



Monday 14th December 2020

CHRISTMAS ROUNDUP

I write to you as we complete our first term of the school year under the most unprecedented of circumstances. This has always been my absolute favourite time of the year to bring our community together and celebrate Christmas with all our usual Birch Wood traditions. It goes without saying that this year we have had to do things differently, but in true Birch Wood spirit we have risen to the challenge to ensure we make things as special as possible for our students for Christmas 2020.

Christmas Show

As you will be aware Hannah O'Mara and Matt Ormerod have been sprinkling some Christmas magic to co-ordinate our virtual Christmas Show. Thanks to the further ingenuity from class teams and David Grimes our Network Manager we are hoping to premiere this in school on Wednesday 16th December for all students and Thursday 17th December for families via a secure hyperlink to YouTube. Only people who have this link will be able to view the performance and we ask that for safeguarding reasons this is not made public and the performance is not shared on social media. However, we will be sharing clips of the performance on our Facebook and Instagram accounts for all students whose parents have given social media permissions, these clips can be shared further if you wish. I have had the pleasure of seeing little snippets being performed and I know you are all in for a real treat!

Virtual Staff Talent Show

In order to provide students with further entertainment and festive fun our Post 16 Lead at Grange Drive- Charlotte Adu, has persuaded staff to show off their hidden talents! The virtual staff talent show will be aired live in school on Tuesday 16th December, with guest judging from students in 5CA. Some of these clips may also make it on to our social media feeds- so watch out for them if you want a giggle.

A Special visit from Santa

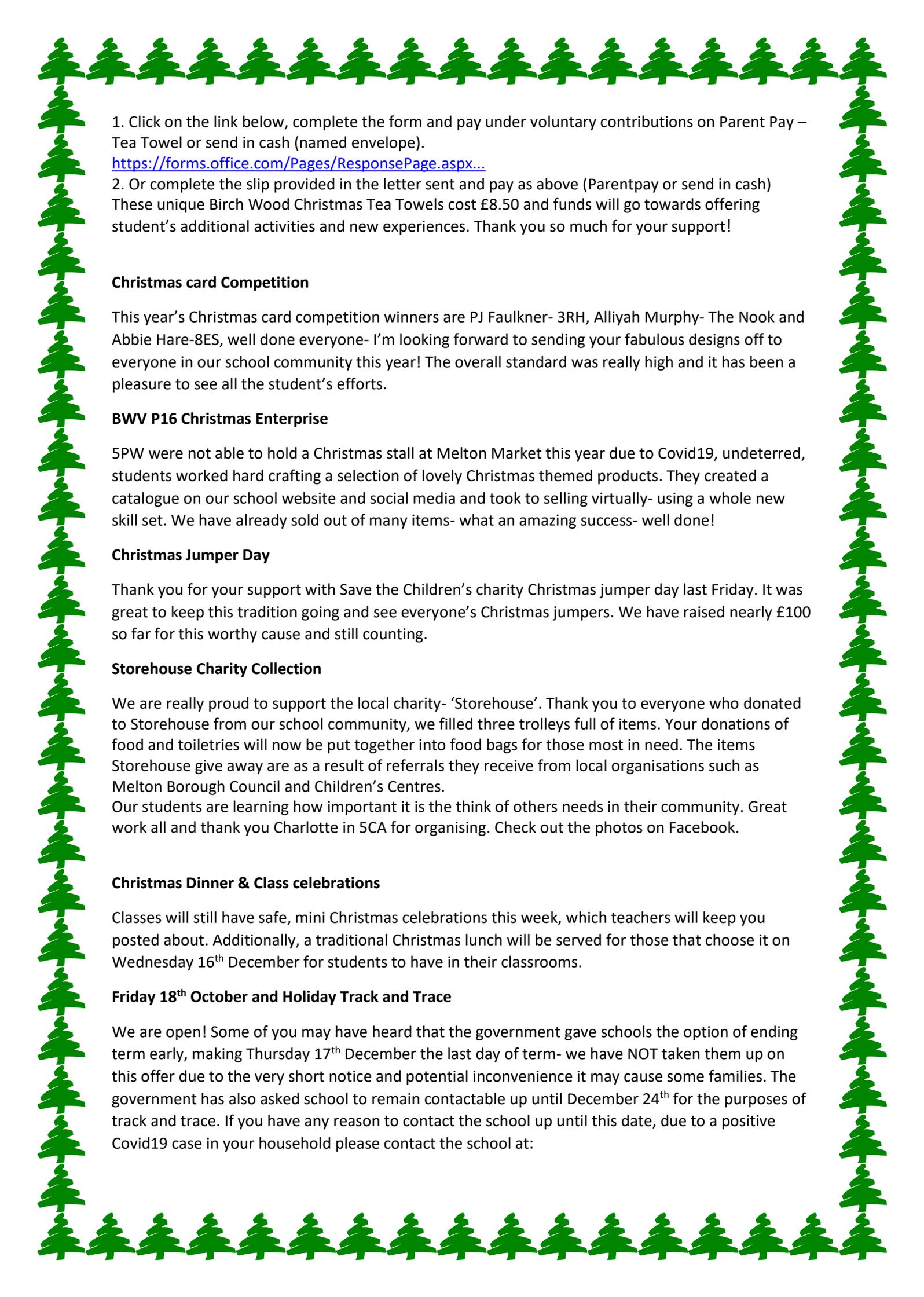
We have had a very special secret visit from Santa, who has prepared a personalised message for our students in the reception at Birch Wood Grange Drive with the help of one of the staff elves. We will be sharing this with students and on social media this week when they will be presented with a small gift.

Christmas Selection Box Donation

We have very kindly been donated £200 from John Bartlett from the Triumph Owners Motorcycle Club, to go towards buying a Christmas gift for all of our students. We are hugely grateful for this kind gesture.

Christmas Tea Towel Competition

You may have seen on our social media that the winners of our Christmas Tea Towel design competition using our ENABLES ethos are a group of students from 4MP at Grange Drive - Millie, Jagrag, Joe, Eden and Ollie, who have had their clever design turned in to a beautiful tea towel to help raise funds for class activities. We would be delighted to take orders for this unique design ready before Christmas. Ways to place an order:



1. Click on the link below, complete the form and pay under voluntary contributions on Parent Pay – Tea Towel or send in cash (named envelope).

<https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx...>

2. Or complete the slip provided in the letter sent and pay as above (Parentpay or send in cash) These unique Birch Wood Christmas Tea Towels cost £8.50 and funds will go towards offering student's additional activities and new experiences. Thank you so much for your support!

Christmas card Competition

This year's Christmas card competition winners are PJ Faulkner- 3RH, Alliyah Murphy- The Nook and Abbie Hare-8ES, well done everyone- I'm looking forward to sending your fabulous designs off to everyone in our school community this year! The overall standard was really high and it has been a pleasure to see all the student's efforts.

BWV P16 Christmas Enterprise

5PW were not able to hold a Christmas stall at Melton Market this year due to Covid19, undeterred, students worked hard crafting a selection of lovely Christmas themed products. They created a catalogue on our school website and social media and took to selling virtually- using a whole new skill set. We have already sold out of many items- what an amazing success- well done!

Christmas Jumper Day

Thank you for your support with Save the Children's charity Christmas jumper day last Friday. It was great to keep this tradition going and see everyone's Christmas jumpers. We have raised nearly £100 so far for this worthy cause and still counting.

Storehouse Charity Collection

We are really proud to support the local charity- 'Storehouse'. Thank you to everyone who donated to Storehouse from our school community, we filled three trolleys full of items. Your donations of food and toiletries will now be put together into food bags for those most in need. The items Storehouse give away are as a result of referrals they receive from local organisations such as Melton Borough Council and Children's Centres.

Our students are learning how important it is to think of others needs in their community. Great work all and thank you Charlotte in 5CA for organising. Check out the photos on Facebook.

Christmas Dinner & Class celebrations

Classes will still have safe, mini Christmas celebrations this week, which teachers will keep you posted about. Additionally, a traditional Christmas lunch will be served for those that choose it on Wednesday 16th December for students to have in their classrooms.

Friday 18th October and Holiday Track and Trace

We are open! Some of you may have heard that the government gave schools the option of ending term early, making Thursday 17th December the last day of term- we have NOT taken them up on this offer due to the very short notice and potential inconvenience it may cause some families. The government has also asked school to remain contactable up until December 24th for the purposes of track and trace. If you have any reason to contact the school up until this date, due to a positive Covid19 case in your household please contact the school at:

adviceandsupport@birchwoodschool.co.uk

I will be picking up these messages and apologise in advance if I have to call you during this time period.

If you do wish to keep your child off on Friday 18th December as you have other children who are off school, please let us know in advance, we will take a supportive stance for families.

Covid19 Safety Next term

We plan to continue with our existing safety measures such as use of PPE, staggered start and end times of the day, grouping students in bubbles, frequent hand washing & sanitizing, cleaning as we go and extra cleaning whilst the infection rates are still high. We will send some updated parental guidance out before students return in the new year.

Thank you for your ongoing help and support with these safety measures, we do look forward to lifting them in time. So far we have been extremely fortuitous and only had to close one bubble down for an extended period. We know how difficult this has been for both children and families and again thank you for your patience and understanding. Families and staff effort with remote learning have been tremendous and have highlighted what fantastic relationships exist between home and school. Again it reminds me what an honour it is to be part of our community.

Vaccination

News of a Covid19 vaccination feels like real light at the end of the tunnel for us all. I will keep you updated on any early news we get about this in school. The latest NHS information about the new vaccination is on our Facebook page and website (under Covid19 updates and information).

Podcast

We are hoping to produce another Special School Lockdown podcast before the term is up. It will be focussing on all the things that we have experienced since opening in late August amidst the pandemic. The first 6 podcasts can be found on our website and also on Spotify and Apple podcasts.

Merry Christmas & Happy New Year 2021

So finally from me and the team here at Birch Wood, thank you for your incredible support this year, as a community we have really come together at such a difficult time and it remains a privilege to be Head Teacher of this truly amazing school. I wish you a safe and happy Christmas and all the best for 2021!

