

16th March 2009

Dear Parents / Guardians,

Response to the Blackpool Gazette article “Fury as school bans Red Nose day”

Following the wildly inaccurate, and potentially damaging, article in last Saturday's edition of the Blackpool Gazette, we are compelled to bring the facts relating to last Friday's non-uniform day to your attention.

- The School publishes its own diary for each academic year in the preceding July.
- The diary for 2008-2009, published last July, is still available on the School's website.
- Dates for the four non-uniform days were decided, published and communicated in a letter to you on 6th October 2008 as:- 10th October 2008, 5th December 2008, 13th March 2009, and 19th June 2009.
- Our calendar is planned around the needs of the school community.
- It is entirely coincidental that our planned non-uniform day last Friday 13th March was also “Red Nose” Day.
- At the usual staff briefing on 11th March, the teaching Staff were asked to remind our pupils that the non-uniform day arranged for last Friday was the School's selected day and unconnected to the Comic Relief fundraising.
- Contrary to what was reported in the Gazette, the letter sent to you as parents on 9th March 2009 said that we would consult the school council as to which good causes we would support. No reference to Comic Relief was made.
- All parents had been made aware, that on non-uniform days pupils would be asked to donate £2 each with reductions for siblings.
- 50% of the monies collected would be directed towards clearly identified School causes such as paying for the School's minibus.
- At no time were staff, parents or pupils informed that the School was not supporting Comic Relief.

In so far as last Friday was concerned, other than our usual Lenten fund raising for the “Good Shepherd Fund” (the Diocesan Charity), we have yet to identify the charities that are to benefit from our pupils' donations.

From enquiries made by the Headteacher, it would appear that some of our teaching staff may have confused the issue in pupils' minds by verbally referring to the Catholic Church's pro-life stance, as stated in the Bishop of Lancaster's document “Fit for Mission? Schools” published in November 2007.

Contrary to what was erroneously stated in the article, the School has a history of supporting Comic Relief. The Headteacher's letter to you from 12th March 2008, re-printed below, is still available in the “downloads” section of our website. Had the Gazette's editorial team taken the trouble to carry out proper research, this fact would have become evident.

12th March 2008
Dear Parent/Guardian
SPORT RELIEF DAY – FRIDAY, 14TH MARCH 2008

As you will probably be aware, Friday is Sport Relief Day. The school is supporting this worthwhile cause by inviting pupils to come to school in sportswear for which they will be asked to pay £1.00. Many pupils have already purchased a pair of Sport Relief socks at a cost of £2.00 from the PE department. If your son/daughter will have purchased a pair of the socks by Thursday 13th March, the £2.00 paid will cover the cost of wearing his/her sportswear on Friday. All of the money raised from the day will go to help vulnerable people living incredibly tough lives both at home in the UK and in the world's poorest countries.

The Headteacher's report to the School's Governors in spring 2008 contains the following reference to Sport Relief Day of 14th March 2008.

**SPORT
Sport Relief Day:**



On 14th March our pupils dressed up in sports gear and purchased "Sport Relief" Socks to raise funds and celebrate for the Comic Relief Charity. Over £1,000 was raised with all pupils and many staff completing a one mile fun run arranged around the school yards.

The School has always adopted a healthy outward looking stance when considering options for charities. OFSTED and Diocesan reports both comment favourably on the efforts our pupils make in raising money for local as well as national charities. In the last two and a half years our children have raised £15,000 for different causes. Many of these charities to which the school donates have no direct Catholic links. Regarding our Option for the Poor, the school takes its responsibilities to those less fortunate than ourselves very seriously and will continue to promote both Catholic and non-Catholic Charities as a significant part of its charity fund raising.

Regrettably, those responsible for writing and publishing last Saturday's article failed to observe the essential pre-requisite of checking the facts before rushing into print. The Blackpool Gazette has been invited to publish a retraction of last Saturday's article and to give their retraction the same level of publicity as the original erroneous article.

Yours sincerely

Philip Mooney
Headteacher

Philip H. Waters
Chairman of Governors

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To Form Tutor, Cardinal Allen Catholic High School, Fleetwood

I have received the School's Response to the Blackpool Evening Gazette article and have noted the contents

Signed:.....

Parent/Guardian of: Form: