

# Westfield Primary Head's Newsletter— December 2024



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Westfield Primary  
Bonsey Lane  
Westfield  
Woking  
Surrey

Phone: 01483 76187

E-mail:  
head@westfield.  
surrey.sch.uk

www.westfield.surrey.  
sch.uk

A warm welcome to December's newsletter—where has the year gone?! Every month in school is fun, busy and special, but December probably tops all other months with the excitement and sense of anticipation it brings! There is lots going on at Westfield over the next 3 weeks of term, so please do keep a close eye on the diary of events at the back of this newsletter and the website, we would hate for anyone to miss out.

During November, the children had the opportunity of experiencing many curricular enrichment activities, for example:

- ◆ Year 3 continued their visits to our neighbours at Mayford Grange retirement village
- ◆ We held our annual Open Evening
- ◆ Anti-bullying themed week which included 'odd socks day' and a theatre production and workshops
- ◆ Owls class went to Pizza Express to make pizzas
- ◆ International Kindness day included a live virtual assembly from 52Lives of Kindness
- ◆ Class assemblies for parents/carers
- ◆ STEM workshops for Year 6
- ◆ Aim High writing workshop for Years 3 & 4
- ◆ Pied Piper theatre company performed 'The Town Mouse & The Country Mouse' for Years 1 and 2

We've also had our first Christmas jumper day, our first Christmas performance by the children (KS2) and a very successful Christmas Fair. A huge thank you to Rachel Walton-Meadway and her team of volunteers for all their hard work in putting together and running such a fabulous Christmas Fair.

At the end of November, we said farewell to Mrs Pauline Hurford. Mrs Hurford worked as a HLTA (higher level teaching assistant) and worked across the school supporting children and covering classes. She will be missed, but we wish her every happiness on her retirement.

In December, we have many Christmas performances for parents and carers, which the children have worked really hard on. Please be mindful if you bring a younger sibling to one of these performance that you take your child out if they are disturbing others, this will ensure that everyone can enjoy the children's performances to the full.

We wish you all a Christmas season full of joy and peace! Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!



## Well-being and Mental Health at Westfield.

Below is a great article from Mark at 'The Art of Brilliance':

### 'Lessons from Momma Nature'

Pumpkin spice lattes, cosy sweaters, and red leaves, Autumn is the unsung hero of the seasons.

And just like our leafy friends, we too can benefit from a bit of shedding of our 'baggage'. Letting go is like a weight lifted off your shoulders, a breath of fresh air for your soul.

So here are three decluttering top tips:

This time of year, Mother Nature's lesson is that 'less is more' so start with decluttering your physical space. Marie Kondo famously said, "Does it spark joy?" If not, it's time to say goodbye. Donate clothes you haven't worn in years, remove knick-knacks collecting dust, and clear out that overflowing junk drawer. A tidy home leads to a clear mind and a light heart.

It's estimated that humans have about 70,000 thoughts a day, but 65,000 are the exact same thoughts you had yesterday, and the day before, and the day before...

To clear space for fresh thoughts and ideas, you need to let go of your mental baggage. Mindfulness and self-awareness really help. Notice when negative thoughts arise and challenge them. Replace them with positive affirmations and gratitude. Journaling can also be a powerful tool for processing emotions and gaining perspective. Remember, you are in control of your reactions to your thoughts - choose to focus on the good.

Healing emotional wounds takes time and self-compassion. Start by forgiving yourself and others. Practice self-care rituals like gratitude, exercise, or hobbies that bring joy. Surround yourself with positive, loving relationships that lift you rather than weigh you down.

Just as trees shed their leaves in autumn to make way for new growth, so too can we shed our physical, mental, and emotional baggage to make room for a brighter, lighter future. Embrace the beauty of letting go and watch as your life transforms before your very eyes. Remember, you are worthy of love, joy, and abundance - so let go and watch yourself soar.



The theme for the December calendar (Action for Happiness) is 'Do Good December', where all through the month there are tips and prompts to carry out small acts of kindness. We know that our wellbeing and sense of happiness improves by being kind to others, as well as the recipient of the kindness. The calendar can be found [HERE](#).

## Online Safety

### What Parents & Educators Need to Know about

# FORTNITE



#### WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

Fortnite was launched back in 2017, but it remains massively popular – with more than 650 million active players. That's partially due to the competitive nature of its player-vs-player combat, its pop culture crossovers and its constantly shifting map. Significant updates are rolled out with each new version of the game – known as 'chapters' – and within these sit shorter 'seasons'.

#### ALWAYS ONLINE

There's no single-player offline mode in Fortnite: it can only be played online. Internet access can sometimes be an issue when you're out and about (both in terms of connectivity and using up data), so you may find that dedicated young Fortnite players are often less enthusiastic about trips away – such as days out and holidays – than you might expect.

#### IN-GAME COSTS

Fortnite is free to download and play, but it does offer various additional purchases – cosmetic 'skins', music tracks and LEGO items – which don't really impact on gameplay but can cost a significant amount. These items are bought with in-game currency, V-Bucks – earned through completing the Battle Pass (which also costs V-Bucks) and can also be purchased from the game's store for real money.

#### POP CULTURE REFERENCES

Part of Fortnite's appeal is its ongoing crossovers with other popular franchises, ranging from movies and TV shows like Family Guy and Avatar: The Last Airbender to comic book characters including Batman to other games such as Street Fighter. This means you could have children asking questions about the monster from Alien or Geralt from The Witcher a little sooner than you otherwise might have.

#### CROSSPLAY AND PARTY CHAT

D@\*#!

Fortnite is popular with many gamers of various ages. 'Crossplay' lets friends play with each other, regardless of whether they're on an Xbox, PlayStation, Nintendo Switch or PC – while the 'party chat' feature allows them to talk to each other during the game. This can, however, put youngsters at risk of hearing inappropriate language from older players in the heat of virtual combat.

#### VIRTUAL VIOLENCE

At its core, there's no avoiding that Fortnite is about shooting other players to eliminate them from the contest. That said, there's no blood or gore. The violence is rendered in a cartoonish style, and there are frequent comical touches to lighten the mood, such as fishing mini-games and dancing emotes. Machine guns, shotguns and other weapons often look and behave realistically, however, so discretion is advised.

#### FREQUENT UPDATES

The game's developers release content in 'seasons' that usually run for around ten weeks. Each fresh update sees items added to the in-game store, changes to the environment's map and a different over-arching theme (such as 'medieval', 'pirates' or 'party'). These regular renewals help to hold players' interest – but also give young gamers plenty of reasons to keep coming back.

## Advice for Parents & Educators

#### MATCH GAMING TIMES

Younger players tend to play Fortnite with their friends. With that in mind, it could be worth speaking to the parents and carers of a child's social group and coordinating their gaming around certain times of day. Safety in numbers is obviously a factor here, but it will also help children feel that they're getting adequate opportunities to socialise with their friends online.

#### SET SPENDING LIMITS

Fortnite's rotating store is a not-so-subtle mechanism for coaxing players into buying sought-after items before they disappear for weeks or months. This could lead to surprise transactions on bank cards if children are tempted into an impulse purchase. Parents could consider getting a prepaid card for the child or ensuring that purchases require adult authorisation. This can be done through parental settings on a console or account settings in the Epic Games app on PC.

#### USE UPDATES AS REWARDS

Fortnite's seasonal updates are free, but each also brings the option of a 'battle pass', unlocking exclusive rewards for playing the game and completing set challenges. The passes cost around £8 and are also available as part of larger bundles. The purchase of passes can be an effective reward to young Fortnite fans for good behaviour or academic performance, or as an incentive for completing chores like tidying their room.

#### BE WARY OF SCAMS

The immense popularity of Fortnite with younger audiences – that are generally more trusting – means there's no shortage of scammers looking to fraudulently obtain passwords and other personal data through techniques like phishing. As the developers point out on many of Fortnite's loading screens, they never ask for a player's account password outside of the game: make sure any young player knows this.

#### ENJOY FORTNITE TOGETHER

Fortnite also offers split-screen gameplay, meaning that two people can play simultaneously on the same console or computer. This can be a good option for siblings or for when a child's friends visit, but it also offers an opportunity for parents and carers to do something fun with their child, while also making sure they're playing the game safely. Who knows? You might even teach them a thing or two!

## Wellbeing event winners

The first Wellbeing event of the school year took place on Wednesday 16<sup>th</sup> October and was thoroughly enjoyed by the whole school community and all the support organisations that attended. We received some lovely imaginative entries for the shaker making competition. Pictures of the 8 winning entries are shown below. They all received a certificate and prize.

### *Shaker making competition winners* KS1 winners



Eliana—BB



Selma—LB



Elaine—LB



Mohammed—BE



Chloe—LB

## Wellbeing event winners

### *Shaker making competition winners* KS2 winners



Dawood—WP



Liberty—PEN



Hareem—F

## Westfield Heroes

It's nice to be nice and if a member of Westfield staff made you smile then let us know and we will pass on your comments to them. It can be for absolutely anyone in school and for any reason - we'd just like to know! Maybe someone in the office was super helpful, someone made your child smile, your class teacher or LSA went the extra mile, or you were helped by a Well-Being Assistant or Nurture Lead, SENCO or Inclusion Leader, or you just want to say thankyou. Please click on the link and fill out the form it will take you to, then just add in the information about the Westfield Hero.

[Click](#) for the Westfield Hero form.



## Generous donation from The Woking Lions Club

The Woking Lions Club have kindly donated funds to the School to enable us to purchase some SEN resources. We would like to thank them for their generosity.



## Pied Piper Production

We were very lucky to be visited by the talented Pied Piper theatre company on Monday 25<sup>th</sup> November.

They performed "Country Mouse, Town house". It was very entertaining with super acting and singing. The children thoroughly enjoyed it. Thank you to The Friends of Westfield for funding this event.



## Some winter weather reminders...

As the wintery months begin we would like to remind you that in the event that the school needs to be closed due to bad weather conditions, Surrey schools make announcements on their school website. Ours is [www.westfield.surrey.sch.uk](http://www.westfield.surrey.sch.uk)

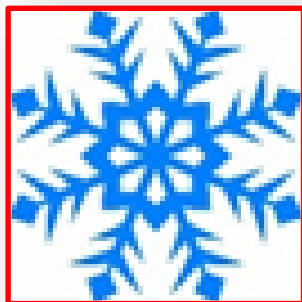
We will also send a text message in the event that the school needs to be closed.

If the weather looks questionable, please continue to check the website and look at your phone messages (in case the website fails), we wouldn't want your child to set off for school only to find we are closed. **Please ensure the school office has your up to date mobile number.**

Should weather conditions turn cold we ask that:

Students and parents should be mindful of their journey to school and allow extra time. **Bonsey Lane is often treacherous and the pedestrian paths have in the past not been treated by Surrey County Council. So we ask that parents/ carers bringing children to school should walk with extreme caution and avoid driving down Bonsey Lane at all if road conditions become icy. THANK YOU!**

When bringing children to school they may come in wearing alternative sturdy footwear (boots) and should change into dry school footwear on arrival.



## Santa's Grotto

The Friends of Westfield Santa's Grotto tickets are now available to buy - online only at :

<https://www.pta-events.co.uk/fowp/>

The grotto takes place during the school day on Friday 13th December, children go class by class to visit Santa in his grotto and receive a gift.

PLEASE NOTE: Ticket sales close a week before the grotto (6th December), to give our volunteers a chance to purchase, order and wrap all the gifts.





### Application for leave of absence/exceptional circumstances

As parents, you have a legal responsibility to ensure your child's attendance at school. Holidays should be taken during the school holiday period. During the academic year pupils are at school for 190 days and at home for 175 days. Students are expected to attend 100% of the time.

Please fill in a request of absence form (available from the office or online) if you want to ask the Headteacher to authorise a *leave of absence* during term time. You must ask well in advance and you are strongly advised to request leave of absence before you confirm your arrangements.

New legislations (Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013) means that if an application is not "*made in advance to the Head teacher by a parent with whom the pupil normally resides, and the Head teacher does not consider that leave of absence should be granted due to the relating to that application*", then it will not be authorised.

If you take your child out of school without the approval of the school, you may be liable to receive a Penalty Notice from Surrey County Council for failing to ensure your child's regular school attendance.

Unauthorised absence in school time will not be authorised. *Guidelines from the local authority are that they may issue a Penalty Notice (with a fine) to each parent, when students are taken out of school during term for 5 days or more and if this absence is recorded as unauthorised by the school. Please note it includes cumulative absence over a 10 week period (several unauthorised absences that total 5 days within a 10 week period).*

The amount payable on issue of a Penalty Notice is £80 per parent per child if paid within 21 days of receipt of the notice, rising to £160 if paid within 28 days. If the penalty notice remains unpaid after 28 days, the Local Authority will consider a prosecution in the Magistrates Court. Please note that penalty notices are issued per parent/carer per child so a family of two parents and two children will receive 4 penalty notices. **If the absence exceeds 20 days, your child's name may be removed from the school roll and you will have to reapply for a place on your return.**

The Headteacher will consider the reasons for the request carefully, taking into account the effect on the continuity of your child's learning and your child's overall attendance rate, and then may authorise up to five days of absence. The Headteacher will notify you, via the office, of the decision within five working days of receiving your written application.

Leave of absence, for exceptional circumstances, will not be granted if additional leave is taken as holiday either side of this time. Proof of flights or other documentation supporting the request must be produced if asked for.

### Monthly Attendance Letters

Monthly letters are automatically produced and sent to all parents whose children are late 4 times or more in a month. Monthly letters will also be produced to all parents whose child has an attendance below 90%, and for those between 91-94%. These letters will continue to be sent until the attendance is above 94%. Please be aware that this may take quite a few months.

### Surrey Attendance Advice Officer (previously Education Welfare Officer)

The Surrey Attendance Advice Officer monitors the attendance of all children on a regular basis. They may contact parents if children are consistently late or there are concerns about attendance.

# SCHOOL PENALTY NOTICE FINES FROM AUGUST 2024



**The following changes will come into force for Penalty Notice Fines issued after 19th August 2024**

**1**

## FIRST OFFENCE

The first time a Penalty Notice is issued for term time leave or irregular attendance the amount will be:

£160 per parent, per child if paid within 28 days. Reduced to £80 per parent, per child if paid within 21 days.

**2**

## SECOND OFFENCE (WITHIN 3 YEARS)

The second time a Penalty Notice is issued for term time leave or irregular attendance the amount will be:

£160 per parent, per child to be paid within 28 days. No reduced rate will be offered.

**3**

## THIRD OFFENCE AND ANY FURTHER OFFENCES (WITHIN 3 YEARS)

The third time an offence is committed for term time leave or irregular attendance a Penalty Notice will not be issued and the case will be presented straight to the Magistrates' Court. Magistrates'; fines can be up to £2500 per parent, per child. Cases found guilty in Magistrates' Court can show on a Parents future DBS certificate, due to failure to safeguard a child's education.

## 10 SESSIONS (5 DAYS) OF UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE IN A 10 WEEK PERIOD

Penalty Notice Fines will be considered when there has been 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a 10-week period.

## **Winter Mini Challenge 2024 launch on 1 December**

It's back! Spark a love of reading with the free online Winter Mini Challenge. Children can unlock rewards for reading and find fun activities on the dedicated children's website created by The Reading Agency.

### **What is the Winter Mini Challenge?**

The Winter Mini Challenge is an online, bitesize version of The Reading Agency's annual Summer Reading Challenge. This summer, The Reading Agency teamed up with the charity Create and public libraries to bring you Marvellous Makers - a Summer Reading Challenge that inspired children to explore their creativity over the summer break. Following the success of Marvellous Makers, The Reading Agency are delighted to extend the theme into the Winter Mini Challenge. With the holidays approaching, now is the time to encourage children to discover the joy of reading and to build on good reading habits!

It is easy to take part in the Winter Mini Challenge. Children simply read three books or more (they choose their target) between 1 December 2024 and 20 February 2025 and add them to their online profile on [wintermini.org.uk](http://wintermini.org.uk). Reaching their reading goal will unlock a limited edition virtual badge and a special Winter Mini Challenge certificate to print off and keep.

### **Prize for every child reaching their goal**

Surrey Libraries are encouraging every child and their responsible adult to visit their local Surrey library to pick up their books and start reading! Children can also borrow books from their school library, and download for free Surrey Libraries' eBooks, eAudiobooks and eComics. All reading counts! Once a child has reached their online goal, they can collect a prize in one of our libraries\* by bringing along their printed certificate or showing the e-certificate to a staff member or volunteer on a device like a mobile phone. Prizes are suitable for 3+ year olds, available in most of our libraries, and as long as stock lasts. Please note that a child must be a library member to collect their prize. If someone isn't a member yet, they can join the library [online](#) or at their [local library](#). Library membership is free.



# Christmas Tree Festival

## St Peter's Church

Church Street, Old Woking  
GU22 9JF

Explore our dazzling display  
of Christmas trees,  
decorated by community  
groups and businesses.  
Refreshments, and crafts to  
make and buy.

**Sat 7<sup>th</sup> Dec 11am-6pm**

**Sun 8<sup>th</sup> Dec 11am-4pm**



**Admission Free**

*(donations received for Woking Hospice and church sound system)*



Parish of  
**St Peter Woking**  
St Peter's · St Mark's · All Souls'

[www.stpeterwoking.org/ctf](http://www.stpeterwoking.org/ctf)

01483 755852

[admin@stpeterwoking.org](mailto:admin@stpeterwoking.org)

## **Ripley Dental NHS Kids Club**

### **Free Dental Care for Children Under 11**

At Ripley Dental, we care deeply about children's dental health and want to help families in our community access important oral care. We're pleased to introduce the **NHS Kids Club**, offering dedicated **Saturday** and **ad hoc afternoon** appointments for children under 11.

### **Why Join the NHS Kids Club?**

Regular dental check-ups are essential for growing children, helping to:

- Spot early signs of cavities and other dental issues
- Teach healthy habits for lifelong oral health

Build confidence in visiting the dentist

### **Kids-Only Saturdays and Ad hoc afternoons**

We're setting aside select Saturdays exclusively for NHS children's appointments, with spaces reserved for kids who need a check-up or treatment.

### **Details of NHS Kids Club Saturdays:**

- **When:**
  - Selected Saturdays in November, December, January, and February
  - 14th of December
  - 18th of January
  - Ad hoc afternoon sessions in November, December and January
- **Who:** Children under 11 (NHS only - adults cannot be seen at this time)
- **Cost:** Free for all eligible NHS children

**Additional Resources:** Each child will receive a leaflet with easy oral health instructions and tips

### **How to Book:**

Please fill the [form](#) with your details and we will contact you with a date and time of your child's appointment.

### **Additional Support:**

Our friendly team will ensure any necessary referrals are set up quickly and easily to make follow-up care as smooth as possible.

We're here to make dental care easy and accessible for your child. We look forward to welcoming you to Ripley Dental's NHS Kids Club and helping keep those young smiles healthy!

**Ripley Dental Team**  
**Ripley Dental Practice**

T: [01483223429](tel:01483223429)

E: [info@ripleydental.co.uk](mailto:info@ripleydental.co.uk)

A: High Street, Ripley, Woking, GU23 6AQ

W: [www.ripleydental.co.uk](http://www.ripleydental.co.uk)

## WESTFIELD PRIMARY DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

*Whilst we endeavour to keep the school dates fixed, we sometimes need to change these and ask for your support with amendments.*

Monday	2nd December	Christmas assembly for year 4 at 10am
Tuesday	3rd December	<b>Christmas assembly for year 3 at 10am— PLEASE DO NOT PARK IN ADULT ED CAR- PARK FOR THIS ASSEMBLY, YOU MAY GET A TICKET IF YOU DO.</b>
Wednesday	4th December	9am Kingfishers class assembly
Thursday	5th December	Christmas assembly for year 1 at 10am
Friday	6th December	Christmas assembly for year 2 at 10am
Friday	6th December	Christmas jumper day
Tuesday	10th December	Reception Classes Advent Assembly at 10am
Tuesday	10th December	Year 6 Christingle St Marks Church at 2pm
Thursday	12th December	Christmas jumper day (to be worn over uniform)
Friday	20th December	1pm Carols around the tree. Pupils break up at 1.20pm
Tuesday	7th January	Children return for the Easter term
Wednesday	15th January	Robins trip to Pizza Express
Tuesday	21st January	Year 6 parents meeting about SATS mocks. 3.15pm in Hawks class.
Friday	24th January	10am Beetles class assembly
Friday	31st January	10am Ladybirds class assembly
Friday	7th February	10am joint Year R assembly
Tuesday	11th February	3.20pm-5.30pm Parents evening in school
Thursday	13th February	3.20pm-5.30pm Parents evening in school
Friday	14th February	10am Hawks class assembly
Mon-Friday	17th-21st February	Half term
Friday	28th February	10am Falcons class assembly
Thursday	6th March	World Book day— dress up day
Friday	7th March	10am Penguins class assembly
Mon-Friday	10th-14th March	Year 6 Bikeability Level 2
Friday	14th March	10am Puffins class assembly
Monday	17th March	Class and Year 6 leavers photos
Friday	21st March	10am Robins class assembly
Wednesday	2nd April	10am KS2 Easter Assembly
Wednesday	2nd April	11am KS1 Easter Assembly
Thursday	3rd April	Children finish at 1.20pm for Easter holidays
Tuesday	22nd April	Children return for the Summer term

