



FAMILY NEWSLETTER

28th January 2022



MESSAGE FROM NIKKI BURROUGHS, EXECUTIVE HEAD

Despite the icy mornings, we are seeing some beautiful days and it has been great to see our children and young people getting out and enjoying the fresh air.



It has been an absolute privilege to walk around our schools over the past two weeks and see all the amazing work that is being done. I have seen students achieving INCREDIBLE results as part of their phonics work; students 'buzzing' upon their return from their inclusion placements; wonderful artwork; turn-taking maths games; bike riding ... the list goes on.

😊 I have seen one young man take his first brave steps upon the climbing frame – a huge achievement.

I have been asked some difficult questions "What came first - the chicken or the egg?" and even been said hello to in every language imaginable!

I have heard so often that certain children are having a good week/day and making so much progress. I've loved seeing their work celebrated on walls of classrooms and really enjoyed the little notes left on my desk from students and emails from the Student Council.

I hope you all managed to make arrangements to attend Parents' Evening and that you are happy with the progress your child(ren) is making. As always, we love to hear if all is going well from your point of view as well as what is not going so well or what could be even better. We really do appreciate the honest feedback - however tough that feedback might be to hear!

No doubt you will have heard there have been changes to the Government guidelines around the wearing of face masks. Whilst it is good news the numbers of Covid-19 cases are currently on the decline nationally, this is not the trend in the South West and certainly not a trend we are seeing across our schools. We are continuing to experience high rates of absence, particularly with staff, due to Covid-19.

As a Federation, our main priority is to always safeguard our pupils and staff and protect learning. We will continue to respect everyone's right to wear a face mask if they wish to do so, to keep themselves safe whilst at school, and also continue to promote the use of the clear masks for staff who choose to wear them.

As always, we will closely monitor the Covid-19 situation in our school and review the latest Government guidance as and when it is released. We will be asking staff to continue to wear face coverings in communal areas for now, and we will keep you informed of our plans and safer working practices.

Have a great weekend.

SHORT OF TIME? HERE'S A SUMMARY

Message from Nikki Burroughs - See across.

Parent/Carer Laurel Trust Family Session - Thanks if you've already signed up! See page 2 if you'd like your voice heard - now's your chance!

Parents Survey About Childcare - Devon would like to hear your views via the link.

School Uniform - We encourage our students to wear uniform, whether it is Bidwell Brook branded or not. See page 2.

School Lunches - A reminder on page 3 of the cost of school lunches this term and how to pay.

Cookery Contributions - A polite request to contribute to cookery lessons this term please! £7.50 for half a term, £15 for the term. Thank you!

Vaccinations - HPV and Covid-19 vaccination letters have been/will be sent home soon. Please complete the forms if you would like your child to be vaccinated, if you wish.

Toys in School - We appreciate some pupils bring toys/personal items into school to help with transitions. However, we discourage toys being brought into school unless there is a specific reason. Please contact your Class Teacher if your child would like to bring a toy into school.

SALT - Bethan Scott, our Federation SALT is leaving at the February half term. We will advise of the new appointment, when known. If you want to make a referral for SALT support, the link is on page 4.

Sunflower Lanyards - We will be offering students the option of wearing a lanyard before leaving the site.

'Tissues & Issues' Group - There's a new SEN family group you could join, if you wish. They meet during term time and holidays. For details, see page 4.

Training/Information for Parents - There are links on page 4.

Hollow Lane Club - Letters and application forms are attached to express your interest in using the club this year. Please complete and return by 14th February 2022.

DATES 2022

- w/c 7th February 2022Safer Internet Week
- w/c 21st February 2022Half term holiday
- Monday 28th February 2022Pupils return to school
- Monday 28th March 2022Tempest Photography visiting
- Friday 8th April 2022.....Last day of term



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INVITATION FOR PARENTS/CARERS TO JOIN A FAMILY SESSION

We are currently working with the Laurel Trust on a project to gain family views about our curriculum. Emily Carey-Lewis, one of our Assistant Heads, is leading on this project and would really appreciate your input. It's only an hour, your voice will be heard and help form the way our curriculum links with EHCPs. Now's your chance to have your say in a co-operative, friendly, open forum where no comment is ever a wrong one! Get in touch with Emily via email, even if you just want some further information. She'll give you a call right back.

Parent/ Carer Group



From 1.30-2.30 pm or 5-6 pm at Bidwell Brook School on Wednesday 2nd February 2022



Please come to see us to talk and share your views on our curricula.

RSVP: ecareylewis@ellentinkham.devon.sch.uk

DCC PARENTS SURVEY

Devon County Council is asking all staff, friends and families within our school community to complete a short survey on Childcare.

Here's the [survey](#).



SCHOOL UNIFORM

At Bidwell Brook, we encourage students to wear our school uniform. Wearing a uniform places a pupil in a 'working environment' mindset and helps them separate their home and school life. It also puts children on a level playing field, reducing the pressure to wear the latest fashionable brands etc. Learning can also be messy sometimes, so it is best students do not wear expensive clothing into school.

We do appreciate however, that some pupils cannot tolerate and refuse to wear a uniform and for these learners, we would much rather they attend school wearing comfy clothing of their choice! Our FE students do not need to wear a uniform in recognition of their age and privileges.

For everyone else, our school uniform can be purchased [here](#). We try to keep our uniform cost as low as possible, and are very happy if you wish to purchase plain white polo shirts or plain blue sweatshirts/cardigans etc as an alternative.



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SCHOOL LUNCHES

Please find below the cost of school meals for the Spring Term 2022. You are able to pay either by cheque, online or by Cash with a PayPoint voucher.

	Junior	Senior
Daily	£2.40	£2.50
Weekly	£12.00	£12.50
1 st Half Term (30 Days)	£79.20	£82.50
2 nd Half Term (34 Days)	£72.00	£75.00
Full Term	£151.20	£157.50

For info:

All school meals are payable in advance.



Please pay online at www.schoolgateway.com or send a cheque into the school office. Please make cheques payable to 'Devon County Council'.

If you would like to pay by cash please contact the school office and we can arrange for a paypoint voucher to be sent home.

If you have any queries please do not hesitate to contact Sarah Kershaw on 01803 864120.

Thank you.

COOKERY CONTRIBUTION

To be able to cook and bake is a vital life skill and in all our classes, we use cookery to help teach some fundamental basics eg Maths to measure and weight ingredients, English to read recipes and write about how it tastes!

Cooking in class happens across the school from our youngest learners who learn about different colours of foods and their textures, right through to our older students who prepare healthy meals from scratch and learn about basic knife skills, how to handle hot food from the oven etc.

To help us teach cookery to our students, we kindly request families make a cookery contribution each term of £15 (£7.50 per half term).

This can be paid by the same methods you use to pay for schools meals (via School Gateway, a cheque made payable to 'Devon County Council' or cash).



Where possible, our learners bring home their cookery efforts and we hope you enjoy them as much as your children have enjoyed creating them!

VACCINATIONS

On Thursday 10th February 2022, we have a clinic running in our Nurses' Room for the following:

- Catch up HPV (Human papillomavirus vaccine) for Year 9's;
- Second dose of Covid-19 vaccination for students aged 12 years and over. (First doses will also be offered if your child has not already received their jab).

Consent letters have been/will be sent home shortly, so please respond even if you do not wish your child to be vaccinated. **PLEASE NOTE** The Nursing Team has to have consent from families regarding the above vaccinations. If you have not provided consent, your child will not be called out of class and will not be vaccinated.

BRINGING TOYS/PERSONAL ITEMS INTO SCHOOL

For some of our pupils, bringing a toy or a personal item into school each day helps enormously with their transition to/from Transport and when settling into class. Bringing such an item into school for this purpose is usually agreed in advance with the class team.

Recently however, we've heard from a few students who wish to bring specific toys into school. Unless there is a learning purpose or specific wellbeing reason, we try to discourage this from happening.

If your child has an item they would like to bring in, possibly as a "show and tell" with the class, please drop the Teacher a line beforehand, and we'll agree a date and make sure we keep the item as safe as possible during the day.

Otherwise, toys/other personal items need to remain at home. Thank you for your support.



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SPEECH & LANGUAGE THERAPIST



At February half term, we will be saying goodbye to Bethan Scott, our resident Speech & Language Therapist who is moving on to pastures new. Bethan works part-time, sharing her working days across the Federation, helping to assess our pupils with their SALT needs. Bethan also provides specific communication support and training for staff.

If your child has SALT needs identified on their EHCP, this input will still come under the jurisdiction of the Local Authority - it is their responsibility to put SALT provision in place. Bethan would like to remind all families that should you have any concerns over your child's speech & language, or their eating or drinking, you should apply for a referral through the [NHS SLT referrals system](#). We are currently advertising for a new SALT to replace Bethan Salt and look forward to introducing our new SALT to you as soon as an appointment is made.

SUNFLOWER LANYARDS

Students who leave our sites will shortly have the opportunity to say whether they wish to wear a Sunflower lanyard whilst out in the community.

A Sunflower lanyard signals to others that the wearer needs additional support.

We will add a plastic badge to the lanyard identifying the school and advising of the wearer's needs eg processing time if conversations are taking place, or relying on classroom staff for help.



The wearing of this lanyard will not happen automatically.

Students will be given visual aids in the classroom for them to make their own decision if they wish to wear this lanyard when leaving the site - it really is their choice.



FAMILY SUPPORT GROUP

"Tissues and Issues" welcome parents/grandparents/carers living in Torbay and Devon. The child/ren you care for do not need to have received a diagnosis to attend this group. "Tissues and Issues" coffee mornings are a chance for parents/grandparents/carers with children that have additional needs/disabilities, to come together to have a relaxed chat with parents/grandparents/carers in a similar situation. It's a chance to meet new friends and for your children to make new friends too. During the coffee mornings the group will be inviting guest speakers. To find out more, keep an eye on their Facebook group "Tissues and Issues", telephone 07796 470009 or email tissuesandissues@outlook.com



HOLLOW LANE CLUB

Please find attached an important letter from the Hollow Lane Club regarding session interest for this year. Also attached is an application form.

Please complete and return this form to Deb Ward via email admin@hollowlane.org.uk or send your completed form into Marie Quinn at Bidwell Brook by **Monday 14th February 2022**.

Thank you!



DISABILITY LIVING ALLOWANCE

Here's a Youtube link to 4 videos regarding claiming Child Disability Living Allowance.

The videos are short and informative so should be helpful for our families to find out more.

[Disability Living Allowance \(DLA\) for children - YouTube](#)

NATIONAL AUTISTIC SOCIETY

This society is running free training sessions for families. Please click here for further info: [EarlyBird](#), [EarlyBird Plus](#) and [Teen Life](#) parent sessions (autism.org.uk)

ATTACHMENTS : LISTENING TO YOUR CHILD'S VIEWS; SNIPPETS; HOLLOW LANE CLUB LETTER AND FORM

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USEFUL INFO FROM OUR ICT TEAM

At National Online Safety, we believe in empowering parents, carers and trusted adults with the information to hold an informed conversation about online safety with their children, should they feel it is needed. This guide focuses on one of many issues that we believe trusted adults should be aware of. Please visit www.nationalonlinesafety.com for further guides, hints and tips for adults.

What Parents & Carers Need to Know about HORROR GAMES

Horror video games come in a such a variety that the genre can hardly define. The overlapping element is that these games are designed to scare or unsettle the player through gameplay, atmosphere, story, music, setting and 'jump scares'. The most common sub-genres are survival horror, action horror, psychological horror, jump-scare horror and reverse horror. These games originate from a range of developers, including smaller indie studios which release download-only titles (that is, they aren't physically sold in shops) and therefore aren't subject to age ratings.

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

ADULT THEMES

Horror games are typically made with adults in mind, which means by definition that they often feature adult themes. Outlast, for instance, is a popular horror game series including material such as nudity and extreme sadistic violence. Other games, like Five Nights at Freddy's and its sequels, have a back-story that doesn't actually appear on screen but still hints at explicit adult themes.

VIOLENT CONTENT

Not all horror games contain graphic violence (titles like Five Nights at Freddy's and Phasmophobia prefer a spookier, suspenseful aesthetic) but many do portray extreme brutality very realistically. Until Dawn and the hugely popular Resident Evil and Outlast franchises, for instance, feature incredibly graphic violence. The safest course of action is to thoroughly research a game in advance.

ONLINE INTERACTION

Some horror games are played cooperatively with others online. Phasmophobia is one of the most popular titles in this category, and while it doesn't feature an excessive amount of gore, it does place a strong emphasis on online interaction – often with strangers. Dead by Daylight is another game in which frequent and prolonged online communication with other players is an advantage.

PSYCHOLOGICAL HORROR

Rather than simply laddling on the blood and gore, psychological horror games try to scare the player through subliminal mental and emotional means. For this reason, this type of game (notable examples include Alien: Isolation, The Medium and the Amnesia series) can have a longer-lasting effect on players; some occasionally 'break the fourth wall' – interacting directly with the player as if they were real.

LONG-TERM FEAR FACTOR

Horror games are designed to be scary; most players accept this fact in advance. They can, however, include content which leaves an unwanted lasting impression. By focusing on our fears and concerns to elicit an emotional reaction, horror games can be triggering in unexpected ways for some players. It's difficult to predict when – and how – a game might have long-term effects on an individual's mental wellbeing.

Advice for Parents & Carers

BWARE OF JUMP SCARES

Jump scares in video games are often no worse than they are in movies. If a young person doesn't cope well with being suddenly startled by something in a film or on TV, they probably won't be able to handle horror games featuring jump scares. Some games (such as Five Nights at Freddy's) are built entirely around this technique and aren't suitable for younger children or those who are easily frightened.

RESEARCH THE GAME

It's best to look into a horror game thoroughly if your child expresses an interest in playing it. Many indie horror titles are download only and therefore aren't required to come with an age rating – so you'll need to do some background reading and judge the game's content for yourself. Check out the game's web pages, read any wikis about it (including fan ones) and watch videos of the gameplay.

ENCOURAGE BREAKS

It's easy to lose track of time when gaming, and horror games are no exception. A short break every hour or so is important to rest the eyes and relieve the posture – especially if traumatic situations in the game have built up tension and stress. For horror gamers, breaks also give the added benefit of feeling more relaxed afterwards, which can mean a scarier gaming session when they resume!

IF IN DOUBT, SWAP IT OUT

If your child finds a horror game to play, but after doing some research you decide it doesn't look like the right one for them, swap it out! There are a lot of horror titles to choose from, and some will be more appropriate than others. Work together with your child to find a suitable game for them. Remember, horror games don't have to be gore-spattered and graphic to be enjoyably scary!

STAY RECEPTIVE

Maintaining good communication with your child is vital for safe gaming. If they see something in a horror game that disturbs them in ways they didn't expect, then they should feel comfortable opening up to you about it. Try not to simply laugh it off or make light of it, and always make time to listen. It's a useful reminder that they can talk to you about any type of problem they have in the future.

Meet Our Expert

Clare Godwin (a.k.a. Lunawolf) has worked as an editor and journalist in the gaming industry since 2015, providing websites with event coverage, reviews and gaming guides. She is the owner of Lunawolf Gaming and is currently working on various gaming-related projects including game development and writing non-fiction books.

