

North Park Primary School

'Achieving and growing, together in friendship.'



Bessemer Green,
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Co. Durham
DL16 6PP

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December Newsletter

Every year at this time the staff nudge me from my office to join parties, watch all the wonderful performances and to wish all of you a Happy Christmas when you join us in school. It is always a huge pleasure to watch the events in school. This year, when everyone has had their lives turned upside down by the Covid pandemic, as some of our community struggle with lockdown, loneliness, concerns about employment, trying to make ends meet and trying to organise a Christmas with the worry of keeping families safe, it has been even more poignant and special for me to see all the children's efforts and enthusiasm (and I confess they brought a tear to my eye!). Although performances etc. have moved online, my sentiments are exactly the same – I am immensely proud to be headteacher at North Park and your delightful children have done you proud yet again!

Firstly, I must thank the whole staff team for their tireless dedication and hard work across this whole term in dealing with all that this extraordinary year has thrown at us, and for their determination that we keep things as normal as possible for the children – parties, penguins, crafts, carols, movies, jumpers, naughty elves galore! The last couple of weeks in school have been lovely – what a great way to end our term! Although we are all tired, we are also very much filled with festive fun!

I am pleased to report we have not had to close any class bubbles yet – hard to believe when we think back to September and how anxious we have all felt at times. A closure may yet happen, but please be assured we will do all we can to support the children and families. I must also thank you all for being vigilant in the community and helping us to get this far.

In addition, I extend my thanks to all the community groups who have supported us and provided various funds/resources for our families - a selection of hampers to be raffled, gifts for children, supports for presents, etc. Thank you, Asda, Greggs, St Andrew's Church community, Cash for Kids Mission Christmas, NEU, to name but a few. This amazing support for school makes such a difference for our community.

Your donations to Butterwick Hospice (Christmas Cuddly Toys), Save the Children (Christmas Jumper Day) and for the People's Kitchen (in lieu of Christmas Cards) has also made a difference to others – thank you so much for your kindness:

- People's Kitchen – together we raised £126 for meals for homeless (25 meals)
- Save the Children – your donations raised £64.50
- Butterwick Hospice – your purchases raised £233

Anyone wishing to enjoy the St Andrew's Church Nativity this year, on Christmas Eve, please pre-books by calling Pamela Watson on 07788 863512

- 'The Mystery of the New Noisy Neighbour': family friendly retelling of the Christmas story, Christmas Eve 4pm at St. Andrew's. Come dressed in nativity costumes (optional!),

I hope you are all looking forward to a much improved 2021, with the promise a vaccine brings for the future. As ever, we will need to continue to be vigilant upon our return in January. Please remember:

- It is vitally important NOT to send your child to school if they, or members of their household have any coronavirus symptoms -
 - **a new, continuous cough**
 - **a high temperature**
 - **a loss of, or change in, your normal sense of taste or smell (anosmia)**
- If this does happen **please isolate and do not go out.**
- Please inform us as soon as possible and organise a test (we can help with this). Let us know the outcome of the result, and we will contact the DFE, LA and PHE for advice. If someone in a group does test positive, then we will take the necessary steps, following that advice, and will inform parents immediately about the actions needed.



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- If the test is negative, children can come back to school, if they are well enough to do so.
- Current guidance states If a member of your household has symptoms, then please follow the isolation guidance until that person has a test – a positive test will mean the household members need to isolate for 10 days. (The government have now announced that the period of self-isolation required after coming into contact with someone who has tested positive for Covid 19 is reducing from 14 days to 10 days with effect from Monday 14 December.)
- Please remember to maintain a suitable distance when dropping off and collecting children and to encourage older children to go straight home if they are not collected, to ensure we keep the environment around school as safe as we can.

Information from Durham LA - Reporting symptoms after the school closes for Christmas Holidays

- School closes on December 18th. If your child develops symptoms of coronavirus you must book a test.
- If your child develops symptoms **up to and including December 20th** which result in a positive test up to December 24th, please inform school via text message or email (NOT Class Dojo). Please include the name of your child, their class and the date that their symptoms started, as well as your own contact details.
- If your child develops coronavirus symptoms from **Monday 21st December** onwards, they must be tested and, if positive, follow the advice of Test and Trace. **You do not need to inform the school of any symptoms which occur after this date.**
Contact tracing during the Christmas break
- Please be aware that the school, following the guidance of the Department for Education and Public Health, will do the following for 6 days after the end of term:
 - Collect information from staff and pupils with positive tests and families of symptomatic pupils
 - Advise families of close contact with confirmed Covid cases, and inform them of self-isolation requirements

Please note, Class Dojo will **not** be routinely checked over the holiday – messages to school should be sent to the email or text messaging service. By keeping school informed if your child develops symptoms or has a test, we are able to continue to support PHE and to adapt plans in school for the return in January, if needed.

Attendance for the year to date is 95% - incredible given the national situation. Your child's certificate is included with this newsletter (up until 11 Dec) – any absence due to isolation does not count as part of the figures (and is coded as x). Well done to everyone who has a green certificate – 97% and above. Yellow certificates are for attendance between 90-96.9%. Red certificates are for any attendance below 90% - this means that absence is classed as persistent absenteeism – and we will require medical evidence for any absence; Durham County Council also monitors this attendance too. Well done to all the children who received an award for 100% attendance this term.

Finally, I sincerely hope you all enjoy a wonderful Christmas with your families, and a happy and prosperous New Year. I look forward to seeing you in 2021!

Mrs Monk

DIARY DATES – Spring Term

January 2021

- 4 School reopens
- 5 Captain Chemistry – Year 6 Circulatory System workshop
- 6&7 Chef Visit
- 21 School photographs – individuals ONLY – no family groups possible this year

February

- 11 School closes for staff training (12th) and half term week
- 22 School reopens

March

- 26 School closes for end of term



SCHOOL MEMBER

