



Headteacher: Mrs M Garnham

Monday 7<sup>th</sup> October 2024

Dear Parents and Carers,

## 500 Smiles - the Christmas Shoebox Project!

Our school is supporting a local project reaching out to poverty-stricken families in Romania this Christmas. St John's Church, Colchester, has a link with a disadvantaged community in Romania and have set themselves a challenge once more, to send shoeboxes full of gifts to at least 500 children.

These families live in appalling poverty. Parents often have to make choices between buying food or fuel and life is a struggle. Opportunities for seasonal work in western Europe have been greatly reduced and the situation in their own communities are very bad. There is simply no money to buy presents. This is an opportunity for our school to do something practical to give a Christmas present to a child who otherwise will receive nothing. There are suggestions for items to put in the box attached with this letter.

500 Smiles will provide the boxes. If you and your child would like to fill a shoe box, *please complete and return the slip below to order your box. Boxes should be delivered by October half term and will need to be returned to school by **18th November**.*

You can personalise your box by decorating it, although we are suggesting not using Christmas paper, in an effort to be more environmentally friendly. There is a suggested donation of £2 towards the cost of sending your shoebox, which will be sent in time to reach the children before Christmas.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Garnham

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## 500 Smiles - Christmas Shoebox Project

Child's Name \_\_\_\_\_ Class \_\_\_\_\_

Yes, we would like to help this local project and would like to order a box. We understand that there is a suggested donation of £2 towards the cost of shipping the boxes and that the box needs to be returned to school by **18th November**.



## 500 Smiles - Packing List Suggestions

**IMPORTANT UPDATE FOR 2024 - DO NOT INCLUDE ANY SECOND-HAND CLOTHES. NEW CLOTHES MUST HAVE THE SHOP TAG OR LABEL ATTACHED**

**OTHER ITEMS THAT CANNOT BE SENT:**

- LIQUIDS OR FOODS (CHOCOLATE, SWEETS, CRISPS etc)
- ANY ITEMS OF CUTLERY
- ENGLISH LANGUAGE READING BOOKS
- TOY WEAPONS

**Suggestions for inclusion:**

<b>Toys and games</b> Toy cars etc Plastic toys and figures Small doll or stuffed toy (with CE label) Skipping rope Ball (small or deflated with pump) Musical instrument Puzzle	<b>Stationery Equipment</b> Pens and pencils Crayons Water colour paints Sharpeners and erasers Note books Colouring books Solar calculator	<b>Clothing and personal care</b> Toothbrush Comb, hair brush Wrapped soap Flannel Hair clips, bows etc Sunglasses (with UV / CE mark) Hat, gloves, scarf Baseball cap Reusable plastic containers e.g. plate, bowl, cup, water bottle
<b><i>You can personalise your box with a photo or Christmas card of you / your family</i></b>		

**Some ideas for different age groups:**

**Age 2-3** Playdough and plastic cutters, plastic building blocks, finger puppets, stickers, glue sticks, pre-inked stampers

**Age 4-6** Stickers, glue sticks, dressing up items e.g. costume jewellery / crown, plastic tools, chalkboard and chalks, small bag / purse, hair bows

**Age 7-10** Ruler, bag or purse, hair bows and clips, small backpack or handbag, colourful balls of twine, beads, loom bands

**Age 11-14** Adhesive tape, geometry set, wind up or solar powered torch, safety (blunt) scissors, sewing set, non-liquid lip balm, deodorant, compact mirror, nail clippers, magnets, compass

***This is not an exhaustive list, use your imagination! Think about whether your box is for a boy, girl or either, but please remember no sharp or fragile items.***