

Highnam C of E Primary Academy



@HighnamAcademy

CHILDREN WITH CONFIDENCE

January 2022



A warm welcome back to school to all our children and families and a Happy New Year to you all. I hope that you enjoyed the Christmas break. We are very much looking forward to welcoming the children back to school on Wednesday. I would also like to welcome Dan Bailey to the Highnam team who will be teaching in year 2.

It was a busy and exciting final few weeks of school last term. We enjoyed a performance of the Sleeping Beauty panto, Christmas dinner day, a visit from Santa's elves, the junior carol service in church and the infant nativity play in school.



I would like to say a huge thank you to all of the staff who helped put these Christmas performances together for our children. There is always so much work that goes into these behind the scenes, especially with the ongoing challenges we've been faced with, but I definitely think it was worth the extra effort and I'm so pleased that we were able to invite parents into school for the nativity. I'd also like to thank all the parents and family members for your cooperation in following our COVID safety restrictions that allowed us to invite you in safely and share in the Christmas cheer.

Update on COVID Measures

Yesterday, you will have received the Primary Quest letter from Mr Dean detailing some COVID updates. Please be assured that in school we will still encourage good handwashing, well-ventilated rooms, twice weekly LFD tests for staff, staying at home if unwell or tested positive and practising good hygiene such as sneezing or coughing into tissues and disposing of these properly. Any parents, carers and visitors that need to come into school for any reason, should wear a mask unless medically exempt. We continue to recommend the wearing of masks for drop off and pick up times, especially when gathering around areas that are potentially busy, such as the school gates and outside the classrooms.

Schools are not required to identify close contacts of COVID cases in their setting. However if we have any confirmed cases, we will continue to send a 'warn and inform' letter to the parents of the class/classes affected.

If the school does have a large outbreak, the public health advice will be based on a risk assessment and may include some or all of the following measures:

- Reducing mixing between year groups or classes
- Cancelling large school gatherings such as assemblies, open evenings, scheduled sports events, school trips and staff meetings
- Moving to online learning

These measures will be discussed and jointly agreed with the school, the UK Health Security Agency and the Department for Education. Head teachers do not have the jurisdiction to make decisions about school closures.

Support for GARAS

This year, we chose to support a local charity GARAS (Gloucestershire Action for Refugees and Asylum Seekers). Thank you to everyone who generously donated money or gifts for this worthwhile cause. Mrs Stephens and the children in year 5 worked very hard to prepare and pack the Christmas shoe boxes with your kind donations of toiletries, clothing and food. This meant we were able to supply the charity with these gift boxes in time for Christmas. In addition to this, we were able to provide supermarket vouchers to families in need, using the money donated by parents at the nativity performances.



PQ Poetry Recital

A quick reminder – we will be holding the school round of the Primary QuEST poetry competition from Monday 10th January in class. We are looking forward to hearing the poems – thank you for supporting your child with this.

Gloucester Cathedral Concert



It was a real privilege to once again be invited to perform in Gloucester Cathedral for the Meningitis Now Christmas Concert. The children sang The First Noel, We Three Kings and Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas beautifully. We are very grateful to Mrs Smith for doing such a fabulous job of patiently and skilfully teaching the children and leading the practices each week, and also to Mr Smith for accompanying the choir on the piano.

House Quiz

In the last week of the autumn term, we held a virtual Highnam House Christmas Quiz. Children in every class took it in turns to answer some tricky questions linked to Christmas. When totalling up the scores for each house it was very close but Maidenhall and Wetherleigh were declared joint winners. Well done to all involved!



Keeping Wetherleigh Drive Safe

As you know, we have been making it a priority to reduce the traffic on Wetherleigh Drive and thereby improve the safety of drop off and pick up times. Thank you to everyone who is cooperating with this. Already we can see an improvement and a reduction in the number of vehicles driving down to the school gates.

Can I remind parents of the 5 minute walking zone that was worked out by Academy Council a few years ago. If you have to drive your children to school, please do consider parking outside of this zone and walking the remainder of the journey.



PTA Updates

Thank you so much to everyone who took part in the PTA raffle for the Christmas hampers and the rugby shirt – we made a total of £839 from these and the year 4 cake sale raised £93. We really appreciate our brilliant PTA team and everyone's generous support. We are hoping to put the money towards new ipads.



Dates for your diary:

Tuesday 4 th January 2022	Inset training day for teachers – children not in school
Wednesday 5 th January	First day of term for children
Thursday 6 th and 13 th January	Active RE sessions with Owen Westall for year 5 and year 6
Friday 7 th and 14 th January	Active RE sessions with Owen Westall for year 3 and year 4
Week beginning 10 th January	Poetry Recital Competition – this will be held in school
Week beginning 10 th January	After school clubs start for the term
Wednesday 12 th January	Lifesavers club starts for the term (8.30am)
Wednesday 12 th January	Reception English evening for parents in the school hall (5.30 – 6.30pm)
Friday 14 th January	Librarian visit to year 2
Friday 14 th January	Swimming at GL1 starts for year 5
Monday 17 th January	Primary Quest Poetry Recital Competition – the finals! This will be held at the auditorium at Hartpury College at 6pm.
Tuesday 25 th January	Health checks for children in reception and year 6
Monday 14 th February	Year 5 performing at Gloucestershire Dance Festival at Cheltenham Town Hall
Friday 18 th February	Last day of term 3

I would like to thank you all for your support during the course of the school year so far. It has again been a year like none of us have experienced before and this doesn't look like changing soon. We will continue to adapt and adjust to the situation and make decisions based on the best interests of our children, staff and families.

Best wishes

Liz Coldrick, Head Teacher