

As we approach the festive period, we would like to take the opportunity to thank all of the members of our school community who have shown us support over the past term. We hope that you all have a joyous break when it arrives. Wishing everyone a Merry Christmas!

Mrs Gemma Rehal

EVENTS

CLESA Christmas Cinema	30 Nov
Christmas Tree Decorating Assembly	2 Dec
Environment Club Christmas Postcard Sale	4 Dec
Handwriting/Fine Motor Read In	6 Dec
Year 2 Walk to Amersham Free Church	6 Dec
Chesham Bois Tree Lights Switch on	6 Dec
Christmas Card Boxes Out	9 Dec
Little Chestnuts Christmas Activity Afternoon	10 Dec
Reception Walk to Postbox	10 Dec
Year 1 Walk to Top Amersham	11 Dec
Youth Moves Performance at 8.30am	12 Dec
Christmas Jumper Day	12 Dec
Christmas Lunch	12 Dec
Reception/KS1 Christmas Performance	13 Dec
Tea in a Box	13 Dec
Reception/KS1 Christmas Performance	17 Dec
Reception/KS1 Christmas Performance	18 Dec
School Closes at 2.05pm	20 Dec
School Starts at 8.40am	6 Jan

Chestnut Lane School

NOVEMBER 2024

Autumn Update

School Challenges

Parents and guardians will have undoubtedly heard through media coverage about the current challenges faced by schools. These include, severe financial constraints, lack of the right support and provision for children with SEND, and staff recruitment and retention due to enormous pressures and spiralling workloads.

Much like other schools, both locally and nationally, our school is not exempt from the impact these challenges have. We are well aware that this presents our whole school community, staff, governors and the parent body, with very real concerns.

Lots of hard work and continued efforts have been put into managing what is in the school's control, and we warmly encourage parents to come and talk to the school if they have worries or concerns, in order to work together towards possible resolutions.

We would like to remind parents that there are a wide range of ways in which you can contact school staff, including:

- approaching class teachers or the headteacher at the school gates/front entrance at drop-off in the morning,
- via communication books and learning logs to reach the class teacher,
- phone calls or emails to the school office to ask to make an appointment to speak with the relevant member of staff (i.e. class teacher, key stage lead/deputy headteacher, SENCo or headteacher),
- contacting your class rep to share queries or concerns with the school on your behalf.

If you are not sure who to contact, please reach out to the school office who can ensure your message gets to the right person in school.

We all have the shared goal of wanting all children to be happy, and to make progress. We rely on everyone's support as part of this process, and look forward to speaking with members of our school community in the near future.

Events

Friendship Week

We had a wonderful week celebrating friendship week! We have chosen winners of the Odd Sock competition and look forward to announcing them on Monday!



Street Kids Assembly & Radio Christmas

During assembly last Friday, children in Year 1 & 2 learned about the work of Radio Christmas and the charity Street Kids Direct. This is a volunteer run, Amersham-based charity dedicated to transforming the lives of street-living and high-risk children in Guatemala through programs that include Mentoring, Outreach, Educational Initiatives and Pastoral Care. We heard how the monies raised last year have been used to support these children. In the coming weeks, some Year 2 children will have the opportunity to be part of a live broadcast on Radio Christmas! More details to follow. Please spend a little time reading about the charity and if you are able to, sign up to donate so that this valuable work can continue. <https://www.streetkidsdirect.org.uk/>

Road Safety Week

Last week we took time to discuss the important topic of Road Safety across the school. We shared a video with the children showing them how to *Stop, Look, Lis-*



ten and Think before crossing the road. We also discussed other important aspects of safety such as having clear pavements to walk, scoot or cycle along, where to cross roads safely so that they can be seen, and holding the hands of adults when near roads. Video link: <https://www.think.gov.uk/resource/crossing-roads/>

All children were gifted reflective stickers which can be used on their helmets, scooters or bikes. This is particularly important with the darker afternoons and evenings. Special thanks to CLESA for funding these.

All children were gifted reflective stickers which can be used on their helmets, scooters or bikes. This is particularly important with the darker afternoons and evenings. Special thanks to CLESA for funding these.

Given all of the hard work the children have put in to understanding these important messages, we request, once again, that members of our school community ensure that they park responsibly, considerately and safely at drop-off and pick-up times. The school received a further two complaints on Friday 22nd, regarding different incidents of inappropriate parking. **Parents must not turn or park in Chestnut Court.** It is a private court for residents only. Please refer to our communication on 24th October for further information.

No Pens Day

This Wednesday 27th November, we held our annual No Pens Day, which is a chance for children to improve their speech, language and communication skills through a day of talking and listening activities. The children put down their pens and pencils and used their voices to record their learning in different ways. Children participated in the 'biggest ever Show and Tell' as part of this special day.

Year 2 Walk to Amersham Free Church—Friday 6th December

As part of our curriculum and 'Hats of Faith' topic, the Year 2 children will be taking a walk to the Amersham Free Church on the morning of Friday 6th December. They will be learning about Advent and producing sketches from inside the church. Full details can be found in the ParentMail message and form sent to Year 2 parents. Please provide your consent for this trip by **Wednesday 4th December.**

Year 1 Walk to the Replica Metropolitan Steam Locomotive—Wednesday 11th December

The Year 1 children will be going for a walk to Top Amersham High Street to see the Replica of the Metropolitan Steam Locomotive. As part of their History work this half term, they are learning about the history of the railway and key people who lived in Amersham. A ParentMail form has been sent to Year 1 parents to provide their consent by **Wednesday 4th December.**



Reception Walk to the Post Box—10th December



Reception will be going on their first local walk to the post box to post their letters on Tuesday 10th. Full details will be provided in Reception's weekly memo in Tapestry.

Staff Update

At the end of this term, we are sad to be saying goodbye to two longstanding members of staff. Mrs Jane Lewis and Mr Mark Turnham will both be retiring, and we wish them lots of well-deserved rest, and new adventures. We are busily working on plans to replace their roles, and you may have seen our vacancy advert on our school website. We will update you when details are finalised.

Governing Body Update from Christine Plimsaul, Chair of Governors

My thanks go again to the members of the Governing Body who have continued to support the school with their expertise and time.

This half term we have all updated our training with many of us completing essential training modules on Safeguarding, Cyber security and PREVENT. Also, part of our recent Informal Meeting was given over to a session on learning more about how the school works with families and children who have English as an Additional Language.

Governors are also in the process of writing brief profiles of their experience and involvement with the school. Soon our profiles will be added to the school website 'Governors' section where you will see the wide range of knowledge and skills we all bring to our roles.

On behalf of the Governing Body, I wish all our staff and families a very Happy Christmas and a healthy New Year.

Chiltern Foodbank Donations

Thanks to all parents for your generous food donations during our Harvest Festival Event. We are pleased to announce Chiltern Foodbank received a total donation of 200.8kg to help them provide food for people in need!



Cake Sales

The Red Class children were very excited to hold the first Cake Sale of the year this term. An amazing total of £265.10 was raised, followed by a very impressive £204.90 from the Green Class Cake Sale last Friday.



The Parent's Portal by Autism Early Support



Autism Early Support Trust, who are a Buckingham-based charity are providing support to parents and carers through their new online portal service. It is being launched to Bucks families for free from the 1st December.

The online portal will provide workshops, resources and guidance to support you and your child's journey. Please find further details about how you can access the online portal on the attached flyer. We hope it will be useful in providing support and guidance.

Use of the Playground After School

Please be reminded that the school playground, and year group gardens, should not be used as play areas before or after school. The school's policies, risk assessments and insurances do not allow for the use of these areas, or the equipment within them, without the supervision of school staff. The front field (before our driveway gates) remains open should families need a space, and children of all ages must remain under their parent or carer's supervision.

Themed Read-ins

We have now planned our themed read-ins for this academic year, as briefly mentioned in our previous newsletter. Our hope is that these will provide parents and guardians with an opportunity to explore the types of activities the children use within the classroom for different aspects of their learning, and give you a chance to 'have a go' alongside your child so that you can further support their learning at home. Following each themed read-in further support on the topic will be provided by the Tapestry Memos.

- **6th Dec** – Handwriting/Fine Motor
- **31st Jan** – Phonics
- **21st March** – Mastering Number
- **16th May** – Mark making/Vocabulary/Sentence Structure
- **27th June** – Maths Reasoning/Problem-Solving

Focus On Wellbeing



Taken from:

<https://www.metoffice.gov.uk/weather/warnings-and-advice/seasonal-advice/health-wellbeing/winter-and-mental-health>

1. Make the most of natural light

Natural light boosts serotonin levels in the brain, which helps improve mood and reduces feelings of sadness.

2. Plan ahead for the winter

Try and plan times to relax, particularly if winter can be a busy time for you. It is okay if you need to re-arrange plans or take time for yourself if you feel you need to.

3. Talk to someone

- Someone close to you that you feel comfortable with
- A professional, such as a GP or therapist.

4. Look after your physical health

Looking after your physical health can make a difference to how you feel emotionally.

If you can, try and do some regular physical activity during the winter. Physical activity can be very effective in lifting mood and increasing energy levels. It doesn't have to be anything too strenuous. It could be yoga or walking, or even activities like housework or gardening. Eating well, getting enough Vitamin D, getting a good [sleep](#) and looking after your hygiene can also all be helpful for your mood during the winter.



CLESA Christmas Cinema

We are so excited to kick off the festive season with our CLESA Christmas Cinema this weekend! We hope that all of you attending have a fantastic time!

2025 will be kicking off with our Family Fun night and the Elangeni Disco, which will be taking place on Saturday 8th March. More details will be revealed closer to the time but please do put the date in your diary!

We are, as always, hopeful to have more parents come forward to volunteer - we have a number of events with leaders who would be grateful for help, so please do let me know if you can spare a hand on clesacochair@gmail.com.

Thank you to everyone who has already volunteered.



'TEA IN A BOX'

CLESA are selling the popular 'Tea in a Box' (TIAB) again at the end of term.

For new parents, TIAB is a fundraising initiative organised by CLESA whereby children can buy a TIAB consisting of a sausage roll, crisps, kitkat and drink for £4. There are vegetarian and healthy options also available.

If you would like to order one for your child please use the following link which will take you to the [booking form](#). Please place your order no later than **3.05pm this coming Friday 29th November**.

Holiday Shopping Fundraising Opportunities!

Make Money While You Shop With EasyFundraising

If you shop online for groceries or are about to do some online Christmas shopping, we would love your help!

With the Easyfundraising App, you can get big companies donating to CLESA **with minimal effort and zero extra expense to you**.

All you need to do is:

1. Sign up to Easyfundraising using [this link](#) and download the app.

2. Every time you want to shop simply **search for the shop you want to go to on the Easyfundraising app/website** (there are over 8,000 of them listed) and click through to shop. There's actually a browser extension you can turn on which will remind you every time you visit a site that makes the donations.

The shop's website is exactly the same and the **prices are exactly the same**. The stores simply give cashback to Easyfundraising for the referral which is then passed on to our charity, CLESA. It's just two extra clicks for you before you shop.



Christmas Activities

Christmas Performances, 'A Twinkly Nativity'

13th, 17th & 18th December

Our Christmas performances of "A Twinkly Nativity" will be taking place on Friday 13th, Tuesday 17th and Wednesday 18th December this year. Please note that siblings are welcome to come on Friday 13th December, but not on the other days. Parents or guardians arriving at performances on 17th and 18th December with siblings will sadly be turned away.

To keep to acceptable levels of safety in our hall we will be allocating two seats per family. A ParentMail form has been sent to parents to indicate your preference and we will be emailing parents notification of their allocation of seats as we will be ticketless this year.

Little Chestnut Christmas Afternoon - Tuesday 10th December

Little Chestnuts are hosting a separate Christmas afternoon on Tuesday 10th December from 2.00-3.00pm in the school hall. If your child does not usually attend for the Tuesday afternoon session, you are still very welcome to come along.

Christmas Postcards - Wednesday 4th December

The Environment Club have been busily preparing recycled Christmas postcards again this year. On Wednesday 4th December we are inviting children to bring a small amount of change into school and they will visit the Christmas postcard stall with their class during the school day.



A pack of 10 Christmas postcards is 50p and this year the children have voted to donate the money raised to support refugees.

Christmas Card Boxes – Monday 9th December

The boxes for children to send Christmas cards/Christmas postcards to one another will be placed in the main building from Monday 9th December. Cards should be posted before or after school, with parents supervision and will be distributed to the children throughout the school day.

School Christmas Tree Decorating - Monday 2nd December

All of the children across the school will come together

on the morning of 2nd December to decorate our Hall Christmas tree together. The children will make their decorations in class leading up to the day, and it is always a very special occasion listening to festive music and then reading the Christmas story together.

Christmas Jumper Day – Thursday 12th December

We invite all the children to join the staff in wearing a Christmas jumper on 12th December. If they would like to bring in a donation towards the charity 'Save the Children' they are welcome to do so.

Kids Lunch Co Christmas Lunch – Thursday 12th December

Kids Lunch are providing a special Christmas themed lunch on Thursday 12th December. Parents will shortly be receiving a form to complete to select their child/ren's menu choices by next **Monday 2nd December**. This menu will override any current orders on that day and unfortunately we will not be able to cater for children without a preorder.



Little Chestnuts parents will need to order their child's lunch via the Kids Lunch website. Please note that due to restrictions on the Kids Lunch booking system, please order a regular lunch option on Thursday 12th for your child but write in the "other" box by the dietary info section which hot roll lunch option you wish to choose from. Full details will be sent in a ParentMail message.

Chesham Bois Tree Decorating - Friday 6th December

Parents and children have been invited to the Chesham Bois Christmas Lights and Carols event on Friday 6th December at 4pm at the War Memorial on the corner of Bois Lane and North Road. Please note however that the school will not be singing at this event this year.

Extracurricular Clubs

The lunchtime and afterschool clubs will finish next week commencing 2nd December.

We will sadly be saying goodbye to our Judo club after many years of teaching here. We are however pleased to introduce a Book Club which is now available for our year 2 children.

Full details of all the spring term clubs and booking forms have been sent out to parents this week.

Christmas Holidays

School closes on Friday 20th December at 2.05pm. School returns on Thursday 6th January at 8.40am.



