



LANCHESTER E.P. (Cont.) PRIMARY SCHOOL



Friday 10th December 2021

Dear Parents/Carers,

I find it hard to believe that I am writing the final letter of the term and it has, yet again, been a very busy and rather different term. As each term begins, I do feel some trepidation, wondering what rules and guidelines might change and be introduced. However, I am pleased to say that this term has been relatively uneventful compared to the previous four! Let's hope it stays that way for as long as possible!

School has been more or less back to normal for the children – I think it is yourselves as parents who have missed out. I long for the day when we can welcome you back into school for the many and varied events we used to hold. I do hope we are not too far away from being able to open our doors to you again.

This week has been very special and I do hope your children have told you all about it. Our Winter Wonderland was as magical as ever and another huge success. To see the children's faces as they boarded the little train and were transported into the Winter Wonderland, seeing Santa and making their s'mores made all the hard work so worth it. We really do have the best job in the world at times!

We really felt for our Year 1 children though when we made the decision to postpone their visit due to the awful weather conditions on Tuesday afternoon. Hot chocolate and a visit from Santa and The Grinch, along with Christmas songs from the Christmas Cracker did help them though and then they thoroughly enjoyed their re-arranged visit on Thursday when they had perfect conditions.

Once more, I would just like to thank the staff for their amazing ideas and hard work in creating all the decorations for the woodland as well as their great spirit, dedication and willingness to be out in the rain and cold to entertain the children. They are a fabulous team who stop at nothing to ensure that our children have the best possible school experience. I would also like to thank Mrs Chambers' husband who came in last Friday morning after working nightshift to make our hot chocolate bar due to last minute issues. Our team work extends to our families as well!

Monday 13th December 2021 – Woodwind Assembly

We are really looking forward to hearing our wonderful woodwind instrumentalists in assembly on Monday morning. We have a number of new starters who have all done exceptionally well this term and are going to share their talents with us in school on Monday morning. Don't forget your instruments!

Monday 13th December 2021 – Christmas Jumper Day

We are asking all the children to come to school dressed festively on Monday. This can be in a Christmas jumper, or just some tinsel in their hair or round their waists, a Christmas bobble or some Christmas socks. Some of the money raised on Monday for the Christmas fair, will be donated to charity for our Christmas Jumper appeal.

Monday 13th December 2021 - Christmas Fair

We are holding our Christmas Fair on Monday afternoon for all children from Reception to Year 6. (Nursery are holding little activities throughout the week rather than all on one afternoon). They will all take part in different games such as Name the Teddy, Guess the Number of Sweets, Treasure Hunt as well as a Tombola. They will also have the opportunity to buy back their enterprise item that they have made this week.

We will be operating the fair in the same way as last year. We are asking that the children bring in some money (or pay on ParentPay) and are suggesting anything between £1 and £5. Obviously, all proceeds go directly back to the children and we use it on all those extra treats they enjoy. I am sure they will thoroughly enjoy their afternoon of fun too!

Tuesday 14th December 2021 – New College Performance

Students from New College Performing Arts Course will be in school on Tuesday morning to perform 'A Christmas Carol' to our KS2 children. This is always a superb experience for our children as their students are so talented and their shows are always just slightly different!

Tuesday 14th December 2021 – Year 1 and Year 3 Christmas Parties

Year 1 and Year 3 will be getting our party season off to a great start! We are asking all children to come to school dressed in their party clothes for the whole day. There is no need for you to provide anything for the children – all party food will be organised by ourselves.

Tuesday 14th December 2021 – Matilda Cancelled

Unfortunately, we have received an email to inform us that the performance of Matilda for Year 6 at Consett Academy has been postponed due to the new Covid guidelines. They hope that it will take place in February.

Wednesday 15th December 2021 – Choir Concert

We are thrilled that our choir will be able to perform to us in assembly on Wednesday morning. They have worked so hard with Mrs Knighton and sound beautiful so it will be a real treat to hear them in person on Wednesday morning.

Wednesday 15th December 2021 – Reception at Lynwood House

Some of our Reception children are going to Lynwood House to sing Christmas songs to the residents outside the home. We did this last year and the residents were so appreciative and loved seeing and listening to the children. The children have also made some Christmas Cards for the residents while Year 4 have also made some Messages of Hope for them too. Advent this year has all been about messages of kindness and the children have thoroughly enjoyed this act of kindness.

Wednesday 15th December 2021 – Christmas Dinner

We will all be celebrating Christmas with our annual Christmas Dinner on Wednesday lunchtime. Unfortunately, if your child does not usually stay for school dinners and you have not booked them their Christmas dinner, then they will not be able to have one. However, all children join in with Christmas crackers and a good old sing-song in the dinner hall which will really get them all into the spirit of Christmas – if they aren't already!

Wednesday 15th December 2021 – Nursery, Year 2 and Year 4 Christmas Parties

Nursery, Year 2 and Year 4 will continue with the party season on Wednesday! We are asking all children to come to school dressed in their party clothes for the whole day. There is no need for you to provide anything for the children – all party food will be organised by ourselves.

Thursday 16th December 2021 – Theatre Visit for EYFS and Year 1

We are really looking forward to the performance of The Greediest Elf for our youngest children in school on Thursday morning. We know that the children will thoroughly enjoy this – it certainly will be a real treat for them all!

Thursday 16th December 2021 – Reception, Year 5 and Year 6 Christmas Parties

Reception, Year 5 and Year 6 will bring the party season to a close on Thursday! We are asking all children to come to school dressed in their party clothes for the whole day. There is no need for you to provide anything for the children – all party food will be organised by ourselves.

Friday 17th December 2021 – Christingle and Carol Service

Year 2 – Year 6 will be walking to All Saints' Church on Friday morning for a special Christingle and Carol Service. We hope to be able to record this for parents so you too can enjoy this from the comfort of your own homes. We hope the children will leave school with the real Christmas message at the forefront of their minds.

After School Clubs

Please remember that there are no more after school clubs this term. Wrap Around Care is still operating as usual through to the end of term.

Friends Of the School Christmas Shop

All of the children should now have received their gifts from the Christmas Shop. If they haven't, please contact Michelle Atkinson via the Parents' Facebook page or contact the School Office and we can pass the message on. If you could do this by Monday, then we can make sure there is plenty of time to get the gifts to them. Likewise, if you have already contacted us about it but your presents have now arrived, please let us know so we aren't looking for things that have already been delivered.

The Friends have worked tirelessly in order to make this shop happen and I know how much you all appreciate their efforts. Choosing, purchasing, storing, wrapping and sorting the gifts is no easy task never mind co-ordinating all the money, spreadsheets and liaising with school. I would like to thank them all on behalf of yourselves for the wonderful job they have done. Thank you!

Henry Dancer Days

Can you help? Jane Nattrass from Henry Dancer Days will be doing the annual Christmas Santa run to the Great North Children's Hospital. If you can spare a new toy for a child with cancer, please drop it off at Hanley & Sons family butcher in Lanchester by 17th December or donate by text including the amount (i.e. HDDAYS5 to donate £5) to 70085. Thank you!

Christmas Raffle

Raffle tickets will still be on sale until Tuesday 14th December and the raffle will be drawn on Wednesday 15th December. We have some wonderful prizes including:

- £25 Pavilion Cantonese Restaurant Gift Voucher
- 2 x Children's Christmas Eve Box Hamper
- A Chocolate & Wine Hamper
- A Family Games Night Hamper
- A Pamper Hamper
- 10 x bottles of Champagne/Prosecco with chocolates
- 9 x Pairs of Bottles of Wine with Chocolates
- Various Other Chocolate, Biscuits, Toiletries & Toys
- A Gin Lovers Gift set
- 6 x mini alcohol gift sets with Chocolates
- A Vodka Lovers Gift set
- Southern Comfort with Chocolates
- A Warehouse Handbag
- A Ted Baker Set

Visit of Richard Holden (MP)

We welcomed Richard Holden to our school on Thursday afternoon, primarily to see first-hand the parking issues in the village. However, the school council took him into the Winter Wonderland first, taking him on the train, making a s'mores and enjoying a hot chocolate before they enjoyed a question and answer session in the trees.

He then went onto the road outside to see the parking issues and he agrees that it was fairly chaotic out there – much the same as usual. We saw 3 cars parked on double yellow lines, 3 cars parked on the white 'keep clear' lines on the bend and numerous cars parked on the grass verges near Fenhall Park. In addition to that, we also saw cars drive at quite a speed up the road and mount the kerb. This was all on a day when somebody drove into the back of a member of staff who was indicating to move in and then drove off without staying to check how they were.

Mr Holden did say that he was quite appalled at what he saw and will do whatever he can to support our community. I shall look forward to hearing from him in future with some potential solutions!

Pupil Progress Reports

Next week, your child will bring home a Progress Report which is a snapshot of their current attainment and attitude to learning. In the end of year questionnaires in the summer, a number of parents commented that they wanted more regular updates of how their child was progressing during the year. We hold formal parents' evenings 3 times per year and decided that it was appropriate to send pupil progress reports home at the end of the alternating half terms. This means that we will now hold parents' evenings in Autumn 1, Spring 1 and Summer 1 and you will receive the pupil progress reports in Autumn 2 and Spring 2 and the full end of year report in Summer 2. This means that you are receiving formal information on your child's attainment and progress every half term.

The reports will be given to children in an envelope to bring home next week. In addition to the Pupil Progress Report there will also be: Attendance Certificate, Accelerated Reader Parent Report and their Additional Support Plan (if they have one). We hope you find these useful. They also have some information on about how you can help to support your child with their learning at home. If you have any questions at all about these, please contact your child's class teacher and they will be able to explain them in more detail.

Attendance Certificates

You will all receive your child's latest attendance information with their progress reports next week. It is important that you understand that the DfE (Department of Education) have changed how schools have to mark non-attendance due to COVID. Whilst children are waiting for a PCR result, the absence is marked as an X, which does not have an impact on attendance. However, once a case of COVID has been confirmed, then we have to change the code to an I. This then does have an impact on attendance percentages. However, we can see on the register in school, when an illness is for COVID reasons and we would never penalise anyone whose child is absent for genuine reasons. The attendance certificate is just showing you your child's attendance. Whilst we understand there are many genuine reasons for your child to be absent from school, we do also have a duty to monitor every child's school attendance and to get in touch with parents when we feel their attendance is a cause for concern. We are not judging anyone - we are just doing our job - as is the Attendance Officer if she gets in touch with you as parents.

Early Years News

Nursery, Reception and Year 1 are looking forward to meeting the Greediest Christmas Elf next Thursday morning at 9am. Can Nursery parents please note that the doors will be open from **8:30am** on Thursday 16th to allow children to be in and settled in good time. Please try to have your child in Nursery by 8:45am at the latest to make sure they do not miss the show.

Reception children will be receiving a short progress report next week via Evidence Me. We will highlight some of the children's strengths and some areas we will be working on over the next half term. We will also include some ideas for how you might support your child at home. If you have any questions about your child's progress report, please email your child's teacher. We do try to keep you up to date with your child's achievements via Evidence Me, so please let us know if you are having any issues seeing the notes we put on the system.

Reverse Advent Calendar

Please don't forget that we are collecting food items so that we can make up some hampers for some of our needy families this year. Please send any items into school by Monday 13th December so we can make up the hampers and get them delivered. The food items needed for the hampers have been listed on previous letters but anything would be gratefully received. Please bring in any of the above items and place in the box in the Main Entrance, or send them in with your children.

In addition to this, the staff and governors will also be making up their own hampers to deliver to needy families in the village. If you know of any family who would appreciate one of these hampers, please let me know. It can be done confidentially by emailing me at: j.davis@lanchesterep.net. We would also like to play our small part to help our local community.

Recordings of Songs, Radio Broadcast and Carol Service

All recordings will be uploaded to the website on the final day of term so that you can listen to them at your leisure over the Christmas holidays.

Holiday Club – Monday 20th – Wednesday 22nd

Don't forget Mr Graham and LJG Coaching will be running his holiday club in school on Monday 20th – Wednesday 22nd December for children aged between 4 – 11 years. If you would like to book, please email: lewisgraham91@hotmail.co.uk or fill in this online booking form.

Flu Nasal Spray

I do apologise but the NHS have not turned up today to carry out the flu nasal sprays today. We are trying to get in touch with them to find out what has happened and as soon as we have any answers, we will get in touch with you.

Rotakids

Your generosity for the Rotakids has, once again, been overwhelming. Thank you all so much. They have raised over £270 and Mrs Startup will be taking some of the Rotakids shopping next week to choose gifts to donate to the Salvation Army for children who will have nothing this Christmas.

Positive Thinking

***It's not what's under the tree that matters.
It is who is gathered around it.***

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you all for your unfailing positivity and support during this term. I would also like to wish you all a very Merry Christmas and a Peaceful New Year on behalf of all the staff and governors. Make the most of being with your loved ones this year and enjoy every single special, family moment.

School re-opens on Wednesday 5th January 2022. We shall look forward to seeing you all in the New Year!

As usual, if you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact either myself or the school office. We are here to help you all!

Yours sincerely,

Jane Davis

Mrs Jane Davis
Head Teacher

New Guidelines for Covid-19

We appreciate that you will already be aware that some national measures have been reintroduced in response to the emergence of a new COVID-19 variant, which is called Omicron. All individuals who have been identified as a close contact of a suspected or confirmed case of the Omicron variant of COVID-19, irrespective of vaccination status and age, will be contacted directly and required to self-isolate immediately and asked to book a PCR test.

There are still high numbers of children and young people in County Durham testing positive for COVID-19 and the highest case rates are in school age children. This is leading to spread of COVID-19 within families and into older age groups.

We have received recommendations from the Government and Durham County Council's Public Health team and are introducing the following measures to reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission in school:

- The use of face coverings in communal areas for all adults – any parents visiting school should also wear a face covering if entering the school building too.
- PCR testing for all adults and pupils if they are a close contact of a positive case in their household. We are also suggesting Daily Lateral Flow Testing at home for 7 days for any adult or pupil in Key Stage 2 (Year 3) or above who is a household contact of a positive case. The testing of primary age pupils is at parental discretion however and is not compulsory. Testing should start from the day the household member has symptoms or if they don't have symptoms, from when they tested positive.
- Additional attention will be given to ventilation, cleaning and hand hygiene in school too.

LFD Testing advice

We would recommend you have a supply of LFD testing kits at home in the event you are requested to use them. You can order home testing kits to be delivered to your home here: www.gov.uk/order-coronavirus-rapid-lateral-flow-tests, or you can collect LFD kits at Community Collect sites across the County. To find your nearest collection point please enter your post code here: maps.test-and-trace.nhs.uk

If you pick up tests from a pharmacy, you may be asked for a 'collect code' this helps the NHS match your details to the tests. To get a 'collect code' please visit: test-for-coronavirus.service.gov.uk/collect-lateral-flow-kits. Please register the result of your home test at www.gov.uk/report-covid19-result

What to do if your child develops symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19) or tests positive for COVID-19

The most common symptoms of 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)

If your child does develop symptoms, they should get a PCR test and remain at home at least until the result is known. Book a free PCR test at: www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test. If positive, your child should isolate for 10 full days after their symptoms appeared. If you are concerned about your child's symptoms, you can seek advice from NHS 111 at 111.nhs.uk/ or by phoning 111.

If your child has a positive test result but does not have symptoms they should also stay at home and self-isolate for 10 full days from the date the positive test was taken. This isolation period will be extended if they go on to develop symptoms by counting 10 full days from the day following their symptom onset.

Help, support, and further information

To help you comply with the requirement to self-isolate, the County Durham Together Community Hub can provide access to essential supplies, financial support and emotional support as well as other services. Please visit: www.durham.gov.uk/covid19help or call the Community Hub on 03000 260260 for further details. There is also support available the coronavirus section via: durhamlocate.org.uk