

Newsletter 7th December 2023

### Challenging Times

During the past few weeks and months, there have been many challenging instances for individual members of staff including, serious health diagnoses, family bereavements and significant care situations for family members. These have coincided with the onset of the winter flu season, which this year has also seemed to include an increase number of tonsillitis cases... amongst other delightful ailments! Inevitably these situations lead to staff absence and the requirement for cover and other rearrangements. Hopefully, for most of you, the experience at school has been business as usual.

I am hugely grateful for the rallying round effort and team spirit that has been so evident daily in ensuring we still deliver strong education and care for our children. As by way of examples, all of our Christmas activities are continuing and we have 40 members of staff signed up to help out at the Christmas Fayre this Friday evening. I am generally really proud of the work we do and things we achieve at Berrywood, and I believe that most parents would express similar sentiments.

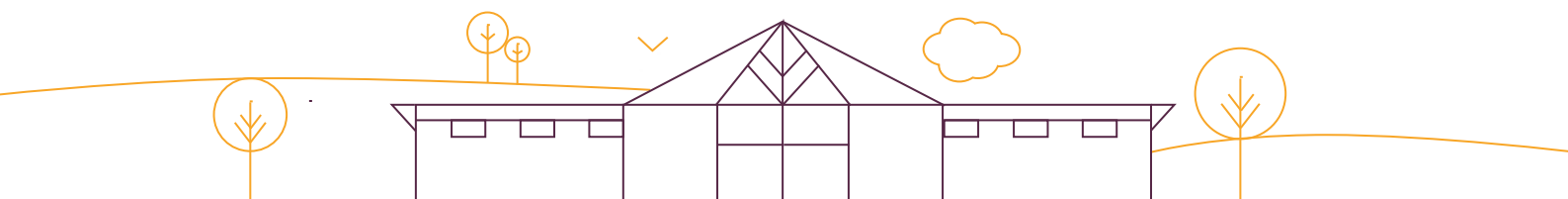
We are also aware that a number of our families have also experienced challenge and personal difficulties. These can of course include the financial pressures that probably hit harder than normal at this time of year. For this reason, we are repeating the message of last year that there is really no need to buy members of staff Christmas gifts. A kind word of appreciation at the classroom door, or a meaningfully written card will mean a huge amount to the teachers and support staff. Likewise, we have agreed as a staff to opt for giving cards rather than presents to the children. Instead, the BSA committee have bought gifts that can be used during wet play times... Santa has kindly agreed to deliver these to each class next week.

### Christmas Fayre

Excitement is mounting and preparations are coming together for the **Christmas Fayre 5.00 – 7.00pm this Friday**. If you are able to come along and support, even if just for a short while, we would love to see you there! The weather forecast has been getting better and better as the week has progressed. Most of the stalls and activities take place outside, so please do dress suitably for the occasion.

Entry is free, and we have again kept prices as low as we can in the hope that all our families will be able to enjoy attending. Don't have any change? Don't worry, we have a change table in the Hall where many of the refreshments are located. *Speaking of refreshments...* we know for many of you 5.00 – 7.00pm means sustenance time! So, we have made sure that there are plenty of food and drink options available hopefully for all to enjoy. This includes: -

- Home-made curries (high quality Market Day)
- Jacket potatoes with various fillings
- Market Day Christmas treats (too many to list...but you must try the caramelised onion sausage rolls)
- Teas & Coffee
- Hot Chocolate
- Mulled wine
- Beers and other alcoholic drinks
- Sweets and fizzy drinks



NB Please note the vast majority of these will be located in the school Hall, except for the CURRIES which are available from the Teaching Kitchen, and the Market Day Christmas treats which are being sold from the Courtyard.

***Our entertainment includes: -***

- Visiting farm nativity (free entry, voluntary donation buckets)
- Arts and Crafts (art Studio)
- Flower Workshop (classroom 11)
- Key Stage 1 & Key Stage 2 CHOIRS (courtyard performance)
- Berrywood Buskers (courtyard acoustic performance)
- Glitter tattoos & many tombolas, games and a raffle

**Last Day of Term**

Thank you to the many families who have completed the Google Form to let us know your choice regarding the early finish option on Friday 15<sup>th</sup> December. If you haven't yet been able to submit this, please see the link on my previous newsletter.

We are also offering the option for the children to come into school that day wearing Christmas jumpers. Please don't feel like you need to purchase anything for this occasion! It is purely optional and there are perhaps more cost effective ways of temporarily decorating the regular school jumper? Please can I stress to parents that this is not a non-school uniform day per se. So, regular lower half uniform please to accompany the Christmassy top half.

A reminder that on this day, it is also our Christmas dinner.

**Christmas Cantata Tickets**

Today, your child will bring home Four Christmas Cantata tickets. It is entirely up to families how these are used across your child's two cantata performances. We have a healthy number of children coming back for the evening performances, so all should be lovely occasions. Fingers crossed that the weather remains as positive as it is currently forecast to be for next week!

**Please do keep your tickets safe and remember to bring them along with you!** This will help us keep the queues moving freely and ensure we won't have to delay anyone's entry while we check.

**BSA Annual General Meeting**

The Annual General Meeting takes place on **Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> January between 6.30 – 7.30 pm** in the school Hall. Every year I make the point that all parents are automatically members of BSA by virtue of being a Berrywood parent.

We desperately need more parents taking an interest in the BSA, and possibly helping out practically with the running and organising of events. Our current committee mainly consists of school staff, which is not ideal. You do not have to be a committee member to be an active part of the BSA, and we will never ask people to take on more than they can comfortably agree to. Surely, in a school our size, there are enough willing hands to make the workload a little lighter.

Please keep the date free in your calendars and help get the BSA year off to a positive start. At the meeting, you will have opportunities to express your views, ask questions and vote for those nominated for committee positions. So if you do have something to offer, or say, then please come along to the AGM and the forum where it matters most.