



# December Newsletter



## Dates for your diary

Friday 3 <sup>rd</sup> December	Daily Mile Santa Run (Santa hats)
Saturday 4 <sup>th</sup> Dec	Final AQE P7
Thursday 9 <sup>th</sup> Dec	Christmas Dinner & Christmas Jumper Day Fundraiser Choir singing at pick up times 11.30pm Outside Nursery 1.50pm Back of the school 2.50pm Front of the school
Monday 13 <sup>th</sup> Dec	Choir on Tour in the local community (11-12 approximately)
Tuesday 14 <sup>th</sup> Dec	Christmas Fun Day (Parties, wear party clothes or Christmas jumper/accessories)
Wednesday 15 <sup>th</sup> Dec	PTA Christmas Movie Day (more details will follow)
Tuesday 21 <sup>st</sup> Dec	School finishes at 12 (non-uniform)

We had a great 'Santa Run' today. The MUGA was filled with very energetic pupils and staff all day. See the website for the many photos.

## Class Christmas Performances

Due to Covid, we have again been unable to have our usual Christmas performances and carol services. Each class are working on a class Christmas performance of a song/poem. This will be shared with all parents via Google Classroom or the school website before the end of term.

## Christmas Jumper Day

Pupils may wear their Christmas jumpers and Christmas accessories. This day is going to be a fundraiser for our new outdoor playground for all pupils. This will be a substantial cost to the school but a very worthwhile investment for all our pupils. We hope to purchase some of the playground equipment with our Shared Education funding but the ground work and fitting of a new safety surface is going to be very expensive. We hope that this will be installed during this school year and can then be enjoyed by all pupils. A suggested donation of £2.

## Choir

Mrs Allen and the choir have been busy practising many Christmas Carols. We would like to share this with our school community. So on **Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> December** they will be singing at pick up times for parents to enjoy (see above for times). **Please remember to stay socially distanced and wear a face mask.**

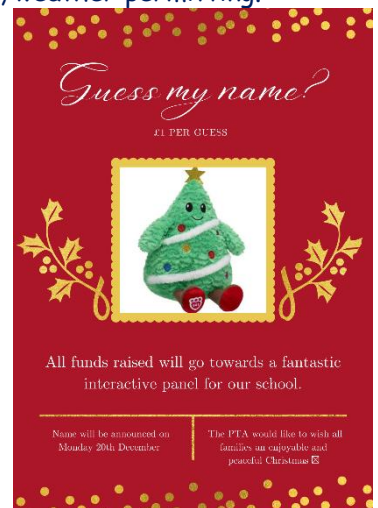
We also hope to go out carol singing around the community on **Monday 13<sup>th</sup> December**, weather permitting.

## PTA Christmas Fundraiser

We are very grateful to the PTA for raising funds for a new interactive panel for school. We hope that this will be purchased very soon. Thank you for continuing to support the PTA activities. The 'Build a Bear' **Christmas Tree** is going around the classes each day for the pupils to guess the name. Someone will be very excited to take it home before Christmas!

## Cash for Clobber

Remember to use the clothing bank to the left of the main school. Please continue to use this to put in bags of clothing/textiles that you no longer need. The PTA then receives a cheque following collections.



## Easy Fundraising



Please consider raising funds for the school via the PTA's Easy Fundraising online service. Shopping doesn't cost you a penny more, but as you make purchases online, shops make a donation to the PTA. All you do is register (it's good to select the "Donation Reminder" option) and start shopping. Please give it a go and encourage your friends and family to do so too - it is free money to benefit the children of Orchard County Primary School and Nursery! Please register by clicking the link

below: <https://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/orchardcountyprimaryschoolpta/>

Once you have joined, the next time you shop online, start at [easyfundraising.org.uk](https://www.easyfundraising.org.uk) and log in. If you shop with your phone or tablet you can download the [easyfundraising app](#).

## Sickness

We have experienced a particularly bad period of illness with pupils and staff. If your child is sick, please keep them at home until they are well enough for school. Some children have been sent to school, after being ill during the night or prior to coming to school. These pupils are then spreading bugs to others.

There is currently a shortage of substitute teaching staff, therefore, if a staff member is off ill, it is becoming increasingly difficult to provide cover for classes. One day this week, we had to move nursery to remote learning, as we could not obtain any substitute staff and I was already teaching another class.

I am very grateful to the staff who were in school, as they have covered various classes, supervisory duties and have been cleaning the school. Our classroom assistants have been amazing, they are very capable, taking on any role when required.

I hope our staffing situation improves. The governors have discussed this situation and if we do not have sufficient staff to cover classes, we may have to move some classes to remote learning, on a rota basis. Please be prepared for this as we do not get a lot of notice. Moving to remote learning is a last resort but we have to risk assess on health and safety grounds. I'm sure you have seen the news and this has been happening in many schools across Northern Ireland.

**Covid-** we continue to have cases of Covid throughout the school. We would ask that you continue to look out for symptoms and get a PCR test for your child if necessary. Many of the children in school are testing positive on day 8, following close contact with a positive case.

## Christmas Technology

Just a reminder that if Santa does happen to bring your child some new technology for Christmas, please remember to set up parental controls on these devices. Please also keep a close eye on what your child is using their device for.

'Healthy, Happy Minds' is a new initiative funded by DE/EA. A small amount of money has been made available to all schools to support children and their mental health.

We are currently in the process of identifying children who may benefit from this support. If you have any particular concerns regarding your child and how they are coping with school or life in general, please let us know by sending an email to their class teacher or myself.

We will then prioritise who we think would benefit most from this service. This will be confidential and the pupils will be supported by a fully recognised and accredited professional. Should your child be prioritised for this we will contact you.

Finally, I would like to thank you all for your support to the staff this term. On behalf of the governors, staff and pupils, I would like to wish you all a very happy and peaceful family Christmas.

Mrs J McMillan  
Principal



# Bounce Back

"Do you find yourself in cycles of nagging and bickering with partners and children? Are you fed up 'fighting fires' at home every day?"

If so then join us as we look at real ways to manage day to day challenges, cope with bumps along the way and all the while keeping our cool.

FREE parent and carer workshops via zoom

6 sessions 8pm-9pm starting Mon 10th January or Thursday 13th January 2022

Call us on  
0808 8020 400  
to learn more and book your place

Mon-Thurs 9am-9pm

Friday 9am-5pm

Saturday 9am-1pm

Supported by the Public Health Agency through the Clear Project

