

Dear Parents and Carers,

This week the governors at Whitehorse Infant and Junior schools held an Extraordinary General Meeting to consider the possibility of forming a new partnership with Ecclesbourne Primary School, which you will know is the nearest primary school to us. The governors at Ecclesbourne have also considered the advantages of such a partnership and all three governing bodies overwhelmingly passed the motion that they agree 'pending consultation, to apply for new academy status with the Department for Education'. The move to become a new academy is an exciting development and, if agreed, will mean that all three schools work much more closely together for the benefit of children and families in Thornton Heath. The Headteachers and governors at all three schools are keen to hear everyone's views but parents and carers should be assured that many of the changes are legal and organisational and that we are committed to ensuring that the only impact on their children's education is a continued improvement in the quality of the educational experience offered by the schools. We are supported in our move to explore new academy status by the Local Authority as well as the central government Department for Education who believe that this is a proven route to ongoing school improvement and a good way of developing school partnerships.

Croydon's Children, Young People and Learners department writes: 'Croydon Local Authority welcomes this expression of partnership by the governors of the school communities of Whitehorse Manor Infant School, Ecclesbourne Primary School and Whitehorse Manor Junior School. They are fully supportive of a healthy debate about the benefits of any 'New Academy' model and what it might offer the children and families of all three schools. The Local Authority is fully supportive of the action taken by governors to proceed to consultation on this matter'

The next stage is to arrange for all members of our school communities to have a chance to share their views and opportunities to do this will be arranged in due course.

Holiday club

Due to a poor take up the holiday club will not be running this half term. Mrs Christopher will be in touch with all those who had booked to arrange a refund.

Friends of Whitehorse

Thank you to Melissa Brittain for organising a very positive first meeting with parents who would like to work with us to raise money for the school. At the meeting some parents said that they liked the new arrangements for the start of the school day but were missing the chance to catch up with other parents and carers. At Whitehorse we want everyone to feel part of our school community so you are very welcome to stay in the hall once the children have gone into their classes to chat with friends.

The next meeting of the Friends of Whitehorse will be held on **Monday 15th November at 3:45pm** in the 'atrium area' in the junior school. Hope you can come!

Requests for exceptional leave

Our attendance policy says 'We pay particular attention to absences, for whatever reason, that happen in the week before or the week after any holiday'. In order to make this clear to parents our request form now states 'Requests for exceptional leave at these times are not usually approved, regardless of the reason'. Please do not arrange family events in term time

Dates for your diary

25th October—1st November—Half term holiday

Children return to school **8:45 Tuesday 2nd November**