

Brookvale Primary School

Newsletter



DR CLARKE'S CHRISTMAS MESSAGE 2024



Christmas is a time of year that focuses our attention very firmly on family. We take time together to decorate the house and put up the Christmas tree. We think about the gifts our loved ones would really appreciate and write cards with seasonal messages of love, good health and prosperity. At this time of the year, we actually get to stop our busy lives, just for a couple of days, and revel in 'family life'. We plan fun-filled activities with our children and wider family members and let our imaginations and creativity embody the fun of Christmas. We think of those less fortunate than ourselves and are genuinely grateful for each and every blessing.

Christmas, although a joyous time of year, can also be a particularly challenging time of year for many children. Irrespective of whether a child has an additional or identified need, parents will know that any change to a child's routine can be disruptive and anxiety provoking. As such, there are some helpful hints below to make the festive season full of love and laughter.

Christmas Dinner: If your child has strong likes and dislikes don't stress about them sitting down to the same Christmas Dinner as everyone else. Keep to what they are used to and don't try to get them to eat what they wouldn't tolerate during the year. It's only another meal. And it doesn't have to be perfect. Use familiar cutlery, dishes and cups for your child.

Family Visits: If you are visiting family and friends or they are visiting you, try to be definite about times of arrival and departure and schedule this for your child. Have a dedicated room or space where your child can retreat to when things get too much. Have favourite games or toys available in this space and make sure other children or adults do not intrude. Put a sign on the door to highlight it's your child's chill out space.

Christmas Presents: When Christmas presents are exchanged we all expect our children to be polite and show appreciation. If your child is likely to say 'I don't like that, take it back' warn family and friends not to expect too much, how to respond and not to take it personally. Draw up a list of possible presents that family and friends can pick from that relate to your child's special interest.

Santa: We expect a lot from any child to be glad to see a stranger in a red suit, sit on his knee to get their photo taken or know that he will be creeping down the chimney when everyone's asleep. Children may worry about this happening. What is important, is that you don't expect your child to make sense of Christmas by themselves. They will need help to remain feeling safe and secure with all the changes that Christmas brings.

Coping with the pressure of Christmas: Be realistic. Preparing for and celebrating Christmas can be stressful. Try to find some time for yourself. Even if it is for a long soak in the bath, or a trip to the hairdressers, a walk in Brookvale park, or watching a film together. Ask family or friends to help out and give you a break. If you are cooking Christmas dinner and are panicking about how you will manage if your child is not coping, cook the turkey on Christmas Eve and carve it. Pack it in foil with a bit of juice and re-heat thoroughly on the day itself. Prep your vegetables on Christmas Eve. Do anything you can to cut down on the workload. Buy ready prepped vegetables. It's only one day out of the year and the extra expense is worth it if it helps you feel less stressed.

Talk to other parents about how they manage Christmas. And remember, keep your sense of humour in close proximity throughout Christmas as it is a time of celebration.

I sincerely hope that you all have an amazing Christmas this year and send messages of love and peace on behalf of everyone at Brookvale.

Dr Beth Clarke

Upcoming events

11/12/24— 12/12/24	Parent Consultation Evenings (appointments only)
13.12.24	KS1 Nativity KS1 families invited to attend 9-10am
17/12/24	Family Christmas Lunch 11.30am for house groups Zephaniah and Cadbury
18.12.24	Family Christmas Lunch 11.30am for Lewis and Phelps
19/12/24	Non uniform day Snowball 3.30pm—5pm Places booked and paid for on MCAS
20/12/24	Award and 100% attendance assembly Whole school party afternoon Break up for Christmas
23.12.24 - 03.01.25	SCHOOL CLOSED
06.01.25	TEACHER TRAINING DAY
07.01.25	Back to School

We are caring citizens, shaping our communities.

We are ambitious for our success and the success of others.

Shaping Our Children's Futures, Together.

We are passionate about everything, and everyone.

We are the authors of our own lives.

Brookvale Primary School, Mallard Drive, B23 7YB

Tel: 0121 3599973

Email: office@brkvale.bham.sch.uk Website:
www.brkvale.bham.sch.uk Social Media: @BPS_B23 (X)

Weekly Attendance



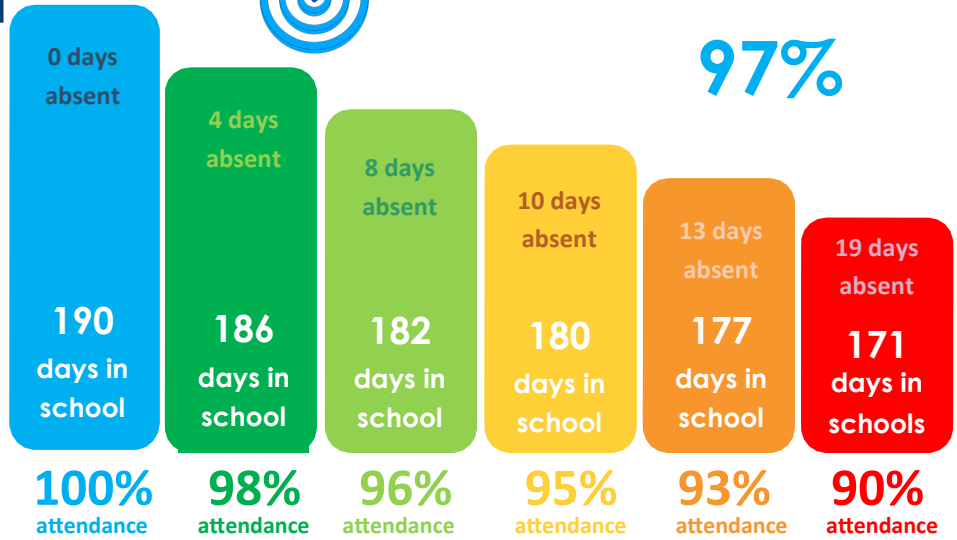
02/12/2024 to 06/12/2024

Reception	91.24%
Year 1	82.29%
Year 2	88.52%
Year 3	97.10%
Year 4	87.85%
Year 5	93.36%
Year 6	93.63%



Our School Attendance Target is

97%



Best chance of academic success and in later life.

Poor attendance—less likely to succeed academically/in later life.

Serious impact on education and reduced life chances

This week's Class Attendance Superstars

Y3


You get extra playtime!

Not a great week for attendance, Brookvale.


We must do better next week!



Sickness has played a factor into the poor attendance this week. Please ensure that you call the school office by 9.15am. to report a child's absence.

Attendance This Week 

90.42%

Attendance Year-to-Date 

96.38%

175 days off school per year.
Use this time for holidays, appointments etc

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BROOKVALE LAUNCH THE **WOW** CHALLENGE!

WOW is a pupil-led initiative where children self-report how they get to school every day using the interactive **WOW Travel Tracker**. If they travel sustainably (walk/wheel, cycle or scoot) once a week for a month, they get rewarded with a badge. It's that easy!

It's simple to run and children love taking part. Each year, the collectable WOW badges are designed by pupils in our annual badge design competition. On average, WOW schools see a **30% reduction in car journeys** taken to the school gate and a **23% increase in walking rates**.

BENEFITS OF WOW

Reduces congestion

1 in 4 cars on the road each morning are on the school run - but WOW can turn that around!

Increases walking rates

Walking rates at participating schools increase by **23%** in the first five weeks. WOW Travel Tracker helps you keep track of your schools modes of travel.



Accreditation

Helps you achieve your outstanding OFSTED schools rating and Modeshift STARS and Healthy Schools status.

Little classroom time

Less than 10 minutes of a teacher's day! The most important part of WOW happens before the school day even starts.

Low cost

WOW is around £2 per pupil; just a fraction of your PE and Sport Premium per child.

Instils healthy habits

Promotes healthy mental wellbeing by improving behaviour and concentration levels in class.

STRANGER DANGER

We have been informed by West Midlands Police about an attempt to abduct a child from a local school in Handsworth Wood/Lozells area which occurred on Wednesday 4 th December 2024.

Events like these remind us of the importance of ensuring children are aware of “stranger danger,” especially when walking to and from school unaccompanied. We address this in school as part of our safeguarding measures, and today, teachers are reminding children of the basic rules to stay safe:

- **Never talk to strangers**
- **Always ignore strangers who ask questions or tell you to do something**
- **Avoid walking alone whenever possible**
- **Speak only to trusted adults if you are concerned about anything**

As parents and carers, we know you want to stay informed. Should a similar situation arise in our area, we will inform you. We also advise you to discuss these safety rules with your children, especially if they travel to and from school unaccompanied.

Thank you for your support. If you see anything suspicious in the local area, please contact the police and the school. West Midlands Police can be contacted via Live Chat at West Midlands Police between 8am and midnight or by calling 101.

Can we take this opportunity to remind that during the winter months all children should be collected by an adult known to staff at the end of the school day.



Foursquare Gospel Church
Birmingham
The Kingdom Family

You are cordially invited to attend FSGC Erdington

Christmas OUTREACH



 SATURDAY 14 DECEMBER 2024

 10AM-11:30AM

 5 Machin Road, Erdington,
Birmingham, B23 6DR

Brookvale Foodbank

which supports our families,
will be in the school from
**Monday 9th—Thursday 12th
December 3pm—3.25pm.**

**All families are welcome to visit
Please bring your own carrier
bags.**

Parental Safeguarding



What Parents & Educators Need to Know about MENTAL HEALTH & WELLBEING APPS

When looking at options for supporting a child's mental health, the sheer volume can be overwhelming. There are many wellbeing apps available, but unfortunately not all are trustworthy. It's important to evaluate which resources are suitable, reliable and effective. This guide lets you know what to consider before installing such an app, to determine just how useful it's going to be.

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

QUALITY & RELIABILITY

Mental health apps can be a useful starting point when looking for wellbeing advice and strategies and can be a useful extension to the in-person services available. However, they aren't a substitute. Information on the quality of some of these apps is scarce. They may look cute and child-friendly, but have they been designed by a mental health professional? Furthermore, do they have research to back up their content?

PLACE RESPONSIBILITY ON CHILDREN

Some apps add the words 'kids' or 'children' to their title or use cartoon icons to make them more appealing to young people. When signing up for some of these apps, some will speak to the parent directly, saying something along the lines of "Your child is good to go. Let them take it from here". It's important to remain involved in the child's mental health journey, so regular check-ins are recommended.

DISREGARDING APPROPRIATE SUPPORT

Young people who feel anxious and have trouble sleeping may download a mindfulness app to help. While this is a good strategy initially, it's not addressing the root of the problem. A child could simply try managing these symptoms themselves (as opposed to speaking out and seeking professional help), which could potentially worsen their anxiety in the long run.

LACK OF PERSONALISATION

Mental health or wellbeing apps are useful tools for the short term, teaching users several helpful habits to manage their condition – such as keeping an illness diary, improving nutrition and practising mindfulness exercises. As every person is unique – and children especially will grow and develop in different ways – these apps struggle to tailor themselves to users' individual needs. For example, many apps don't distinguish between the ages of users and can offer extremely generic advice.

DATA SECURITY

As with any other app – not just those for mental health and wellbeing – it's wise to check out the privacy policy before downloading it. Some of these applications may share data with third parties for numerous reasons (such as targeted advertisements), and if a user is sharing personal and sensitive information within the app, they probably don't want it ending up elsewhere without their consent.

IN-APP PURCHASES

Many apps will provide their most basic features for free but will require you to pay for other aspects – such as a more tailored experience or access to additional resources. This could be a one-off fee or a regular subscription. Consider whether this is actually required. Is it benefiting the child, or could they receive the same support from a medical professional?

Advice for Parents & Educators

CHECK THE CREDIBILITY OF THE APP

Before you download a mental health and wellbeing app, investigate the developers. Have they consulted with qualified mental health professionals to create their resource? Also check whether the app is affiliated with any government or mental health organisations, as these are solid indicators of legitimacy. Reviews can also be a useful signpost to the app's quality. There are many good apps out there, but there are just as many that miss the mark.

READ THE PRIVACY POLICY

Look into the app's terms of service – especially its privacy policy. Do so by yourself first, then go over it with the child who is considering using the app, to ensure they know what data will be collected and how exactly it will be used. Use all of this information to make an educated decision on whether or not to download that particular app.

SEEK PROFESSIONAL SUPPORT

Trusted mental health and wellbeing apps designed by qualified, reputable organisations can be used alongside the personalised advice and support of fully trained professionals. These apps should never be considered a substitute for counselling or other tailored medical help. If you have real concerns about a child's mental wellbeing, you should seek appropriate advice from a suitable source, such as their GP – or Childline, who can be contacted by calling 0800 1111.

ENCOURAGE OPEN COMMUNICATION

Mental health and wellbeing apps can be useful for writing down feelings, tracking your own health and other such activities. These can help if the problem is short-term and temporary – such as a child getting stressed about approaching exams – or if you're currently waiting for professional support. Nonetheless, it is important that children aren't solely reliant on the app and have a safe space to talk about their feelings and experiences in the real world.

Meet Our Expert

Dr Claire Sutherland is an online safety consultant, educator and researcher who has developed and implemented anti-bullying and cyber safety policies for schools. She has written various academic papers and carried out research for the Australian government comparing internet use and sexting behaviour of young people in the UK, USA and Australia.



#WakeUpWednesday

The National College

Source: See full reference list on guide page at: <https://nationalcollege.com/guides/mental-health-apps>

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WOW What a Christmas Fayre.

Thank you to all the families who attended and for all the donations you made over the last few weeks. Thank you to the parents who helped at the event, without this help and support we would not be able to hold these events which the children really do enjoy. Thank you to the staff who give up their free time to support these events as well as helping massively behind the scenes.



In total the Christmas Fayre raised

£953.57.

Huge congratulations to our Great Brookvale Bake Off winners!



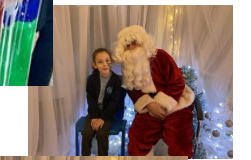
Oliver Y4



Sebastian Rec



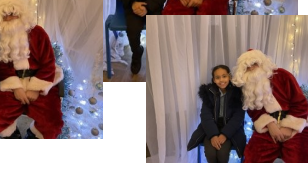
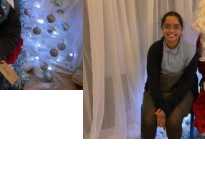
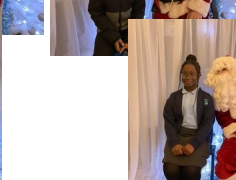
Siniyah Y6



Well done Miss Humphrey for being a good sport—SPLAT the Teacher



Congratulations to Axl who correctly guessed the name of the teddy bear... Bear King!



Merry Christmas!

Tuesday 17th December for

ZEPHANIAH and PHELPS

Wednesday 18th December for

CADBURY and LEWIS

Choose a Main

**Roast Turkey
or
Halal/Quorn Roast**

**Roast Potato,
Stuffing and Yorkshire Pudding
and Gravy**

With

Brussel Sprouts and Carrots

For Dessert

**Sticky Date Pudding with
Caramel Sauce**

SOLD OUT

**Log onto MCAS to book and pay £3.50 for
1 adult per family**

PRE-SCHOOL CHILDREN ARE NOT CATERED FOR

**You will be able to book your child's Christmas meal on Relish
from Friday 29th November**

Brookvale's Snow Ball

(Children attending the Snow Ball do not need collecting from school until 5pm)

Thursday 19th December

3.30pm–5pm

SOLD OUT

Non Uniform Day so children will already be in their festive outfits.

Children not attending will need to be collected at the normal time

3.20pm for Rec 3.25pm Y1—Y6