



Tuesday 15<sup>th</sup> December 2020



Dear Parents / Carers

We are rapidly approaching the end of the autumn term...just 3 days to go of what has been an unprecedented time both nationally and at Eastlea. This letter is to update you on how things stand at the current time at Eastlea, provide feedback on some of the many events which have been happening in recent weeks and to **THANK YOU** once again for your generosity and support, especially this half term.

### **Eastlea Christmas events**

Our aim this half term has been to ensure that as many of the varied Eastlea Christmas activities as possible went ahead, even if they had to be modified to make them 'Covid safe'. Although some things have looked different this year we feel that we have succeeded in doing this. There are of course still a few events to come – the KS2 class parties (tomorrow), our Christmas Golden Day (Thursday) and our socially distanced reading of the Christmas story/virtual carol singing on the last day of term!

In case you have missed some of our news shared on Facebook and via Seesaw/Tapestry...

- the video we made to show our '**Eastlea Merry Christmas**' message as part of the Remotely Christmas live stream event last Friday can be seen via our school Facebook page. It has received 1000 views so far!!
- our '**Straw and Order**' whole school Christmas production can also now be viewed on YouTube. A protected URL access code will be shared with parents/carers via Seesaw/Tapestry today. Miss Betham has worked incredibly hard to put this together – each class 'bubble' had a song/scene to perform which was rehearsed in classrooms and then performed, one class at a time, in the hall on our 'stage zone'. Not an easy task, I'm sure you will agree, but we managed to involve each class and then performed the last song altogether but socially distanced on the yard in our festive jumpers!!
- plus, advance notice that a recording will be shown of a group of our Year 5 pupils doing a reading for the Covid compliant "**Drive In**" Cramlington Town Carol Service on Christmas Eve @ 6pm in the North Car Park adjoining the Vue Cinema

### **Charity and Fundraising Support**

We have had a number of events this half term where we have asked for your financial support and have been amazed by the generosity shown for each and every one of them...**THANK YOU!**

- **Poppy Appeal** – back in November, we started the half term by supporting the Royal British Legion appeal by selling poppies and inviting children to colour in poppy pictures to display at home and in school. We had a letter last week thanking us for the **£85** we had raised!
- **Children In Need** – our traditional 'Pennies for Pudsey' fundraising was modified to be class based this year. We raised an astounding **£540.90** for this national charity – our best ever total!
- **Virtual Christmas Fair** – on Friday 4<sup>th</sup> December, the 'Friends of Eastlea' coordinated a scaled back 'virtual' fair which focused on the raffle and the sale of children's craft bags plus some homemade jars of jam. Once again we were blown away by the response – money seems to keep coming in and we now have what we think is a final total of **£1272.15**.
- **Santa Cancer Run** – due to the cancellation of the usual Children's Cancer Run event in May, we were asked to consider a different school based event. This took place last Tuesday and was incredibly well supported by 49 children from Year 4/Year 5/ Year 6 each running in their class 'bubbles'. Donations for the NECCR charity from those taking part amounted to **£230** – amazing!
- **Christmas Jumper Day** – last Friday we supported this national event and it was combined with the work of Leading Link/Northumberland Council who created a 'Remotely Christmas' themed package of live stream events which we thoroughly enjoyed. Voluntary charity contributions for the Save the Children Fund totalled **£215** – wow!

## End of term awards

- **Reading** – Our 'Rainbow' themed reading challenge which started at the end of September has proved to be immensely popular and the vast majority of children from across the school have got into extremely good reading routines each week. The first Bronze awards were presented on 4<sup>th</sup> December and so far we have been able to present certificates/bronze award bookmarks and rainbow pencils to **162** children. These pupils are already starting on their silver bookmark! If your child hasn't yet received the bronze award, it is not too late! Encourage them to keep reading and more certificates will be awarded in the New Year! **Reading in the Christmas holiday counts as one sticker on their 'Rainbow' bookmarks!**
- **Writing** – on 2<sup>nd</sup> December, the writing success of pupils from across the school was recognised. A child from each class was presented with a 'Star Writer' certificate and a letter was sent to parents outlining their achievements – well done!
- **Maths** – on 7<sup>th</sup> December, a range of maths awards were presented. One child from each class was chosen who had shown real enthusiasm, improvement and determination in class based maths lessons and they each received a letter and certificate. Other certificates were awarded for pupils in Year 2, Year 3, Year 4, Year 5 and Year 6 for the progress they had shown in Times Tables Rockstars and their speed of recall of their times tables. Congratulations to all our winners!

## Early Years updates

1. We have been asked by county to remind parents of Nursery pupils who will transfer to Reception next year that the **closing date for Reception school admissions is 15<sup>th</sup> January 2021**. Any children born between 01/09/2016 and 31/08/2017 need to apply for entry to Reception 2021. Parents need to make an application for their child to join Eastlea Reception class in September, even if they already attend our Nursery. Information, Handbooks and application forms are available online at: [www.northumberland.gov.uk/primaryadmissions](http://www.northumberland.gov.uk/primaryadmissions)
2. We have some new starters who are joining our Nursery next term – and will welcome them for afternoon sessions. They will be arriving at 12.20pm and will stay until 3.20pm unless parents have a child to collect at 3pm in which case they will leave at the same time to make things easier.
3. Our Nursery continues to be very popular, so I would advise that if you or someone you know has a pre-school age child and they would like a place at our Eastlea Nursery then it is best to apply as soon as possible!

## Year 2, Year 3, Year 4 iPad scheme

Thank you to the large numbers of parents from Y2/Y3/Y4 who have responded to the letter about the launch of a possible iPad scheme. For anyone who hasn't yet replied, can we ask that you do so by Friday so Miss Betham can plan our next steps appropriately and see if the scheme is viable in each class.

## HUGGG 'Free School Meal' vouchers for eligible families

By the time you read this newsletter I hope to have placed the order for the grocery vouchers which can be exchanged for food at local supermarkets. This will mean that those children eligible for benefit based free school meals will be have a link emailed to them which they can activate to generate a gift card for groceries over the Christmas holidays. If anyone has any questions about this before the end of term, then please contact me directly in school.

## Christmas Golden Day – Thursday 17<sup>th</sup> December

As I am sure you are aware, everyone who has earned the right to take part in Golden Day is looking forward to Thursday! 'Flash' a magical entertainer will perform for our Nursery pupils in the morning, while Reception class are out in the local park for an Eastlea Christmas treasure hunt and Year 6 have a go at festive 'orienteering'! The other classes will be based in and around the school grounds and everyone will be enjoying a McDonalds take away meal delivered to their classrooms!

Please remember that the day is a **festive non-uniform day (no charge)** – a second chance to wear their Christmas jumpers, Santa hats etc. Appropriate footwear, coats and gloves/scarves will also be needed as breaks/lunchtime and some events are outside.

## End of term – Friday 18<sup>th</sup> December

You may have heard on the news that there was some discussion about schools breaking up a day or more early for the Christmas holidays. **Eastlea will NOT be doing this!** To change the term dates at only a week's notice did not seem a sensible thing to do and would have caused difficulties for families which we felt were not fair. As a result we will be keeping to our previously planned arrangements of being in school all week – but with our usual 'early finish' on Friday... **1.45pm for Reception/Y1/Y2 /all day Nursery pupils or 2pm for Y3/4/Y5/Y6** [with the usual amendments made for families with siblings in multiple classes].

### **COVID update**

Everyone has worked incredibly hard to keep everyone at Eastlea safe and been sensible and cautious with the Covid situation. For that we are very grateful – thank you! We still know that a positive case affecting children/staff could happen at any time and are constantly on the alert to make sure we are following all the correct procedures.

Over Christmas it is important that we keep following the guidelines in order to keep ourselves and our community safe. I am including overleaf a letter from Northumberland County Council, sent to all schools, which recognises the hard work that has been done so far but acknowledges the precautions we all still need to take.

So, although we will all be having a 'break' over Christmas and will not be in school, we cannot forget about the Covid threat. **With that in mind, I need to ask that you inform us via email/Seesaw/Tapestry/Facebook if your child(ren) develop Covid symptoms and have to seek a test over the holiday. A positive test outcome could impact on other families/staff and depending on the timing of the onset of symptoms and the positive test result it may mean that we have to contact pupils/staff to inform them of the need to self-isolate during some of the holiday period.** We hope that this does not have to happen, but wanted to make you aware that it could.

### **Looking ahead to next term**

We clearly do not know yet, what level of restrictions we will be facing when we return to school in January. As we have learned, things can change at a moment's notice. However, it does seem clear that, unless the guidance changes, the systems we have in place at Eastlea will be continuing in the way that we have been doing so successfully in the autumn term.

- The staggered start/finish times, socially distant waiting areas and protocols to limit the number of people on site and visitors in school will continue
- We will also continue to ask that **masks or face coverings** are worn by those on the school site for school drop off/collection of pupils to help keep everyone safe
- Thankfully, it looks very likely that we will be able to **restart our Eastlea lunchtime/after school clubs** again in the spring term. Details of what each year group will have on offer will be shared as soon as we come back.
- We will be considering restarting our **Owlets pre-school toddler group** in a Covid secure reduced format at some point during January
- We will also be looking at other class/school activities which normally take place in the spring term (e.g. Year 4 swimming lessons) to see what is possible and/or available for us to complete safely.

### **And finally...Happy Christmas**

I would like to wish everyone a very 'Merry Christmas'. Have a happy holiday and we will see you all again on **Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> January 2021** when we reopen for pupils for the spring term! (Monday 4<sup>th</sup> January is a staff training day)

Yours sincerely, **Miss E Beeston**





# Northumberland

## County Council

**Your ref:**

**Our ref:** CMcE/DA

**Enquiries to:** Cath McEvoy-Carr

**Email:** [Cath.McEvoy-Carr@northumberland.gov.uk](mailto:Cath.McEvoy-Carr@northumberland.gov.uk)

**Tel direct:** (01670) 624034

**Date:** 10<sup>th</sup> December 2020

Dear Parents and Carers

As we head into the festive break, I wanted to take the opportunity to write to you to highlight all you have done this year to support your children, schools and our communities.

It has been a challenging time for all of us, and when we look back to where we were ten months ago it is hard to believe what we have all had to deal with.

You have had to become teachers yourselves and adapted your lives to help the fight against the pandemic. You have supported those in our schools; headteachers, teachers and support staff to be able to do their jobs – to care for and teach your children.

I hope you agree that as we continue to experience the effects of the pandemic, the learning, routine and social interaction your children get from attending school is vitally important for their health, social, mental and physical wellbeing.

All of our schools have worked tirelessly to ensure your children are kept safe, and my thanks is also extended to them at this time.

I am sure you are all looking forward to enjoying the Christmas break with your children and families in line with new government guidance, but it is important to remember that we are not out of the woods yet, and we must continue to do all we can to protect ourselves and others from the virus.

We would all like to forget for just a moment what we are dealing with, but by continuing to follow government guidance, we will hopefully begin to see a light at the end of the tunnel as we head into the new year.

I want to thank you for continuing to support your schools as you have, by following the measures they have put in place to protect you, your children and staff.

Thank you,

Wishing you a Merry Christmas.

Yours sincerely

Cath McEvoy-Carr

Executive Director of Adult Social Care and Children's Services



Wellbeing and Community Health Services Group  
County Hall, Morpeth, Northumberland, NE61 2EF  
T: 0345 600 8400 E: [contactcentre@northumberland.gov.uk](mailto:contactcentre@northumberland.gov.uk)  
[www.northumberland.gov.uk](http://www.northumberland.gov.uk)

