



# January/February 2023 News on the Ninth

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## Happy New Year

We warmly welcome you back to school this term after a rather snowy end to last year! We hope you had an enjoyable Christmas break. A huge thank you for all the heartfelt Christmas wishes, cards and presents we received at the end of last term. We are looking forward to lots of exciting events this spring, as well as some warmer weather!

## Christmas events

It was wonderful to welcome parents and carers into school for our Christmas performances. The children in Nursery, Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 did a fantastic job with their acting, singing and dancing, and we hope you have made some fantastic memories. Thank you also to the PTA for organising the mince pie and mingle sessions before each performance.

The PTA Christmas Fayre was a great hit too and lots of fun was had by all. Thank you for supporting this event.

## Start of Term

We eased ourselves into the spring term with two days of wellbeing. The children revised their helping hands (please do talk to your child about who is on theirs) and embarked on a variety of learning which focused on physical and mental wellbeing. Here are some of the things we got up to:



## Strike Action

Thank you to all the parents who sent in supportive messages regarding the strike on 1<sup>st</sup> February. Many parents thanked teachers for sharing information in advance of the strike which gave families time to prepare childcare arrangements.

**Whilst some classes remained open on 1<sup>st</sup> February, we recommend that you make contingency arrangements for childcare for the subsequent strike dates (1<sup>st</sup>, 15<sup>th</sup> & 16<sup>th</sup> March) as NEU members are entitled to change their decisions. We will keep you informed as soon as we know more.**

We remain committed to providing a safe and secure environment for our pupils and delivering high-quality teaching.



## Nursery

The children took part in a fabulous music workshop and made shakers. Some of the shakers double up as a guiro too! We discussed how music can lift our mood or calm us down.

## Reception

Reception have started their Talk 4 Writing text: Cops and Robbers by the Ahlbergs. They have been solving a crime that happened in our outdoor area. Our beloved Jenni Jigsaw was taken and the children have been finding clues and writing posters to alert everyone in the school about who had taken her - Grabber Dan!

## Year 1

In Year 1 we have been learning about poetry in literacy lessons and written our own. We have used similes, adjectives, rhyme, and applying the new graphemes in our writing that we have learnt in our phonics sessions each day. In geography, we have been looking at aerial maps of our local area in readiness for our local walk next week. We are looking forward to our walk next week and a visitor who will be teaching us all about the Chinese New Year.

## Year 2



Year 2 have started a new topic in art this half term where we are learning about observational sketching and creating art from nature. We had a lot of fun creating animal sculptures out of nature, where we used our imagination to create squirrels, foxes and owls.

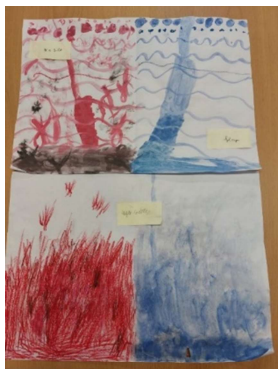
## Year 3

In Year 3, we focused on emotional regulation and what to do if something goes wrong! After lots of discussion we created regulation cards to help us when we need it. We hope you enjoyed looking at these at home.



## Year 4

In Year 4 we have finished and evaluated our 'winter bunting' unit. We practiced our sewing skills, designed and created our bunting, then hung them on display.



## Year 5

Year 5 discussed the wide range of emotions that we feel and how all these are perfectly normal. We created art using oil pastels and watercolour paints to show how different emotions may look if they were created in colour.

## Year 6

Year 6 have enjoyed their first week back looking at their new geography topic: South America. They have been looking at atlases and creating a map of the countries within South America. We have then focussed in on Brazil and have been exploring the cities of Brazil by using 6 figure grid references. In maths pupils have been finding percentages of amounts.

## Online Safety Theme

January's Online Safety focus is 'Self Image and Identity'. At home, please could you have a discussion with your child regarding this area.

In EYFS and KS1, it could be discussing what to do if something happens that makes them feel sad, worried, uncomfortable or frightened.



In Lower KS2, we have been discussing how people can represent themselves in different ways online and not to fully trust everything as how it appears.

In upper KS2, discussing how to make responsible choices about having an online identity.

## Device / App Parental Controls

Almost all apps and devices now offer controls for parents. Parental controls on devices can offer different types of protection -from filtering out adult content in search results, to preventing your child from buying things when playing games. You can find instructions on how to set controls on the manufacturer's website or to find specific guidance for your device, network or platform use the online tool from the 'Internet Matters' website. Control settings will apply whether the device is being used in your home or outside. It's also easy for controls to be switched off, so make sure your child understands why the settings are in place.

## Stationery Shop

On Fridays, children from year 6 will be running a stationery shop at break time. Children from Years 3 – 6 will be able to buy a selection of different items for use within the classroom (or at home). This is something which we ran before lockdown and found that it helped children to understand using money and being responsible for looking after items which they have bought. The children do not have to buy items as the school will continue to provide what they need; however the option is there for them.

## Mums for lungs

We have been made aware that a number of parents are idling in their cars outside school at drop off and pick up times. Children are more affected by air pollution than adults as they breathe faster and deeper than adults and are closer to car exhausts. Please turn off your car engines when waiting outside school as exhaust fumes are not only harmful to adults and children but pollute the surrounding air.

More information can be found on the Mums for lungs website.

## School Council news

Here we are with Ian from the local food bank, which is our chosen charity for this academic year. Ian visited to tell us all about how the food bank supports families and what we can do to help them. We found out that families need a special voucher to attend the food bank and about 65 families a week benefit from donations. This has risen steeply over the last year.

School council will be planning some events to support this worthwhile charity ... so watch this space!



## Hygge Accreditation

Commonswood Primary and Nursery School Early Years department have just received their 'Hygge in the Early Years Accreditation'. Hygge is a Danish word that loosely translates to 'cosiness' or 'comfort'. We started off by transforming the indoor environments, making them more homely with indoor plants, neutral colours and dimmed lighting, and less like a typical classroom. Hygge is also about being more present in life and showing gratitude to the things and people we have around us. Something our school is very grateful for is the wonderful grounds we have. Regardless of the

weather, the Nursery and Reception classes make their way down to the orchard each week to engage in outdoor learning which the children thrive on. It helps them to be more present, notice things in their immediate environment and inspires them to be curious and ask questions. This enables the children to take ownership of their learning and the adults help to facilitate this. The staff work hard to develop secure relationships with the children, to really get to know them and their interests and use this to plan and extend their learning.

“You cannot buy the right atmosphere or a sense of togetherness. You cannot hygge if you are in a hurry or stressed out, and the art of creating intimacy cannot be bought by anything but time, interest and engagement in the people around you.” — Meik Wiking,

## Clubs

Clubs started week commencing 16<sup>th</sup> January 2023 and the last week of clubs will be week commencing 6<sup>th</sup> March 2023.

**There are no clubs running week commencing 6<sup>th</sup> February 2023 due to parent consultations. In order to offer places to as many children as possible, the booking limit for clubs is one club per child.**

## KS1 CLUBS

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
	Years 1 & 2 Lego Club – Cost -Free  12 places  Parents, please collect from Nursery entrance at 4.15pm	Years 1 & 2 Multi Skills Club  Cost - Free  15 places  Parents, please collect from Nursery entrance at 4.15pm	KS1 Ball Skills – Cost - Free  20 Places  Parents, please collect from Nursery entrance at 4.15pm	KS1Football  Cost - £4 per session - Run by Premier  20 places  Parents, please collect from Nursery entrance at 4.15pm
	Years 1 & 2 Cooking Club  Cost - Free  10 places  Parents, please collect from Office entrance at 4.15pm			

## KS2 Clubs

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Years 3 & 4 Gymnastics  Cost - Free  20 Places		Year 4 Badminton  Cost - Free  8 places	Years 3,4,5 & 6 Cooking Club  Cost - Free  10 places	KS2 Football  Cost - £4 per session – Run by Premier  20 places

Parents, please collect from Nursery entrance at 4.15pm		Parents, please collect from Office entrance at 4.15pm	Parents, please collect from Office entrance at 4.15pm	Parents, please collect from KS2 playground at 4.15pm
Years 3, 4, 5 & 6 Tag Rugby  Cost - Free Club  20 Places  Parents, please collect from Office entrance at 4.15pm				
Years 5 & 6 Art Club Cost - Free Club  10 places  Parents, please collect from Office entrance at 4.15pm				

Please be advised that Choir club will commence on Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> January 2023 for those children who attended Choir club in the Autumn term. Please collect from the Office entrance at 4.15pm.

### Nursery Applications for September 2023

If you would like to prepare your child for school and your child was born between 01/09/2019 – 31/08/2020 they are eligible to start our Nursery in September 2023. Applications for Nursery are now live. We do have some additional Stay & Play sessions available for you and your child to come along and spend some time in the Nursery prior to applying. Please contact the school office in order for you to book a place. Places are limited so please book early to avoid disappointment. Nursery application forms are available from the school office – [admin@commonswood.herts.sch.uk](mailto:admin@commonswood.herts.sch.uk) and from the school website.

### Parent teacher curriculum meetings

The spring term began with year group curriculum meetings for parents. Following feedback from the autumn term welcome meetings, we included more information for you about subjects being taught and year group expectations. We also adjusted the timings to make it easier for KS2 parents to collect younger children and allow a little more time for questions. The length of these meetings understandably can't be too long as they are taking teachers out of the classroom, so if you have any further questions, please approach your child's class teacher at the end of a school day. If you would like more information about our curriculum and what the children are learning, please visit our website or ask your child's teacher.

Thank you for completing the online survey to give your views on these meetings. The vast majority of parents thought the meetings were useful and informative. Comments given were constructive, such as wanting further information about a range of subjects, so we will do our best to take these

on board for next time. Thank you also for some very kind comments; these have been passed on to teachers.

For you to stay informed about your child's progress, we hope you have attended one of our parent teacher consultation evenings this month. At the end of the summer term, you will also receive your child's written report.

### Parent Consultations

Following the positive feedback from parents and staff after October's parents' evenings, we have used the same system for February's parents' meetings.

Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> February 3.30pm – 6.30pm face to face meetings

Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> February 3.30pm – 6.30pm online meetings



Thank you to the parents who attended the parent forum. The theme for the meeting was Enriching the curriculum. Please click on the link below/copy and paste the link to your browser:

[http://www.commonswood.herts.sch.uk/documents/parent\\_forum/03-02-23-enrichment.pdf](http://www.commonswood.herts.sch.uk/documents/parent_forum/03-02-23-enrichment.pdf)

The next parent forum will be held at 9am on 27<sup>th</sup> April. The theme will be Special Educational Needs/Disabilities provision and policy.

### Sustrans Big Walk and Wheel

Once again, we will be joining in with this initiative, which encourages families to take to the pavements, rather than the roads, when travelling to and from school. Between 20<sup>th</sup> and 31<sup>st</sup> March the children will be logging the number of journeys they take by foot, bike and scooter. We compete with other schools across the country, so please support us with active journeys to and from school.



### World Book Week

This year, we will be celebrating World Book Week, the week commencing Monday 27<sup>th</sup> February with World Book Day on Thursday 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2023. Mindful of the cost of living and inclusivity, we would like the children to come to school dressed in warm pyjamas or cosy loungewear to celebrate World Book Day on Thursday 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2023. Pyjamas are of course connected to bedtime, which is the time of day when many of us read or are read to. We also want the focus of the day to be on reading and about books that inspire us, rather than finding or making a good costume. Children are



asked to wear trainers (any colour) and not slippers on this day. There will be fun activities and workshops linked to our favourite books and authors and of course, lots of reading! So, join us in celebrating world book day by coming to school in your pyjamas. Let's get reading!

**Please find below this Month's reading recommendations!**

**EYFS**

**Nursery** – All Join In by Quentin Blake

**Reception** – Funny Bones by Allan Ahlberg

**Key Stage 1**

**Year 1** – Cinnamon by Neil Gaiman

**Year 2** – Hattie and Olaf by Frida Nilsson

**Lower Key Stage 2**

**Year 3** – The Accidental Prime Minister by Tom McLaughlin

**Year 4** – Edie and the Box of Flits by Kate Wilkinson

**Upper Key Stage 2**

**Year 5** – Wolf Brother by Michelle Paver

**Year 6** – Nightfall in New York by Katherine Woodfine

**Free Relationship Support Courses**

OnePlusOne offer free online relationship support courses for Hertfordshire residents. There are three digital resources available for parents: 1. Me You and Baby Too – To help new and expectant parents adapt to the changes that parenthood can have on their relationship, raise awareness of the impact of stress and conflict on their baby and develop skills to manage conflict constructively. 2. Arguing Better – To support parents experiencing high levels of stress and couple conflict to raise awareness of the impact on children, increase capacity to cope with stress together and develop skills to manage conflict. 3. Getting it Right for Children – To support separating or separated parents experiencing high levels of conflict understand the impact on the child, develop positive communications skills, and cooperate in working out solutions.

All three of the above courses are online and parents who wish to access them can work their way through them at their own pace, they do not need to complete all in one go, they can save and come back to it later. Parents can do any one of the courses or all three, depending on their circumstances and needs. Parents will need a smart device such as a mobile phone and an internet connection to access the online resources <https://www.oneplusone.org.uk/parents> For more relationship advice and support you can visit <https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/services/schools-and-education/childcare-and-advice-forparents/parents-and-family-support/relationships/relationship-support-forparents.aspx?searchInput=&page=1&resultsPerPage=10&view=card>

**DIARY DATES**

February 2023	
1st	Nursery stay and play 1.30 -2.30pm
2nd	Year 4 Virtual Museum visit
3rd	Parent Forum – 9am – Focus: Enrichment, visitors in school and trips out
6th	Year 5 Swimming all week No Clubs this week
7th	Face to face Parents evening 3.30-6.30pm



9 <sup>th</sup>	Online Parents evening 3.30- 6.30pm
13 <sup>th</sup> – 17 <sup>th</sup> February	Half Term
23 <sup>rd</sup>	Year 5 mini medics First Aid awareness
24 <sup>th</sup>	Year 3 and Year 5 Science Dome
28 <sup>th</sup>	Nursery Stay and Play 1.30 – 2.30pm
27 <sup>th</sup> Feb – 3 <sup>rd</sup> March	Book Week
March 2023	
1 <sup>st</sup> March	Potential Strike Day
2 <sup>nd</sup> March	Wear Pyjamas/loungewear & trainers to school
6 <sup>th</sup> March	Year 6 to the Science Museum
7 <sup>th</sup> March	RE day – whole school
8 <sup>th</sup> March	Nursery Stay and Play 1.30- 2.30pm
14 <sup>th</sup> March	Parent Coffee Morning
14 <sup>th</sup> March	Nursery Stay and Play 1.30- 2.30pm
15 <sup>th</sup> March	Potential Strike Day
16 <sup>th</sup> March	Potential Strike Day
20 <sup>th</sup> – 31 <sup>st</sup>	Big Walk & Wheel Fortnight
22 <sup>nd</sup> March	Nursery Stay and Play 1.30- 2.30pm
28 <sup>th</sup> March	Bug Fest Visitor – Nursery & Reception
29 <sup>th</sup> March	Nursery Stay and Play 1.30- 2.30pm
31 <sup>st</sup> March	Term ends 12.30pm
17 <sup>th</sup> April	INSET – children do not attend
18 <sup>th</sup> April	Term commences - all children attend
1 <sup>st</sup> May	Bank Holiday
5 <sup>th</sup> May	King's Coronation Celebration
8 <sup>th</sup> May	Bank Holiday
29 <sup>th</sup> May – 2 <sup>nd</sup> June	Half Term
5 <sup>th</sup> June	INSET – Children do not attend
6 <sup>th</sup> June	Term commences - all children attend
13 <sup>th</sup> July	Secondary School Transfer day
20 <sup>th</sup> July	Term ends 12.30pm
21 <sup>st</sup> July	INSET – Children do not attend

#### Term time holidays

We are unable to authorise term time holidays. Absence can only be authorised if a child is unwell. If however, the number of unauthorised sessions reaches 15 or more within 2 terms, the local authority may issue you with a Penalty Notice. The Penalty Notice requires parents to pay a fine of £60 within 21 days. If this is not paid within the time limit, the penalty rises to £120 which must be paid within 28 days.

Term time holidays have a negative impact on friendships and learning. Please avoid taking your child out of school. Term time holidays are not authorised. Absence requests can only be authorised if there are exceptional, unrepeatable 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), Mr S Burt (Deputy Designated Person for eSafety & Mrs D Lindsay-Hill (Deputy Designated Person), Miss K Dean (Designated Senior Person) Chair of Governors Mrs Julie Noakes**