



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 and Carers,

We are nearly there! We are almost at the end of term and the year 2020.

Covid 19 has made this year hard for all of us. Everyone has suffered and at times, felt sad, worried, cross or frustrated. We have all had to adapt to a different way of life; for some no school or normal working for 5 months, for others no summer holiday and for most, the disappointment of not being able to see family and friends as much as we would like. There has, however, been a positive impact too. We've taken up new hobbies, learnt new skills, walked more, become more competent users of IT and shown kindness and compassion to strangers. It has warmed my heart to see just how much some people will do for others in times of need.

I would like to say a big "thank you" to our whole school community for helping us through the difficult times this year.

Thank you parents and carers, for taking the time to read the communications from school, adhering to new procedures and systems and trusting us to do our very best to keep your children safe.

Thank you children, for being enthusiastic to return to school in September, for settling into the new way of working in school without a fuss and for filling the building once again with your voices and laughter.

Thank you governors, for giving your time to help guide the leadership of the school through tough times and provide moral support when needed.

And a special "thank you" to my amazing staff, for doing whatever needed doing even if it wasn't in your job description, for working harder and longer to provide pupils and families with the support they needed, for being willing to change everything at the drop of a hat and mostly, for doing it all with a smile on your faces.

This year, we have all learnt a great deal, not least how to show the best of ourselves by caring for and helping others. It is in times of challenge that we show who we really are and here at Balcombe School, we really are a strong community.

We have been overwhelmed with foodbank donations, kind words, gifts for staff and a mass of Amazon orders arriving. We would like to say a HUGE thank to you all for your generosity and thoughtfulness.

We couldn't quite let the end of term pass without marking Christmas in some way. Unfortunately this year we have not been able to hold our usual Nativity, Christmas Fair, end of term assembly and all the other lovely events we usually hold, but as a small consolation here is a special Christmas message for you all.

LINK on main email

Wishing you all a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

Stay safe and look after each other,

Wendy Millbanks

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Covid Update

From lunchtime of Friday 18th 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 Monday 21st December**. This is so that we can help with the NHS Track and Trace with contact tracing.

From Tuesday 22nd December, please contact the NHS Track and Trace directly.

Please keep an eye on your emails over the holiday. If we have a confirmed case, where the child may have passed on the virus to others in the last few days of term, we will email you to let you know and identify which children will need to self-isolate.

If your child develops symptoms before returning to school in January and needs to isolate during the start of term, please let us know by phone on the first day back – **Tuesday 5th January**.

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.

How to stop COVID-19 spreading

There are things you can do to help reduce the risk of you and anyone you live with getting ill with COVID-19.

- wash your hands with soap and water often – do this for at least 20 seconds

- use hand sanitiser gel if soap and water are not available
- wash your hands as soon as you get home
- cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or your sleeve (not your hands) when you cough or sneeze
- put used tissues in the bin immediately and wash your hands afterwards

Further information is available at <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/>

School Shoes

If you are in a position to buy school shoes for your child to wear from January, then please do so. If however, you are having to prioritise your spending, then your child may continue to wear trainers for the time being. Other uniform should be worn as normal and children should continue to wear **School** PE kit on PE days. It is also important that pupils have wellington boots in school, so that when we are able to get back on to the field, they have the appropriate footwear.

Stationery for Pencil Cases



The children in Forest Class upwards will be bringing home their pencil cases over the holidays, please can you check them and replace any missing items ready for the Spring Term.

The pencil case **should** have in it:
Fountain pen (if a pen person – Parker Vector or similar)
Handwriting pen
Pencil
Rubber
Ruler
Pencil sharpener
Glue stick

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Whiteboard pens

And also **could** have:

A green pen for editing

Coloured pencils

Felt tip pens

Highlighter pens

Scissors

Blue ink cartridges (if a pen person)

Census Day – 21st January 2021

The school receives funding from the government to pay for Universal free school meals for all KS1 children (Reception, Year 1 and Year 2). This funding is calculated on how many children eat a hot lunch on census days twice a year. Census day this term is **Thursday 21st January**. Please could you encourage your child to eat a hot meal on this day to maximize our funding. If numbers are low on census day we do have to cover any shortfall from an already stretched school budget. **You do not need to book this if your child is in KS1.**

Prayer Group

As you may be aware, a group of people associated with the school, (parents, governors, members of the local community) meet every second Wednesday of the month to pray for the staff and pupils. The next prayer meeting will be at 10 am on Wednesday 13th January and anyone wishing to join will be most welcome. Hopefully it will be in the church but that will depend on government guidance. If it is in the church, please just turn up. If however, it's on zoom please contact James Hodgson via email on hodgson.a.james@btinternet.com so that he can arrange for you to be included.

The staff and pupils are very appreciative of your prayers and are grateful to those who are freely giving their time to support the school.

Dates for your diary

2021

Mon 4th Jan – INSET DAY, school closed to pupils

Tues 5th Jan – School open for Spring Term

Mon 11th Jan – Clubs will resume – details to follow in first week of Spring Term

Thurs 21st Jan – CENSUS day

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/balc-ombeprimary>

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**

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CASE.

Please read the linked information letter which explains that any accepted applications for Free School Meals (whether or not your child takes the meal up) attract £1320 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.

[LINK](#) to pupil premium letter