

Dear Parents and Carers,

We are entering what is always a very busy (but very enjoyable) period of the school year and every single member of staff is determined to ensure that the children at Alverton School enjoy the 2020 festive period.

First of all ...

As we mentioned last week, we are aware that we are in the middle of a particularly difficult period and that some families are under enormous financial strain. If you are struggling financially and are finding it difficult to feed your family at the moment, please contact Mr Higgs at head@alverton.cornwall.sch.uk and we will do our best to offer you support. All requests and support will be treated in the strictest confidence.

An update about how we are responding to COVID ...

As the end of term approaches, it seems like a good time to give you some information about how we are continuing to respond as a school to the health situation. We remain committed to doing the right thing at the right time. At the time of writing this newsletter, we have not had any members of staff or pupils test positive for COVID and, as yet, we have not had to action any class closures (or similar). Please be assured that, in every situation where we have been made aware that there has been the slightest concern, we have followed official guidelines. Plans are in place for any classes that do need to close but let's all hope that this does not occur. All schools are having to juggle a number of issues at the moment but our priority will always remain the safeguarding and wellbeing of our community.

With this in mind, please can we all work together to keep the site as safe as possible during drop off and pick up times. The main ways in which you can help are ensuring that only one adult comes onto the site to drop off and collect their children, keeping paths clear and following the one way system, and being on site for the shortest possible times. Thank you.

Whole School Nativity ...

This has taken on a life of its own! From our office, we can often clearly hear the (small and guideline-approved) groups of children in the hall practising some of our favourite Christmas songs. These include "Do Not Be Afraid" (Mrs Wicks's favourite) and "Sheep on the Move" (Mr Higgs's) which even has an accompanying dance. There will be room for some classics ("We Three Kings") and also the whole-school favourite "Bells Will Ring" which we have sung for many years and which was written by Mrs England. And don't worry ... the Carol Service "highlight", also known as the Staff Carol, will make an appearance. It's all been different this year, but still an enormous amount of fun. Thank you to all the staff who have, as usual, worked incredibly hard and been very creative, and especially to Mrs O'Rourke, who is masterminding the event, Mrs England, who is tirelessly practising singing and teaching a large number of instrumentalists some accompaniments, and Mr Keast who is making the film. We will let you know how this can be viewed as soon as we can.

The prize for ambitiousness, however, probably goes to Mrs Hall, who is filming a Woodlands Nursery Nativity outdoors, in costumes, in the woods with 60 children aged 3 and 4 years. We remain hopeful that she will have rounded most of these children up in time for Santa's scheduled visit!

Finally ...

Our biggest strength will always be the teamwork and co-operation shown by the whole school community and everyone at Alverton really appreciates the support shown to us by our parents now more than ever.

Best wishes,

Mr Higgs and Mrs Wicks

Non uniform day - Friday 11th December

Friday 11th December is a non uniform day to raise funds for FOAS (Friends of Alverton School). If your child wishes to wear something Christmassy or their own clothes they can and either bring in a donation (suggested amount £1) or you can donate via the FOAS Just Giving page (please see details below). This is so that money can be raised this year as FOAS are unable to hold a Christmas Fair.



Lunches next week - IMPORTANT!

Wednesday 9th December - menu change

No roast meal. The menu will be fish and chips or spicy bean burger. Jacket potatoes and packed lunches will be available.

Friday 11th December

Christmas lunch - this must have been ordered. **No jacket potatoes or school packed lunches available.** If you have not ordered a Christmas lunch please send your child in with a packed lunch from home as there will not be any spare meals available on the day.

Christmas tree

Our Christmas tree still needs more decorations! Please could your child make one at home and bring it in on Monday. Thank you.

Our grateful thanks to Mole Valley Farmers at Ludgvan for their generous donation of the tree.

FOAS fundraising

FOAS have recently set up a Just Giving page to help us raise funds towards a new music room. If you would like to make a donation you can do so by following the link below:

<https://www.justgiving.com/campaign/alvertonmusic>

Thank you very much for your support.



Decorated Christmas window

We have, once again, entered the Penzance Town Christmas Window Competition and last year we won! If you are in town, please have a look at our Christmas window display which is in the old Hunter Walsh shop directly opposite the bottom of Causewayhead and then vote. You can vote either by scanning the QR code in the window or below or online at <https://lovepenzance.co.uk/christmas-window-comp/>

The winning school window will receive £250 and one lucky voter will receive £100. Many thanks to Miss Williams and her team of creative staff and children.



Penzance Christmas Window Competition

Vote for your favourite window

HOW TO VOTE

Simply scan the QR Code to be taken to the online voting form. Vote for your favourite business window and your favourite school window display.



Coronavirus symptoms

The main symptoms are:

A high temperature (hot to the touch on chest or back)

OR

A new, continuous cough (coughing a lot for more than an hour or 3 or more coughing episodes in 24 hours)

OR

A loss or change to your sense of smell or taste (you've noticed you cannot smell or taste anything or things smell or taste different to normal)

If you or your child have any **ONE** or more of these you must get a COVID-19 test as soon as possible and stay at home and do not have visitors— only leave home to get the test. Anyone you live with, and anyone in your support bubble, must also stay at home until you get your result. **Please ring or email the school office as soon as possible to let us know.**

You can book at test online at:

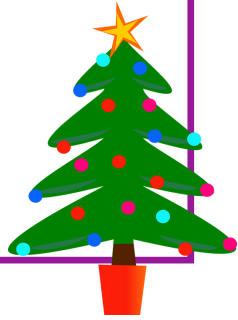
<https://www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test>

Drinks in school

Please remember that your child needs a named water bottle in school every day filled with water. As we are a healthy school please do not send in water bottles with squash or juice in them.

Wanted!

Our Reception class would really love a small artificial Christmas tree if you have a spare one that you don't want. One about the height of your average 5 year old would be perfect! If anyone also has any child friendly decorations for it, we would be extremely grateful. Thank you very much.



Need a chat?

Christmas is meant to be a jolly happy time of year. A time to celebrate and get together with family. Let your hair down and have some fun. Make some memories. I sincerely hope you can do just that. I'd you're finding it all a bit much, pop into for a chat. If Covid is getting to you, you've had enough of being brave, you just want life to get back to the way it was, you're missing family who perhaps can't come to celebrate, and you're really cross, fed up, grumpy, tearful, or you just want a cuppa and a biscuit, come and find me. I totally get it. I'm feeling exactly the same. I'm happy to be here for you. If not, can you be there for someone else? It's hard at the best of times but at this time of year it's so much harder. We all try to be brave and perhaps we shouldn't. Perhaps it's okay to be soft and tell someone else we find life tricky. It helps. No matter what, I'm here for you if you fancy a chat. You know where I am.

Mrs D





Cornwall Partnership NHS Foundation Trust

The Trust has its own Out of Hours telephone support provided by Support Matters Cornwall. This service operates from 5pm to 9am on weekdays and 24 hours a day at weekends and bank holidays. The service is open to all patients (aged 16+) under the care of the Trust's mental health services. Support can be delivered over the telephone, via text, email or web chat. Call free on **0800 001 4330**.



Family
Line

0808 802 6666



Download this image onto your phone for **when you might need help**



Samaritans: 24h
Emotional support to anyone in distress, struggling to cope, or at risk of suicide.

☎ **116 123**

Shout: 24h
Text service, free on all major networks, for anyone in crisis anytime, anywhere.

• If you're over 18, text the word **SHOUT**
• Under 18s, text **YM**

☎ **Text: 85258**

Cornwall's 24/7 NHS mental health support

Call for free, any time day or night if you are worried about your own or someone else's mental health. The team behind the 24/7 open access telephone service will listen to you and determine how best to help

☎ **0800 038 5300**

Valued Lives:

Supports people who are experiencing mental or emotional distress in Cornwall. Every day, 5.30pm - midnight.

☎ **01209 901438**

If you, or someone else, is in immediate danger call **999**



🌐 www.cornwall.gov.uk/mentalhealth

NSPCC

Help for children worried about COVID

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/childrens-mental-health/depression-anxiety-mental-health>

Penzance CTIPA Foodbank

The CTIPA Foodbank in Penzance provides food for anyone in need. If their support would be helpful to you, just phone Vryan or Adele in the office in confidence on 01736 364087 and they can phone the Foodbank for you who will be able to help.

The Foodbank are extremely busy at the moment and are very grateful for any donations.

ON YOUR SIDE NO MATTER WHAT

☎ **0800 58 58 58** 🌐 THECALMZONE.NET/WEBCHAT

5PM-MIDNIGHT | FREE | CONFIDENTIAL | ANONYMOUS

CAMPAIGN
AGAINST
LIVING
MISERABLY
CALM

citizens
advice

0344 411 1444

"It's alright to ask for help"

SAMARITANS

☎ **116 123**

COVID-19 isolation may cause tensions to rise and domestic abuse to increase. Help is available.



NATIONAL DOMESTIC VIOLENCE HELPLINE
0808 2000 247
24/7 CONFIDENTIAL FREEPHONE

WCWAid

West Cornwall Women's Aid
01736 367539

<https://www.wcwaaid.co.uk/helpline>



SafeToNet is an app for parents to help them safeguard their children from online risks like cyberbullying and sexting, whilst respecting their child's rights to privacy.

Online Safety

The BBC have a website and app called Own It. The website has a lot of content for children to help them navigate their online lives, and the free smartphone app comes with a special keyboard which can intervene with help and support in the moments that children need it the most.

Whilst there are huge benefits to being online in order to stay connected to family and friends, many parents may feel concerned about the activities and content their children are accessing. This guidance outlines resources to help keep children safe from different risks online and where to go to receive support and advice. This information is updated as needed (it's recently added new information on apps) so it's worth another look.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-keeping-children-safe-online/coronavirus-covid-19-support-for-parents-and-carers-to-keep-children-safe-online>

At National Online Safety we believe in empowering parents, carers and trusted adults with the information they need to hold an informed conversation about online safety with their children, should they feel it is needed. This guide focuses on one platform of many which we believe trusted adults should be aware of. Please visit www.nationalonlinesafety.com for further guides, hints and tips for adults.

What parents & carers need to know about ...

PLAYSTATION 5

The PlayStation 5 is the next-generation video game console from Sony. It offers improved graphics, sound and much quicker loading times. It also has a new controller with motion- and force-feedback features for a more immersive experience. Parents should note that there are two different versions available that support discs or digital downloads.

Safely setting up your Playstation 5

PlayStation 5 Blu-ray

PlayStation 5 Blu-ray is the larger of the two consoles, although not by a lot. It enables you to play games on disc or by digital download. Although all new games are available digitally, the disc drive is still useful to watch movies from discs as well as play most existing PlayStation 4 games you own. It also enables you to purchase second-hand games on a disc, which is often much cheaper.

PlayStation 5 Digital

PlayStation 5 Digital is slightly smaller as it doesn't contain a Blu-ray drive. This means the console is cheaper but can only run games you download via an internet connection. Unlike the Xbox Series X and the cheaper Series S, the digital-only PlayStation 5 is just as powerful as its more expensive disc-and-download counterpart.

Family Settings

Both PlayStation 5 models offer important family controls that should be set up before your family starts using the system. Although this can take a little time, it ensures that children have their own accounts and sets limits on spending, interactions and age ratings. If done correctly, children cannot circumvent these controls that require the parent's password to alter.

Setting Limits on Play Time

You can specify how long, and at which times of day, the console can be used to play without needing a password. Talk to your children and agree how long is appropriate, then set this on their profile, so it's something they understand and accept. You can set different time limits on each of the users on the system.

Managing Spending

You can set a limit on spending via Parental Controls. This means that any additional purchase requires your password. Another alternative is not to put credit card details into your account and instead add credit as they need it using the book token-like cards in-store or online. A nice feature on the PlayStation is setting an amount of pocket money to spend on games each month.

Setting Age Ratings

You can set a limit that stops any older-rated games being played without a password being entered. This is not only a good way to ensure children are playing appropriate content but is a good chance to talk about the games they are playing.

Downloading the PlayStation App

The PlayStation 5 uses the same PlayStation app as the PlayStation 4. This is a super-easy way to tweak the user settings for your family without having to log on to the console. It's also a good way to keep track of what different people are enjoying on the system. The app can also be used as an easier way to log-on by scanning the QR code.

Creating Guest Account Password

An important step during the PlayStation 5 set-up is specifying the default settings for guest accounts as well as a passcode for your own account. This ensures that all users need to access the system with their own account and related limits and settings.

Managing Online Interactions

Another important area of the Parental Controls is specifying how and who your child can interact with online. Modern consoles enable players to share text, voice, images and video with each other. You can set whether they can do this, and also apply a password before they can add new friends.

Game Subscriptions

In addition to buying individual games digitally or in-store, you can also subscribe to services that offer access to hundreds of games for a monthly fee. PlayStation Plus is needed to play games online with other people and offers a set of games you can immediately download for the new system. PlayStation Now enables you to stream (and download) a wider set of games.

Types of Accounts

Set up Parent Accounts

Setting up a parents' account is important so you can manage the console for your family. After plugging your console in, connect to the internet and wait for updates to finish. Once updated, create a parent user account with an email address you regularly check and password specified.

Set up Child Accounts

Setting up child accounts are important to be able to limit play time, spending and apply age ratings automatically. Separate accounts for each child user can be set up. It's a good idea to specify a password for the guest account so children cannot access this also.

Meet our expert

Andy Robertson is a freelance family technology expert who often works for the BBC. He runs the Family Gamer TV YouTube channel and contributes to a range of national media on the topic of video games and family.



NOS National Online Safety®
#WakeUpWednesday

STARS OF THE WEEK

Choughs	Korben	for being super helpful during tidy up time every day this week
Robins	Nessa	for super money calculations
Puffins	Oscar	for his effort & determination in his writing this week
Owls	Eva-Grace	for exceptional progress in handwriting
Kingfishers	Vivian	for super progress in Maths
Trencrom	Charlie	for always trying his best & mastering the grid method in Maths
Lanyon	Hannah	for an excellent creature report. A super piece of writing
Kerris	Maddie	for using some great imperative verbs (or being bossy) in her instructional writing
Bodrift	Nathan	for a fantastic result in the arithmetic paper & a brilliant attitude to school
Bosigran	Barnabas	for working extremely hard to get his full pyramid on Reflex
Kenidjack	Isabella	for being the bossiest & best Emperor Augustus imaginable!
Dinnertime	Amelie	for being delightful and well mannered



Applying for a school place for September 2021

If you have a child born between 1st September 2016 and 31st August 2017 you need to apply for a school place in a Reception class for starting in September 2021. The deadline for applications is **15th January 2021**. The easiest way is to apply online at www.cornwall.gov.uk/admissions. For more information call the Admissions team on 0300 1234 101 or visit the website.

After school childcare provision

This is now only being offered to Year 3-6.

Please contact Mr Timmons for details and to book by emailing alvertonkidsclub@outlook.com or by phoning 07843 126 833.

Twitter

Don't forget to follow us on Twitter @alvertonschool to keep up-to-date with all the exciting things that are going on.



Lost Property

The lost property box is overflowing again. If you are missing anything, please contact the school office and we can check it for you. We will be emptying the box at the end of term and sending everything that is not named to the charity shop unless it is claimed. **Please name all items of your child's clothing.** Anything named will always be returned to your child.

Reminder

School finishes for the Christmas holidays on **Friday 18th December at 3.15pm** (normal time). The Spring term starts on **Wednesday 6th January 2021 at 9am**.

Free School Meals

At this time, many families may find themselves eligible for Free School Meals and Pupil Premium who previously did not meet the criteria. Please read this page carefully to find out if you are now eligible.

Cornwall Council are continuing to process new applications for Free School Meals. Please ensure that you read the eligibility criteria before applying and complete the online application form if you are eligible.

<https://www.cornwall.gov.uk/education-and-learning/schools-and-colleges/school-meals/application-for-free-school-meals-and-pupil-premium/>

Postal applications are currently not being accepted but, if you are unable to apply online, you can call the Free School Meals team on 01872 323298 and a member of the team will call you back to complete the application over the phone. Please make sure that your phone will accept calls from a private / withheld number.

NB All Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 pupils are entitled to receive a free school meal as part of the Universal Infant Free School Meals (UIFSM) initiative, regardless of what benefits are being claimed.

However, some children in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 may also have an underlying entitlement to benefits-related Free School Meals. Please ensure that you check this and apply if appropriate, even if your child is in one of these year groups, because of the additional benefits (eg food vouchers during holiday times where these are given by the Government).

Your child may be eligible for benefits-related free school meals if their parent / carer (or the child themselves in their own right), receives any of the following benefits:

- Income Support (IS)
- Job Seekers' Allowance (Income-Based) and equal based Job Seekers Allowance
- Income Related Employment and Support Allowance (ESA-IR) and equal based Employment and Support Allowance
- Child Tax Credit (CTC) with an annual income of less than £16,190
- Working Tax Credit run-on - paid for 4 weeks after you stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit
- Guarantee Element of Pension Credit (GPC)
- Immigration and Asylum Act 1999 (IAA) Support
- Universal Credit - Your household income must be less than £7,400 a year (after tax and not including any benefits you get) as assessed by earnings from up to three of your most recent assessment periods

If you are claiming the benefits listed below you are NOT eligible for free school meals, regardless of what other benefits/credits are being claimed:

- Working Tax Credit
- Contribution-Based Job Seeker's Allowance and / or Contribution-Based Employment and Support Allowance

However, you will be temporarily eligible to claim free school meals if you receive a Working Tax Credit run-on, which is the payment you may receive for a further four weeks after you stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit.

If you think that your child is eligible for Free School Meals, we strongly recommend that you contact Cornwall Council as detailed above.