

Dear Parent / Carer,

The term has gone so quickly! Already we are within a few short weeks of the Christmas holiday and the school is ringing to the sound of children rehearsing Christmas songs and carols. We are all gearing up for the Community Carol Concert, the 'Voice in a Million' concert at St Andrew's Hall and of course our very own Christmas concert performances. We hope you enjoy sharing some of these festive events with us.

Last week we held an open morning and intake evening for parents of Year 2 children. We received so many compliments from our visitors and are so pleased that their children felt so immediately at home and at ease in their future school. Of course it was very much thanks to all your children who gave up their evening so happily to come back and show off *their* school to the younger ones! We are also very grateful to FOF who on top of everything else found time to organise all the refreshments for the events.

As this is the last newsletter before the Christmas break, all the children and staff at Firsides wish you a very merry Christmas and a happy new year.



CHRISTMAS FAYRE

Friends of Firsides would like to thank everyone who came and joined us at the Christmas Fayre on Saturday. It was a great success as always, and you helped us raise just short of £900 which is amazing!

Christmas Concerts

This year we will again be presenting an evening of festive celebration. It will include singing, drama and a variety of presentations from each year group to make an enjoyable entertainment for parents to come and share. As in previous years there will be performances at 1:30pm and 6:00pm. Letters about ticket allocation will be sent out very shortly along with further details. We intend that the events will involve the whole school for everyone to take part in and enjoy. (Tuesday 10th Year 3 & Year 5, Wednesday 11th Year 4 & Year 6).

Christmas Charity Fundraising

The school is supporting two charities at Christmas.

First of all we will be holding a collection at the Christmas performances in support of the *Philippine disaster appeal*. All funds raised will be sent to the Disasters Emergency Committee (DEC) who will channel the funds to where it is most needed.

We also will continue our annual support for the *Buckingham Emergency Food Appeal* (BEFA). For those who don't know, this local charity collects bags of sugar which they then supply to homeless people and to night-shelters and hostels. We would like to start collecting from December 1st and hope you will be able to support our efforts.

Anti-Bullying Week

During the last week in November, the school held its annual anti-bullying week. Across the school we focussed on the clear message that bullying is not to be tolerated at Firside. We were pleased to welcome back a visit from Playright Theatre Company for an exciting and thought-provoking start to the week.

Some people use the label "bullying" for any unpleasantness and this is unhelpful. Real bullying is a world away from squabbling, falling-out between friends or banter! The Anti-Bullying-Alliance defines it as *repetitive, intentional* hurtful behaviour, where there is an *imbalance of power* between those involved.

This year's anti-bullying week focus is Cyberbullying. Cyberbullying has the same effect as face-to-face verbal or psychological bullying but it takes place via mobile phones, emails or texting. With more, and more, young people having mobile phones this is becoming an increasing concern nationally. Cyberbullying is especially hurtful because anyone can practice it without having to confront the victim – the usual inhibitions don't exist. You don't have to be fast or strong – you just have to have a mobile or computer and the wish to be hurtful.

We are pleased that our work in this area throughout the year is successful and are extremely pleased that repeated surveys and inspections highlight how well the school deals with the "very rare" incidents that sometimes occur.



Diary Dates

December

Tuesday	3 rd	Y3 to visit Meadow Way Chapel 'Voice in a Million': choir concert at St Andrew's Hall 7pm-9.30pm
Sunday	8 th	Carol Service at Hellesdon High School.....3.30pm
Tuesday	10 th	Christmas Performances Y3 & 5.....1.30pm & 6pm
Wednesday	11 th	Christmas Performances Y4 & 6.....1.30pm & 6pm
Friday	13 th	Y3 to Puppet Theatre
Thursday	19 th	Christmas Lunch – Have you ordered your lunch? Year 6 Book Café.....2 pm
Friday	20 th	Last day of Autumn term

January

Tuesday	7 th	First day of Spring term
---------	-----------------	--------------------------



EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT BEFA

BEFA is a locally founded, locally operated charity with roots in the farming community and a strong commitment to the people of Norfolk. It has a 28 year history of bringing good food to the homeless from the people of Norfolk.

BEFA's mission is simply to help feed the homeless and those fleeing domestic violence at Christmas. We work through established shelters, supported accommodation projects etc. and with other experienced agencies, such as the Salvation Army, which have daily contact with the homeless.

BEFA is a 100% voluntary organization. There are no paid staff and the administration costs are negligible. So, almost every penny donated goes to purchase food.

- **Local farmers** donate most of the fresh produce – more than 40 pallets of fruit and vegetables. Food Wholesalers and Manufacturers donate foodstuffs at Christmas, and during the course of the year too. The total value of food donated last year was nearly £60,000.
- **Norfolk schoolchildren** donate sugar – nearly 4 tonnes last year! **British Sugar** matches the "Silver Spoon" sugar donated by Norfolk schoolchildren
- **Norfolk families and Schools** make donations of cash, which is used to purchase those necessary food items (like Turkeys and Christmas Puddings) which have not been donated.
- **Local Charities** recognize the importance of our work by sending donations.
- **Local volunteers** donate time, office space, supplies, etc.
- **Local businesses** help with postage, copying, transportation and warehousing.

BEFA sends only the food that is needed. Each homeless project is sent a shopping list of the Christmas foods BEFA can provide. They mark the quantities they need, and add a "wish list". We at BEFA work to supply everything.

BEFA provides food for more than 70,000 meals at Christmas and over the following 10 days.