

HEATHSIDE NEWS

JANUARY 2010



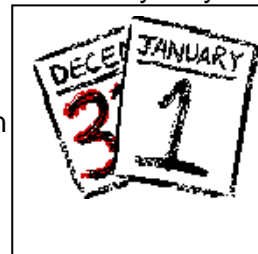
Question

Time

Suffolk Parent Carer Network has organised a "Question Time" event at Trinity Park (Suffolk Showground) on 21st January from 6.30 pm to 9.30 pm. The "Panel" will consist of representatives from Health, Social Care, Education and voluntary agencies and they will be answering questions from parents and carers of children with additional needs or disabilities. Entry is free but by ticket which can be obtained from Karen Markham on 01473 835416 or karen.markham@suffolkfamilycarers.org By 14th Jan

Happy New Year - 2010

I hope you had a wonderful Christmas and New Year holiday and while they may be fading into the mists of time the snowy weather is still managing to retain a bit of that festive feeling at the moment. The prolonged cold spell has obviously had an impact on whether the school is open or not, and where a closure has been necessary I apologise for any inconvenience this may have caused.



It is a very difficult decision that I have to make and I consider many different factors before making it: what is the weather forecast for the day, will drivers be going out, are the roads safe, can staff get to work and so on. At the end of the day it is a judgement call and I can only make the decision that I feel will ensure everyone's safety. Please be assured that the initial intention is always to be open as usual and the decision to close is always a last resort.

We have good systems in place to get the message of any closure out to you as soon as possible. However, recently there has been some confusion because different radio stations and websites have been giving out different messages. I am following this up with the Local Authority because I pass the information on to them about any closure and they then inform the media.

You will always get accurate information on Radio Suffolk (103.9, 104.6 & 95.5 FM) at ten past and twenty to each hour from 6.40 a.m. Our school website: www.heathsideschool.com will also display a message as soon as a decision has been made which will be around 7.00 a.m.

In addition, our caretaker, George, is usually able to battle through to the school and answers calls from around 7.30 a.m.

If you use one of these three sources you will be able to get accurate information about whether we are open or not.

If we are open it may still be the case that transport providers make their own decision not to call for children because of the weather conditions. In such circumstances you are welcome to bring your child to school but must be available to collect them at 3.00 p.m., or earlier if conditions deteriorate.

Finally, please can you ensure that we have up to date contact details for you and anyone else we may need to contact in an emergency. If you got a new mobile phone with a different number for Christmas don't forget to let us know.

Suffolk Family Carers

Suffolk Family Carers have just released the details of their programme of events and activities covering the period January to April.

There is a complete range of support for carers including days out, art and photography workshops, complementary therapies, advice and information sessions.

Full details at: www.suffolkfamilycarers.org or telephone: 01473 835400.

Speech Therapy & OT

One of our speech therapists, Gaynor Job, and one of our occupational therapists, Kate Williams will be leaving us at the end of January to start their maternity leave. We wish them well with the birth of their children and hope to see them back at Heathside sometime in 2010.

Gaynor's colleague Rose, and Kate's colleague Sarah, will be looking after things during the maternity leave. I am hopeful we can also get some additional speech therapy cover for Gaynor.

Topic for the Term

The topic the children will be following this term is "Light & Sound". The children will be having a wonderful time experiencing colours, shadows, lights and discriminating between different sounds. A lot of the activities will take place in the multi-sensory studio or the visual stimulation room and some class trips will be linked to the topic.



Fundraising

Thank you to everyone who bought some raffle tickets at our Christmas productions. All of the proceeds are going to help our link school, Hart House, in Gambia. We raised a total of £161.50 and staff donations instead of sending Christmas cards raised a further £91. This will really help the children at Hart House and will go a long way to ensuring they get some of the basics they need to survive and learn. If you have other fundraising ideas let

Contact a Family

Contact a Family is a national organisation which provides advice and support to families caring for a child with disabilities aged 0-19 years.

They have a team of Family Workers who can help with enquiries or make a home visit. The service is free to families who can make direct contact or be referred by other agencies.

The Family Workers offer time limited support but if other issues arise they can become involved once again.

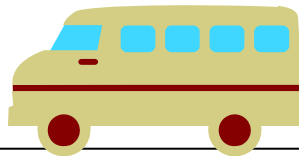
A new Family Worker is being appointed for Suffolk during January 2010 but you can make contact now by telephoning 0808 808 3555 or check out the website at: www.cafamily.org.uk



School Minibus

We had fantastic support from parents and carers, local charitable trusts, community organisations, staff and the school budget in raising the £46,000 we needed for our new minibus.

The basic chassis is now with the coach builders who are fitting all of the specialist equipment and fixings etc that we need. If all of the work goes according to plan we will be able to take delivery of the minibus towards the end of January. The children and staff will then be able to enjoy the luxury of travelling in the new bus for social skills and other outings.



Schools Merging

Planning is continuing at a pace for the merger of Heathside and Belstead Schools in September 2010.

Governors from both schools meet regularly to plan the next steps.

The staff from both schools will be taking part in a joint training day on 22nd February to work on a shared vision for the future and as you will know we are inviting suggestions for a new name for the merged school. So, don't forget to send your ideas in before 15th January and if you have any queries about the merger please feel free to contact Odran.

PECS Cards

We have a supply of PECS cards for "Wait" and "Help" in school at the moment.

If you would like to purchase one or both of the cards please contact Sara Pells and she will be happy to sort it out for you. The "Wait" cards cost £3 and the "help" cards cost £1.50.



Parent's Evening

There will be the usual opportunity to meet with class staff to discuss the progress that your child is making during this term. Our Parent's Evening will take place on Wednesday 3rd March from 6-8 p.m. Further details will come home in good time to allow you to make your choices.

Kevin Filby and Paula Benneworth from Activities Unlimited will also be attending the Parent's Evening to explain about the development of short break opportunities, through Activities Unlimited, for children with additional needs or a disability. They will explain how you can register and the benefits available for you and your child.



Dates for Your Diary

These are some of the important dates you need to be aware of:

12th February - break up for half-term

22nd February – Staff training day

23rd February—school re-opens

3rd March - Open Evening

1st April – Easter Assembly

1st April - Break up for Easter

19th April – staff training day

20th April - school re-opens