

FAMILY SUPPORT WORKER NEWSLETTER

July 2024



I cant believe that it is coming to the end of the school year again and the Summer holidays are looming!

We have lots of exciting things on our calendar for the next few weeks which our lovely children are looking forward to. Lets hope the weather stays ok for Sports Day!

I have included several bits of information below that you might find useful and if there is anything that you personally would like information about please let me know.

Please feel free to contact me confidentially at anytime if you have any concerns or would just like a chat to get things off your chest. No issue is too big nor too small! If you are having difficulties or worries then it is a problem worth sharing. If I don't have the answer then I will find someone who does.

My email address is sdugard@lapsw.org or you can contact me through the school office or on my mobile 07496 323846



BABY AND TODDLER GROUP WEST ALVINGTON PRIMARY

Mini Chestnuts - our Baby and Toddler Group runs at West Alvington C of E on Thursdays between 9am until 10am.

If you feel you are able to help run the group or with setting up at the beginning of the session I would love to hear from you.

All are welcome. Please come and join us!

TESCOS STRONGER STARTS

Every three months, three local good causes are selected to be in the blue token customer vote in Tesco stores throughout the UK. West Alvington Primary School have been approved to be one of these good causes. The application is for a sensory room in school to help those who need particular quiet times or need help to regulate when upset - although the room will be open to all. Voting will commence in store from the first week in July 2024 until the end of September 2024. PLEASE can you all do your best to put your token into the box. The aim is to apply for this fund for Thurlestone and Charleton in due course.

UNIFORM APPEAL

If you have any unwanted uniform or uniform that no longer fits could you kindly donate it to school. With the current stretch on finances many families are struggling with the additional cost of buying uniform and I have received numerous requests already this month. Any contribution you can make will be so very much appreciated.

HOUSEHOLD BILLS AND FOOD PRICES

In the current time with prices rising in nearly all parts of the economy, many families are struggling with household bills, rents, mortgages and food costs. I am happy to signpost anyone to services that can help with household budgets, debt advice, cooking and shopping on a budget and referrals to the Food Bank amongst other things. Just to let you know that the Food Bank have many strings to their bow not just food parcels. They can supply furniture, uniforms, carpets and more as well as access to Livewest housing officer and a lady from

the benefits office who can meet you to go through finances. I am also able to apply for on one off household grants for help with utility bills or white goods (this is not means tested!). Please don't be embarrassed - just ask (everything will be treated confidentially)!

Use the below link for details about help with the cost of living crisis as well as available grants

<https://content.govdelivery.com/accounts/UKDEVONCC/bulletins/35c7953>

BENEFITS ADVICE

We know the benefits system can be complicated and confusing and this can put busy families off claiming.

Quids for Kids is a free benefits information service that we offer through Citizen's Advice for families with children or young people up to the age of 21 years old with additional needs, a long term-illness or disability. It's also open to care leavers, young homeless people, foster parents and people looking after a child with a special guardianship order.

You can help with finding out whether you are able to claim benefits, and also help with challenging benefit decisions if you think you have not been treated fairly.

ENERGY GRANTS

The following energy suppliers offer grants to their customers:

British Gas Energy Support Fund - apply for a grant on the British Gas Energy Trust website

Scottish Power Hardship Fund - apply for a grant on the Scottish Power Hardship Fund website

Ovo Customer Support Package - apply for help on the Ovo Energy Fund website

E.ON Next Energy Fund - apply for a grant on the E.ON Next Energy Fund website

EDF Energy Customer Support Fund - sign up to the priority services register to apply for a grant on the EDF Energy website

Octopus 'Octo Assist Fund' - apply for a grant on the Octopus website

Shell Energy Support Fund - apply for help on the Shell Energy website

If you can't get a grant from your supplier, you might be able to get a grant from the British Gas Energy Trust. These grants are available to anyone - you don't have to be a British Gas customer.

STARTING A NEW SCHOOL YEAR

The prospect of starting a new school year will be exciting for many pupils and others might feel anxious after the long summer break.

It can also be a particularly challenging time for parents and carers of children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities.

Young Minds has helpful information and advice on supporting your child with school anxiety.

Here are a few things you can do to make their return to school as comfortable as possible:

- Talk to your child about how they are feeling
- Encourage positive talk about school and ask them what they're looking forward to
- Try not to leave shopping for uniform or stationery to the last minute - we all know how stressful it can be!

- Give your child your full focus when they return from their first day back.

The Young Minds website also has tips for working with your child's school if your child is having difficulties and finding extra help if you need it.

It might take a little while for children to get used to the change, and there will be ups and downs. Try your best to support, reassure and comfort them, without putting pressure on yourself to make it better.

<https://www.youngminds.org.uk/parent/parents-a-z-mental-health-guide/school-anxiety-and-refusal/>

The below link gives parents information about Tik Tok safety

<https://www.radfordacademy.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/TIK-TOK-SAFETY-CHECKLIST.pdf>

PUPIL PREMIUM INFORMATION

Pupil premium funding from the government is given to schools to help pupils reach their full potential, regardless of their background or financial situation. It's provided for pupils who:

- Are a Looked-After Child (according to the Children Act 1989), or
- Have left care through adoption, special guardianship order (SGO), or child arrangement order (CAO)
- Have a member of the family in the armed forces
- Whose family are in receipt of a range of government benefits, entitling them to free school meals

Please inform the school if any of the above relates to your child and we are not already aware of this. Schools receive extra funding for every eligible pupil. This extra money could make a real difference to the quality of education we offer. For example, we've previously used pupil premium funding for:

- Educational provision/resources
- Academic interventions

- Wellbeing and self-esteem building interventions

Pupil Premium is allocated separately to the free school meal programme. Your child may be eligible for one, but not the other. If your child is eligible for 'free school meals' and you register them for this, your child will receive:

- free school meals throughout their schooling
- food vouchers to use in the school holidays
- free places at a range of holiday activity clubs

Is my child eligible for free school meals?

Your child might be eligible if you access:

- Income Support
- Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance or Employment and Support Allowance
- Support under part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- The guaranteed element of Pension Credit
- Child Tax Credit (provided you're not also entitled to Working Tax Credit and have an annual gross income of no more than £16,190)
- Working Tax Credit run-on
- Universal Credit, provided you have an annual net earned income not exceeding £7,400 (£616.67 per month)

Universal infant free school meals

Currently, pupils in reception, year 1 and year 2 are entitled to a free school meal thanks to a different government funding scheme known as universal infant free school meals (UIFSM).

You shouldn't confuse UIFSM with free schools meals and the pupil premium.

If your child is in reception, year 1 or year 2 and is eligible for free school meals according to the criteria above, you should still register because we'll receive the extra pupil premium funding.

Does my child have to eat the free school meals?

No. Pupils who are registered for free school meals don't have to eat them. If you're eligible but you want your child to have packed lunches you should still register because the school will receive the funding which can support your child in other ways.

How do I register?

You only need to register once. To register, please log on to the 'Citizen Portal' of the Devon County Council website

FAMILY HUBS

Family Hubs are a new way of bringing together all the support a family may need. They offer a welcoming environment and serve as a central point of access for all families, including those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) up to age 25.

Discover support, courses and help from services near you including information about support for Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND). They also run Baby and toddler community groups and provide information and advice for parenting. If you need me to make a referral I am happy to do so.

Our nearest centre is

Daisy Play Centre

Pathfields

Totnes

Devon

TQ9 5TZ

Phone 01803 847626

Email devonfamilyhubs@actionforchildren.org.uk

Follow Facebook.com South Hams Family Hub

<https://service.actionforchildren.org.uk/devon-family-hubs/>

FREE WEBINAR FOR PARENTS WITH CHILDREN WITH SEND

Action For Children have two free webinars coming up in their 'Help Me! I'm a Parent' series, offering support to parents and carers with children who have Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND).

The first is about Sensory and Physical needs, and will cover things like senses and sensory differences; sensory meltdowns and helping cope with sensory and physical difficulties.

There's also a webinar about Communication and Learning needs that will discuss things like attention and listening, understanding and problems understanding how relationships with other people work.

The webinars provide a safe, friendly and informal space for parents and carers to come together and listen to two Family Hub Navigators, ask questions and share thoughts and ideas.

For the dates and times of these webinars and to book a place, please visit the Action for Children's Eventbrite webpage.

ADOPTION AND SPECIAL GUARDIANSHIP SUPPORT FUND (ASGSF)

This fund is for any parent who is looking after an adoptive child or has a Special Guardianship Order. You can use it for therapeutic purposes such as play therapy, educational psychologist, equine therapy, occupational therapy, speech therapy, music therapy etc.

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/adoption-support-fund-asf>

SUMMER ACTIVITIES AND OFFERS

Asda Cafes

Asda Cafes Kids Eat Free

Kids eat for £1 All Day, Every Day at Asda cafes, with no adult spend required. The offer has been extended until the end of 2024.

In addition, children will receive a free piece of fruit such as an apple, pear or banana when purchasing the hot kids £1 meal deal.

Asda also provides FREE Ella's baby food pouches for children under 18 months old with any purchase.

Morrisons

Morrisons Cafes Kids Eat Free

Kids eat free all day, every day in Morrisons cafes nationwide, daily with every adult meal over £4.49. This offer includes half terms.

Sainsburys cafe

Sainsbury's Cafes offers one child hot meal or lunch bag for £1 with any adult main meal purchased over £5.20. This offer is on every day from 11:30am. Kid's mains include one main, 3 sides a drink and a piece of fruit.

Tescos

Parents can spend as little as 60p to claim a free kids' meal worth up to £3.25

The offer runs from 25th July until 26th August at over 300 Tesco Cafés

Free meals include Kids Breakfast, Kids Hot Meal Deal and Kids Cold Pick and Mix Deal

HAF programme

Devon County Council is working with local providers to coordinate a programme of activities and healthy meals for the school holidays.

The aim of the scheme is to support children to eat more healthily, be more active over the school holidays and have a greater knowledge of health and nutrition as well as be more engaged with school and other local services.

Funding will be prioritised for school aged children and young people from reception to year 11 (inclusive) who are receiving benefit related free school meals, and their families. Eligible children will be sent a code to use for booking your HAF place from your school.

HAF providers will hold a waiting list for extended criteria places and will not be able to confirm a place until a week before the Holiday period. Priority must be given to the benefit-related free school meal children.

<https://www.devon.gov.uk/eys/holiday-activities-and-food-haf-programme/>

Britannica Reading Challenge & Activities



Britannica of Reading
challenge UK version(



Digital Summer
Reading Kit Britannica