



# FAMILY NEWSLETTER

3rd December 2021



## MESSAGE FROM NIKKI BURROUGHS, EXECUTIVE HEAD



And just like that we are in December!

Christmas time is a great opportunity to bring back the cheer that we have all been missing so much of late. Covid-19 has not gone away and shows little sign of doing so, however we are trying our best to continue with some semblance of normality as safely as possible.

The school is starting to sparkle with decorations and I have enjoyed being able to spend some time in classes celebrating the progress that children and young people have made this term thanks to the support and hard work of class teams and families working together.



Classes have been a hive of enterprise – with some fabulous items being made for our Christmas catalogues. It was great to hear about the virtual STEM (Science Technology Engineering and Mathematics) presentation some of our FE students participated in this week and to see how excited another group of students have been following their weekly tennis sessions. I was also very proud to talk to a young man who had his first driving lesson this week and to hear about how he is practicing for his theory test – just fantastic!

This week, we have also enjoyed the annual ritual of decorating the Christmas Trees – a huge thanks to Denise Andrews from our Ladybirds Class who donated the tree to Bidwell Brook, and Mr & Mrs Stephens from Connetts Farm [www.connetts.co.uk](http://www.connetts.co.uk) for their kind tree donations to both Ellen Tinkham School and College.

Have a great weekend.

## SHORT OF TIME? HERE'S A SUMMARY

**Message from Nikki Burroughs, Executive Head** - See across.

**PTFA Meeting** - This took place but we are still seeking additional members to join us. If you're interested, contact Daisy Binnie at BB.

**Children In Need** - BB raised £215!

**Theatre Alibi** - Had to cancel their visit this week. Hoping they'll come again in February 2022.

**Family Support** - Has a direct number - 01803 221592. Daisy or Carla may ring you on this number from now on.

**Hollow Lane Club** - See attachment. You can win ALL THE PRIZES!

**E-Safety Family Workshops** - Will be running in the new year. Look out for dates.

**Christmas Jumper Day** - Wear festive jumpers or tops into school on Friday 10th December.

**Christmas Lunch** - Tony and his team will be serving the festive feast on Wednesday 15th December.

**Communication Aids** - Links on page 3 for practical ideas and resources to use at home with your child.

**Financial Support** - Contact the school if you are struggling financially or have not received your Christmas Free School Meal voucher for the holiday.

**Holiday Activities and Food Christmas Holiday Programme** - Links on page 4.

**Devon's new SEND Model** - "SEND Connect" is being launched next year.

**DIAS - Ambassador Volunteers** - If you'd like to become an Ambassador, see page 4.

**Young Minds Survey** - Click on the link on page 4 if your young person would like to participate.

## DATES 2021/2022

Friday 10th December .....	Christmas Jumper Day
Wednesday 15th December .....	Christmas Dinner
Friday 17th December.....	Term end
Tuesday 4th January .....	Staff Training Day (school closed)
Wednesday 5th January .....	Pupils return to school
w/c 21st February .....	Half Term



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## BIDWELL BROOK PTFA - UPDATE FROM ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Thank you very much to the couple of parents who took part in the PTFA Annual General Meeting, joining Paul Thomas who has very kindly agreed to stay on as Treasurer until the end of the academic year. We do still need people to be officially appointed as Chair and Secretary for our Charity. If you would be interested in stepping up for a couple of terms only, this would be brilliant - please let Daisy know.



At the meeting, we talked about possible upcoming events in the Spring and Summer Terms. These included the very popular Plant Sale around Easter, a possible Easter hamper raffle and the Summer Fayre. In the past, the Summer Fayre has been the main fundraiser of the year, but it would be good if we could organise a low key event, just to get back in the swing of things! Bags2School will hopefully also return soon.

At the meeting, Paul ran through the current funds available in the PTFA 'pot'. As you can imagine, the money is ever depleting but the PTFA did kindly agree to the following spend:

1. A bespoke Christmas Present purchase by the Class Teacher for each pupil;
2. An Easter Egg for each pupil in the Spring Term;
3. Ice lollies to hand out on Sports Day in the Summer.

Please seriously consider joining the PTFA or getting in touch to help out when we advertise ad hoc events or fundraising opportunities. The more "hands" we have, the more fun it is! The PTFA is a great way for you to come into school, be part of your child's education and meet like-minded families. Contact Daisy Binnie at school if you would like to be part of the team or have a relative, friend or neighbour who could join.

## CHILDREN IN NEED

Bidwell Brook School raised a whopping **£215.00** for Children In Need this year!

Well done to everyone who supported this worthwhile charity and special thanks to staff who donated cakes to sell to colleagues.

Much appreciated.



## THEATRE ALIBI

Unfortunately Theatre Alibi had to cancel their visit to Bidwell Brook School this week, due to Covid-19 restrictions amongst the performers. We are hoping to re-book their visit in February 2022.

## FAMILY SUPPORT SERVICES - DIRECT NUMBER

We have a new direct dial number for Daisy Binnie and Carla Chase in the Family Support Services Dept at Bidwell Brook. The number is **01803**

**221592**. If either Daisy or Carla ring you, it will be this number that appears on your phone, not the main Bidwell Brook number.



## HOLLOW LANE CLUB

Exciting news from the Hollow Lane Club attached!



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## E-SAFETY FAMILY WORKSHOPS



We are planning a couple of E-Safety Workshops for families in the new year. This will help you to help your child navigate their way safely when online. Keep a look out for the dates in 2022!

## CHRISTMAS JUMPER DAY!

Friday 10th December 2021 is "Christmas Jumper" day! If your child would like to wear their favourite Christmas jumper or sparkly top into school that day, this would be great! Let's spread some cheer!



## HIGH-TECH AND LOW-TECH COMMUNICATION AIDS

These resources have been circulated by Bethan Scott, our Speech & Language Therapy Assistant, to all teaching staff across the Federation. Families may also wish to read/try these practical ideas at home to reinforce learning taking place in school:

1) This is info gathered by a big research project across Devon on AAC (especially good for families):

[Course: Augmentative and Alternative Communication \(AAC\) – An introduction \(babcockldp.co.uk\)](https://babcockldp.co.uk)

2) Here are some lesson plan ideas for teaching core vocabulary words such as go, more, want etc:

[Core First Lessons - Tobii Dynavox Global](#)

3) Here are some practical ideas and resources for teaching new vocabulary (e.g. what does it sound like, what does it start with, where would you find it etc):

[Widgit Symbol Resources | Pre-teaching Vocabulary](#)



## CHRISTMAS DINNER



Tony and the team will be serving our legendary Christmas Dinner on

**WEDNESDAY 15TH DECEMBER 2021**

## FINANCIAL SUPPORT

The school is able to access financial support for any families who are struggling. If you are finding it very difficult to make ends meet, especially with the holidays coming up, please contact Daisy Binnie or your Class Teacher.

The only criteria we have to meet is that we haven't applied for this money for you in the last year and you are in need. We can apply for Food Vouchers to get boxes from local Food Banks anytime you need them.

We will keep your request totally confidential.

The funds can be requested to cover:

- Providing vouchers for food;
- Supporting with energy and water bills for household purposes;
- Emergency boiler and heating repairs;
- Essential white goods such as a fridge, freezer or cooker.

The scheme can also help with petrol costs to keep you in work and with your broadband.

All families with children on Free School Meals will have received a voucher for the holidays. Please call the School Office if you haven't had yours.

[Free school meals holiday vouchers doubled for Christmas - Devon Childrens' and Families Partnership \(dcfp.org.uk\)](#)



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## HOLIDAY ACTIVITIES AND FOOD CHRISTMAS HOLIDAY PROGRAMME (HAF)

The Holiday Activities and Food Christmas Holiday Programme is primarily for children aged 5-16 years (and can include 4-year-olds already in Reception year) who are either eligible for and receiving benefits-related free school meals (FSM) or are classed as vulnerable:

[Holiday Activities and Food \(HAF\) programme - Education and Families \(devon.gov.uk\)](https://www.devon.gov.uk/education-and-families/haf-programme)

School holidays can be particularly difficult for some families because of increased costs (such as food) and reduced incomes. For some children that can lead to a holiday experience gap, with children from disadvantaged families less likely to access organised out-of-school activities, more likely to experience 'unhealthy holidays' in terms of nutrition and physical health and more likely to experience social isolation. Click [here](#) to find out what's available over the Christmas break.

## DEVON'S NEW SEND MODEL

A new SEND model has been designed in collaboration with parents and carers, professionals and children and young people with SEND. The model has been created in collaboration with various agencies across Devon, with the aim to ensure that every child or young person gets the support they and their families need to achieve their best in life. Here's some information about the new "SEND Connect" service coming out next year.

[Devon's Children's Service announces name of new SEND model, chosen by you! - Devon Children's and Families Partnership \(dcfp.org.uk\)](https://www.devonchildrens.org.uk/news/devons-childrens-service-announces-name-of-new-send-model-chosen-by-you)

## YOUNG MINDS

Young Minds recognise some of our young people are struggling. From speaking to parents, Young Minds is aware parents agree.

Young Minds want young people aged 13-25 across the country, from all walks of life, to tell them what the big issues affecting their lives are. But to make this happen, they need your help. Please could you consider working with your young person to complete and share this 10-minute survey. Click below to start the survey:



[Share The Big Young People's Survey](#)

## MESSAGE FROM DIAS - AMBASSADOR VOLUNTEERS

The **Ambassador Volunteer Project** is supporting the Parent Carer Forum Devon (PCFD) to grow across Devon. More information is available on the [DIAS website](#).

Our number of Ambassador Volunteers is increasing. They are trained and connecting families in their community network to signposted information, and support. The Ambassador Volunteers also feedback themes and trends from their own network through the project to The Parent Carer Forum Devon, to help shape services, and to DiAS, so they can provide the information and support you need.

There are Ambassador Volunteers actively connected and supporting parent/carers of children with SEND in North Devon, Honiton, East Devon, Okehampton and Holsworthy. If you would like to get connected to their networks please email [megannenkeallystone@devon.gov.uk](mailto:megannenkeallystone@devon.gov.uk) and she can put you in touch with an Ambassador Volunteer network near you!

**New Induction** training for people interested in becoming an Ambassador Volunteer is running on 8th December between 10 am - 1 pm (online). The session will be the first step in training to become an Ambassador Volunteer.



If you are interested in the Induction training please complete the form through this [link](#) and we will be in touch with you shortly.

## ATTACHMENTS : SNIPPETS, HOLLOW LANE CLUB NEWS

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