

Newsletter for Parents and Carers

December 2010



A View from The Bridge



SNOW SNOW and more SNOW!!

Unfortunately we had to test our bad weather procedures a little too early this year! Hopefully the text messages helped you prepare for the two days that we had to close. If for some reason you didn't get a message please contact the school office to make sure we have up to date numbers for you. We would also be interested in any feedback regarding the text messaging. Our one major cancellation due to the snow was the carol concert with the other primary schools at Copleston. It is unlikely to be re arranged due to all schools having so many other commitments at this time of the year.

It has been great to see so many of you at the Christmas Productions at the Primary Campus and the Carol Concert on the Secondary Campus but in case I don't see you before the end of term, can I wish you a very Merry Christmas on behalf of all the staff at The Bridge School as we look forward to a busy new year and new challenges.

Changes and additional Professional Development Days

Just to remind you the students on the Secondary Campus will return on January 4th and on the Primary Campus January 5th. We will still be having our additional PD days on both campuses on 4th April. I have attached to this newsletter a new sheet of term dates for you to save and put in your diary/notice board. As we now have an additional bank holiday for the Royal Wedding on April 29th.



Parents' Group

We had some very useful Parents' Group meetings this term. The visit from the Clarkes Shop Manager, Mr Browning was very useful. He would like you all to be aware that by phoning in advance you can book an assistant who is aware of special needs and autism. They are also willing to open early 9:00 to 9:30 but you need to contact Campus Directors in advance as it has to be for more than one person and school needs to arrange this. If you have difficulty in parking there may be the possibility of parking at the rear of the shop while you are in the shop but again you need to call in advance. We are in the process of putting a social story together and when we have we will not only let you know but we will also put it on the school website.

The hairdressing on the Secondary Campus went very well. Stephanie, who is the older sister of one of our students was very patient and resourceful and all the parents were really pleased with the results and are keen for us to make it a regular session. Stephanie will be visiting the Primary Campus on Tuesday 8th February so if you haven't previously requested your child's haircut in familiar surroundings of school please contact the school office to see if we can add anyone else on to Stephanie's next visit. The cost of the haircut is £5

We also had a very informative PECS awareness session led by Jacqui Davies and Rose Bacon but unfortunately due to the weather only a few parents were able to attend.

We have many other useful meetings arranged for next term and it is not too late to sign up. We have Makaton training sessions Stage 1 and 2 on the Primary Campus on Tuesday 11th January with Stages 3 and 4 on Tuesday 15th February as well as an informal meeting on Tuesday 25th January on Secondary Campus where we discuss future sessions. Something new for your diary is a workshop on the creative use of colour on 15th March on Primary Campus. More details to follow in the New Year.

School Meals and Uniform

Please be aware that a school uniform order will be sent off on Thursday 16th December so please ensure your order is with the office in time. There is likely to be a price increase in January.

Please also remember that school dinners increase to £2.10 from the beginning of term.



Multi Cultural and MFL Day

On the Primary Campus at the beginning of November we had a Jewish Multi Cultural week with all the pupils learning about the Jewish faith and taking part in many exciting activities and cooking lessons connected with this. On the Friday we had an assembly where all the pupils showed what they had made/cooked and we had a visit from 3B from the Secondary Campus who helped us join the celebrations. There are photos on the school website on the events page.

On November 17th on the Secondary Campus all normal lessons were suspended while everyone all experienced activities about India. There were many enjoyable lessons where they had the opportunity to learn about the culture and music of the country and they were also

able to watch dancing by students from University of Essex and participate in cooking with one of our student's older brothers. There are also pictures of this on the same web page.



Children In Need

As you know we supported Children In Need on both Campuses. In total across the two campuses we raised in excess of £316. Thank you for all your support.

You might be aware that I did 'my bit' on the Secondary Campus by allowing teachers and students to throw wet sponges at me. If you would like to see how they did it photos are again on the events page of the website. I think everyone enjoyed the opportunity but I'm not sure who enjoyed it the most the students or the staff but at least this helped to raise lots of money!



Free Meals

Suffolk County Council are committed to providing assistance for children from entitled house holds and they would like me to remind you of the criteria required to have your child's meal provided free of charge. If you feel you are receiving any of the benefits listed below please call 01473 584784 and speak to Clare Perkins who will gladly advise you further.

- Income Support
- Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance
- Employment Support Allowance (Income related)
- Child Tax Credit, **and** you are not entitled to receive Working Tax Credit **and** you have a taxable income of less than £16,190 (from 6 April 2010) as shown on your Tax Credit Award Summary
- The Guarantee Element of the State Pension Credit or
- Support under part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999

By applying for free meals this can often then entitle you to other benefits such as help with computers etc as the government uses eligibility to free meals as a benchmark. In addition, the new government has decided that part of the funding we receive to run the school will be determined by the number of children who are registered for free school meals. This funding, called the Pupil Premium, is extra funding on top of our normal budget.

It would help us enormously if all eligible children are registered even if they do not actually take the free meals by early in January when we have to complete a census for the Department of Education because this will then maximise the funding we receive within our budget. So even if your child will not eat a school dinner or is gastrostomy fed but you feel you would be entitled please call either Clare at the area office or the school office to discuss it further or to receive a form.

Dates for your Diary

- 14th December – Upper Team Christmas Production on Primary Campus
- 15th December – Christmas Lunch Secondary Campus
- 16th December – Christmas Lunch Primary Campus
- 17th December – Break up for Christmas
- 21st December - STARS Christmas Party for Students at Secondary Campus 10-3pm
- 4th January 2011 – Staff Development Day Primary Campus only
- 4th January 2011 – **Secondary Campus open for students**
- 5th January 2011 – **Primary Campus open for pupils**
- 18th February 2011 – Break up for half term
- 28th February 2011 – Back to school
- 15th March 2011 - Workshop for parents of Creative Use of Colour -Primary Campus
- 28th March 2011 - **Staff Development Day Secondary Campus only**
- 4th April 2011 - **Staff Development Day for Whole School**
- 8th April 2011 – **Break up for Easter**

And Finally

As you may be aware we are linked with a Special School in Gambia called Hart House. The school was founded by Geoff Hunwicks in 2001 and is a charitable organisation. It is "not for profit, and has no religious, racial, tribal, and political allegiances". Geoff is a British National and has had many years experience with children with learning difficulties. The link was first established when one of our Teaching Assistants and Governor, Christine Leigh from the Primary Campus went there on holiday and visited the school. We have been supporting them with money and donations since early 2009 and again this year the proceeds from the raffles and the collection from the church service will be donated to Hart House. In addition to this both campuses will be donating their loose change and making donations instead of sending internal Christmas cards. The school in Gambia is always in need of additional support but they have been experiencing additional financial difficulties recently when they were unable to pay staff for two months.



Thank you very much to everyone who contributed money and raffle prizes.

The Bridge School (Secondary Campus)

Term Dates 2010/2011

Spring Term

Tuesday 4 January to Friday 8 April 2011
(Half Term week commencing 21 February 2011)

Summer Term

Wednesday 27 April 2011 to Friday 22 July 2011
(Half Term week commencing 30 May 2011)
Bank Holiday Monday 2 May 2011
Staff Training Day 28 March 2011
Staff Training Day Monday 4 April
Royal Wedding Friday 29 April 2011
Staff Training Day 6 June 2011

Staff Training days

1 September 2010
2 September 2010
28 March 2011
4 April 2011
26 April 2011
6 June 2011