



Dear Parents / Carers

On Thursday we 'break up' for Christmas after what has been a long eight-week half term. This letter provides information for the remaining days of this week as well an update on some of the many events which have happened in recent months.

Eastlea Christmas activities

We are continuing to enjoy a very successful Eastlea Christmas with a welcome return to events involving families and visitors coming into school. **THANK YOU** for your tremendous support with everything we have arranged and for attending events in such large numbers:

- our **Nursery and Reception Christmas craft family workshops** were extremely well attended and seemed to be very well received
- the **Festive Meal prepared and served by Year 6** was also well received by parents/governors who were able to attend. On that afternoon the children raised **£86** for their Enterprise funds.
- the response to our **Christmas Fair** was quite simply phenomenal with **£2106** raised towards our Golden Day funds. *(And another £72.67 was added to this total from the donations for refreshments last week at the performances – thank you!)*
- last week the audiences for the **singing/violin club concert** and the five key stage **Christmas productions** were treated to some great performances in the school hall (as were the family members who came to the Rocksteady band concert the week before!)

There are of course still more events going on, with the Nativity service at church today, Christmas dinner and the last of the class parties tomorrow, Year 6 carol singing at Sainsbury's Manor Walks on Wednesday at 10am and obviously the countdown continuing to our special Christmas Golden Day on Thursday this week!

School meals this week

Due to the Christmas dinner tomorrow, the school lunch menus are slightly different for the last week of term:

- Monday 19th – today – will be the same as normal (Week 1)
- Tuesday 20th – Christmas dinner
- Wednesday 21st – chicken Chow Mein
- Thursday 22nd – Fish fingers and chips (last day of term)

N.B. When we return for the spring term the menu cycle will restart on WEEK 1 (for w/b 9th January).

Charity and Fundraising Support

We have had a number of charity events this half term and wanted to say **THANK YOU** once again for your generosity and support for each and every one of them...

- **Poppy Appeal** – last month the half term started with our annual support for the Royal British Legion poppy appeal. **£330.40** was raised by the pupils for this very worthwhile cause.
- **Children In Need** – our traditional 'Pennies for Pudsey' fundraising included covering Pudsey pictures with as many coins as possible and added to this was the money raised from the Eastlea Countryfile Ramble in October. Again we raised the excellent total of **£608.63** for Children in Need.
- **Book Fair** – the Scholastic Book Fair which took place last week was well supported by those who attended the Christmas productions. In total we sold **£517** worth of books. The commission arrangements have been changed, and we will get 40% of this total (approx. £207) to spend on books for our Eastlea library.

Reading / Phonics books

Staff are very grateful for your continuing support with reading especially for those who are still developing their phonic skills. As you know we are using the Read Write Inc. scheme and the books that are sent home have cost a large amount of money – from school funds, money raised at fairs etc. We have spent approximately £9000 on these books so far. Can we therefore ask that when books are sent home for your child to practise that they continue to be well looked after and returned to school in good condition ready for the next child who will need them. Any books which go missing need to be replaced and it is hard to source single copies, so they have to be bought as a pack, which means the costs are high. **THANK YOU!**

End of term awards

- **Reading** – Our Disney reading challenge which started at the end of September has been very successful and most of the children from across the school have extremely good reading routines each week. The first Bronze awards were presented on 2nd December and so far we have been able to present certificates/Disney keyrings to **173** 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 'Disney' bookmarks'!**
- **Writing** – on 28th November 'Star Writer' certificates and letters were presented to the children chosen as autumn term writing award winners for their enthusiasm and progress shown in writing across the curriculum in their class since September. Well done to them all!
- **Maths** – on 30th November one child from each class was chosen who had shown real enthusiasm, improvement and determination in class-based maths lessons. These maths award winners each received a letter and certificate. Congratulations to all our winners!
- **Sports** – Eastlea were announced as runners up in the **Year 3 and Year 5 Cramlington and Seaton Valley multi-skills** competitions. They will now go ahead to compete in the online Northumberland School Games finals in this event in January. Brilliant!

Early Years updates

1. I think most Nursery parents have now completed their application for Reception places in September 2023. We have been asked by county to do a final reminder that the **closing date for Reception school admissions is 15th January 2023**. The information about this is all on the Northumberland County Council website (school admissions).
2. We have 10 children who are due to join our Nursery next term. We will welcome them for either full day or afternoon sessions. These children will start during the first few weeks of term in January and arrangements for this have been shared with the families concerned.
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, even if it is for some way in advance!

HUGGG 'Free School Meal' vouchers for eligible families

This week an order will be placed for the vouchers which can be exchanged for groceries at local supermarkets. This will mean that parents of those children eligible for benefit based free school meals will have a link emailed to them which they can activate to generate a gift card for use over the Christmas holidays at a supermarket of their choice. Please contact me in school if there are any queries about this.

Christmas Golden Day – Thursday 22nd 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! Nursery children are in school for their Christmas based activities, while everyone else will be heading out after an early lunch to Newcastle Theatre Royal for the matinée performance of Cinderella. We can't wait!!

Please remember that for all children (apart from Nursery) school uniform is required on the day – with the option of festive headgear (Santa hats/reindeer antlers etc). Can we also ask that no reading folders, water bottles, bags etc are brought into school that day. They won't need them and it will make it easier to dismiss the children quickly on our return to school without them needing to go to classrooms/cloakrooms.

On our return to school the pupils will be taken into the school hall to be dismissed from there by their class teachers – the timing of 5.15pm is approximate, but we will aim to let you know a more specific time when we are on the way back to school depending on traffic.



Staffing update and farewell to Mrs Hall

We are sad to say that from January Mrs Hall is having a 'career change' and will no longer be working in her Reception support staff and midday supervisor role at Eastlea. She will be missed!

In her place Mrs Kendall will be joining the Reception staff team – and she comes with experience of similar roles at other primary settings.

Our Early Years staff team in Nursery is also being extended further to provide supervision for the increased numbers in January. We are delighted that Mrs Murray (who has already worked at Eastlea for some time now via an agency) has opted to join the Eastlea team on a more definite basis and we will also be welcoming Miss Harvey to provide additional afternoon support as well.

Miss Christer will be joining the Eastlea staff team to complete a Teaching Assistant apprenticeship in school from January. She will be providing support in both KS1 and KS2.

Year 4 swimming – advance notice

Swimming starts for pupils in Year 4 in the spring term. The first session is on Monday 16th January and the children will have a one hour session at the pool for 10 weeks in the spring term. The cost of each session is £4.50 per child per week. This price includes the school subsidising the costs of the lesson and the transport. The swimming lessons are part of the KS2 PE curriculum but in order for us to provide this for the children we have to pay for the instructors and the coach transport to get us to the pool at Concordia. In common with the other schools in the Cramlington partnership we therefore have to ask for a £4.50 donation from parents/carers each week. Without these contributions, the lessons will not be able to go ahead in this format. A letter with further information about this will be shared with Year 4 parents.

And finally, I would like to wish everyone a 'Merry Christmas'...and don't forget that the pupils break up after Golden Day on Thursday for their Christmas holidays.

Have a safe and happy holiday and we will see you all again on **Tuesday 10th January 2023** when we reopen for pupils for the spring term! (Monday 9th January is a staff training day).

Yours sincerely,

Miss E Beeston
Head Teacher

