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Friday, October 7, 2022

Dear parents and carers

### October Update 2022

The school year has begun well and it has been a pleasure to welcome our new Year 7 students together with several other new students in different year groups. They all seem to have settled in well; we are especially proud of those who have joined us from abroad and have made such a success of changing not only schools, but countries and languages too.

So far this year the very successful Ypres battlefields trip has taken place for Year 9; we have had external visitors in working with Year 8 & 9 students on personal safety and respect and the 6<sup>th</sup> Form College has been in to talk to Year 11; Year 11 Geography students have also been to Borth and Year 10 have completed some terrific bricklaying as well as their first Bronze Duke of Edinburgh expedition and the Year 8/9 Girls football team are into the third round of a national competition. We all enjoyed cakes on MacMillan Coffee Morning and we have hosted a Science visit for one of our partner primaries. Not to mention showing round about 150 families who are considering a school place for their Year 6 child and the lovely music, food and art on display at Celebration Evening in September. And we are still only a month in!!

We are super excited about our new MUGA (Multi Use Games Area) which is almost finished. It is a fantastic addition to our facilities and the PE staff can't wait to get teaching on it. It will also be used for games at break and lunchtimes – but we will be very strict about footwear (trainers only) and no bags or food/drink. We have paid for this entirely from our own funds – saved up over many years! – and we are determined to look after it. I know the students will be too. As soon as it is open we will send photos so you can all enjoy it!

As the weather is starting to get colder, please send your child to school warmly dressed. Students are able to wear a base layer under their polo shirt and jumper; we advise strong shoes and a warm coat. Our PTA have been fantastic in collecting and laundering nearly new uniform which is available extremely cheaply – if you would like to take advantage of this, then please contact the PTA on [PTA@gvsc.org.uk](mailto:PTA@gvsc.org.uk) Fairfield has been proactive in keeping the number of badged items to a minimum – we only have four to keep costs as low as possible – and you can of course buy from any source and get items embroidered in Peterchurch at the Horse & Jockey.



I have been asked by the local community to remind you of the 'one way' system past the school and also to park considerately in the village. It is also important to drive slowly along our lanes – as there are no pavements, pedestrians are in the road.

Following the success of Oliver in July and Celebration evening in September, we are looking forward to the Christmas Concert on December 14<sup>th</sup>. Please 'save the date' – it's a lovely way to start the festive season. We usually have a large raffle – the PTA are asking for anyone who can donate a prize to let them know please – it might be a voucher for a local business for example. After half term, donations can be dropped into the school office – please do not send your child with alcohol!! If you would like to help to raise funds, an easy way to do so for anyone who shops with Amazon is to set up your account to go via 'Amazon Smile' and name the Fairfield PTA account. Every time you buy anything on Amazon, the school will benefit. We are also working on a big fundraising social event at the end of January – more details to follow. The PTA are always glad to have more members – if you would like to join (or for any other information) please contact them on the email address above.

Many of you have asked me for an update on our 'Aid to Ukraine' programme; I can share the following summary with you, written by David Gaston at the beginning of this term.

*You may recall that earlier in the year I made several trips to Poland and Ukraine. In fact, I spent 70 days abroad in total, 24 of which were in Ukraine. During that time I travelled well over 20,000 miles, delivered three minibus loads of aid and helped more than 60 Ukrainians to get to where they needed to go: Poznan, Krakow, Warsaw, Medyka in Poland; Berlin and Bavaria in Germany; Barcelona in Spain. We also brought one family to the UK in the minibus (or, rather, my co driver Charlie did as by then I was driving in Ukraine for a Canadian medical team supported by a charity). We could not have accomplished any of these things without the kindness and generosity of so many people.*

*Andrei, who was hit by shrapnel in a rocket attack in Kharkiv continues to stay in Salzburg and is recovering well but he can only stay there until February 2023. He has just heard he has an English sponsor in Bristol, so perhaps we will see him in the UK soon.*

*Olena and her children have returned to the Ukraine and at least one other family that we transported is planning on doing the same. Adapting to a new environment is challenging at the best of times; when the alphabet of the language that you must learn is completely different to your own, the level of challenge rises dramatically. Most displaced people can't work where they stay and all miss their loved ones; the pull of home is enormous despite the risks. I was contacted by one mother and asked if I would take three families back to Ukraine; sadly this wasn't possible.*

*During my last trip, we visited displaced families that are staying not far from the Polish/Ukrainian border to deliver food. One child, Dawid, who is six years old, has a cleft palate. I asked if it will be possible, when the war is over, to have this addressed and was told that the cost will forever be beyond the family. I took the liberty of asking if the cost could be ascertained, wondering if the Canadian medics and I might be able to raise sufficient funds to pay. I took lots of photographs on the day we visited Dawid and his family but in not one of them is Dawid smiling; we would like to help him and his family to smile one day.*

Your tremendous generosity helped make those trips earlier in the year possible (you will remember we also paid for a lorry load of aid organised by a local haulage logistics company as well). We sent clothes and food to people displaced by the war; your money and contributions made this possible, in particular a very

generous donation of clothing and money from the owner and customers of Little Poppets. David was asked to return to Ukraine at the beginning of October by two American aid workers he had driven previously; there was still money available to make this possible, so you have again bought food and warm clothes for people whose homes and villages have been destroyed and who have nothing, sometimes not even running water. He has spent the past week driving in Ukraine near Bucha, Lviv and Kyiv, distributing food, medical aid to hospitals and warm clothes. He messaged "I never thought I'd see anything like I've seen today in my lifetime in Europe. It's the stuff of nightmares". He added "Just seeing the look on one woman's face when we gave her a donated coat makes it all worth it..."

A few photos from the past week are below; we are currently finding out what else we can do to help. I am enormously proud that Fairfield continues to be proactive in supporting people in Ukraine who have lost so much. Thank you.

*Sue Gaston*

Sue Gaston

