



# FERN HILL PRIMARY SCHOOL

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Headteacher: Mr A. Scott

29<sup>th</sup> April 2021

## Fern Hill Voluntary Fund – making a difference

Dear Parents and Carers,

Many of you will already be aware of the **Fern Hill Voluntary Fund** that was set up in 2016 to supplement our school budget at a time when government funding was declining in real terms. This funding shortfall continues and today we face another significant challenge to our financial position from the pandemic.

Our priority at Fern Hill is to provide a rich and varied curriculum for the children, one that goes beyond the requirements of the national curriculum and offers exciting learning opportunities for all. The Voluntary Fund has been key to this, enabling us to make a significant investment in IT and broaden the children's educational experience in school. This investment has also helped us to provide the children with robust and engaging out of school learning during periods of school closure over the past year. Thank you to all the families who have donated and to those who continue to do so – we see the difference you have made every day and are incredibly grateful.

## **Increased costs and reduced income**

Like so many other schools, we are funding the costs of providing a COVID-secure environment for the school community from both our core budget and reserves. For cleaning and hygiene supplies alone we have spent an extra £10,000 since March 2020. There are 'hidden' costs too in making the school safe, for example higher water bills from more handwashing and higher heating bills from ensuring the children learn comfortably in a well-ventilated classroom. These costs will undoubtedly continue well into the next school year.

At the same time, our ability to generate income to support the school budget has been curtailed. In a normal school year, we might expect to raise a minimum of £200,000 from letting our facilities, Tree Tops and after school clubs. This year, we will earn just £70,000. In addition, the PSA would usually generate and donate a significant sum of money to school funds. Sadly, very little will be received this year as they have not been able to run their usual events and activities.

Increased costs and reduced income will clearly have a long-term impact on staffing and on our ability to maintain the highest standards of teaching. We can no longer afford to continue to enhance our curriculum offer as we would wish without your help.

*We are passionate about developing the whole child and instilling an enduring love of learning*

Inspiration

Collaboration

Empathy

Excellence



## How you can help

The purpose of the Voluntary Fund is not changing; our long-term goal to integrate the best technology into teaching and learning remains. In the short-term however, we would like to use the Fund to invest in resources that will benefit the children straight away and allow them to explore aspects of the curriculum that have been difficult to teach remotely. You can read more about the resources and equipment we would like to fund in the FAQ section overleaf.

Our immediate goal is to raise £15,000 this term and, to make donating and sharing the impact of your contribution easier, we have joined the [KindLink](#) platform for charities. Details of the many ways you can donate are given overleaf and on the school website [here](#).

We would like to stress that the donations we are asking for are voluntary; there is no obligation to contribute to the Fund but any amount, however small, is very welcome and will make a difference.

If you have any questions about the Voluntary Fund that are not answered overleaf, please do get in touch by emailing the school office at: [office@fernhill.rbksch.org](mailto:office@fernhill.rbksch.org) and either myself or one of the Voluntary Fund Trustees will contact you.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Alan Scott', written in a cursive style.

**Mr A. Scott**  
**Headteacher**

**Please see overleaf for FAQ on the Fern Hill Voluntary Fund.**

## Fern Hill Voluntary Fund FAQ

### What will future donations be spent on?

In the short term, we would like to purchase: whole class novels to enrich reading resources; musical instruments to support the music curriculum; cookery and Art/DT resources and equipment to provide a fully functional and dedicated space in which to teach these subjects; VR headsets to enhance learning across the curriculum and flipcharts to effectively teach modelled writing.

In the autumn term, we will review our investment strategy once again to ensure the Voluntary Fund is being used to provide the very best educational experience for all children.

### How can I donate to the Voluntary Fund?

There are several ways you can make a donation. You can make a single, one-off contribution, or set up a regular payment and you can donate by debit or credit card through KindLink or ParentPay, by standing order or bank transfer directly into the Voluntary Fund bank account, using childcare vouchers or by cheque or cash.

**KindLink** – click [here](#) and make a one-off donation or set up a monthly, quarterly or yearly regular payment using a credit or debit card.

**ParentPay** – sign in to ParentPay [here](#) and make a one-off donation by selecting a Voluntary Fund payment item.

The Voluntary Fund account details you need to set up a regular **standing order** or make a **bank transfer** are:

**Account name: Fern Hill Primary Volunteers Fund**

**Account number: 77989168 | Sort code: 30-94-77**

If you would like to donate using **childcare vouchers, cheque or cash**, please go to our website [here](#) for further information on how to do this.

### Can I claim Gift Aid on my donation?

Yes, the Voluntary Fund is a registered charity and eligible for Gift Aid. By claiming Gift Aid you increase the value of your donation by 25%. If you donate online through KindLink or ParentPay, you can gift aid your donation at the same time as you process your payment. Otherwise, please complete the [Gift Aid Declaration Form](#) available on the school website.

### Are there other ways I can help the school that do not involve donating money?

Yes, absolutely! We will be restarting our volunteer reader programme and opening the school to parent and carer helpers as soon as government guidelines allow us to. We would be delighted to hear from families who can offer their time, skills or any equipment for school use. Please contact the school office and a member of the Senior Leadership Team will get back to you.