



Balcombe

Church of England
Primary School

"In all that we do we are guided by God"



DECEMBER NEWSLETTER

parents@balcombeschool.co.uk

*We do have learners with allergies, so please remember – **NO NUTS** in school.*

Dear Parents/Carers,

Only 8 more sleeps til Santa!

Somehow, we've almost at the end of term and what a term it's been! It is fair to say, it's been a bit of a roller coaster for all of our community.

The highlights of this term have definitely been seeing the Nativity, even with its daily reduction in cast and the wonderful experience of completing the sponsored walk. It was such a lovely thing to be part of and I know that many pupils and parents share my feelings about that. But the best thing has been seeing the children learning together in so many different ways. Looking at the books and talking to the children, it is clear that they are glad to be in school, working hard to make up for lost time and regaining those so important social skills that have been severely impacted by the disruption of the last 21 months or so. I feel that despite the tiredness creeping in and the recent rise in children being off, our pupils are beginning to blossom once again and school is starting to feel more "normal". I really hope that we are able to continue to build on this in January.

The challenges have been many – making decisions that others may not agree with, balancing the priorities of academic progress and emotional wellbeing, dealing with last minute advice or direction from the Local Authority and Department for Education, finding ways to keep classes running with staff members missing and at times, pushing already exhausted members of

the team to go just that little bit further. Once again, I end this year, being so thankful for my team and genuinely in awe of how much they have given to our school. On behalf of all parents, I thank them wholeheartedly and on behalf of them I thank all parents, for your continued support and encouragement during this term and the whole of 2021.

On some of the most difficult days, a kind word from a parent has meant so much. Of course the cards and gifts that you have given us all are very much appreciated too and will be enthusiastically read, eaten, drunk and bathed in over the next two weeks. Thank you from all of the staff.

We all hope that you all have a safe, calm and wonderful Christmas and that the new year brings more great times to Balcombe School.

With very best Christmas wishes,
Wendy Millbanks

Breakfast Club

I'm pleased to announce that the children attending breakfast club over the last couple of weeks have all been on their best behaviour and Mr Graham is happy to continue running it for us after Christmas. We are hoping to appoint an assistant this week.

We do have learners with allergies, so please remember – no nuts in school.

To book a place for your child/ren, please email breakfast@balcombeschool.co.uk and complete payment on Squid - £5 per session. When booking, you can reserve your child's place for the whole term or just book odd days, but please do give us 48 hours' notice so that we can ensure we have enough staff to supervise the children.

Swimming

It is still our intention that year 4 and 5 swim in the Spring term, but a final decision as to whether or not we go ahead with lessons, will be made at the beginning of the spring term.

Nature Ninjas

With the removal of so many trees from our new site, we have had to let the ground settle a little before starting work over there. We were not expecting the site to be quite so bare, but unfortunately instead of the three trees we initially thought were being removed, the estate had to remove 20 suffering with Ash die back. As you can imagine (and see if you wander down the lane) this has led to a very different "wood" being left behind and necessitates a change in our plans.

In the new year, we hope it will be dry enough to get the tractor in to begin levelling and marking out the area for development. With the heavy work done, we will then organise a weekend, volunteer session or two, with groups of children using the site as soon as it is appropriate and safe to do so.

Government Funding

Schools have been given some more additional funding to help minimise the impact of Covid on education for those children classed as

vulnerable. Being a small school, we have not received a huge amount of additional funding. During the spring term, the money we have been given will fund an additional teacher for a small period of time each week in some classes, to enable individual or small group interventions to take place to help our most vulnerable children close the gap between themselves and their peers

Cross Country

Earlier this term, we sent our team of intrepid, year 5 and 6 cross country runners to complete in the NEARS competition. I am delighted to say, that for the third year running, Balcombe Team came first overall. Each member of the team really pushed themselves to be the best that they could be and made some excellent placings. Some members of the team will go on to compete in the Mid Sussex trials next term and of course, we wish them good luck with that. Team members were – Harry, Seb, Rowan, Charlie, James, Eliza, Martha, Elizabeth, Anna and Bonnie.

Well done team.



Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year

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Covid Update – FOR ACTION & INFORMATION

You will be aware that the government have recently announced some changes to the procedures for adults who are close contacts of those with Covid. As yet, there have been no changes for schools, however it is likely that by January 4th, there may be some new guidelines; probably issued on January 3rd! Please click on the link below for a diagram on the change of rules, which may be useful over the coming weeks.

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1KoOLBkue63UxKA0N5eG2mL83xTTP2A9o/view>

Please keep an eye on your emails towards the end of the holidays, so that you are aware of any changes that we are making, or protocols to which we are returning for the start of the new term.

It would be very helpful if every pupil did a lateral flow test before returning to school at the start of term. Obviously, if your child is exhibiting any symptoms or generally feeling unwell, please organise a PCR before they return even if the LFT shows negative. As far as I know, every time an LFT has indicated positive this has been confirmed with a PCR, however in a few cases, the LFT has indicated a negative result, but the PCR has been positive.

From leaving school on Friday 17th December, if your child shows symptoms of the virus or a positive test result, please email parents@balcombeschool.co.uk. This email address will be checked daily until the **end of Sunday 19th December**. This is so that we can notify any affected close contacts to enable the appropriate action to be taken.

From Monday 20th December, please contact the NHS Track and Trace directly.

Symptoms of COVID 19

The most common symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19) are recent onset of:

- new continuous cough and/or
- high temperature and/or
- a loss of, or change in, normal sense of taste or smell (anosmia)

For most people, coronavirus (COVID-19) will be a mild illness. If anyone does develop symptoms, you can seek advice from NHS 111 at <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/check-if-you-have-coronavirus-symptoms/> or by phoning 111.

Dates for your diary

Tues 4th Jan 2022 –Spring Term starts

Mon 21st Feb – Fri 25th Feb – HALF TERM

Fri 8th April – Term finishes at normal time

Fundraising for School



[Link to Amazon Smile](#)

Amazon wish lists will remain open should you wish to purchase anything for your child's class.

Donate with
JustGiving™

Remember to join easyfundraising and Amazon Smile and you can collect free donations for us every time you buy something online. It won't cost you a penny extra, so please help us to raise funds. <https://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/balcombprimary>

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REMINDER

Pupil Premium

If you are on a low income making a FSM application can greatly benefit your child.

It is often thought that parents of children in KS1 who currently receive Universal Free School Meals do not need to make a Free School Meals Application for the school to receive Pupil Premium. **THIS IS NOT THE CASE.**

Please contact the office if you think you may be eligible for Pupil Premium funding. Any accepted applications for Free School Meals (whether or not your child takes the meal up) attract over £1300 per child per year which the school can use to greatly enhance the resources available for your child both within the classroom and for extra-curricular activities. We may be able to help with school uniform costs, trips and other extra-curricular activities like swimming and music tuition.

Making an application is easy and confidential.

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year