

WEATHERFIELD ACADEMY

Head of School: Mr L Meenan

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Dunstable
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12th December 2024

Dear Parent/Carers

Christmas Lunch & Panto

Thank you to the staff who organised our trip to the Panto this week and to the staff who organised the Christmas lunch on our return. We would also like to thank Peter Smith and his ukulele band for providing the music throughout our Christmas lunch. Finally, thank you to Happy Days Charity, who funded our whole school Panto trip.

Celebration Service –Tuesday 17th December

A reminder that our Christmas Celebration Service will be held on Tuesday 17th December at St Mary's Church in Dunstable. If you are able to attend, we look forward to seeing you at 10.30am for 10.40am start for the Carol Service.

Safeguarding Reminder

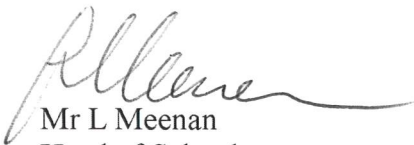
Just a reminder, if digital presents are being bought over the holidays for learners, please seek advice regarding parental settings and encourage your child to be safe online by monitoring their use of digital products.

Flyers

Please find attached some flyers for information for catch up vaccinations for age 14 learners and above and some e-safety tips for parents over the Christmas period.

A reminder that we break up for Christmas holiday next Friday at 3.10pm with usual transport arrangements.

Yours sincerely



Mr L Meenan
Head of School

Dates for your Diaries

Tuesday 17th Dec – Celebration Service at St Mary's Church, Dunstable

Fri 20th Dec - End of Term – Break up for Christmas

Mon 6th January – Pupils return to the Academy

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Weatherfield Academy is a Registered Charity, number 0106025162



10 Top Tips for Parents and Educators

SAFETY OVER THE FESTIVE SEASON

The holiday season, marked by Christmas and New Year, brings joy and togetherness but also presents unique safety challenges for children, families and educators. From busy holiday shopping, traveling and family gatherings to managing digital activity during school breaks, staying safe during this period requires heightened awareness. This guide offers practical tips to help families and educators maintain a more secure and fulfilling festive period.

1 MONITOR DIGITAL ACTIVITY

Children spend more time online during school holidays, increasing exposure to potential dangers such as cyberbullying, inappropriate content and online predators. Balancing screen time, avoiding harmful websites and ensuring children engage positively online can be difficult without proper monitoring tools. Set clear boundaries, encourage open discussions about online safety and use parental controls to manage content exposure and screen time effectively. Regular check-ins and positive reinforcement around digital habits encourage safe online behaviour.

2 PRACTICE FIRE SAFETY PROTOCOLS

The incidence of house fires increases during Christmas due to greater use of candles, cookers and electrical decorations. Open flames, electrical overloads and the need for quick response plans can make fire safety challenging. Ensure smoke detectors are operational, keep fire extinguishers on hand and teach children how to respond in case of a fire emergency. Avoid leaving cooking unattended and use fire-safe candles to prevent mishaps.

3 CREATE TRAVEL SAFETY PLANS

More families tend to travel during the holidays, resulting in busier roads, increased traffic accidents and weather-related hazards. Weather conditions, road rage, fatigue and busy airports can all compromise travel safety. Pack emergency kits and adhere to seatbelt laws. Plan routes in advance and allow extra travel time to avoid rushing and mitigate risks on busy roads.

4 BEWARE OF ALLERGIES

Holiday meals often involve many foods that may contain allergens. Cross contamination, unclear labelling and lack of allergy-friendly options can lead to severe reactions. Communicate any allergy needs to hosts, provide safe food alternatives and carry necessary medications like antihistamines or EpiPens. Teaching children how to advocate for themselves and recognise dangerous foods also contributes to safer celebrations.

5 PREVENT THE SPREAD OF ILLNESS

Cold weather and seasonal socialising can increase the spread of viruses like flu and COVID-19. Crowded gatherings, schools out of session and frequent travel can lead to higher infection risks. Emphasise hygiene, encourage vaccination, disinfect surfaces and isolate symptomatic individuals. Communication with children about proper hygiene practices is essential to reduce the spread of illness.

6 STAY VIGILANT ON THE ROAD

Increased holiday traffic heightens the risk of accidents for both drivers and pedestrians. Distracted driving, pedestrian safety and inclement weather can complicate road safety. Encourage pedestrian safety practices, avoid distracted driving and never drive under the influence.

7 MAINTAIN SAFE DECORATIONS

Festive decorations such as Christmas lights and candles can pose electrical, fire and choking hazards if mishandled. Frayed wires, toppling Christmas trees, small ornaments and open flames can be difficult to control, especially in busy households with children. Inspect and maintain decorations, secure Christmas trees, place fragile or small items out of reach and ensure candles are never left unattended. Testing smoke alarms and using flame-retardant decorations can significantly reduce risks.

8 SET BOUNDARIES FOR GIFTS

Some toys and gadgets can present choking, sharp-edge or safety risks, particularly for young children. Ensuring that gifts meet safety standards and are age appropriate can be complex with so many options available. Inspect all toys carefully and ensure any tech devices have parental controls. Setting expectations around safe gift use and discarding packaging that poses a risk also helps to prevent accidents.

9 ADDRESS STRESS & FATIGUE

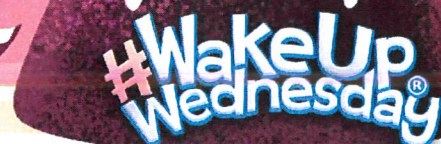
Holiday pressures can lead to burnout, which affects both physical and mental health. Overpacked schedules and a lack of downtime can cause stress and fatigue, leading to accidents or poor decision making. Incorporate rest, maintain regular routines and seek support to reduce stress. Encourage activities that promote relaxation to create a healthier, happier holiday experience for everyone.

10 DRINK RESPONSIBLY

Alcohol is commonly present at holiday events, raising concerns about safety and supervision. Excessive alcohol consumption can lead to accidents, impaired judgment and lack of supervision for children. Designate responsible adults, limit consumption and provide transportation alternatives for guests. Teaching moderation and modelling responsible behaviour in front of children ensures that celebrations remain positive and secure.

Meet Our Expert

James Whelan is a chartered health and safety consultant with 10 years of experience in promoting family and community safety. Specialising in risk assessment and preventative strategies, he has worked with educational institutions, public health agencies and community groups to deliver safety education and training.



The National College

Source: See full reference list on guide page at <https://nationalcollege.com/guides/safety-over-the-festive-season>



Hertfordshire Community
NHS Trust

Missed your
routine
childhood
vaccinations???

Catch up vaccination clinics



NO APPOINTMENT NEEDED
JUST WALK IN! 10AM TO 2PM

HPV, DTP & MEN acwy- Year 10 and above
MMR - All year groups

CHURCH LANE COMMUNITY CENTRE

147 CHURCH LANE, BEDFORD, MK41 0PW

FRIDAY 20TH DECEMBER

FLITWICK CHILDREN'S CENTRE

MALHAM CLOSE, FLITWICK, MK45 1PU

Friday 27th December

For queries call 0300 555 5055



Weekly Bulletin for Families in the Dunstable and Houghton Regis area

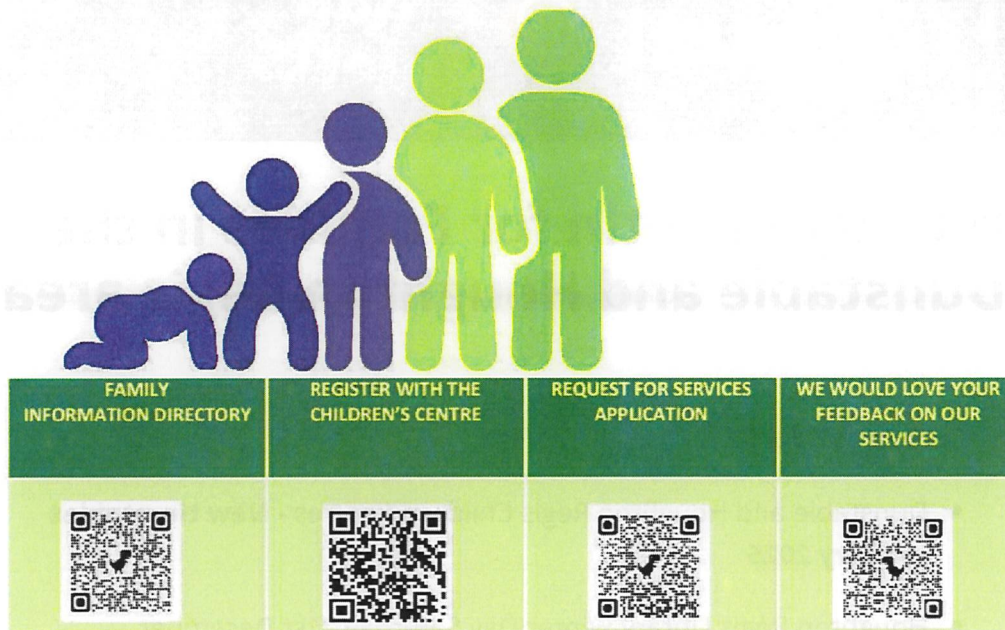
In this week's edition:

- Dunstable and Houghton Regis Children Centres - **New timetables January 2025**
- Houghton Regis Library Winter Day Saturday 21st December
- Active Lifestyles
- Grove Corner Christmas Workshop for 11 to 19 year olds (25 SEND)
- Grove Corner Weekly Youth Groups in Dunstable
- Take time for you- support for parents of children/young people with special educational needs or disability.
- Understanding and exploring 'masking behaviours' of children who are neurodiverse parent/carer workshops
- Understanding emotions and behaviours of children who are neurodiverse parent/carer workshops
- Elmer's Christmas AR Trail
- Better Housing Better Health
- January Parent Insight Session - Chrysalis Centre
- Family Information Directory
- SEND Local Offer

Dunstable and Houghton Regis Children Centres

New Timetables for January 2025 now available

Find out more here



Houghton Regis Library Winter Day Saturday 21st Dec 10am - 2pm

Join us at Houghton Regis Library as we enjoy our Winter Day with a range of fun activities!

Reindeer Headbands -

Make a magical reindeer headband with a famous red glowing nose!

Biscuit Decorating -

Decorate your own winter themed biscuit and then enjoy eating it on the way home!

Snowman Card -

Craft a snowman themed card to give to someone special this holiday season.

Name the Reindeer -

Guess the name of the reindeer for a chance to win a toy!
(library card required for toy competition entry)

Active Families Referral Programme

A free 12 week programme for families with children under 5 to help lead a healthier, happier, active lifestyle



Active Families Referral Programme

We are offering families with children under 5 years old a **FREE 12 week programme** to help lead a healthier, happier, active lifestyle.

- Gain knowledge and ideas on how to get more active as a family
- Find out what services and support is available
- Information on weaning and healthy eating
- A chance to take part in a fun interactive activity with your children
- Chance to set some goals for your family
- Free goodie bag and leisure centre pass for you to enjoy as a family

To register your interest e-mail:
active.lifestyles@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk



A great place to live and work.

Find us online www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/active-lifestyles getactivewith @letstalkcentral

Free goodie bag and leisure centre pass for you to enjoy as a family



Register your interest here

Grove Corner Young People's Christmas Workshop

Free workshop for young people from 11 to 19 (25 SEND) on Saturday 21st December, 3pm-5pm at Grove Corner

FREE

YOUNG PEOPLE'S CHRISTMAS Workshop

Ages 11 to 19 (25 SEND)

21
DEC

SATURDAY 3 PM TO 5 PM

GROVE CORNER

Biscuit, baubles, and coaster decorating

Festive photoshoot

Handmade presents to take home

Snacks & Hot chocolate

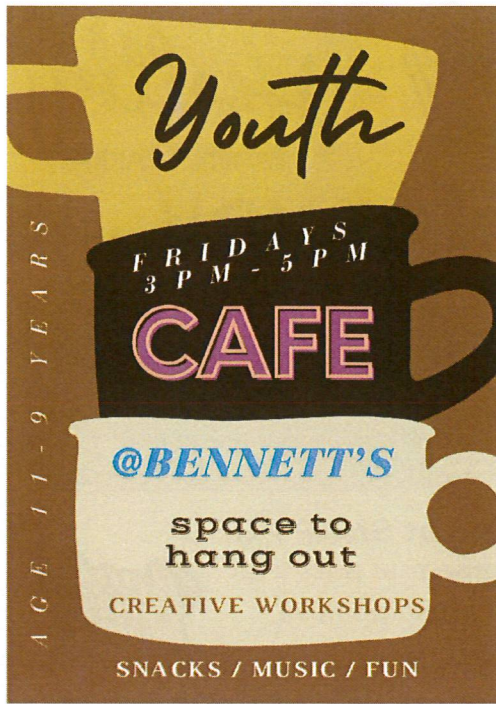
Led by the Dunstable Town Council
Detached Youth Team

GC

COMMUNITY FUND

Funded by UK Government

Grove Corner Weekly Youth Groups in Dunstable



Youth Groups at Bennett's Rec and Kingsbury Park

Take Time for you..

A free online supportive programme for parents of children/young people with special educational needs or disability, who want to improve their own health and wellbeing.

A 12 week online programme during term time on monday evenings 7pm-9pm, starting on 06.01.2025.



Book Now!

Healthy
PARENT CARERS

Take time for you...

A free online, supportive, programme for parents of children/young people with special educational needs or disability, who want to improve their own health and well-being.

Join our trained facilitators at SNAP PCF ...
For a free 12-week online programme that puts your well-being at the centre. Learn how to take positive, manageable steps to better self-care.

Book Now!

"I NO LONGER FEEL ALONE AND I FEEL HELD BY THE PEOPLE THAT I HAVE MET."

Meet other parent carers.....
in a supportive group and focus on your well-being

Join us for a supportive 12-week course held online, term time on Monday Evenings 7:00-9:00 pm, starting on 06/01/25. Learn how to build confidence, resilience and feel empowered to solve problems and achieve better health and well-being.

"I DEFINITELY LEARNT TO LOOK AFTER MYSELF AS THE GLUE IN OUR FAMILY."

THANK YOU!"

"What is the bravest thing you've ever said?" asked the boy.



"Help," said the horse.

BOOK NOW

To reserve your place and to receive more information on our free *Healthy Parent Carer Programme* email: admin@snappcf.org.uk
All participants will receive a free handbook and mini pamper pack

Reserve your place

Understanding and exploring 'masking behaviours' of children who are neurodiverse

The workshop is suitable for parents/carers of children aged 0-12 years old with emerging needs, on the pathway to assessment, have a diagnosed condition and/or identified special educational need.



'Masking is a form of "social camouflage" where a person adapts their behaviour in order to be accepted in an environment' [Sunshine Support – Sunshine Support \(sunshine-support.org\)](https://sunshine-support.org)

'Someone who is masking (a fawn response) is in the same survival mode as someone who goes into fight/flight mode or shows other highly stressed behaviours. But they internalise their stress instead of being able to process it through their safety response, which is more manageable for the people around them, but is more detrimental to their wellbeing.'

[Masking | Autism Barriers to Education \(Spectrum Gaming\)](#)

The workshop will cover:

- Neurodiversity
- How children may present when they are 'masking'
- Strengths and challenges
- Strategies to help children to manage 'masking'
- (At home and possible reasonable adjustments for school)
- Signposting to other services, resources and further reading

Thursday 06.02.2025 12.30pm-2.30pm (online via Team)

[Request a place](#)

Monday 17.03.2025 9.15am-12.30pm Flitwick Children's centre (unfortunately no children can attend)

[Request a place](#)

Understanding emotions and behaviours of children who are neurodiverse

The workshop is suitable for parents/carers of children aged 0-12 with emerging needs, on the pathway to assessment, have a diagnosed condition and/or identified special educational need.

The workshop will cover:
Brain development
Self-regulation and co-regulation
Visual aids
Strategies to support behaviours that are difficult or dangerous

The workshop will be run by the Early Years SEND and Inclusion Team and Children Centre staff (0-12 Family service)



The workshop will cover:

Brain Development

Self regulation and Co regulation

Visual Aids

Strategies to support behaviours that are difficult or dangerous

Thursday 23.01/2025 12.20pm-2.30pm (online via Teams)

[Request a place](#)

Thursday 06.03.2025 9.15am-12.45pm Shefford Children's centre (unfortunately no children can attend)

[Request a place](#)

Tuesday 11.03.2025 9.10am-12.30pm Houghton Regis Children Centre-Tithe Farm (Unfortunately no children can attend)

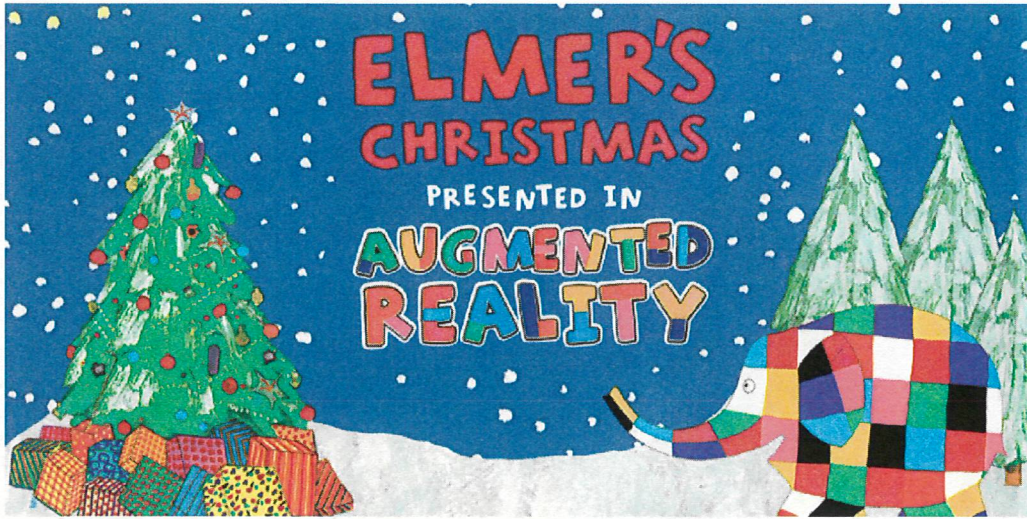
[Request a place](#)

Thursday 13.03.2025 3.50pm-6.00pm (online via Teams)

[Request a place](#)

Elmer's Christmas AR trail at Houghton Hall Park

Enjoy a Free interactive adventure from 20th Nov - 3rd January 9am-4pm at Houghton Hall Park



To get started on the trail click [here](#)

Better Housing Better Health

Winter is coming.

Get your home ready with a FREE home energy assessment. The team at [Better Housing Better Health](#) can provide you with tailored advice to keep your home warm and energy-efficient this winter.

Call 0800 107 0044 to book your FREE visit and get ready for the colder months.

Keep an eye out for more energy saving tips and stay [#EnergyAware](#)



 **ofgem**

In collaboration with BHBH

GET READY FOR WINTER FOR FREE

Book a **FREE HOME VISIT** now to receive expert guidance and support

CALL FOR FREE

0800 107 0044

www.bhbh.org.uk

Chrysalis Centre
Wednesday 29th
January 4pm-5pm

Central Bedfordshire Council
www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk



Insight Session
for
Parents

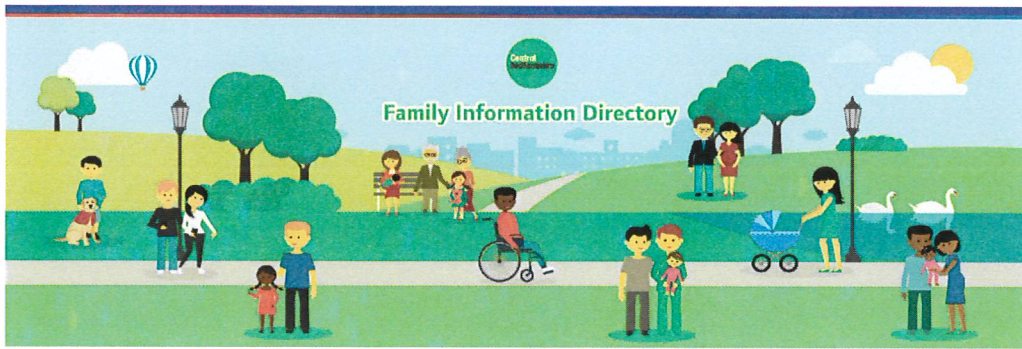


Chrysalis Centre is a ground-breaking programme of interventions to break the cycle of domestic abuse making victims, families and communities safer. Interventions are available to anyone who causes harm and is a resident of Beds and Herts irrespective of sex, age, or risk level.

CAPVA Child Adolescent to Parent Violence & Abuse – a programme to help young people displaying violence towards their parents/carers

CAPVA Come and find out more information on how the Chrysalis Centre can support your young people and families.

[Register here](#)



Search the Family Information Directory



Central Bedfordshire SEND Local Offer

Visit the Local Offer website

Contact us

community.partner@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk

Sent to you by Central Bedfordshire Council
To update your details or change your
subscription preferences, please click here



