

THE BELHAM BUZZ

The Belham
Primary School



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HEAD TEACHER'S NOTE

We are now two-thirds of the way through the autumn term and I know in the run-up to Christmas additional communication can be overwhelming, with requests for costumes and details of lunches and parties. Now seems a good time to pause and consider how we communicate with our parents and how we can continue to innovate in this area as we try to in all aspects of school life.

It was always our mission to be as paperless as possible, within and beyond the curriculum - indeed this was part of our application to the DfE – and we think we're doing a pretty good job, whilst never being complacent and always looking at ways we can improve.

Recently I was made aware that one of the parent social media groups was being used to exchange more negative views and opinions, and to ask questions that would be better directed to the school. Whilst it's nice to air thoughts, the problem is that such a platform can quickly develop into something more corrosive and can undermine the strong trusting relationships that we work very hard to build with our parents. It can actually be quite upsetting and teachers last week had a real sense of conversations happening behind their back. There is also the potential for information received indirectly to be misconstrued.

Last year, in response to parent demand, we set up year group Facebook pages. To ensure the safety of pupils and staff these are managed by the school. The pages allow us to address concerns, answer queries and to open a door into children's daily life.

This year we introduced Tapestry, a brilliant learning journey tool, for Reception pupils. This is a fantastic way of assessing and communicating children's achievements at school and at home.

As part of our determination to be as paperless as possible, our primary method of communication with parents is email – so it's important for parents to check their accounts every day.

We are currently meeting together as a school to discuss homework and will be talking to you about that soon. Our plan is that all homework will initially be communicated by email – this could sometimes be a prompt to look in your child's bookbag. We also have an absolute commitment to daily reading and expect every parent to be reading and sharing books with their child every day of the week. Whether Reception or Year 6, this is the most important thing you can do to support their learning.

We involve our parents a great deal in daily school life, and know that the extensive communication we provide is unusual in schools. We know that the Belham is a very special school and we know that to keep it special we have to work at it every day. The three-way dialogue between school, parents and child is key to building strong, honest relationships.

KEY DATES

Wednesday 23 November

FoB AGM, Peckham Liberal Club, 24 Elm Grove
8pm for 8.15pm start

Monday 28 November

Linen class art session with Alleyn's pupils
Year 2 to Florence Nightingale Museum
packed lunch needed

Wednesday 30 November

Building programme meeting at Harris Academy
Peckham, Peckham Road SE15 5DZ, 6.30pm

BUILDING NEWS

We look forward to seeing as many of you as possible at our building programme meeting on **Wednesday 30 November**. The meeting will start at 6.30pm but please arrive from 6.15 for tea, coffee and cake. Please note that the meeting is not suitable for children to attend.

We're aware that some people have heard rumours about the progress of the building and plans for next year and believe that information is being provided in a piecemeal way – unfortunately sometimes that's impossible to avoid, and is the very reason we've arranged to hold this meeting with Southwark Council; for everyone to hear the same information at the same time.

CHRISTMAS TREE ORDERS

Christmas trees can now be ordered from Friends of Belham via the attached order form. There are 4 different sizes to choose from, with prices considerably cheaper than other retailers. The school will receive £10.00 for each tree sold. Please note that payment must be made in advance by bank transfer to FoB, not cash on collection as previously detailed. Trees can be collected from the school's Copleston Road garden, opposite the Copleston Centre (entrance next to the Latter Rain Outpouring Revival Church), from 11.30am to 1pm on the day of the Christmas Fayre, Saturday 10 December.

Completed order forms should be sent to Michael Sharman at msharman@rocketfuel.com. **All order forms must be received by 10am on Friday 2 December.**

FoB CHRISTMAS FAYRE DONATIONS

A reminder that **Friday 25 November** is the first date for collection of your unwanted toys, books and children's clothes, to be sold by Friends of Belham at the Christmas Fayre. Please bring items along at drop-off and leave in the porch area at Faith Chapel, or with Claire in Reception at Thomas Calton. Donations can also be dropped off on **Monday 28 November**.

KEY CHRISTMAS DATES

All dates can also be found on the front page of the school website.

Monday 5 December

Whole school trip to *The Snail and the Whale*, Albany Theatre, Deptford

Monday 12 December

Year 1 and 2 Christmas performance dress rehearsal

Tuesday 13 December

Year 1 and 2 Christmas performance, Faith Chapel, 2pm

Wednesday 14 December

Reception Christmas performance dress rehearsal

Thursday 15 December

Reception Christmas performance, Faith Chapel, 2pm

Friday 16 December

Christmas Jumper Day and children's Christmas lunch

Monday 19 December

Reception Christmas party, 1-3pm

Tuesday 20 December

Year 1 and 2 Christmas party, 1-3pm

Wednesday 21 December

Own clothes day and last day of term
Pick-up 12.50pm from Thomas Calton
Pick-up 1.00pm from Faith Chapel
No Owls session today

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

We are still looking for parents to help accompany Year 2 to the Florence Nightingale Museum on **Monday 28 November**. The museum is on Lambeth Palace Road, next to St Thomas' Hospital, and the children will be travelling from school by bus. We will leave in the morning and return around 3pm. Please email the school office if you can help.