



Friday 8th December 2023

Dear Parents/Carers,

I hope you have had a great week and are looking forward to the weekend. I am writing with my usual weekly letter of news and information. I can be contacted at exechead@aspire-kent.org.uk between 8am - 5pm Monday to Friday for queries and questions. Also Lauren my PA can be contacted at Iriby@aspire-kent.org.uk. Any requests for meetings or appointments can be made through Lauren - thank you.

Winter Mini Reading Challenge-

Don't forget about the mini Winter Reading Challenge that is running until **19th February 2024**.

Keep reading and unlock rewards for your reading, including online badges, and receive a certificate when you reach your goal!

<https://summerreadingchallenge.org.uk/>

Family Festive Fanfare

The Family Festive FanFare is on Saturday 16th December 2023, 1:30-4:30pm (concert starts at 3pm) at Maidstone Grammar School for Girls, Buckland Road, Maidstone, ME16 0SF. There is also free parking on site

Book online and save up to £10 per family compared to on the day prices:

£12 for adults (£15 on the day)

£8 for seniors and children aged 5+ (£10 on the day)

£30 for a family of four (£40 on the day)

Under 5s get in FREE!

www.maidstonewindsymphony.org

Holiday Club Vouchers-

For families that are entitled to Free School Meal Vouchers you will be eligible for a place at the Schools Out Holiday Club.

This Holiday club runs from 18th-21st December 2023. They are held at Southborough Primary School, Tree Tops Academy and Greenfields Community Primary School, all in Maidstone.

You can book your place here- <https://www.holidayactivities.com/>

More activities for the Holidays-

Libraries throughout the festive period are offering lots of free activities throughout the festive period. This includes storytimes, crafts activities and lots more.

For locations and more information visit - www.kent.gov.uk/libraries or see the attached flier.

Southern Water Financial Hardship Fund-

To provide assistance to individuals who are experiencing financial difficulties, Southern Water are now offering three types of assistance.

To qualify, you must be able to demonstrate significant financial hardship, either long or short term, or challenging circumstances that have financial impacts. You are able to complete a short online form and will hear back within six weeks.

For more information and to complete the form visit- <https://www.southernwater.co.uk/water-for-life/community/customer-and-community-grants/customer-hardship-fund>

Kent Community Foundation also offer help for families. This covers lots of different funding and support covering different areas and needs.

Please visit-

<https://kentcf.org.uk/uploads/components/file/AlternativeFundingSupportforIndividuals-653b9ffcee815.pdf> for more information.

SEND Training-

The Education People have been funded to deliver training to parents and carers of children with SEND across Kent.

This is free training and is delivered virtually.

Primary school aged children will be held on 12th December 2023 and Secondary school aged children on Thursday 14th December (both at 10am-12pm). Please see the attached poster if you wish to book a place.

Mental Health and Well-being-

Christmas and Winter can be particularly difficult, especially to juggle the daily challenges and stresses... whether that's looking after your family, looking after other loved ones, all whilst going out to work. Life is hard sometimes. Below are some links to advice and guidance to help you look after yourself, whilst looking after everyone else; you're important too.

Anna Freud Centre for children and families is a fantastic resource, which offers an array of guidance and information regarding mental health and wellbeing. The link below takes you to the parent/carer self-care page, which highlights exactly what to do and why you should also take care of yourself.

<https://www.annafreud.org/parents-and-carers/self-care-for-parents-and-carers/>

Finance help - the Kent Family hub at the NHS also has a lot of information for families who need support with finances and benefits. There is a list of resources on there, with a number to access the Kent Money Advice Hub. You can also find guidance for those parents and carers with children under 5 and those with school-aged children.

<https://family.kentcht.nhs.uk/support/your-family/family-finances-and-benefits/#:~:text=Visit%20kentmoneyadvicehub.com%20or%20call,tax%2C%20housing%20and%20debt%20advice.>

Wishing you all a lovely weekend. We look forward to welcoming the children on Monday for the last week of term, and lots of festive cheer.

Kind regards,

Emma Hickling
Executive Headteacher