



Welcome to the final newsletter of 2020. It has certainly been a year unlike any other, and one which shall be remembered throughout time. In these uncertain times, one thing that has shone through is our Commonswood family. We have become more than a community, learning to appreciate each other and lean on each other in a way that has been quite inspiring. Our staff have had rather blurry job roles at times, with everyone becoming an educator, a leader, a cleaner, a first aider, and so much more.

And the children? Well, you will see in our Christmas DVD that the children are still children and school is still school. We may not be able to provide every opportunity we would like to at the moment, but our dedicated teachers are always full of good ideas to enhance learning and Covid has not stopped us from having fun.

I would like to thank parents for their patience, support and kindness. I know that the new routines are inconvenient for some and have, at times, been frustrating. The solidarity you have shown for keeping everyone safe and well and helping us to keep the school fully open has been much appreciated.

We will remain on duty over the holiday period, monitoring emails for safeguarding and Covid-19 purposes. Please notify us immediately by email at [admin@commonswood.herts.sch.uk](mailto:admin@commonswood.herts.sch.uk) if your child has a positive Covid-19 test result. In the event that a child has tested positive for Covid-19, we will use School Comms to notify everyone who has had close contact that they will need to self-isolate.

Finally, I would like to wish you all a safe and happy Christmas and New Year.

### Christmas DVD



The Commonswood/Hollywood Christmas extravaganza has been filmed and will be ready to make its UK debut at the end of term. The children will be bringing this home as a wrapped gift so there is no need to place an order. (Shh it is a secret!).

A massive thank you to Miss Buckley for organising, writing, rehearsing, directing, filming, editing and stressing over the production!

### Pantomime

To bring some fun at the end of term, the children will be watching a Jack and the Beanstalk pantomime after their school Christmas lunch. We are asking for a £2 donation per child to cover costs.

Please log onto School Gateway if you would like to make a contribution. Your contributions are gratefully received so thank you in advance.



### Test and Trace

Emails will be monitored over the holiday period for safeguarding and for positive Covid-19 test results ONLY. Please notify us immediately by email at [admin@commonswood.herts.sch.uk](mailto:admin@commonswood.herts.sch.uk) if your child has a positive Covid-19 test result. Please ensure that you put 'Covid-19 Positive Test Result' as the subject of your email. In the

event that a child has tested positive for Covid-19, we will use School Comms to notify everyone who has had close contact that they will need to self-isolate.

### Email Correspondence

When emailing the school, please send emails to [admin@commonswood.herts.sch.uk](mailto:admin@commonswood.herts.sch.uk) and address it to the appropriate class teacher so we can deal with your request as swiftly as possible.

### Nursery

The children are becoming so excited as we prepare for Christmas. The Elf and a Christmas tree appeared on Monday! The children have begun to make decorations to hang on the tree. We had a lovely time in the school grounds looking for winter trees. The children have learnt that some are bare, and some are evergreens. We brought back some pieces of pine tree and explored making patterns in the playdough. We have even been painting with it!



### Reception

Each class has had a new arrival; Jess (Acer) and Jack (Alder) the elves! The children have been enjoying their company, writing letters and making pictures, slides and swings for them to use in the classroom. The elves have written a letter to the children each day which they have loved reading first thing in the morning. The letter usually includes a challenge for the children to take part in. The elves have been helping us get into the Christmas spirit!



### Year 1

In Year 1 we really enjoyed our Christmas art day! We completed our calendars, cards, decorations and other Christmas creations ready to bring home. In English, we used Talk for Writing to help us retell the story Wolf Won't Bite. We changed the verbs in the story, added similes and used exclamation marks. The children produced some of their best writing in Year 1. We have displayed them all in our classroom to celebrate this.



### Year 2



During our ICT lessons, the children have been investigating computer art. We have researched different artistic styles such as pointillism as well as different artists such as Mondrian and Picasso. After practising these styles, we then created a Christmas masterpiece, where we tried to use these artists as our inspiration.

### Year 3

In Year 3, this half term, we have been enjoying learning about the stone age. It has been great to see some of the tools the children have made at home as part of their homework. In class we have enjoyed learning about the role of stone age hunters. We drew flowcharts to show how the animals are used for meat and clothing once they were caught.



### Year 4



In Year 4 English lessons, we created our own 'wanted' posters of the 'baddies' we are writing about in our revenge stories. In Geography we have been looking at Fairtrade. We learnt about the process of how bananas get from a plantation in Ghana to a supermarket in the UK. We looked at how much each person got paid in the process, which was not very much for the farmers and more than we thought for the supermarkets! In Science we have been learning about the Digestive System. We looked at the process of the digestive system using bananas, orange juice and a ziplock bag to mirror the breaking down of food in our stomach. It did not look very nice! We also learnt that food takes 6 seconds to get from our mouth to our stomach.

### Year 5

In Year 5, we have been deepening our knowledge of Tudor times by finding out about how clothing and accessories were produced. In DT we explored various types of stitching such as running, cross

and back stitch. We have also perfected the art of threading needles. This week, we will attempt chain stitch and blanket stitch. Quite soon, we should be qualified to create our own Tudor purse.

### **Year 6**

During this second half of the Autumn term, Year 6 have become creative authors. The whole class has worked successfully in groups to develop great pieces of descriptive writing, before using these skills to create their own unique pieces of narrative.

In Maths we have been honing our knowledge and skills in using and calculating with fractions, solving worded problems and even writing our own number investigations.

Our History topic has moved onto creating our expert projects, based on chosen areas of interest about World War 1. Working with a partner the children have researched and developed projects which they will present as experts at the end of term.

### **Remembrance Day**

The final task for our 2019-20 School Council was to ring the special Commonswood bell on Remembrance Day. At the end of a Remembrance assembly which was beamed into classrooms via Teams, we had a minute's silence followed by 11 dongs of the bell. It is a great honour to ring the Commonswood bell as usually it is only sounded by Year 6 children and staff when they leave the school.

The 2019-20 School Council remained for half a term at the start of this year due to missing a whole term last academic year. They handed over to the new Council members in a ceremony during which they presented the 2020-21 children with their School Council badges. Thank you to last year's Council for all their hard work.



### **Forgotten School Items**

To stop any cross contamination we are unable to take any forgotten items including packed lunches though the office. We ask all Parents/Carers to double check that pupils have all the items needed for the school day before sending them into school. If your child has forgotten their lunch, please alert the office as soon as possible and we will get a school dinner ordered. For years 3-6 please make sure there is sufficient funds to cover the cost on your child's dinner account.



### **House points**

With focus being given to settling the children back into school routines, we are yet to have our elections for this year's House Captains. Year 6 are currently preparing their speeches and will soon be asking the school for their votes. Every child from Year 1 – 6 is allocated to a House: Chambers, Osborn, De-Soissons or Howard and will be able to vote. Our new House Captains will be announced in the new year.

### **Home Learning**

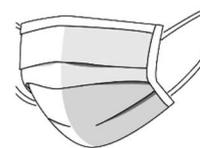


There are guides on the school website about how to use the various parts of MS Teams.

[http://www.commonswood.herts.sch.uk/using\\_teams.php](http://www.commonswood.herts.sch.uk/using_teams.php)

## Facemasks

A polite reminder to all parents to wear face masks on drop-off and pickup.



## Nursery Applications and Stay & Play sessions

If your child was born between 1st September 2017 – 31st August 2018 they are eligible to start our Nursery in September 2021.

At present, we have not arranged any Stay & Play sessions due to the Covid-19 pandemic but please copy and paste the following link into your internet browser for a virtual tour of the Nursery.

Application forms are available from the school office or via our website [admin@commonswood.herts.sch.uk](mailto:admin@commonswood.herts.sch.uk)



## Reception Allocations 2020

Please be reminded that the deadline for you to apply for a Reception place for September 2021 is Friday 15<sup>th</sup> January 2021. Reception tours can be found on the school website.

## Healthy Start



If you're pregnant or have a child under 4, you could get Healthy Start vouchers to help buy some basic foods. This important means-tested scheme provides vouchers to spend with local retailers. Pregnant women and children over 1 and under 4 can get one £3.10 voucher per week. Children under 1 can get two £3.10 vouchers (£6.20) per week.

If you are entitled to Healthy Start Vouchers you will also get free vitamins designed to help pregnant and breastfeeding women and growing children.

To check your eligibility <https://www.healthystart.nhs.uk/healthy-start-vouchers/how-to-apply/>

## Smart Watches

We would like to remind parents that smart watches are not permitted in school. If your child would like to wear a watch, please provide them with a digital or analogue watch. Watches should not be worn on a PE day.

## Christmas cards and gifts



Unfortunately, sending Christmas cards in school this year won't be possible, so instead, for Years 1-6, we will create a special channel for each class on Teams for children to send Christmas messages to their friends. These channels will be monitored by the teachers and opened on 1<sup>st</sup> December.

We have had a number of parents who have kindly asked about sending gifts to staff at the end of term. Items of appreciation are not essential but are always gratefully received and can be sanitised or quarantined before staff take them home. Thank you for thinking of us.

## Uniform



Our school uniform comprises:

- Smart, plain grey short or long trousers (not sportswear, leggings, jeggings, chinos or

- jogging bottoms except in Nursery)
- Sky blue polo shirts or shirts
  - Plain grey skirts or pinafores (or pale blue gingham dresses in the Summer term)
  - Navy blue sweatshirt or navy-blue cardigan (preferably with the school logo)
  - Black, navy, grey or white tights or socks - Socks/tights **must** be worn for hygiene purposes
  - Black shoes or plain black trainers – no logo or white/coloured soles or coloured laces. No laced shoes in Reception.
  - Wellington boots can be worn in extreme weather conditions, but children must change into school shoes on arrival.

It is always a good idea to include spare socks in your child's PE kit in case of wet feet.

Adhering to the uniform guidelines are vital for your child's sense of belonging, self-esteem and their understanding that the rules are there for everyone. Please ensure your child is wearing the correct items and has the correct equipment for school, including a waterproof coat with a hood.

### Disability Equality Questionnaire results

Thank you for completing the short questionnaire about disability and mobility. There are a number of people, both children and adults, in our school community who stated there is a disability within the family. The vast majority of questionnaire responses stated that access to the school is suitable and that school meets the needs of children with disabilities.

Children and young people who have special educational needs (SEN) do not necessarily have a disability. Some disabled children and young people do not have special educational needs. There may be overlap between the two groups.

A child has a disability if they have a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial or long-term effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. Children with these needs will require specialist services. They will require support with their health, education or physical, intellectual, emotional, social or behavioural development, due to disabilities.

Currently, specialist services have long waiting lists and can take many months to access. In our questionnaire there were a couple of parental responses regarding specialist services. External professionals would usually come into school to observe children, but they are presently unable to do so. The questionnaire is anonymous, so please feel free to contact us if you would like a personal response to your query. Thank you to those who offered kind words of thanks and appreciation for members of our staff team.

### Diary Dates

December	
11 <sup>th</sup>	"Christmas Jumper Day" for Save the Children – wear a colourful or Christmas jumper with school trousers or skirts and school shoes. Donations can be made via School Gateway
14 <sup>th</sup> and 15 <sup>th</sup>	Christmas dinner days – see additional letter
17 <sup>th</sup>	Last day for Nursery children
18 <sup>th</sup>	End of term 12.30pm – staggered gate times for collection from the usual pick up points:  Reception - 12:10 Gate 1 Year 1 - 12:20 Gate 1 Year 2 - 12:30 Gate 1 Year 3 - 12:20 Gate 3 Year 4 - 12:10 Gate 3 Year 5 - 12:30 Gate 3 Year 6 - 12:20 Gate 3
January	
5 <sup>th</sup>	Term commences – children start the school term

### SCHOOL TERM AND HOLIDAY DATES 2020/2021

#### Autumn Term

Wednesday	2 <sup>nd</sup> September	Staff Inset Day – Children do not attend
Thursday	3 <sup>rd</sup> September	Term Commences for Children
Friday	23 <sup>rd</sup> October	Staff Inset Day – Children do not attend

<b>Monday</b>	<b>26<sup>th</sup> October – 30<sup>th</sup> October</b>	<b>Half Term</b>
Monday	30 <sup>th</sup> November	Occasional Day – Children do not attend
Friday	18 <sup>th</sup> December	Term Ends 12.30pm

<b>Spring Term</b>		
Monday	4 <sup>th</sup> January	Staff Inset Day – Children Do Not Attend
Tuesday	5 <sup>th</sup> January	Term Commences for Children
<b>Monday</b>	<b>15<sup>th</sup> –19<sup>th</sup> February</b>	<b>Half Term</b>
Friday	26 <sup>th</sup> March	Term Ends 12.30pm

<b>Summer Term</b>		
Monday	12 <sup>th</sup> April	Staff Inset Day – Children Do Not Attend
Tuesday	13 <sup>th</sup> April	Term Commences for Children
Monday	3 <sup>rd</sup> May	Bank Holiday
<b>Monday</b>	<b>31<sup>st</sup> May – 4<sup>th</sup> June</b>	<b>Half Term</b>
Wednesday	21 <sup>st</sup> July	Term Ends 12.30pm
Thursday	22 <sup>nd</sup> July	Staff Inset Day – Children Do Not Attend

**Term time holidays have a negative impact on friendships and learning  
Please avoid taking your child out of school during term time.**

**Governors' policy does not allow term time holidays to be authorised unless there are exceptional circumstances.**

**Section 7 Education Act 1996 places a duty on parents to ensure that their child of compulsory age attends school.**



**Commonswood Primary & Nursery School is a Safeguarding School**

**We are an Encompass School working with external agencies to support children who are victims of domestic abuse.**

*'All schools have a clear responsibility placed on them by the Children Act 1989 and by guidance from the Department of Education to safeguard the welfare of all their pupils. In doing so schools are expected to consult with Social Services if they believe there is a possibility that a child may be suffering from abuse or neglect.'*

*If you have any concerns about children, please contact 0300 123 4043.*

**Mrs G Seymour (Designated Senior Person), Mrs S Manning (Deputy Designated Person),  
Mrs N Scatchard (Deputy Designated Person) , Mr S Burt (Deputy Designated Person for eSafety) and Mrs D Lindsay-Hill (Deputy Designated Person for Early Years)**

**Chair of Governors Mrs Julie Noakes**