



Balcombe

Church of England
Primary School

"In all that we do we are guided by God"



NOVEMBER NEWSLETTER

parents@balcombeschool.co.uk

We do have learners with allergies, so please remember – no nuts in school.

Dear Parents,

Last July, we officially became part of Hurst Education Trust. Being part of an academy has brought a few changes for us, some very noticeable to pupils and staff, some not so. The main change that we hope our pupils will notice and benefit from as time goes on, will be greater access to resources and opportunities. We are already using a new format for teaching writing, called "I am a clever writer" which was funded by HET. This breaks down the teaching of the mechanics of writing into very small steps, allowing children to master the basics before branching out into higher order writing skills. We will still aim to develop writers with a passion for writing and a strong writer's voice, but through using this new format, will ensure that they use punctuation and grammar correctly too. That, coupled with continuing the good work started last year through our focus on spelling, should lead to improvement in our pupils' writing attainment. So far, early indications are good. The children seem to like the new approach and work in their books shows good progress already.

We hope that you are able to come in and see for yourself, by joining us for our "book look" on Thursday 5th December at 2:15pm. For parents with younger children, don't forget to let us know if you won't be joining us and are worried that your child might get upset, then we can ensure your child is engaged somewhere else during the session.

Since joining HET, a noticeable change for staff, is the fairly regular appearance of HET staff and trustees in school. We have had many visitors since September, some for familiarisation with the school and others in order to support and challenge our senior leadership

team. Our visitors always spend some time in classrooms and engage with the children and staff.

Here are a few things that they have said about us:

"I thoroughly enjoyed seeing Balcombe in action. I was impressed by everything that I saw, a really purposeful and happy place to be." *Governor at Hurst College*

"The quality of your school and the education you provide for your children shines through." *Trustee Hurst Education Trust*

".....there were many areas of exemplary practice seen today. In particular, there is a culture that pervades the school in relation to behaviour for learning." *School Improvement Adviser*

".....your knowledge of the children and tight planning meant that all had access to teaching and learning at an appropriate level." *Director of Education – HET*

"Both your experience and passion for your subject shone through in your expert delivery." *Director of Education – HET*

As always, I'm incredibly proud of what we do here and look forward to continuing our development through our relationship with HET.

Best wishes,
Wendy Millbanks

Nativity Tickets

I have been asked by a parent to explain the rationale behind the introduction of charging for Nativity tickets this year, which of course, I am very happy to do.

The challenges and expectations facing schools have changed rapidly over the past few years, not least due to the impact of the pandemic and the cost of living crisis. However, funding and resourcing has failed to keep up, leaving schools struggling to meet the increased needs of pupils. We work creatively to ensure that our provision is not affected by the severe lack of funding, but rely even more heavily on the goodwill of parents and our community in general to be able to provide all of the “extra” resources and opportunities that our children love.

Over the last few years, we have seen a dramatic reduction in the capacity of our parent body to assist in the organisation and running of FOBS fundraising events such as our Christmas and Summer Fair, resulting in some of these crucial fundraising opportunities becoming impossible to continue. Unfortunately, not being in an area considered deprived, or having a large number of children eligible for Pupil Premium funding, our budget allocation gets more difficult to manage each year and I am therefore very grateful to parents who have purchased items from the class wish lists to help with this, in addition to staff who regularly purchase resources for their classes.

Determined not to allow our pupils to suffer from the budgetary constraints that we face, we continue to plan enrichment activities in the hope that our community will find ways to fund them. In the last week of this term, we are planning an expressive arts week for the children, with a visitor in each day to lead workshops in pop dance, Bollywood, drama and singing. FOBS have generously agreed to help with the funding for this, so that we don't need to charge parents, but using the Nativity ticket money is one way of stretching the FOBS money to go just that little bit further.

By charging this small amount, we are merely bringing the infant Nativity in line with the junior production, for which we have made a ticket charge for many years. Aside from being an excellent

fundraising opportunity, the money is used to buy the script, music, licence and cover the cost of any props or scenery that we need.

Obviously for any parent unable or unwilling to pay this, I will review the price, as I don't want this to be a barrier to any parent experiencing the joy of seeing their child perform in the Nativity. Please do get in touch if purchasing a ticket is causing concern.

Internet Safety

We have recently been able to access materials to support internet safety from the National College – an excellent source of supportive resources for teachers and schools. If your child plays Roblox, you may wish to take a look at the attached information sheet for parents.

Reminders!

If you need to contact us via email, please use parents@balcombeschool.co.uk as this email address is regularly checked during the day. The office@ address is used by sales companies and receives a lot of junk mail so important messages from parents are easy to miss.

Please can we kindly ask that you notify the office by 9.30am if your child is unwell and not going to be at school. You can either leave a message on the ansaphone or email us.

Spare Uniform

We need your help ...!

A lot of our children are getting very muddy at lunchtimes and often need of a change of clothes at the end of playtime. Unfortunately, we do not have sufficient spare uniform for everyone so please consider sending a spare pair of trousers/skirt if your child is regularly coming home with a bag of muddy clothes!

We do have learners with allergies, so please remember – no nuts in school.

Please note that on Friday 20 December, school will finish at 1.30pm.

Lost Property

The Lost Property bin is overflowing again. Our Eco Warriors regularly go through the bin and return named items to their rightful owners.

We will put out the bin every day during the last week of term. At the end of that week, anything left will either be given to FoBS or will go in the bin.

Dates for your Diary

Thurs 5th Dec @ 2.15pm – Book Look

Fri 6th Dec @ 3.30-5.30pm – FoBS Christmas Crafts

Fri 6th Dec @ 7pm - FoBS Christmas Wreath Making

Weds 11th Dec & Thurs 12th Dec @ 9:30am – Nativity

Thurs 12th Dec – Christmas Jumper Day and Christmas Lunch

Thurs 19th Dec @ 1.45pm – Carol Service, St Mary's Church

Fri 20th Dec @ 9am – Final assembly

Fri 20th Dec – term finishes at 1.30pm

Mon 6th Jan 2025 – INSET day, school closed

Amazon wish lists will remain open should you wish to purchase anything for your child's class.

Please ensure you include your child's name and the class on a gift receipt so we can get your gift to the correct class and thank you for your generosity!

Donate with
JustGiving

Remember to join easyfundraising - you can collect free donations for us every time you buy something online. It won't cost you a penny extra, so please help us to raise funds.

REMINDER

Pupil Premium

If you are on a low income making a FSM application can greatly benefit your child.

It is often thought that parents of children in KS1 who currently receive Universal Free School Meals do not need to make a Free School Meals Application for the school to receive Pupil Premium. **THIS IS NOT THE CASE.**

Please contact the office if you think you may be eligible for Pupil Premium funding. Any accepted applications for Free School Meals (whether or not your child takes the meal up) attract over £1300 per child per year which the school can use to greatly enhance the resources available for your child both within the classroom and for extra-curricular activities. We may be able to help with school uniform costs, trips and other extra-curricular activities like swimming and music tuition.

Making an application is easy and confidential.

Fundraising for School

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CHRISTMAS SPORTS COURSES.

Multi-Sports 23rd December

Indoor Football 2nd & 3rd January

9.15 to 3.30 - £22 per day
Warden Park Secondary
Open to years Reception to Year 9
jamesprostarsports@gmail.com

Pro Star Sports

FOLLOW US

@pro_star_sports_camps @camps_pro



HOLIDAY HEROES **west sussex county council**

WINTER HOLIDAY ACTIVITY CAMP
SPORTS, GAMES, ARTS & CRAFTS!

HAYWARDS HEATH
ST WILFRID'S COE PRIMARY

AGES 5-11 YRS

THURSDAY 2 JANUARY 2025
FRIDAY 3 JANUARY 2025

8.30AM - 5PM OR 9AM - 4.30PM

Fully funded HAF places + we accept childcare vouchers.
Pricing available on the website.

BOOK ONLINE: www.southcoastsports.org.uk



Christmas Kids Trail & Grotto

30th November to 22nd December, 10am to 3.30pm

This winter, experience the magic of Christmas at Borde Hill. Children can write their letters to Santa and explore the Garden on a daily festive kids trail, 'Ivy's Sparkling Snow Ball Adventure'. £4.50 per child, plus admission* or free to Members.

Santa's Grotto

Kick-start the festive season with a visit to see Father Christmas in his grotto (weekends only). The 30 minute experience includes crafts in Santa's Workshop before seeing the man himself to receive a gift. £15 including Members - booking required.

Visit the Garden Shop to browse gifts for all the family and indulge in a warming cup of hot chocolate or mulled wine.

*Half price Garden admission applies from 4th November to 22nd December.

BORDEHILL.CO.UK 01444 450326 WEST SUSSEX, RH16 1XP



CHRISTMAS HOLIDAYS

PREMIER HOLIDAY CAMPS

INSPIRING ACTIVITY

Premier Education

SCAN HERE FOR MORE INFORMATION
or visit premier-education.com/holiday-camps

Trustpilot 4.7/5
Based on over 30,000 reviews

INSET DAYS: 6 January, 4 April, 2 June 2025