



Prior's Mill C.E. Primary School

Newsletter December 20th 2024

Welcome to the Prior's Mill Newsletter - this is shared weekly and will contain key dates and information, paper copies are available at the office 20.12.24

In This Issue



This week we include:

- **Message from Mr Linsley**
- **School Council**
- **Sporting Stars**
- **Musician of the Month**
- **Digital Leaders**
- **Attendance**
- **Worship Theme**
- **Class News**
- **Key Dates**
- **NEW! Picture News (We thought you might like to read 'Picture News' this is shared with children in a class worship every week)**

- **Contact Us**
- **Safeguarding**

Heads Up - Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year



Christmas

It has been lovely to welcome families into school to watch Nativity performances and Carol concerts this week. It was lovely to see children in Nursery and Reception perform to an

audience of family and friends as well as children in Y5/6 sing in a group, duo and solo - thank you to everyone who was able to attend.

We have provided books as gifts to all Children this year to reinforce our focus on reading for pleasure - please send in any pictures of children reading over the Christmas Holidays and we will feature them in the Newsletter - prizes for the most creative places! Apologies to Y6 pupils your books have been delayed due to an issue with the supplier we will have them ready for when you return to school.

On behalf of Governors, Staff and the Trust I would like to wish everyone a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year, thank you for all of the cards and gifts they are very much appreciated. It is a privilege to be Headteacher at Prior's Mill and I'm looking forward to working with you all in 2025 to ensure the best outcomes for your children.

Staffing News

Congratulations to Mrs McHale who is expecting and will be leaving us to start her maternity leave in February, Mr Richards will take over as y6 teacher. Mrs Casey will be replacing Mr Richards in Y2 when she returns from her maternity leave. Mrs Day will also start her maternity leave at the end of the term, Mrs Wilson will be teaching an additional day and Mr Ainsley will continue his regular Lego session. In KS1 Mrs Akerman will be remaining as Year 1 teacher until the end of the academic year.

Mrs McHale has already started to work with Mrs Williams who will become the new school SENDCO after February half-term. Mrs Williams has held the position before in a previous school and will be involved in some of the meetings with pupils, parents and external agencies after Christmas. Mrs Williams will continue in role till Mrs McHale returns in the next academic year.

We send our best wishes to Mrs Thompson who is still poorly but we are hoping that she is able to make a return after Christmas - a huge thanks to Mrs Brooks for teaching children in Class 1. We also send our best wishes to Mrs Boyle and Miss Chapman and look forward to seeing them in the Spring Term.

Reception Open Events

Thank you to everyone who attended the Reception Open afternoon, we will be repeating the experience on the morning of Saturday 11th January - please help spread the word and don't forget to book a place at the office.

Safeguarding

In KS1 we conducted a practice Fire Register Check at lunchtime to check safety procedures - children listened well and followed all the instructions. Well Done to all Children in KS1 and Reception!

CCTV

The school will be installing CCTV through the holidays this is being installed to complement our existing safeguarding protocols and will only cover outdoor areas of school.

EMERGENCY HELP DURING THE WEEKEND / HOLIDAYS

During the weekend / holidays, whilst your children are playing outside with friends, we would recommend that your child knows where to go to for help if they need it. This might be a grandparent or family friend, as well as at home. It is important that your child knows how to call the emergency services for help.

We have been advised that you talk to your child about risk-taking behaviour and the potential consequences of any decisions that they make whilst away from home. Give your children the confidence to say “no” to taking part in any risky or anti-social behaviour with their peers.

Of course, we want the children to enjoy the weekend and part of that is becoming more independent from parents; however, we want all our children to return to school fit, well and safe after the weekend.

TEWV Crisis team (CAMHS & Adults) has now changed.

There is a new system and people must call 111- option 2 - this is the 111 Mental Health line & call handlers will transfer to the local crisis team appropriately.

The Children’s Hub is the first point of contact for anyone who has a concern about the welfare or safety of a child or young person.

The Children's Hub

Stockton: 01642 130080

childrenshub@hartlepool.gov.uk¹

Crisis support line

If someone you know, is experiencing a mental health crisis call NHS 111 and select the mental health option.

Billingham & Stockton Borough Foodbank

4-6 West Precinct

Billingham Town Centre

Billingham TS23 2NH

07583 575522

<https://billinghamstocktonborough.foodbank.org.uk>

info@billinghamstocktonborough.foodbank.org.uk²

If you have any welfare or safeguarding concerns relating to a child in school during term time, please do not hesitate to contact –

Mrs ALLISON HANSON

PUPIL WELFARE & SAFEGUARDING OFFICER

Prior's Mill C/E Primary School

Billingham TS225BX

01642 650426

office@priorsmill.org.uk

QUICK REMINDER

Monday 6th January - School reopens for Spring Term

¹<mailto:childrenshub@hartlepool.gov.uk>

²<mailto:info@billinghamstocktonborough.foodbank.org.uk>

Thanks to all the parents who responded to our online survey we have published the results and actions we are taking to address some of the development points that were raised.

Results taken from 128 responses:

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
My child feels happy at this school	50%	39%	9%	2%
My child feels safe at this school	52%	41%	6%	1%
The school makes sure pupils are well behaved	30%	60%	8%	2%
My child has been bullied and the school dealt with it quickly and effectively	9%	47%	31%	13%
The school makes me aware of what my child will learn throughout the year	18%	50%	28%	4%
When I have raised concerns with the school, they have been dealt with properly	23%	60%	14%	3%
My child has SEND and the school gives them the support they need to succeed	17%	38%	29%	16%
The school has high expectations for my child	28%	64%	6%	2%
My child does well at this school	43%	48%	8%	1%
The school lets me know how my child is doing	26%	54%	19%	1%
There is a good range of subjects available to my child at this school	32%	65%	3%	0%
My child can take part in clubs and activities at this school	45%	46%	7%	2%
The school supports my child's wider development	28%	56%	14%	2%

I would recommend this school to another	Yes 88%	No 12%
--	------------	-----------

Strengths, Points for Development and Actions taken from additional comments:

Strengths	Points for Development	Actions
Supportive teachers	Communication of dates well in advance	Moving forward, Worship dates will be published a year in advance and key dates for other events, a term ahead.
Teachers know the children well	Increased numbers for clubs	Expansion of Club opportunities for Summer 25.
The school keeps children safe	Advance notice of topics/themes to be covered	New Curriculum Year Group Newsletter half termly to replace Whole School Curriculum Newsletter.
My child loves school	Improved communication with general messages	New school communication system comes online in Summer 25 with a new app.
Teachers make sure the children settle well	Improved communication/opportunities to meet with teachers/SENDCo for pupils with SEND	Parent Consultations twice per year Three meetings to discuss SEND plans End of year and annual reviews for EHCPs Open door policy for concerns/issues Development of a SEND section on the school website
There are adults children can confide in	Shorter Newsletter	Review design of School Newsletter.
The school is very supportive to parents	Concerns around behaviour of some pupils	Continue to implement and evaluate United Against Bullying training with pupils and staff in line with school and Trust policies.
Active presence of the Headteacher around school		
Teachers are reassuring and encouraging		
My child is excited to learn every day		

School Council



School Council met this week again and have been asking children in their class about what equipment they would like to use on the playground. Updates on final proposals of equipment and playground markings will be shared in the next few weeks.

Thank you Mrs MacKay for organising the group.



Sporting Stars



FIRST KICKZ 

Tuesdays, 5-6pm, £3 each.
Current Reception and Year 1 kids.
Indoor Sports Hall, Our Lady St Bede's School
(next to Stockton Town Football Club), TS19 0QD.



Contact Joe to book:
joe.lillie@stocktontownfc.com
07486 289 108

1 - Thank you to the football coach who came from Stockton Town to work with some of our children on Friday. Check out their session for Reception and Year 1 children, Thursdays 5-6pm at the indoor Sports Hall next to Stockton Town £3 per session.

Musician of the Month



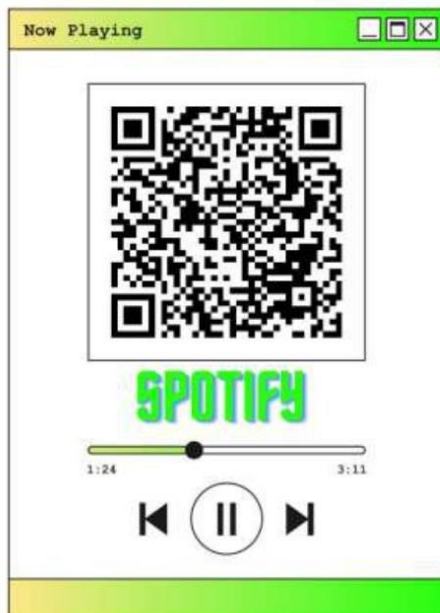


HOME INFORMATION



December's Musician of the Month

Elton John



About: Sir Elton John (born Reginald Kenneth Dwight; 25 March, 1947) is a British singer, pianist and composer. Acclaimed by critics and musicians, particularly for his work during the 1970s and for his lasting impact on the music industry, his music and showmanship have had a significant impact on popular music. His songwriting partnership with lyricist Bernie Taupin is one of the most successful in history.

Genres: R&B/Soul, Jazz

Active from: 1962 - Present

Origin: Middlesex, United Kingdom

Books to read...

If you like Elton John, try...



- Billy Joel
- Tina Turner
- Phil Collins

Digital Leaders



2 - Hugo (Y3), Felicity (Y4), Luke (Y5) and Joey (Y6) are the new school Digital Leaders.

Parent guide for this week - Safety over the festive season

If there are any apps or online sites that parents would like a fact sheet about then please get in touch and we'll try and provide one.

Any safeguarding concerns can be relayed to:

Mr Linsley - Designated Safeguarding Lead

Miss Huddart - Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead

As a parent or carer you play a key role in keeping your child safe online. Find out more about commonly used social media platforms at

<https://saferinternet.org.uk/guide-and-resource/social-media-guides>

At The National College, our WakeUpWednesday guides empower and equip parents, carers and educators with the confidence and practical skills to be able to have informed and age-appropriate conversations with children about online safety, mental health and wellbeing, and climate change. Formerly delivered by National Online Safety, these guides now address wider topics and themes. For further guides, hints and tips, please visit nationalcollege.com.

10 Top Tips for Parents and Educators SAFETY OVER THE FESTIVE SEASON.

The holiday season, marked by Christmas and New Year, brings joy and togetherness but also presents unique safety challenges for children, families and educators. From busy holiday shopping, traveling and family gatherings to managing digital activity during school breaks, staying safe during this period requires heightened awareness. This guide offers practical tips to help families and educators maintain a more secure and fulfilling festive period.

1 MONITOR DIGITAL ACTIVITY

Children spend more time online during school holidays, increasing exposure to potential dangers such as cyberbullying, inappropriate content and online predators. Balancing screen time, avoiding harmful websites and ensuring children engage positively online can be difficult without proper monitoring tools. Set clear boundaries, encourage open discussions about online safety and use parental controls to manage content exposure and screen time effectively. Regular check-ins and positive reinforcement around digital habits encourage safe online behaviour.

2 PRACTICE FIRE SAFETY PROTOCOLS

The incidence of house fires increases during Christmas due to greater use of candles, cookers and electrical decorations. Open flames, electrical overloads and the need for quick response plans can make fire safety challenging. Ensure smoke detectors are operational, keep fire extinguishers on hand and teach children how to respond in case of a fire emergency. Avoid leaving cooking unattended and use fire-safe candles to prevent mishaps.

3 CREATE TRAVEL SAFETY PLANS

More families tend to travel during the holidays, resulting in busier roads, increased traffic accidents and weather-related hazards. Weather conditions, road rage, fatigue and busy airports can all compromise travel safety. Pack emergency kits and adhere to seatbelt laws. Plan routes in advance and allow extra travel time to avoid rushing and mitigate risks on busy roads.

4 BEWARE OF ALLERGIES

Holiday meals often involve many foods that may contain allergens. Cross contamination, unclear labelling and lack of allergy-friendly options can lead to severe reactions. Communicate any allergy needs to hosts, provide safe food alternatives and carry necessary medications like antihistamines or EpiPens. Teaching children how to advocate for themselves and recognise dangerous foods also contributes to safer celebrations.

5 PREVENT THE SPREAD OF ILLNESS

Cold weather and seasonal socialising can increase the spread of viruses like flu and COVID-19. Crowded gatherings, schools out of session and frequent travel can lead to higher infection risks. Emphasise hygiene, encourage vaccination, disinfect surfaces and isolate symptomatic individuals. Communication with children about proper hygiene practices is essential to reduce the spread of illness.

6 STAY VIGILANT ON THE ROAD

Increased holiday traffic heightens the risk of accidents for both drivers and pedestrians. Distracted driving, pedestrian safety and inclement weather can complicate road safety. Encourage pedestrian safety practices, avoid distracted driving and never drive under the influence.

7 MAINTAIN SAFE DECORATIONS

Festive decorations such as Christmas lights and candles can pose electrical, fire and choking hazards if mishandled. Frayed wires, toppling Christmas trees, small ornaments and open flames can be difficult to control, especially in busy households with children. Inspect and maintain decorations, secure Christmas trees, place fragile or small items out of reach and ensure candles are never left unattended. Testing smoke alarms and using flame-retardant decorations can significantly reduce risks.

8 SET BOUNDARIES FOR GIFTS

Some toys and gadgets can present choking, sharp-edge or safety risks, particularly for young children. Ensuring that gifts meet safety standards and are age appropriate can be complex with so many options available. Inspect all toys carefully and ensure any tech devices have parental controls. Setting expectations around safe gift use and discarding packaging that poses a risk also helps to prevent accidents.

9 ADDRESS STRESS & FATIGUE

Holiday pressures can lead to burnout, which affects both physical and mental health. Overpacked schedules and a lack of downtime can cause stress and fatigue, leading to accidents or poor decision making. Incorporate rest, maintain regular routines and seek support to reduce stress. Encourage activities that promote relaxation to create a healthier, happier holiday experience for everyone.

10 DRINK RESPONSIBLY

Alcohol is commonly present at holiday events, raising concerns about safety and supervision. Excessive alcohol consumption can lead to accidents, impaired judgment and lack of supervision for children. Designate responsible adults, limit consumption and provide transportation alternatives for guests. Teaching moderation and modelling responsible behaviour in front of children ensures that celebrations remain positive and secure.

Meet Our Expert

James Whelan is a chartered health and safety consultant with 10 years of experience in promoting family and community safety. Specialising in risk assessment and preventative strategies, he has worked with educational institutions, public health agencies and community groups to deliver safety education and training.



The National College®

Source: See full reference list on guide page at: <https://nationalcollege.com/guides/safety-over-the-festive-season>

X @wake_up_weds

f /www.thenationalcollege

ig @wake.up.wednesday

🎵 @wake.up.weds

Users of this guide do so at their own discretion. No liability is entered into. Current as of the date of release: 11.12.2024

What Parents & Educators Need to Know about GAMBLING

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

Gambling can be defined as betting or risking money or something of value on the outcome of a situation involving chance. Under current regulations, gambling is legal for adults in the UK. Its potential impacts on the wellbeing of individuals, families and communities are well documented – emphasising the importance of safeguarding children and young people against these hazards.

MANIPULATIVE ADVERTISING

Adverts for online bookmakers and betting exchanges can take creative forms to target vulnerable groups, fostering addiction, promoting misleading representations, obscuring potential results, affecting social norms, posing regulatory challenges, influencing crises and other ethical issues. Effective regulation, responsible advertising practices and public education are essential to mitigate these concerns and address the potential harms associated with addictive marketing in manipulative advertisements.

ADDICTIVE FEATURES

All gambling products carry safety concerns, but some can be even riskier and more addictive. The frequency with which people can place bets can encourage them to do so often – with rapid spins and multiple betting options, for example, betting on sports events, especially with live in-play betting options, can be highly engaging and addictive. The 24/7 availability of online platforms can also increase the risk of excessive gambling, particularly among young people.

PEER PRESSURE

Exposure to gambling through friends, advertising or social circles can normalise risk-taking and create unrealistic expectations about the chances of winning. Addressing peer influence requires support services, responsible advertising practices and effective education of the public to mitigate the impact on children and promote healthier choices.

FREE BETS

Free bets are a common feature of online gambling, often used as a lure to attract new customers. They can be highly addictive and encourage excessive betting.

50 FREE SPINS

50 free spins are a common feature of online gambling, often used as a lure to attract new customers. They can be highly addictive and encourage excessive betting.

PLAY TO WIN

Play to win is a common feature of online gambling, often used as a lure to attract new customers. They can be highly addictive and encourage excessive betting.

IMPACT ON MENTAL HEALTH

Gambling can exacerbate mental health issues such as anxiety, depression, and stress – especially if it leads to financial loss. Individuals with existing mental health conditions may use gambling as a coping mechanism – but the cycle of gambling can worsen their symptoms, leading to a detrimental impact on overall wellbeing. Integrated support services and treatment options are crucial to address these interconnected challenges effectively.

GATEWAY BEHAVIOURS

Certain features of other products – such as video games that offer in-game purchases – can lead to gambling among young people. These mechanisms can sometimes be designed to exploit psychological vulnerabilities, encouraging repeated spending to acquire virtual items or advantages. Such practices can normalise the associated risks and encourage young people to put their or their family's money in danger.

FINANCIAL DIFFICULTIES

The most common impacts of online betting come in the form of financial issues and debt. This, in turn, can lead to distorted perceptions of money, deterioration of relationships, social isolation, and poor academic and career outcomes. Regular gambling can even exacerbate other risks identified by making it seem less significant – potentially leading to a worse health, financial and financial state.

Advice for Parents & Educators

ENCOURAGE OPEN DISCUSSIONS

Sporting events can be a good opening for conversations about gambling, as some sponsorships may reference and even glamorise it. Talk to children about how these sponsorships make them feel and encourage frequent conversations about any concerns they may have. Adverts, influencers and online platforms may also feature gambling products, as a result, it's important to encourage their critical thinking skills to help them avoid being manipulated by this type of marketing.

MONITOR SPENDING

In-game purchases can be appealing to children, allowing them to unlock new features or cosmetic items in a fraction of the time it would take to win them by playing. Talk to children about how they spend money online, and remind them that video games they play can encourage the conversation. Consider setting up restrictions on the device, requiring their parent or carer's permission before making any purchases. Talk about finances regularly and openly.

KNOW THE WARNING SIGNS

Parents and educators should be vigilant for signs of gambling harm among young people. Look for changes in their behaviour such as increased secrecy, unexplained money issues, mood swings or withdrawal from their usual activities. Open conversations about gambling risks and maintain a supportive, non-judgemental environment, try to normalise power with resources and be positive for assistance and guidance.

GET FURTHER SUPPORT

Support and treatment for young people is available. At the Young People's Support Service at GamCare, who can be contacted at 0800 8000 133. A link to their website has also been included in the sources of this guide, along with links to several other support networks. Your GP and local NHS gambling clinic are also available if you require additional advice. Don't hesitate to reach out for help if you're concerned about a child's gambling behaviour or their financial situation.

Meet Our Expert

Ngan's mission is to prevent children and young people from experiencing gaming and gambling harms through awareness raising, education, and research. The charity was established in 2014 as a result of the lived experience of their founder.



Source: See full references in the accompanying document for this guide.

X @wake_up_weds

f /www.thenationalcollege

@wake.up.wednesday

@wake.up.weds

Users of this guide do so at their own discretion. No liability is entered into. Current as of the date of release: 26.06.2024

Attendance Matters



In accordance with School and Trust Policy any unauthorised absences (that are not subject to exceptional circumstances) will be subject to a fixed penalty notice.

Current School Attendance is 95% this is just below the DFE target of 96%.

We strongly advise that any holiday in term time should be avoided due to the impact of lost learning time on children. Please be aware that leave of absence (holiday) during term time will not be authorised except in exceptional circumstances. It is school policy to refer any unauthorised absence due to holiday to the local authority who may issue a fixed penalty notice. This is a penalty of up to £120 per child, per parent and so can add up to a significant amount. The school does not receive any revenue from fines; the money is paid to the Local Authority. In addition, we now have a new system in school for pupils who are late. Pupils must be escorted to the office in the main building and a form completed by parents/carers to sign the pupils in

and indicate the reason for the lateness. This is for our records and also to avoid pupils becoming distressed.

LATE MARKS ALSO IMPACT NEGATIVELY ON ATTENDANCE PLEASE TRY TO BE ON TIME!

Worship Theme - Christmas Joy



CHRISTMAS JOY

Luke 2:10

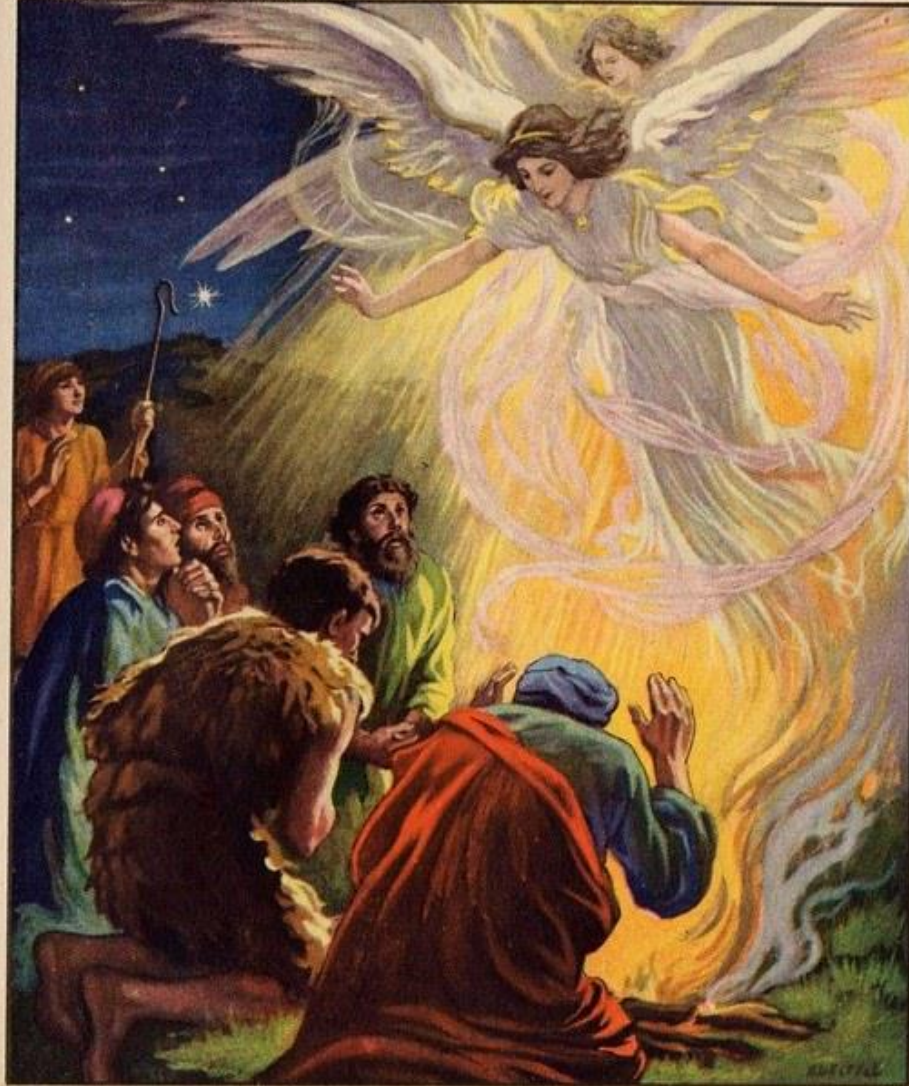
I bring good news of great JOY that will be for all the people.

I wonder who said these words and how you think it relates to Christmas and the Christmas story?

Use a wooden crib set or printed-out pictures of the different characters in the Christmas story. Or you could simply write the names of those characters on post-it notes.

I wonder what makes Christmas so joyful for you? I wonder whether it would still feel joyful if we didn't have those things you talked about? I wonder if it is a real Christmas without presents, decorations and food?

You could watch this clip of The Grinch, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p8J-YmVs1j0> where the people of Whoville, whose presents and Christmas trimmings have been stolen away, sing joyfully anyway leading the Grinch to wonder: 'maybe Christmas doesn't come from a store?'



THE ANGELS' SONG AND THE SHEPHERDS' VISIT



Class News



LOVELY COOKING FROM AFTERSCHOOL CLUB WHO MADE CHRISTMAS CAKES! DELICIOUS!

























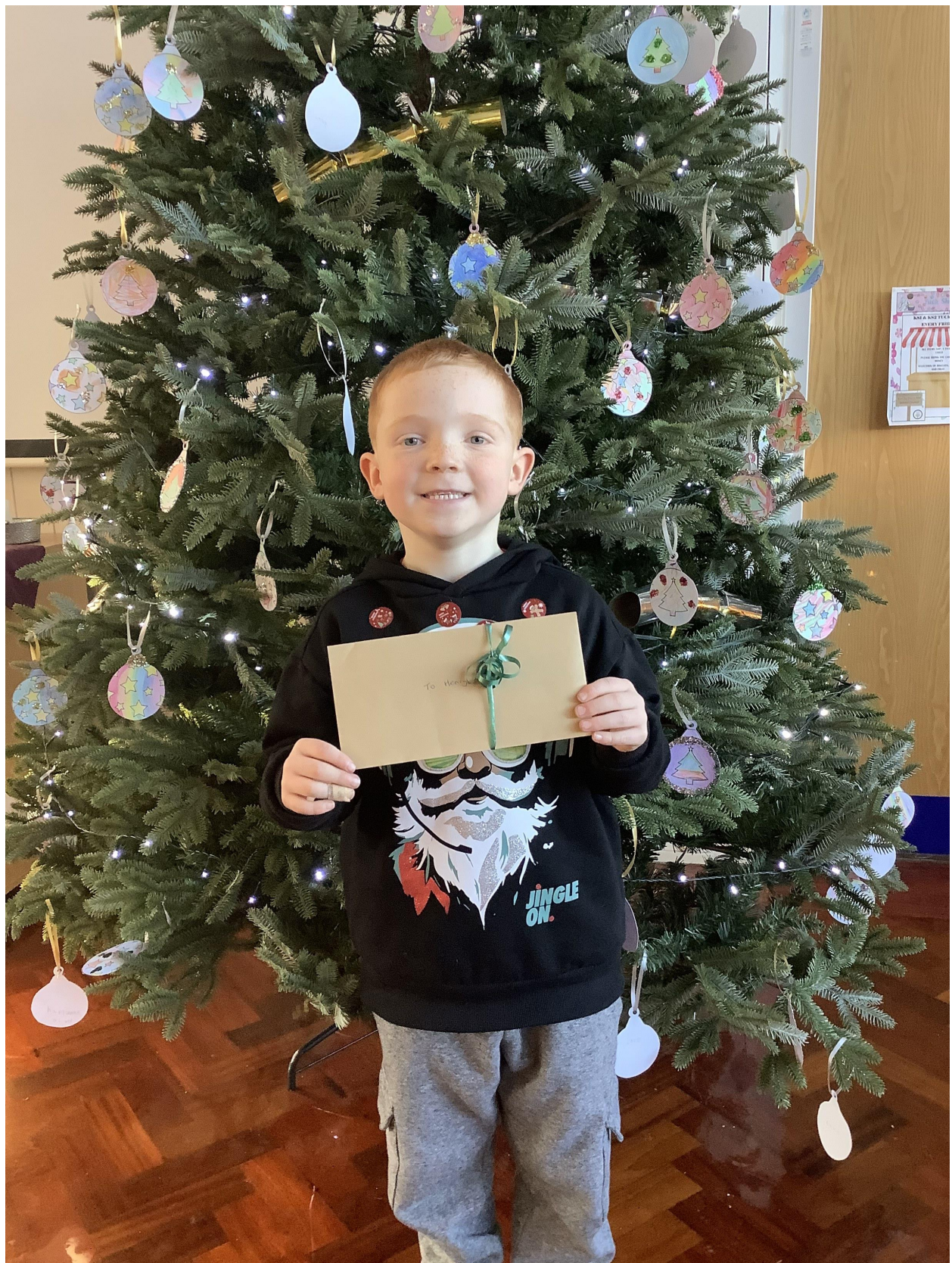
Cool Christmas Cards!







This morning the KS1 children gathered to receive their reading prizes. The prizes are awarded for each time a child has read fifteen times. Some children received four prizes! The children who read fifteen times or more also had their names put into a draw to win an Amazon voucher. Henry was our winner this term, well done Henry!





This morning the KS2 children gathered to receive their reading prizes. The prizes are awarded for each time a child has read fifteen times. The children who read fifteen times or more also had their names put into a draw to win an Amazon voucher. Well Done Lucille (Y5) and Maddie (Y3).



Key stage one had a fantastic time on Thursday afternoon at their Christmas party. There were party games, dancing and lots of fun had by all!!









Key Dates



Monday 6th January - School reopens for Spring Term

[Picture News](#)



[Contact Us](#)



If you would like to contact us about anything in the newsletter or need an additional conversation then please don't hesitate to catch me outside on the yard or through making an appointment at the office.

Clifton Avenue, Billingham. Stockton-on-Tees, TS22 5BX

Tel: 01642 650 426

Email: **office@priorsmill.org.uk**

Visit us on the web at <https://priorsmill.org.uk/>³

Safeguarding

The school safeguarding policy is on the website and a paper version can also be requested from the office. Safeguarding is at the heart of all we do at Prior's Mill CE Primary School.

Designated Safeguarding Lead - Mr Linsley

Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead - Miss Huddart

EMERGENCY HELP DURING THE WEEKEND / HOLIDAYS

During the weekend / holidays, whilst your children are playing outside with friends, we would recommend that your child knows where to go to for help if they need it. This might be a grandparent or family friend, as well as at home. It is important that your child knows how to call the emergency services for help.

We have been advised that you talk to your child about risk-taking behaviour and the potential consequences of any decisions that they make whilst away from home. Give your children the confidence to say "no" to taking part in any risky or anti-social behaviour with their peers.

Of course, we want the children to enjoy the weekend and part of that is becoming more independent from parents; however, we want all our children to return to school fit, well and safe after the weekend.

TEWV Crisis team (CAMHS & Adults) has now changed.

There is a new system and people must call 111- option 2 - this is the 111 Mental Health line & call handlers will transfer to the local crisis team appropriately.

The Children's Hub is the first point of contact for anyone who has a concern about the welfare or safety of a child or young person.

³<https://priorsmill.org.uk/>

The Children's Hub

Stockton: 01642 130080

childrenshub@hartlepool.gov.uk⁴

Crisis support line

If someone you know, is experiencing a mental health crisis call NHS 111 and select the mental health option.

Billingham & Stockton Borough Foodbank

4-6 West Precinct

Billingham Town Centre

Billingham TS23 2NH

07583 575522

<https://billinghamstocktonborough.foodbank.org.uk>

info@billinghamstocktonborough.foodbank.org.uk⁵

If you have any welfare or safeguarding concerns relating to a child in school during term time, please do not hesitate to contact –

Mrs ALLISON HANSON

PUPIL WELFARE & SAFEGUARDING OFFICER

Prior's Mill C/E Primary School

Billingham TS225BX

01642 650426

office@priorsmill.org.uk

⁴<mailto:childrenshub@hartlepool.gov.uk>

⁵<mailto:info@billinghamstocktonborough.foodbank.org.uk>

School Vision

As an inclusive Church of England primary school, we welcome children and families of all faiths and none to be part of our school family which has a distinctly Christian character and ethos. At Prior's Mill, we encourage everyone to discover, flourish and grow in their talents, nurturing their God given gifts and potential. We work with passion to foster a love of learning, a love of community and personal resilience. Following in the footsteps of Jesus, we are a school where kindness, forgiveness, respect and honesty underpin our words and actions.

Biblical Narrative - The Parable of The Mustard Seed – Mark 4:30-32 (NIV)

“What shall we say the kingdom of God is like, or what parable shall we use to describe it? It is like a mustard seed, which is the smallest of all seeds on earth. Yet when planted, it grows and becomes the largest of all garden plants, with such big branches that the birds can perch in its shade.” **School Values**

We give our best - We are kind - We are honest - We are respectful - We forgive