



Dear Parents / Carers

On Friday this week the autumn term comes to an end after a busy 7 weeks at Eastlea. This letter provides information for the remaining days of this week as well an update on some of the many events which have happened in recent months.

Eastlea Christmas activities

Our Eastlea Christmas activities have been very well supported. **THANK YOU** for attending events in such large numbers:

- Lots of families really seemed to enjoy our annual **Nursery and Reception family Christmas craft workshops**. The attendance for these was very high – with families saying they appreciated the opportunity to work alongside their child in school.
- the **Festive Meal prepared and served by Year 6** was also very well received by parents/wider family members/governors who were able to attend. The children prepared and served a 3 course Christmas meal for their guests and provided entertainment too. On that afternoon the children raised a further **£60** for their Enterprise funds.
- There was a lovely atmosphere at the **Christmas Fair** as families attended in huge numbers. In total we raised the amazing total of **£2354.00 – our highest yet for a Christmas Fair**. This money goes towards our Golden Day funds. *(And another **£116.25** was added to this total from the refreshments and donations last week at the performances – thank you!)*
- Our various performances in recent weeks have had very supportive audiences – including large numbers coming to see our **Rocksteady bands** as well as the **singing/violin club concert** and the five **key stage Christmas productions**. Those who attended were treated to some great performances in the school hall. The change in format for the joint KS1&KS2 production appeared to work well – and we had lots of positive comments.

There are of course still more events going on, with the class parties this week and the Christmas dinner tomorrow, plus Year 6 out carol singing at Sainsbury's Manor Walks on Wednesday at 10am and obviously the countdown continuing to our special Christmas Golden Day on Thursday this week!

School meals this week – a reminder

Due to the Christmas dinner tomorrow, the school lunch menus for Tuesday and Wednesday will be as follows:

- Tuesday 17th – Christmas dinner
- Wednesday 18th – chicken / turkey (!) curry

The other days will follow the usual Week 1 menu and when we return in w/b 7th January it will be week 1 menus again – *we always start with week 1 after a school holiday!*

Charity and Fundraising Support

We have had a number of charity events this half term and wanted to say **THANK YOU** once again for your generosity and support for each and every one of them...

- **Poppies** – in November, the half term started with Year 5 coordinating our annual support for the Royal British Legion poppy appeal. **£353.70** was raised for this very worthwhile cause part of a grand total of £30,672.80 raised in Cramlington. Well done!
- **Children In Need** – our traditional 'Pennies for Pudsey' event took place and we raised the brilliant total of **£481.16** for Children in Need.
- **Book Fair** – the Scholastic Book Fair was available in school last week for those who attended the Christmas productions and others who bought books at other times. In total we sold **£150** worth of books. We felt this year that the books were expensive to buy and have decided that unless a different 'deal' can be offered to us, then this will be the last bookfair from Scholastic that we run at Christmas time.
- The **ASDA Cashpot** fundraising event proved to be a big success too. Thanks to a prompt start with the Cashpot campaign when we were alerted to it by some of our Eastlea families, the magnificent total of **£920.26** has been 'donated' to Eastlea. Thank you to everyone who shopped at ASDA last month.

End of term awards

- **Reading** – Our Castles reading challenge has been very successful and almost all the children now have extremely good ‘reading routines’ each week. The first Bronze awards were presented on 29th November and so far we have been able to present certificates/‘magnetic bookmarks’ keyrings to **175** children. These pupils have already started on their silver bookmark! If your child hasn’t yet received the bronze award, it is not too late! Encourage them to keep reading and more certificates will be awarded in the New Year! **Reading in the Christmas holiday counts as one sticker on their ‘Castles’ bookmark’!**
- **Writing** – on 27th November ‘Star Writer’ certificates, gold pencils and letters were presented to the children chosen as autumn term writing award winners for their enthusiasm and progress shown in writing across the curriculum in their class since September. Well done to them all!
- **Maths** – on 2nd December one child from each class was chosen who had shown real enthusiasm, resilience and determination in class-based maths lessons. These maths award winners each received a letter and certificate. Times Table Rock Star (TTRS) certificates were also presented to members of KS2 who had shown improved scores, accuracy, speed of recall and extra effort. Congratulations to all our winners!
- **Sports** – our **Y5/Y6 basketball team** represented Eastlea superbly in the Thunder in the Valley tournament at the Eagles arena and I know that the large group of children and family members who came to watch this and/or the Eagles game that evening had a great time. Some families have also taken up the offer of discounted tickets at other games since then too.
The whole school was also involved in the **National Santa Dash** on Friday 6th December which was organised by our Year 6 Sports Leaders. Thank you!
Our **Year 3 team** thoroughly enjoyed their **Hoopstarz** festival with an Eastlea pupil winning the award for maintaining their hooping while also doing skills for the longest time. Well done! She and two of her classmates were presented with hoops as recognition of their resilience and positive attitude during this festival.
Year 3 were also successful in the KS2 multi-skills competition. They were delighted to hear this morning that they had come **FIRST** in the **Cramlington and Seaton Valley schools multi-skills** competition and will progress to the ‘zoom’ finals which take place in January. **WELL DONE!!**

HUGGG ‘Free School Meal’ vouchers for eligible families

This week an order will be placed for the vouchers which can be exchanged for groceries at local supermarkets. This will mean that parents of those children eligible for benefit based free school meals will have a link emailed to them which they can activate to generate a gift card for use over the Christmas holidays at a supermarket of their choice. Please note that the expiry date to activate the vouchers is 31st January 2025.

Christmas Golden Day – Thursday 19th December

As I am sure you are aware, everyone who has earned the right to take part in Golden Day is looking forward to Thursday! Nursery children will be in school wearing their pyjamas for their ‘**Twas the night before Christmas**’ interactive workshop, while everyone else will be heading out after an early lunch to Newcastle Theatre Royal for the matinée performance of **The Little Mermaid**. We can’t wait!!

Please remember that for all children (apart from Nursery) school uniform is required on Golden Day – with the option of festive headgear (Santa hats/reindeer antlers etc).



Can we also ask that for those going to the theatre, no reading folders, water bottles, bags, scarves/gloves etc are brought into school on Golden Day. They won’t need them and it will make it easier to dismiss the children quickly on our return to school without them needing to go to classrooms/cloakrooms.

On our return to school from Newcastle the pupils will be taken into the school hall to be dismissed from there by their class teachers – the timing of 5.15pm is approximate, but we will aim to let you know a more specific time when we are on the way back to school depending on traffic.

Mental health and wellbeing update

It had been our intention to follow up the outcomes of the parental questionnaire this half term with a **workshop for parents/carers**. However, due to the hectic 'festive' diary and also the ill health of Miss Fox (Senior Mental Health Lead) this has not been possible. Our apologies. We will, however, aim to arrange an initial session for parents in the new term and will share more information about the format and timing for this in January.

Within school we have continued to explore mental health and wellbeing within our curriculum delivery. The whole school focus on '**Choose Respect**' was the key message in our **Friendship Week** and the **Raven play** which we were fortunate to host was very well received by the children that week too. Since then our KS2 classes have been continuing to use the **MELVA** resource in their **Personal Development** lessons and we have also had a couple of visits from the two **Educational Mental Health Practitioners** who will be spending some time working with us in the coming year. Amy and Alex have observed an assembly, a personal development lesson and a session in the Haven. They have also met with key staff and are due to attend another staff meeting in the first week back in January.

Miss Fox was successful in her application to allow Eastlea to become involved in the **Peer Mentoring** programme. This involves a group of Year 5 pupils who are being trained in this role and will hopefully gain a qualification to work alongside other children who need some support with aspects of school life. Having been involved in one of their sessions, I know the 11 children involved are very excited about their training so far!

Attendance update

Our high focus on attendance continues and in January we will be in touch with parents of children whose attendance has fallen below 90% (persistent absentees) and those whose attendance percentage is at risk of dropping below this figure (below 94%). We are very grateful to those parents who have spoken to staff about issues they are facing with getting their children into school due to illness or other issues. This has enabled us to discuss the problems being faced and work together to address them.

Just a reminder that in terms of illness, whilst sickness and/or diarrhoea does require an absence of 48 hours to help reduce the risks of bugs being spread, other **minor illnesses do NOT require your child to miss school**. It is fine for children with a sniffly nose, sore throat, headache or other cold symptoms to attend school. In some cases, if it helps, then with your signed permission we can administer a dose of calpol to your child at lunchtime if this will prevent them missing school. The NHS information about this is always our reference point – "**Is my child too ill for school?**" which can be found at <https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/is-my-child-too-ill-for-school/>



Early Years updates

1. Most Nursery parents have now completed their application for Reception places in September 2025. A final reminder that the **closing date for Reception school admissions is 15th January 2025**. The information about this is all on the Northumberland County Council website (school admissions).

2. We have 11 children who are due to join our Nursery next term. We will welcome them for either full day or half day sessions. These children will start during the first few days of the new term in January and arrangements for this have been shared with the families concerned.

3. Our Nursery continues to be very popular, so I would advise that if you or someone you know has a pre-school age child and they would like a place at our Eastlea Nursery then it is best to apply as soon as possible, even if it is for some way in advance!

Year 4 swimming – advance notice

Swimming starts for pupils in Year 4 in the spring term. The first session will be on Monday 13th January and the children will have a one hour session at the pool for 10 weeks in the spring term. The cost of each session is £4.50 per child per week. This price includes the school subsidising the costs of the lesson and the transport. The swimming lessons are part of the KS2 PE curriculum but in order for us to provide this for the children we have to pay for the instructors and the coach transport to get us to the pool at Concordia. In common with the other schools in the Cramlington partnership we therefore have to ask for a £4.50 donation from parents/carers each week. Without these contributions, the lessons will not be able to go ahead in this format. A letter with further information about this will be shared with Year 4 parents.

Eastlea in the news

Some of our 'Active October' activities were featured in the Northumberland News last week. It is always lovely to see news of our events being highlighted in the wider media!

Linked to this, we have been gifted some 'Go Smarter' zip tags for all pupils so that when they are out and about walking or cycling over the Christmas holidays / winter months they can be seen to keep safe.

Thank you!



Hope Centre uniform

A reminder that if you need to 'refresh' any school uniform over the Christmas holiday, the Hope Centre Uniform and baby bank in Cramlington will still be open over the festive fortnight before the new term starts in January if you need any **FREE** pre-loved items. They can be contacted by email on: hope1uniform@gmail.com

And finally, I would like to wish everyone a 'Merry Christmas'...and don't forget that the pupils break up at **2pm on Friday 20th December** for their Christmas holidays.

Have a safe and happy holiday and we will see you all again on **Tuesday 7th January 2025** when we reopen for pupils for the spring term! (Monday 6th January is a staff training day).

Yours sincerely,
Miss E Beeston,
Head Teacher

**Merry
Christmas**