



Dear Families and Friends

As we move rapidly towards the Easter holidays and begin to see even more "light at the end of the tunnel" with regard to the refurbishment of the school hall, I want to remind you of events taking place during the next few weeks. I also want to take this opportunity to pay tribute to Jack Norfolk, one of our former pupils, who has sadly passed away, aged 12 years. As a staff, we have been devastated to hear of Jack's death.

We look forward to seeing you at our Learning Walks next week. Entry to classrooms will be via the playground on this occasion as the hall, although looking far healthier and brighter than it did four months ago, is still not quite ready for public use.

Kind regards

Ian Beard
Headteacher



KEY DATES for your DIARY (see website for all events)

| | |
|-----------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------|
| <i>Friday 20th March</i> | <i>No Assembly on this day</i> |
| <i>Tuesday 24th March at 2pm</i> | <i>Learning Walks (parents invited into school)</i> |
| <i>Wednesday 25th March at 9am</i> | <i>Learning Walks (parents invited into school)</i> |
| <i>Thursday 26th March</i> | <i>Year 4 Class Visit : Manchester Climbing Centre</i> |
| <i>Friday 27th March</i> | <i>Easter Assembly (St Hilda's Church)</i> |
| <i>Tuesday 31st March, 1.30pm/6.30pm</i> | <i>Year 4 performance at Manchester Health Academy</i> |
| Thursday 2nd April | School closed for the Easter Holidays |
| Monday 20th April | School opens for the summer term |
| <i>Tuesday 21st April</i> | <i>Parents' Evening (Short – 3.30pm – 5.30pm)</i> |
| <i>Wednesday 22nd April</i> | <i>Parents' Evening (Long – 3.30pm – 7.30pm)</i> |
| <i>Friday 24th April</i> | <i>Manchester Airport World of Work Day (no assembly)</i> |
| <i>Thursday 30th April</i> | <i>Class Photographs (correct uniform please)</i> |
| Monday 4th May | Public Holiday (school closed) |
| <i>Thursday 7th May</i> | <i>General Election (school used for voting but open)</i> |

JACK NORFOLK

27.03.2002 - 14.03.2015

Some of you will no doubt know of the sad news we received last weekend about the death of one of our former pupils, Jack Norfolk, aged 12. Jack left us as a Year 6 pupil in July 2013 and moved on to the Manchester Health Academy. Jack lost his battle against Leukaemia last Saturday, as further treatment was not possible, just a few weeks short of his thirteenth birthday. His passing has been reported in the Manchester Evening News this week.



For those of you who have been parents at the school for a few or more years, you will hopefully have seen Jack in action and recognise the qualities and strength of a young person to overcome and stay positive despite many significant illnesses and the challenge associated with years of weekly dialysis and an eventual kidney transplant when he was 8 years of age. If you did not know of Jack, you have missed a treat and the chance to know someone whose character, determination, sense of humour and impact on those around him were huge. You may recognise Jack as one of the children featured on ITV's 'Children's Hospital' which was broadcast in 2010 and made him a national star.

It is always sad when someone we know and who has been part of our school community passes away but, on this occasion, it is particularly poignant for everyone given Jack's age, his huge character, his ongoing determination and that he deserved so much more. Jack's time with us at Northenden Community School was particularly significant as we shared his struggles and his joys more than most. He was as much part of the ongoing life story of our school as we were part of his.

As well as feeling huge loss and sadness at this time, we want to remember and celebrate Jack's life and recognise the sheer impact that he, his character and his example, had on his family, his friends and on our school. Staff have shared so many stories of Jack during this week and have remembered the many occasions when we could be taken aback by his honest observations and comments (he treated adults more as his friends having spent so much time around medical staff for much of his life), by his "get on with it" attitude to life and, not forgetting, the sheer speed at which those little legs could get him around, often moving him to his next distraction or (perhaps more interesting) conversation before you could slow him down. Staff often finished their conversations with Jack while he was speeding down the corridor. We remember that, alongside the many struggles we shared in his life, Jack brought laughter, joy and utterly mad, admirable, inspiring and proud moments to our classrooms, our assemblies (we recall his breakdancing) and our playground. Jack's life brought out the very best in people, in particular the empathy and care of his class peers who welcomed him back to school following every absence and took care of him. We recall the distinct applause he received at their assemblies as his achievements were recognised as perhaps more significant than others. I know that the children (now in Year 8), and their parents, will be upset to learn of his passing. We reflect on the funny, caring, joyous, inspiring and proud moments that Jack brought to our school and to our lives as we think about the huge sadness of his passing. Our thoughts are with his family at this time.

Jack's funeral takes place tomorrow (Friday). As a school, we would like, at this stage, to mark Jack's passing with a collection in Jack's memory. Monies collected will go to the family's chosen charities, *Childflight* and *Francis House*. If you would like to contribute, please do so by cash or cheque at the school office.