



BIDDICK PARENT WEEKLY BULLETIN

Week commencing 12th December 2022

Dear Parents and carers,

Although we are nearing the end of term, school life is still jam-packed with events.

This week has seen Year 7 pupils enjoying a Science, Technology, Engineering, Art and Mathematics Day (S.T.E.A.M) developing their XXXX. On Wednesday evening, pupils from all year groups came together in a wonderful Christmas Showcase. The performers not only raised funds for our school nominated charity - Teenage Cancer Trust, but entertained and delighted the audience with carols, readings and solo performances. It was great to have so many families, friends and supporters cheering the students on.



Once again, this year, we are running our annual food bank and toy appeals. Now, more than ever, there are families in our community who need that extra help to enjoy the festive period. If you feel able to donate a food item or toy, it would be very much appreciated. All donations are very welcome and can be made via your child's tutor group, or by dropping items off in Reception. Thank you for your support.

This bulletin also includes important information from the UK Health and Security Agency on Strep A infections. I'm sure you will have seen in the news, the tragic deaths of a small number of children due to Strep A. While these infections are very rare, please do read the attached details which give advice on the symptoms. As always at this time of year, we encourage good hand hygiene in order to minimise winter colds and illnesses.

Kind regards,

Miss K. Morris

Year 10 Christmas Lectures

On Monday 12th December a group of year 10 students will be out of lessons period 1 and 2 to attend a pair of STEM Christmas lectures organised by Newcastle university.

The presentations we will be attending are:

Tanya Gleadow, Loughborough University - "Giant sky lasers and other shiny things"

James Arthur - "Spherical pendulums"

The lectures are delivered by specialists within their fields and aim to appreciate applications of content taught within STEM subjects in real life.

Year 9 Parents' Evening

Please find the link to SchoolCloud below where you can book your appointments with your child's teachers for Year 9 Parents' Evening on Thursday 15th December from 3.45pm to 6.15pm. We look forward to seeing you there!

<https://biddickacademy.schoolcloud.co.uk/>

Christmas Showcase

The Christmas Showcase was a roaring success on Wednesday night! Over 40 students were involved with the evening and the performance featured some of most talented instrumentalists, singers, drama students and also our dance group.

The Biddick Ensemble made their debut public performance alongside the Academy Choir and many other solo and group performances. A huge thanks to all the students involved and to all the parents, carers, families and friends who came to support the evening. As a result of all the generous donations given for tickets and refreshments we raised over £440 for the Teenage Cancer Trust.



Parent drop off in the carpark

Please could we kindly remind parents/carers NOT to park in the bus bays and when dropping off do so safely yet quickly if you are in the drop off zone. Your child should exit the car safely and quickly to aid a smoother turnover in the carpark. Thank you

Year 9 Spanish Apprentice

A massive well done to Amy, Holly, Leah, Amelia and Ebony in year 9, who took part in Durham University's Spanish Apprentice challenge on Wednesday. The girls gave a presentation about local tourism, in Spanish, to a panel of 3 judges and an audience of well over 100 other students, educators and investors. The judges described them as 'original, engaged and with a 10/10 presentation style', and the university student ambassador supporting them said they were a 'pleasure' to work with. They did themselves and Biddick Academy proud!

Christmas Reading Bookmarks

Students in KS3 have all been given a reading bookmark to document their reading over the break. Every 20 minute reading slot just requires a parent signature. When students return their bookmarks in January they will receive Classcharts points and a student from each year group will also receive some stationary gifts. Students are allowed to loan two reading books from the Library and are advised to select books to bring home at their reading level. Merry reading!

Flu Vaccination

The school immunisation team will be in school on Monday 12th December to administer flu vaccinations to pupils who returned a consent form.

Free School Meal Vouchers

All parents and carers who are entitled to Free School Meal Vouchers will receive these via email in week beginning the 12th December 2022.

Apprenticeships- Parents of Year 11

This year Nexus are looking for 9 apprentices to join 7 teams across their organisation. The apprenticeships are at Level 3 and Level 6, and successful applicants will start with them in September 2023. For more information see: <https://www.nexus.org.uk/apprenticeships>

Toy Appeal

For some families Christmas is a worrying time with all the financial burdens this may bring. As such, we are asking for donations of toys to go to our Toy Appeal and be distributed to those families in the local area who may go without this Christmas. Please drop your donations off at student's reception. Thank you in advance for your support with this worthwhile cause.

Christmas Jumper day

This Thursday students and staff alike dressed in their festive jumpers to raise money for our school charity. Over £320 was raised and will go towards The Teenage Cancer Trust. Thank you to all who took part.



Year 7 STEAM event

The Year 7 STEAM event took place on Tuesday. Students attended 5 different stations throughout the day; producing a brain cap, helping Santa to deliver presents to the North East, helping a family cross a river, designing and testing a bridge made only of one sheet of paper, and making, evaluating and packaging their own sherbet.

The students had a great time, and were able to identify where they used STEAM specific skills in each of the tasks.



Food Bank Donations

To support families within our local area this Christmas we are asking for donations of non-perishable food stuff. This will be collated and passed on to our local food bank. Please send the food in with your child so they may pass this to their tutor. Alternatively, you are more than welcome to drop this off at reception at your convenience. Once again thank you for your support.



Dear parents and carers,

Re: Increase in scarlet fever

We are writing to inform you of a recent increase in notifications of scarlet fever to the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA), above seasonal expected levels.

We would like to take this opportunity to remind you of the signs, symptoms and the actions to be taken if you think that you or your child might have scarlet fever.

Signs and symptoms of scarlet fever

Scarlet fever is a common childhood infection caused by *Streptococcus pyogenes*, or group A Streptococcus (GAS). It is not usually serious, but should be treated with antibiotics to reduce the risk of complications (such as pneumonia) and spread to others.

The early symptoms of scarlet fever include sore throat, headache, fever, nausea and vomiting. After 12 to 48 hours, the characteristic red, pinhead rash develops, typically first appearing on the chest and stomach, then rapidly spreading to other parts of the body, and giving the skin a sandpaper-like texture. The scarlet rash may be harder to spot on darker skin, although the 'sandpaper' feel should be present. Patients typically have flushed cheeks and be pale around the mouth. This may be accompanied by a bright red red 'strawberry' tongue.

If you think you, or your child, might have scarlet fever:

- contact your GP or NHS 111 as soon as possible
- make sure that you or your child take(s) the full course of any antibiotics prescribed. Although you or your child will feel better soon after starting the course of antibiotics, you must complete the course to ensure that you do not carry the bacteria in your throat after you have recovered
- stay at home, away from nursery, school or work for at least 24 hours after starting the antibiotic treatment, to avoid spreading the infection

You can help stop the spread of infection through frequent hand washing and by not sharing eating utensils, clothes, bedding and towels. All contaminated tissues should be disposed of immediately.

Invasive Group A Strep (iGAS)

The same bacteria which cause scarlet fever can also cause a range of other types of infection such as skin infections (impetigo) and sore throat. In very rare cases, the bacteria can get into the bloodstream and cause an illness called invasive group A strep (iGAS). Whilst still very uncommon, there has been an increase in iGAS cases this year, particularly in children under 10 years old. It is very rare for children with scarlet fever to develop iGAS infection.

As a parent, you should trust your own judgement.

Contact NHS 111 or your GP if:

- your child is getting worse
- your child is feeding or eating much less than normal
- your child has had a dry nappy for 12 hours or more or shows other signs of dehydration
- your baby is under 3 months and has a temperature of 38C, or is older than 3 months and has a temperature of 39C or higher
- your baby feels hotter than usual when you touch their back or chest, or feels sweaty
- your child is very tired or irritable

Call 999 or go to A&E if:

- your child is having difficulty breathing – you may notice grunting noises or their tummy sucking under their ribs
- there are pauses when your child breathes
- your child's skin, tongue or lips are blue
- your child is floppy and will not wake up or stay awake

Stop the spread

During periods of high incidence of scarlet fever, there may also be an increase in outbreaks in schools, nurseries and other childcare settings. Children and adults with suspected scarlet fever should stay off nursery / school / work until **24 hours** after the start of appropriate antibiotic treatment. Good hygiene practice such as hand washing remains the most important step in preventing and controlling spread of infection.

Yours sincerely,



Gerry Taylor

Executive Director of Public Health and Integrated Commissioning Services
Sunderland City Council

Resources

[NHS – Scarlet Fever](#)

[Scarlet fever: symptoms, diagnosis and treatment](#)

[Health protection in education and childcare settings](#)

[Hand hygiene resources for schools](#)