



Consett Junior School

Christmas 2020 Newsletter

Welcome to our December newsletter, the last of one of 2020.

It certainly has been a different year in terms of Education, for staff, children, and parents. Obviously, the children lost 4 months of education, but also some wonderful events in school, especially our delightful year 6 children who missed much of their leaving events.

Since we returned in September, we have tried as hard as possible to ensure school is as 'normal' as can be. Although difficult at times, we have managed to successfully cope with the ever-changing guidance and Tiers presented to us to allow us to remain open.

I am acutely aware that most of the local schools have had to close bubbles because of positive COVID cases in their schools - I understand that this has caused many problems for their schools. It remains so important for us to continue to follow the rules and allow us to remain fully open.

As I write this message, I can hear the strains of the latest Christmas performance practice taking place, I am sure it will be an amazing experience for the children and so exciting to share with families on Christmas Eve.

We do hope everyone continues to stay safe and well. I hope you and your families have an amazing Christmas and New Year, looking back across 2020, it does highlight how very important family and community is to everything we do.

Take care and keep safe,
Best wishes,

Mr Paul Dixon

Head Teacher

Attendance

The whole school attendance for November was 95.89% which is slightly below our floor target of 96%, but higher than October. Thank you again to families who are keeping us informed of any Covid symptoms and test results, this communication is key to protecting everyone in our school. So far we have been lucky to have no positive cases and symptoms are just that of general viruses expected at this time of the year.

November attendance overview

As year 4 have achieved the best attendance for November each child in year 4 will be given a cake/giant cookie on Friday (4th December) as their reward.

Class 3 (Mr Meadows) have achieved the reward for the best class attendance at an amazing 97.06%, well done! The Class 3 reward for this is a FREE non-uniform day which will also be on Friday 4th December.

We are very concerned at the number of late arrivals into school. Your child arriving late disrupts the whole class. Please ensure your child arrives at school on time and ready to learn.

Year Group	% attendance	Unauthorised absences	Lates
3	96.28%	6	37
4	96.98%	0	25
5	95.40%	16	18
6	94.88%	22	4

Durham County Council out of school term FSM vouchers

At the point of writing this newsletter, we have not yet been informed about FSM vouchers over the Christmas break. Once this information has been shared with us, we will inform you via our school app and website.

Donations to 'Food 4 U' - an alternative to sending Christmas Cards

Due to the restrictions of Covid, we are asking families not to send Christmas cards into school as some families may not want cards from other homes in theirs and it also prevents additional ways for Covid to be transmitted into school. We created a 'forms' page to see how families felt about donating online to the local food bank rather than sending cards to school this year. Out of 66 respondents, 60 people said they would prefer this option.

To make this very special for our families and children, and to keep in theme with the reason for sending Christmas cards, please can you accompany your donation with a Merry Christmas message on this gofundme page, this could be a message from your child directly to others. You can leave your message after making the payment, or at a later date by following the link in your receipt email.

[gf.me/u/y9v4x7](https://gofundme.com/p/gf.me/u/y9v4x7)

Food 4 U supports local families, at this time of year, it is a reliable source of food for struggling families. Having additional funds, they can buy items they need to donate to local families to ensure they too have a lovely Christmas time together.

As always, thank you very much for your kindness and generosity in advance

Remote Learning Policy - Reminder

I just wished to clarify the situation with work set for pupils isolating from school. As you can imagine at this point in the year, we have now had many pupils isolating from school - thankfully at present only individual children based on their home circumstances/cases.

Work will not be set for the full two weeks in one go but will match what we are delivering in school - obviously, staff are still teaching and will set work when they are able.

We will set work for isolating pupils via our online provision, which has already been shared with families. Whilst we appreciate that working from home can be difficult, we are finding some pupils not completing any work - we have a duty of care to follow this up. The work set is monitored and marked by the child's class teacher, so it is very clear who has or has not been accessing it.

There is an expectation that as a school we challenge this, for those isolating because of COVID, we will be emailing or ringing to check how families are and how they are managing with access to schoolwork.

Staff Car Park – Safety Concern

Due to Covid and staggered school times we are using both exits to our school, this is also the case with Beechdale Nursery who share our site. However, of late I have become increasingly concerned by the number of additional cars in the car park at pick up time - it is most certainly an accident waiting to happen. Due to medical concerns a few parents have permission to use the car park, but only a few. If you do not have permission to use the staff car park, you will be challenged if you park there.

Too many additional parents and family members are driving onto the site. I do not want an accident to take place, if parents continue to use the private car park, despite warnings, I will have no choice but to have the school gates locked at this time.

Please help us in this matter.

Salvation Army Toy Appeal

As previously informed, we have now been told about how families can donate new/unused toys for local children for Christmas gifts this year. Usually we would request that donations are sent into school, but due to current restrictions we are unable to do so this year.

The Salvation Army, Sherburn Terrace, Consett are open Monday to Friday from 10.00 a.m. - 4.00 p.m. for families to drop off any donations of new/unused gifts. Christmas this year is undoubtedly going to be one of the most challenging times many families will ever have. Many families who may not usually struggle, may do this year due to the impact Covid has had on jobs and their finances. The Salvation Army are a service that is here to help local families, it is non-judgmental and completely confidential.

If you need help with a few extra gifts for your children this year, please contact Mrs Raine, we are here to support all our families.

You do not need an appointment to donate gifts to the Salvation Army, but please help if you can.

November Voluntary School Fund

Just a quick thank you to all families that have sent in school fund for November, we received £30 School Fund in school via the use of our 'money spinner' and a further £215 online from ParentPay. This has helped to cover the cost of treats for our recent well-being day and will also be a great help towards the cost of our Christmas celebrations in school. Thank you very much.

Clubs

After school enrichment clubs are still unavailable.



[Our Christmas Eve 'Big Show' extravaganza...](#)

Please see the dates at the end of this Newsletter for the rehearsal and the actual day of filming. Please ensure your child wears a Christmas Jumper on these days. If you have not given permission for them to take part they will not take part in their dance on these days. Our aim is to send the video live on Christmas Eve, it will be quite long and we hope that the edited songs we have chosen will not prevent Youtube from blocking it, however, our back up would be to email the link to the email addresses registered to ParentPay. We will let you know if this is the case.

[Uniform](#)

Please ensure your child comes to school wearing the full and correct uniform, with the exception being PE days. The classrooms will continue to be ventilated, despite the colder weather so please ensure your child is dressed suitable to keep them warm.

<http://www.consett-jun.durham.sch.uk/parents/our-school-uniform/>

[Winter Wonderland 'Christmas Party Day'](#)

As previously mentioned, DNA kids are in school all day on Thursday, 17th December. Children can come to school in party clothes but they will need suitable outdoor clothing (coat) and footwear for break time and lunchtime. Parties for the whole school will be all day within their year group 'bubbles' taking part in activities/games in their classrooms and taking turns to use the school hall. Our cleaner will be working in school all day.

The company is going to spend the whole day in school and will entertain each year group in turn with games, music, props, prizes and more! **The cost of this is £2 per child, which should cover some of the cost; the rest will be heavily subsidised from our Private School Funds. This £2 must be paid on ParentPay from now until the day of the party.**

In previous years we would request donations of food, but due to Covid we will not be asking families to do this. Instead we have sourced a good price from a local company that they will provide individual buffet boxes for each child. If your child has a special diet, we will contact you separately.

In order to allow all four bubbles to have their one hour party slot in the hall, we need to end the school day later than normal on this day, but this will ONLY impact on Year 6. Year 6 will not be finished until 3.30 p.m. on this day.

[New Outdoor library](#)

We are very pleased to announce that we are almost in a position to start the new build of our outdoor library. With heartfelt thanks and praise once again to all of our families who went above and beyond in their fundraising efforts. We have now purchased an outdoor library, bigger and better than the one we lost due to the arson attack. We are waiting for contractors to provide us with additional quotes and their availability to start on our new and amazing outdoor space, as this has taken careful planning. Our new space will have two rooms, electricity and heating so this can be used all year round. Following the recommendations from the Police to ensure the safety of our premises since the arson attack we now have CCTV installed to monitor the security of the new library as well as our outdoor gym. It is saddening to need to budget for this type of security, but also very much needed to safeguard our school site.

[Key Dates and events for you to be aware of, please note that they are correct at time of print.](#)

Friday 4th December – Mr Meadows class (class 3) won the best class attendance for November, at a whopping 97.06%. Their treat is a free non-uniform day.

Friday 4th December - Nasal Flu Immunisations. If you have returned your form to give consent for this immunisation the children will receive this in school today. Children will not receive this immunisation if you have not returned your form or given permission.

Wednesday 9th December – Christmas Lunch to all Year 3 and Year 5 children today. This will allow them to eat in the hall and cleaning between both bubbles implemented. The link to order a school dinner has now closed, if your child is on packed lunch and you forgot to order, please ring Mrs Raine.

Wednesday 9th December – All children to wear a Christmas Jumper today, it is our ‘Christmas Event’ rehearsal...

Wednesday 16th December – Christmas Lunch to all Year 4 and Year 6 children today. This will allow them to eat in the hall and cleaning between both bubbles implemented. The link to order a school dinner has now closed, if your child is on packed lunch and you forgot to order, please ring Mrs Raine.

Wednesday 16th December – All children to wear a Christmas Jumper today, it is the day of filming...

Wednesday 16th December – For families who would like to donate to the local ‘Food 4 U’ food bank, please do so online before today (link in newsletter above). We are closing the online link at 3.00 p.m. today so that funds can be collated and sent to the foodbank in time for Christmas.

Thursday 17th December - Whole school Christmas Party Day. The cost of this Party Day is £2.00. We have a local catering company providing individual buffet boxes this year instead of requesting food donations. We will contact families if their children have a special diet. **Children in Year 6 will finish at the later time of 3.30 p.m. today. We cannot accommodate siblings of children in Year 6 children held back.**

Friday 18th December - Last day of the autumn term. Children can come to school in non - uniform for a £1 school council fine, payable on ParentPay under ‘non - uniform fines’. Please ensure all ParentPay arrears are cleared.

Christmas Eve - A time is yet to be decided, but sit back as a family and prepare to be amazed with our wonderful virtual Christmas extravaganza...

Tuesday 5th January 2021 – School reopens for the start of the Spring term at 7.45 a.m. for Breakfast Club. Monday 4th is closed for teacher training.

Friday 12th February – School closes for February half term.

Monday 22nd February - School reopens for the start of the Summer term at 7.45 a.m. for Breakfast Club.

