

BEAMINSTER SCHOOL

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Friday 10th December

Dear Parents and Carers,

I wanted to start by passing on my thanks to **Beaminster Town Council**, and our own **BSPTA**, for the hugely successful **Christmas Fair last Friday**. Despite the many organisational and logistical challenges faced by such an undertaking, every year the Town Council manage to co-ordinate a safe and joyful evening for the community. I am also grateful to **St Mary's Church**, who provide such a wonderful space for the BSPTA stalls, where it was a real pleasure to speak to so many of you and accept your generosity with our raffle tickets. The community spirit and support was warmly reflected in two conversations that I had with some new residents. Both agreed that the kindness and welcome from the town had been more than they could have hoped for, and even the children would look them in the eye and smile!

On Monday we were delighted to welcome the **award-winning news photographer, Peter Macdiarmid**, to talk to our Year 11, 12 and 13 Photography and Media students. Peter spoke enthusiastically about his amazing career and life as a photo-journalist; his work has involved travelling the world, photographing well known subjects such as the Queen, the Pope and famous politicians as well as capturing events such as major demonstrations over a 35-year career working for the Independent, Telegraph, Reuters and Getty. Students were enthralled by his presentation and really enjoyed the opportunity to ask him many interesting questions. Our thanks to Peter for his time and good humour.

We very much enjoyed having **Salway Ash School** join us, on Wednesday, for over 100 Christmas lunches. It was lovely for our current students to serve the meals, meet their old school friends and catch up with past staff. The children certainly had hearty appetites and showed their appreciation to our catering team by clearing nearly every plate!

Thank you to all involved with our **Year 13 Parents Evening** this week. Following reports after half-term and Academic Monitoring Day, the evening gave a third opportunity to further refine what students need to do whilst there is still plenty of time to act on staff guidance.

On Wednesday 8th December, the Prime Minister announced the implementation of [Plan B of the COVID-19 Response: Autumn and Winter Plan](#), to reduce pressure on the NHS. Although this adds no new expectations on schools, the Government is clear on the critical importance of not disrupting the education of children. This includes **mandatory school attendance**, the continued use of **face coverings** in communal areas and your ongoing support with **twice-weekly LFD testing**. Students will be given **additional testing kits** to use over the Xmas holidays to bring home with them on Monday. We will also be testing all students on their return to Beaminster School on Thursday 6th January.

The **Christmas Carol Concert** in St Mary's Church yesterday was a joyful celebration of the festive season. The afternoon performance was attended by our Year 8 students who missed out last year and were a real credit to themselves, and the school. Despite the damp evening, the wonderful setting and acoustics enhanced the choir, instrumentalists, soloists and readers to make for a delightful service. My thanks to everyone involved, particularly Mr Smith and Reverend Baldwin, for co-ordinating these uplifting performances.

As well as the enjoyment of **Christmas lunches**, today was the much-loved **Christmas Jumper Day**. You can see just some of the many (varied!) jumpers on display on our Facebook page: [Beaminster School - Home | Facebook](#). The **BSPTA's Grand Christmas Draw** also took place today, with many thousands of counterfoils going into the large tombola. The lucky winners are being contacted, and I am extremely grateful to everyone who supported our BSPTA with this important annual fundraiser.

Looking ahead, Year 7 have the excitement of the **Beauty and the Beast Pantomime** at The Lighthouse Theatre in Poole on Tuesday. Staff have been very generous in offering their time and support to continue with this event, and I am sure it will add some welcome festive cheer.

As part of our ongoing catch-up programme, we have the return of our friends from **Learning Performance** on Tuesday (with Year 8) and Wednesday (with Year 7). Students will all receive half a day of intense, interactive workshops to reinforce effective study skills and develop their ability to think about and regulate successful approaches to learning. These workshops are always fun and very well received, and I would encourage parents and carers to discuss them with their children to get a sense of the skills and techniques covered.

The famous **end of term raffle** will be taking place on Friday 17th and the deadline for students to order tickets from the reward shop has been **extended until the end of Sunday 12th December** if they want to be included in the draw, so please do remind them!

Parents interested in becoming a **Parent Governor** have until **Wednesday 15th December** to apply.

As mentioned previously, don't forget that we will be **finishing at 1pm next Friday**, with all buses organised for this earlier time. Should you have any difficulties with these arrangements please do let us know as soon as possible.

Finally, Mr Withers has used assemblies this week to remind all students to "**Do the right thing**". As well as a focus on the value of kindness to others at this time of year, there was also the importance of service, including not sitting idly by while others do or say hurtful things. One particular quote seems to encapsulate the issues that our pastoral team have to deal with each day:

"Don't say something permanently hurtful because you are temporarily upset."

Have a good weekend.

Mr Hales

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