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Headteacher: Natalie James  
Deputy Headteacher: Liz Abel

November 2022

## NEWSLETTER

Dear Parents / Carers,

As the weather and nights draw in, children in school are preparing and rehearsing for the Christmas concerts at the end of this term, as well as continuing with studies.

### CHRISTMAS CONCERTS

Here are the dates for the Christmas concerts next month. You will receive a Parentmail next week giving you information on how to obtain tickets.

**8<sup>th</sup> December EYFS Nativity 2pm**

**13<sup>th</sup> December Years 1 & 2 9.15am & 2.00pm**

**14<sup>th</sup> December Years 3 & 4 Christmas carol service 9.15am & 2.00pm**

**15<sup>th</sup> December Years 5 & 6 Christmas carol service 9.15am & 2.00pm at St Mark's Church**

### CHRISTMAS LIGHTS

As we are not having a Christmas Fayre this year, we are having a Christmas lights 'spectacular' in our spinney. Our children, in their Forest School work, will be decorating the spinney and we would like to invite parents and children into the spinney to enjoy what our children will have created. Our intention is to invite parents and children into school once it is dark in the last week of term. I will be sending out further information in a Parentmail.

### CHILDREN IN NEED

Thank you very much for your donations to such a worthy cause. I should have totalled up all donations by Monday and will share the final amount raised.

### SPORT MARK EVENTS

This term, children have participated in the town's annual cross-country competition. We had representatives from Years 4 - 6. It was a hard competition and our children ran exceptionally well, particularly, Amanda in Year 5, Morgan and Megan in Year 6 who were in the top 5 girls! We were so proud of all the children; their resilience in a tough race was not unnoticed. Huge congratulations to the girls for placing in the top 5 – a huge achievement with over 100 runners. I do hope they continue to pursue their talent - Olympic champions in the making?

### ANTI-BULLYING AND E-SAFETY

Anti-bullying week took place between 14<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> November, beginning with 'Odd Sock Day'. Monday's 'Odd Sock Day' was used to encourage the children to express themselves and celebrate their individuality. The whole week was based around getting on and being kind to one another, keeping other people's feelings in mind and by approaching one another empathetically. Please see the link below if you are interested in learning further information: <https://anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk/anti-bullying-week/parents-and-carers>

### E-SAFETY

Before we break up, Miss Mitchell will be sending out information to all parents about how you can keep your child safe online. We are affiliated to NOS (National Online Safety) and by signing up you will have lots of information to support your child.



## CHRISTMAS

On 9th December, Kingswood Catering will be offering the children Christmas lunch. Please book by Wednesday 30<sup>th</sup> November, if you would like your child to have Christmas lunch.

This year, the Christmas party day will be held on the last school day of term, Friday 16<sup>th</sup> December. The children will enjoy fun and games throughout the day and during the afternoon a talented troupe of performers will share the story of Cinderella through Pantomime. Santa will also visit the classrooms during the morning.

At this time of year, I am mindful of how busy parents are and that for some children, the meal they receive at school may be their only hot meal of the day, which is why I have asked Kingswood Catering to make a full menu available on Friday 16<sup>th</sup> December (Christmas party day), in order that parents can order a meal for their child in the usual way. This is a change from our previous newsletter which stated that no meals would be available to order. If your child usually brings a packed lunch, we are relaxing the rules a little and are happy for you to add the odd sweet treat. However, please be aware that food/drinks containing nuts are still not permitted. We will **not** be requesting party food for on this day.

## PARENT SURVEY

Thank you to those who completed the parent survey. We had 185 responses. The survey will help me with school decisions to make Whitehills an even better school for our children. The responses were overwhelmingly positive, however, there are areas you would like improving:

Homework was an area some parents felt we could improve. We completed a survey several years ago and acted upon your information. As a result, much of our homework is APP based and some parents are requesting more traditional paper-based homework. I will speak to staff over the next few weeks and look at how we can improve this, particularly, for our older children in Years 4, 5 and 6.

Another area that parents felt we could improve is communication. Some parents are unsure where to look for information as we have several sources to view. Parentmail and monthly newsletters via Parentmail are the primary and official form of communication as I am aware, not everyone has social media. Reminders are sent out via Facebook and Class Dojo. I always send out a Friday update on Class Dojo to the whole school, commenting on the week's events and sharing photos when I can. Your child's class teacher will post at least two class stories on Dojo and this will be relevant only to your child's class. We are avoiding communicating with information on the class room windows and doors as we are aware that many of you are working and do not get the opportunity to see any messages, and this is where Class Dojo works so well.

My monthly newsletters have been at the end of the month, however, sometimes relevant dates for you may be too late, so I will endeavour to get my newsletter out to you earlier with dates of events for the next couple of months at the end of each letter. I do hope this helps.

Other comments from the survey, which are relevant to certain year groups, I will be addressing. If there are any other recommendations, please do not hesitate to contact me via my email.

## NISA

I would like to thank Alex, from Nisa (Whitehills branch), for his continued support. Once again, he has donated £400, which we are spending on books for the library. We are so lucky to have such a generous benefactor!

## STAFF

Welcome to Tammy Malpas who will be joining our office team from Monday.

## GOVERNORS

School staff and governors are mindful that what may have been affordable in the past may not be this year. Events such as Christmas performances and mufti will be free however should you wish to donate you may do so.



## SNOW AND SCHOOL CLOSURES

In the unfortunate event that school has to close due to adverse weather or other reasons, we no longer have the service provided by the local authority to alert parents and radio stations of such closures via their website. Therefore, we will relay this information in several ways: on the school website front cover page, via Parentmail email, Class Dojo and by the school Facebook page. It would help in such circumstances, if the power of social media could inform all parents and we envisage that all parents and carers will have the information quickly. We do endeavour to get the information to you as soon as possible as we understand that childcare can be an issue at short notice. However, please understand that closing the school is a difficult decision to make and it is not one I take lightly. In the event of a closure, teachers will ensure children have remote learning available.

School closes on **Friday 16<sup>th</sup> December**, for the holidays and will **re-open** to all children on **Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> January 2023**

With best wishes,

Natalie James

## DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

<b>November 2022</b>	
23 <sup>rd</sup> November	Year 2 visit to St Mark's church
23 <sup>rd</sup> November	Year 5 & 6 athletics competition – Benham Sports Centre
28 <sup>th</sup> November	Advent assembly with Reverend Sarah
30 <sup>th</sup> November	Year 2 visit to the theatre
<b>December 2022</b>	
1 <sup>st</sup> December	Year 3 visit to the museum & theatre
6 <sup>th</sup> December	30 Year 5 Grease at KC
<b>7<sup>th</sup> December</b>	<b>Years 5 &amp; 6 Target festival at Benham Sports centre</b>
7 <sup>th</sup> December	Flu immunisations EYFS – Year 6
8 <sup>th</sup> December	Year 5 & 6 Reward day at Benham Sports Centre
<b>8<sup>th</sup> December</b>	<b>EYFS Nativity 2:00pm</b>
<b>8<sup>th</sup> December</b>	<b>Christmas jumper day</b>
<b>9<sup>th</sup> December</b>	<b>Kingswood Christmas lunch</b>
12 <sup>th</sup> December	Donations for St David's food bank all week (tinned food, toiletries and Christmas foods)
<b>13<sup>th</sup> December</b>	<b>Year 1 &amp; Year2 Christmas Play 9:15 &amp; 2:00pm</b>
<b>14<sup>th</sup> December</b>	<b>Year 3 &amp; Year Christmas Carols 9:15 &amp; 2:00pm</b>
<b>15<sup>th</sup> December</b>	<b>Year 5 and Year 6 Christmas Carols 9:15 &amp; 2:15 at St Mark's Church</b>
<b>16<sup>th</sup> December</b>	<b>Christmas party day – non uniform Pantomime School closes for Christmas break</b>
<b>January 2023</b>	
4 <sup>th</sup> January	School reopens to pupils 8:50am
6 <sup>th</sup> January	Pre-loved school uniform donations
9 <sup>th</sup> January	Year 4 clarinet project starts this week
13 <sup>th</sup> January	Pre-loved school uniform start and end of the day
<b>17<sup>th</sup> January</b>	<b>Year 4 assembly for parents 9:05</b>

