

# Introduction of the Building Fund

## What is the Building Fund?

St John's is a Voluntary Aided School. This means the St Albans Diocese (Church of England) owns the school buildings, and contributes to building costs. The school receives no funding from the Local Authority for the maintenance or refurbishment of any of the school buildings. Being a Voluntary Aided School also affects the way the school is funded and therefore parents are asked to help. Nobody likes having to ask for money and the Governing Body is only too well aware that there are many pressing needs on family budgets at the moment, but we hope you are proud of your school and would like it to remain outstanding in every way. Parents' generosity is crucial if we are to continue to provide the best education and opportunity for your children. This is why we need your help now and are requesting a donation of £10 per family per month.

## Why does the school need a Building Fund?

The school is legally obliged to have this fund.

## Why do parents need to pay into it?

The Building Fund has to pay 10% towards all works carried out on school buildings. There needs to be enough money to ensure necessary improvements to the school can be made as required, or when lucky enough to secure extra funding from other sources. There also needs to be a contingency fund for any unforeseen or emergency maintenance.

## What has the Fund been used for recently?

In 2022-2023 the Diocese refurbished the Early Years play area by installing tarmac and fencing. In 2023-2024 the flat roof was removed and replaced over classrooms 1 and 2 and the office waiting area, at a cost of around £150,000. The Building Fund must pay 10% on all these projects. If the Fund does not have the money, then it must come from the school budget. Parental contributions in community schools fund extras on top of the budget. If we do not receive sufficient contributions, this means money must be taken out of the budget and the money available for the children's education will be reduced.

## What things are still needed?

We are looking to replace and upgrade the lighting and emergency lighting across the school site to LED lights; replacement and upgrade of the fire alarm system and sprinkler system throughout the school is needed, and refurbishment of the access to the hall from external doors is needed. Finally, the refurbishment and upgrade of the boys and girls changing rooms and toilets. As you can appreciate, these will form the basis of multiple bids over several years.

## **Why can't the Council or the Diocese pay for this work? Why do the Governors not look at sources of alternate funding?**

Because St John's is a Voluntary Aided School the Governing Body is legally liable to make a 10% contribution.

## **Does the Fund subsidise anything else?**

No. Voluntary contributions are set aside for school maintenance and improvement only.

## **Does the Fund support any school club?**

No – clubs are required to be self-financing.

## **Why do the Governors ask for £120 a year?**

If every family paid the suggested contribution of £10 a month per family it would ensure that annual costs are met and a modest sum can be set aside to top up the maintenance budget.

## **What happens if parents don't pay?**

The donation from parents is entirely voluntary and we are very grateful to receive all donations, however large or small. The Governors hope parents can see that their generosity is crucial if a healthy balance in the Fund is to be maintained.

## **What if parents can't pay?**

The Governors are all too aware of current financial pressures on families. Any donation, however small, is welcomed but if you are unable to pay, we understand. All gifts are confidentially handled. Unfortunately, however, if there are not enough contributions the school will be unable to go ahead with many of its plans.

## **Why can't the LSA funds be used?**

We greatly appreciate all of the work and contributions parents make already through LSA events. The LSA raises funds during the year from various sources, (for example, Fireworks Night, Christmas Hampers, Summer Fête and so much more) but the Building Fund is separate. Whilst the LSA can (and often does) make generous contributions for some improvement projects, such as the new playground climbing frame, new chrome books and a

projector for the school hall, it cannot donate to building or structural works due to the regulation as a charitable organisation. Therefore, the Governing Body is legally liable to make a 10% contribution to funding.

## How do I make my donation?

The Governing Body will be very grateful for any contribution, whether larger, smaller or equal to the £10 per family per month as suggested. The Governor's bank account details are as follows for parent donations:

Name on Account- The Governors of St Johns Lemsford

Sort Code- 60-23-07

Account Number- 73255599

Thank you for your continued support!

The Governing Body