

Archdiocese of Thyateira and Great Britain

2017: Start of the New School year

Our dearly beloved in the Lord,

On the auspicious and sacred occasion of the beginning of the new school year 2017-18, I am sending you all warm greetings to everyone working for the education of our children: the Parents, the Pupils, the Teachers, men and women who are serving the sacred institution of Education in the Countries of the United Kingdom and Ireland where the Greek-Orthodox Community resides under the jurisdiction of the Greek-Orthodox Church of the Archdiocese of Thyateira and Great Britain.

I am fully aware of the effort and pains of every parent as well as of every teacher for the upbringing and the education of their children. For this reason I warmly congratulate you from my heart and pray for your health and progress. May the Lord guide and support your sacred struggle for the education and upbringing of your children according to God. On this point, I would like to stress the dire need for closer cooperation between parents and Teachers as well as between the School Committees and the heads of the Greek and Cypriot Educational Missions under the auspices of the Archdiocese. We should all contribute to the sacred effort for Education providing high quality training and teaching our children the beauty of ecclesiastical and secular education, the simplicity of life, the value of prayer, of work, or virtue, of thriftiness and toughening up to hardship and also of the sacred work of voluntary work and offering to others. For these reasons, our day and afternoon schools should comprise the "home church" in which children study and learn the greatness of God, which are extolled by the Creation and Science on a daily basis. I am writing all this to remind you of the value of Education and edification which help us praise God, love our fellow human beings and be meek and righteous. However we should not forget that without respect towards the Family, our Parents, the Officers, our Teachers and Spiritual Fathers, the Elderly and the Weak, our education is curtailed and alien to the Gospel and Christian civilization.

On this occasion of the beginning of the school year and our own Schools, I am writing this letter to wish you all every success in your studies and extend a call to all of you engaged in the Education of our Diaspora, Parents, teachers, School Committees to join ranks and engage in a holy crusade. I am particularly extending a kind request to all the parents to send their children to our Day Schools, the Elementary School, the Middle School and the High School which have been established and operated by the Greek State for many years now here in London. I am reminding you all about the Greek-Orthodox Academy "St Cyprian" Croydon, the Greek-Orthodox Secondary School "St Andrew the Apostle" North London, as well as the Community Saturday Schools that are operating in London and the Countryside quite successfully for decades. All schools offer education to our boys and girls. For this reason, they deserve our support and love indeed. The various Communities and Churches and our Educational Organizations are supporting them with great effort and sacrifice and contribute positively to the education of the new Greek-Orthodox generation of the Country in which we all live and prosper. It is our duty to support our Schools, offer voluntary work in them and love them as they comprise our standing hope for the preservation of their Christian Faith and Orthodox identity.

In this connection, I mention the fact that there are Adult Education Classes in our Saturday Schools as well as regular Traditional Greek Dance classes, in addition to the School of Byzantine Music and Chant operating in London and the Countryside. The significance of this education as a necessary complement to the teaching of our language and Civilization cannot be overstressed as well as the need for the support of all of us, given that in most cases, teaching traditional dances is offered on a voluntary basis and is free to our students.

Every year, I also make reference to the vital contribution of both the Greek and Cypriot States to the education of the Diaspora youth. But a sine qua non for the success of the Educational Effort remains the contribution of all those who have been particularly blessed by God and created wealth: the rich, the successful businessmen but also all our Greek-Orthodox brethren, who should extend their financial and moral support to our Schools and show in deed their

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interest and concern for the Greek-Orthodox Education so that it can in turn fulfil its valuable and blessed function to our youth.

Connected to the above is also the concern shown by the Greek and Cypriot Missions for the continuing education of the teachers, the updating of the teacher as regards the new educational approaches but also the changes made by the Educational Boards responsible for the examinations in the Greek language.

Let me wish you all from the depths of my heart a good and blessed new School and Academic Year. May our Lord Jesus Christ, via the intercessions of Virgin Mary Mother of God, the Three Hierarchs and Ecumenical Teachers, support you and enlighten us in our sacred work in Education and I remain with warm wishes and blessings in the Lord and honour.

London, September 2017

Archbishop Gregorios
of Thyateira and Great Britain