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30/09/2020

Re.: Health and Well-being

Dear Parents/Guardians,

Health and well-being have become major issues in society over the past number of years. We all have read about the dangers of sedentary lifestyles and obesity, particularly among younger people.

Wellbeing and Physical Education (PE) are key dimensions of the primary school curriculum. We try to maximise the activity that your child undertakes through PE each week and also during active break-times. Our healthy eating policy is an aspect of this that we take very seriously and see excellent cooperation from the majority of parents on a daily basis. Our holistic approach to education also enables our pupils to develop coping strategies, resilience and problem solving skills for more difficult times. Specific programmes are run across the school to deal with anxiety and to encourage better self-regulation. Combined, all of these provide some of the raw materials that are required for a balanced approach to the health and well-being of our pupils.

However, we realise that our role in developing a rounded approach to health, fitness and wellbeing is limited and that your influence at home is by far the most important factor. With this in mind, we would like to encourage you to ensure your child is eating the right food and receiving appropriate exercise for his age. Most research in this area will point to the strong link between physical exercise and that of positive mental health and this is something that we will be focusing on over the coming weeks.

To give you an indication of the fitness level of your son, we are going to be running an aerobic endurance test for 5th class pupils next week. Effectively, this is a fitness test involving running 20 metre shuttle runs over a specified time. Your child will be scored and only you will be informed of the results. They will be ranked by percentile and categorised into average, above average etc. This assessment has been standardised internationally among pupils ranging from ages nine to seventeen.

We will be repeating the test in approximately 6 weeks' time prior to Christmas.

In the intervening time, we will be asking your child to fill in an activity diary to take account of what activity he has engaged in each week for the 6 weeks. This will not be assessed, however, the teacher may review and encourage participation over the period. The point of this exercise is to make you aware of where your child is performing in terms of his physical fitness, which hopefully will inform decisions you make around his past-times and the screen-time he receives. Please be aware, just because your child appears to be of average weight, does not mean that his aerobic fitness is age appropriate.

We encourage a family approach to increasing fitness as much as possible to foster a positive attitude to physical activity. The boys will also be engaging in activities in school to consolidate this work.

If you have any concerns or queries in relation to the above, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

Anthony Liddane,

Principal

Amy Williams

5th Class Teacher