



Lanchester E.P. (Cont.) Primary School & Nursery

A Caring Community Where All Can Flourish



*'Through God's love, we are the rich soil
where roots grow and seeds flourish.'*

Luke 8:4-15



Friday 13th December 2024

Dear Parents and Carers,

This week has not gone the way we had hoped at all. Our Reception cohort has been decimated by a variety of viruses doing the rounds. With an average of 21 children absent on a daily basis, this week we felt we had no option but to postpone their planned nativities. It was definitely the right decision to help prevent any spread, but I do realise the disappointment and frustration of the many parents and carers who had taken time off work to attend. Let's hope next week goes more smoothly.

As a precaution, we have also postponed our Woodland Worship which was planned for Sunday afternoon. This will now take place on Sunday 19th January 2025. A new link to an online form will be sent out at the start of next term.

I also think we have no alternative but to cancel our Carols and Hot Chocolate Around the Tree which was due to take place on Wednesday after school. Many staff are also struggling to fight the germs and I have a duty of care to them as well as the children. Lots of people crammed into the hall will not benefit anyone with so many germs and viruses spreading so quickly. I do apologise for any disappointment caused but again, I do feel this is the right decision bearing in mind the current issues we are facing.

Thank you all so much for your great support of our Christmas Fair – both for your donations and for coming along to support it last Friday afternoon. £1700 is a magnificent amount to raise and it is thanks to you all. That money will come straight back to your children once we have decided how to use it!

I am in a very privileged position and have had the delight of listening to some wonderful singing coming from the hall all week when the children have been rehearsing. You are in for a real treat next week!

Please read the information about next week very carefully. It was already busy enough, but with the postponed nativities taking place next week as well, it is quite action-packed now!

Performances and Photography

We have a number of children who do not have permission to have photographs taken or posted on social media. Due to this, as well as the fact that we just want you to enjoy being in the moment and make the most of watching your child perform, photographs **will not** be permitted during the performances. However, at the end of each nativity, we will make time for you to take a photograph of your child on the stage and in their costume as we understand this is very important to many families.

Friends of the School Christmas Shop

I would like to say a huge thank you to every single volunteer who has helped in any way to make the Christmas Shop such a success this week. Many adults have shopped, wrapped, delivered and helped to supervise the shop itself and for that we are truly grateful.

The children have been so excited to go down and choose their gifts for their loved ones. Such precious memories and moments which help to reinforce the true meaning of giving at Christmas. We hope you all enjoy opening your presents on Christmas morning! If your child was not in school please don't worry – any children who missed their slot will be taken to choose a gift when they are back in school next week.

Household Vouchers

These have been sent to all eligible families via the primary email address we hold on file this week. It would be appreciated if you could please check your junk mail if you have yet to receive it. Any questions, please contact: school.office@lanchesterep.net no later than Monday 16th December. Thank you.

Money Raised

Reception parents and carers have managed to raise an amazing £521 for St Cuthbert's Hospice after the Reindeer Dash last Friday morning. This is an incredible amount of money to raise from such a relatively small group of parents. Thank you all so very much – there has obviously been some great generosity for this good cause.

We have also received over £200 in donations from families for Mission Christmas which is a remarkable achievement – thank you so much for your generosity. The School Council will work with Mr Innes next week to decide what toys and presents they would like to donate to children in the area.

Attendance

Year Group	Current Week Attendance Percentage (%)	Attendance Percentage to Date (%)	Year Group	Current Week Attendance Percentage (%)	Attendance Percentage to Date (%)
Reception	65%	93.1%	Year 4	94.3%	97.6%
Year 1	85.7%	95.9%	Year 5	92.1%	97.7%
Year 2	88.3%	96.8%	Year 6	93.4%	97.2%
Year 3	93.9%	97.3%	Whole School	87.5%	96.5%

Safeguarding

Keeping children safe from harm is our number one priority. We will always act upon any concerns individuals have, or any disclosures from children. However, if you have any concerns outside of school, or 03000 267979.

Diary Dates for Next Week

All Week – No Extra-Curricular Clubs

Reminder, the only club on after school next week is after school club and tea time club. All other clubs have finished. Please make sure you collect them at normal school time, or they will be sent to after school club and you will be charged for the session.

Monday 16th December – Key Stage 1 Nativity – 10am and 2pm

'Bethlehem Bake Off' will take place at 10am and 2pm on Monday in the Junior Hall. The children have worked so hard for this and are very excited to perform to you all. Please note that the doors cannot be opened until 9.45am and 1.45pm to give us time to organise the hall.

Tuesday 17th December – The Wizard of Oz Performance for Years 2-6

We are thrilled to be welcoming back the Performing Arts students from New College, Durham who will be treating Years 2-6 to a performance of 'The Wizard of Oz.' I know the children will thoroughly enjoy this!

Tuesday 17th December – Winter Wonderland for Reception and Nursery

On Tuesday morning, Reception will be enjoying their special time in the Forest, followed by Nursery in the afternoon. Children need to come to school dressed appropriately, in PE kits/jogging bottoms & warm jumpers, and to bring hats and gloves. All children should have wellies in school, but please make sure you bring them in if you think your child doesn't have them here.

Tuesday 17th December – Year 6 Performances at 2pm and 6pm

Year 6 will be performing 'The Stars Come Out at Christmas' in the Methodist Church at 2pm and 6pm on Tuesday. They have been working very hard on this and I know that Year 6 parents are in for a real treat.

Tuesday 17th December – Reception Nativity at 2.30pm

Our Reception nativity, postponed from last week, will take place on Tuesday afternoon at 2.30pm. Please make your way to the Junior Hall door and the doors will be opened at 2.15pm.

Wednesday 18th December – Reception Nativity – 10am

This will start at 10am in the Junior Hall. Please make your way to the Junior Hall door which will be opened at 9.45am.

Wednesday 18th December – Year 1 Party Postponed

Due to the Reception Nativity taking place on Wednesday morning, the Year 1 party has now been postponed to Friday 20th December.

Wednesday 18th December – The Greediest Elf

We are thrilled to have Big Foot Arts Education theatre company in school all day on Wednesday for four performances of this show for Nursery, Reception & Year 1. and Year 2. These will take place throughout the day.

Wednesday 18th December – Party Day for Nursery and Reception

Nursery and Reception are to come to school in their party clothes on Wednesday. Nursery children will be enjoying a fun-filled day whilst the fun will begin for Reception following their nativity in the morning.

Wednesday 18th December – Year 2 Party

Year 2 will have their party on Wednesday. Children should come into school dressed in their party clothes.

Wednesday 18th December – Carols Around the Tree CANCELLED

As stated above, due to the high number of winter illnesses around at the moment we have decided to cancel this event.

Thursday 19th December – Key Stage One Carol Service

Year 1 and Year 2 children will be going to All Saints' Church on Thursday morning. Please note, this is for the children only. Some of our Prefects will be helping to lead a traditional type of carol service which I am sure they will enjoy.

Thursday 19th December – Year 3 and Year 4 Parties

Year 3 and Year 4 children will enjoy their Christmas parties on Thursday. They are to come to school dressed in their party clothes.

Thursday 19th December – Nursery Visit to Winter Wonderland

Our Afternoon Nursery children will enjoy their time in Winter Wonderland on Thursday afternoon.

Friday 20th December – Christingle and Carol Services for Years 3, 4 & 5 – 9.30am and 11am

Mrs Coyle's class and Year 4 have their service at 9.30am in All Saint's Church. This will be followed by Miss Watt's class and Year 5 service at 11am in All Saints' Church. This is always a very special service and I am sure all parents and carers will enjoy it.

Friday 20th December – Year 1, 5 & 6 Parties

The parties of Year 1, 5 & 6 will all take place on Friday 20th December. All children should come to school dressed in their party clothes for the day.

Friday 20th December – End of the School Day

We are hoping that a very special visitor might be in the village at the end of the school day on Friday. Keep a look out for him!

Positive Thinking

Christmas Gift Suggestions:

To your enemy, forgiveness. To a friend, your heart.

To all, charity.

To every child, a good example.

To yourself, respect.

As always, if there is anything at all you would like to discuss, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Best Wishes,

Jane Davis

Mrs Jane Davis
(Head Teacher)

10 Top Tips for Parents and Educators SAFETY OVER THE FESTIVE SEASON.

The holiday season, marked by Christmas and New Year, brings joy and togetherness but also presents unique safety challenges for children, families and educators. From busy holiday shopping, traveling and family gatherings to managing digital activity during school breaks, staying safe during this period requires heightened awareness. This guide offers practical tips to help families and educators maintain a more secure and fulfilling festive period.

1 MONITOR DIGITAL ACTIVITY

Children spend more time online during school holidays, increasing exposure to potential dangers such as cyberbullying, inappropriate content and online predators. Balancing screen time, avoiding harmful websites and ensuring children engage positively online can be difficult without proper monitoring tools. Set clear boundaries, encourage open discussions about online safety and use parental controls to manage content exposure and screen time effectively. Regular check-ins and positive reinforcement around digital habits encourage safe online behaviour.

2 PRACTICE FIRE SAFETY PROTOCOLS

The incidence of house fires increases during Christmas due to greater use of candles, cookers and electrical decorations. Open flames, electrical overloads and the need for quick response plans can make fire safety challenging. Ensure smoke detectors are operational, keep fire extinguishers on hand and teach children how to respond in case of a fire emergency. Avoid leaving cooking unattended and use fire-safe candles to prevent mishaps.

3 CREATE TRAVEL SAFETY PLANS

More families tend to travel during the holidays, resulting in busier roads, increased traffic accidents and weather-related hazards. Weather conditions, road rage, fatigue and busy airports can all compromise travel safety. Pack emergency kits and adhere to seatbelt laws. Plan routes in advance and allow extra travel time to avoid rushing and mitigate risks on busy roads.

4 BEWARE OF ALLERGIES

Holiday meals often involve many foods that may contain allergens. Cross contamination, unclear labelling and lack of allergy-friendly options can lead to severe reactions. Communicate any allergy needs to hosts, provide safe food alternatives and carry necessary medications like antihistamines or EpiPens. Teaching children how to advocate for themselves and recognise dangerous foods also contributes to safer celebrations.

5 PREVENT THE SPREAD OF ILLNESS

Cold weather and seasonal socialising can increase the spread of viruses like flu and COVID-19. Crowded gatherings, schools out of session and frequent travel can lead to higher infection risks. Emphasise hygiene, encourage vaccination, disinfect surfaces and isolate symptomatic individuals. Communication with children about proper hygiene practices is essential to reduce the spread of illness.

6 STAY VIGILANT ON THE ROAD

Increased holiday traffic heightens the risk of accidents for both drivers and pedestrians. Distracted driving, pedestrian safety and inclement weather can complicate road safety. Encourage pedestrian safety practices, avoid distracted driving and never drive under the influence.

7 MAINTAIN SAFE DECORATIONS

Festive decorations such as Christmas lights and candles can pose electrical, fire and choking hazards if mishandled. Frayed wires, toppling Christmas trees, small ornaments and open flames can be difficult to control, especially in busy households with children. Inspect and maintain decorations, secure Christmas trees, place fragile or small items out of reach and ensure candles are never left unattended. Testing smoke alarms and using flame-retardant decorations can significantly reduce risks.

8 SET BOUNDARIES FOR GIFTS

Some toys and gadgets can present choking, sharp-edge or safety risks, particularly for young children. Ensuring that gifts meet safety standards and are age appropriate can be complex with so many options available. Inspect all toys carefully and ensure any tech devices have parental controls. Setting expectations around safe gift use and discarding packaging that poses a risk also helps to prevent accidents.

9 ADDRESS STRESS & FATIGUE

Holiday pressures can lead to burnout, which affects both physical and mental health. Overpacked schedules and a lack of downtime can cause stress and fatigue, leading to accidents or poor decision making. Incorporate rest, maintain regular routines and seek support to reduce stress. Encourage activities that promote relaxation to create a healthier, happier holiday experience for everyone.

10 DRINK RESPONSIBLY

Alcohol is commonly present at holiday events, raising concerns about safety and supervision. Excessive alcohol consumption can lead to accidents, impaired judgment and lack of supervision for children. Designate responsible adults, limit consumption and provide transportation alternatives for guests. Teaching moderation and modelling responsible behaviour in front of children ensures that celebrations remain positive and secure.

Meet Our Expert

James Whelan is a chartered health and safety consultant with 10 years of experience in promoting family and community safety. Specialising in risk assessment and preventative strategies, he has worked with educational institutions, public health agencies and community groups to deliver safety education and training.



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Source: See full reference list on guide page at: <https://nationalcollege.com/guides/safety-over-the-festive-season>