

Christmas Arrangements

Dear Parents,

As you know, this year has presented all sorts of challenges and we have had to rethink the way we do things in order to keep us open and to keep everyone as safe as we possibly can. With this in mind, the run up to Christmas is inevitably going to look a little bit different this year.

Christmas Cards

On the advice of the Local Authority, Christmas cards will not be allowed in school this year. Instead, we are inviting children to create a Christmas message for their friends which can be sent to us to form a gallery of Christmas wishes on our website. This can be in any form they wish: photos, pictures, drawings, digital animations, video messages – get creative! Children should avoid using individual names, but instead wish all of their friends a Happy Christmas in their message, whatever form it takes. These can be sent to website@ashchurch.gloucs.sch.uk or via the Facebook page before the end of term to be added to the gallery. Whilst not the same as Christmas cards, hopefully the contributions sent in will form a unique gallery that can be downloaded and cherished as a reminder of Christmas during the strangest of times we are experiencing this year.

Christmas Lunch

Christmas lunch will take place on Wednesday 16th December. The menu is attached to this email. Lunches will need to be ordered in advance, by 3.15 on Wednesday 2nd December so that we can order ingredients. There is an order form on School Spider to let us know what they would like. Please remember to complete one form for each child and to complete the form even if they are having a packed lunch. As always, lunches are free for children in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 and £2.32 for all other children. Payment is via ParentPay. Please request a ParentPay letter by emailing the office, admin@ashchurch.gloucs.sch.uk, if you do not already have an account but your child in KS2 would like Christmas lunch. Children can wear a Christmas jumper to school on Wednesday 16th December.

Class Parties

Working within our 'covid secure' measures, we are unable to organise class parties in the usual way this year. Getting changed into party clothes and bringing in and sharing food are not going to be possible this year. That said, we are making a real effort around school to make things as magical as we can for the children and the those in Diamonds, Pearls and Emeralds have already seen a Winter Wonderland appear in the area outside their classrooms this week. Their faces were a picture! We will soon be spreading some Christmas cheer throughout Rubies and Sapphires too! In the final week of term, we will come 'off timetable' and organise a range of fun, festive activities in class groups throughout the week.

Table Decorations

Some of you will know that we usually offer a table decoration workshop at this time of year with florist Jo Hiorns of Simply Flowers. The children love this activity and are always proud of the results. An example picture of what they look like is attached to this email. This year, Jo is not able to visit us, but has agreed to provide the materials for us to do the activity within our 'bubbles'. Alternatively, we can provide a kit including all the materials to do this at home. They are £5 each and the options are available on School Spider now. Please can we have orders by the end of school on Wednesday 2nd December so that we can organise materials with Jo. We will do the activity and send out kits in the last week of term so that they keep for Christmas.

PTFA Christmas Raffle

We are unable to hold a Christmas fair this year. However, we are going to run a Christmas raffle with some fantastic cash prizes. PTFA fundraising has been hit hard this year with almost no events since February but they are keen to keep doing what they can to raise funds for the school, particularly new playground games and equipment for when the new build is finished. In normal times, we are very grateful for the support of local businesses who support us with kind donations of prizes and vouchers. This year, it doesn't feel right to seek prize donations as many small businesses have been hit hard by the pandemic. We are therefore offering three fantastic cash prizes: £200, £100 and £50. Entries are £1 each and there is no limit on the number of entries you can buy.

We are using a platform called Raffall to manage to process. We have been in touch with other PTFAs locally who have used Raffall successfully and we are confident that it will be a success for us this year too. They use a third-party payment processor approved by Visa and MasterCard (and authorised by the Financial Conduct Authority), processing all payments through a server-to-server system which means that Raffall never see or store payment card details. The draw is also automated at the end so that the host (the PTFA) has no influence at all over the selection of winners.

We would be really grateful if you could spread the word about our raffle far and wide – family members, friends, colleagues – everyone is welcome! Feel free to pass on the link! Your support really does help.

<https://raffall.com/150342/enter-raffle-to-win-christmas-cash-hosted-by-ashchurch-primary>

Last Day

Our last day of this term is usually a half day when we go to the church for Christmas carols before finishing at 12. We are unable to visit the church this year and with the logistics of a staggered finish in mind, term will now finish at normal school time on Thursday 17th December (3pm for siblings, 3.10 for KS1 and 3.15 for KS2). The new term begins again on Monday 4th January 2021.