

www.firslower.co.uk

Chair of Governors: Sarah Walker

Governors: Jade Brown, Joseph Burton, Adam Campbell, Grant Chaney, Suzi McIntosh, Amaritpal Uppal, Hannah Wadsworth and Claudia Wallis

Dear parents/carers,

Christmas Performances

We are delighted to share that each year group will be presenting two Christmas performances this year—one in the morning and one in the afternoon.



Each child (including siblings in the same year group) will be able to reserve four seats in total:

- Two seats for the morning performance
- Two seats for the afternoon performance

At every afternoon performance, our wonderful PTFA will be offering refreshments and running raffles. Please bring along some spare change if you'd like to take part—you never know, it could be your lucky day!

If you haven't already done so, please complete the relevant Google Form below to let us know which performance times you would like to attend.

- [Year R Christmas Performance](#), Wednesday 10th & Thursday 11th December
- [Year 1 Christmas Performance](#), Tuesday 9th & Wednesday 10th December
- [Year 2 Christmas Performance](#), Thursday 11th & Friday 12th December
- [Year 3 Christmas Performance](#), Monday 8th & Tuesday 9th December

Thank you for your support!

Christmas Lunch – Thursday, 18th December

We're excited to celebrate one of our favourite Firs traditions! On Thursday, 18th December, our brilliant kitchen team — alongside the whole staff — will be serving a festive Christmas lunch. It's always a highlight of the season, bringing plenty of smiles, delicious food, and holiday cheer.



As this special meal replaces our usual Thursday menu of Biryani or Sausage Pasta, **all existing bookings for that day will be automatically cancelled.**

If your child would like to enjoy the Christmas lunch, please make a new meal booking for **Thursday, 18th December**. Bookings must be completed by **Friday, 12th December**. We look forward to celebrating together!

Please note that the usual roast dinner on Wednesday 17th December will be sausages for opt 1 and vegan sausage for opt 2, any bookings already made for this sitting will remain in place.

Christmas Jumper Day

We're taking part in 'Save the Children's' Christmas Jumper Day on **Thursday 18th December**.

Children are invited to wear a Christmas jumper or anything festive. There's no need to buy anything new. A decorated jumper, a splash of tinsel, or any Christmassy accessory will do perfectly — creativity is very much encouraged!

This is a non-uniform day.



We're asking each family to make a small donation, whatever you can manage, either in the bucket at the gate or online via our JustGiving page (scan the QR code or use the link below).

[Christmas Jumper Day Fundraising Page](#) - Thank you for your support!



PTFA Panto

On Wednesday 26th November, our children were treated to an unforgettable surprise — a full professional theatre experience right here at school! They were absolutely captivated by 'Scrooge - A Christmas Panto', and the audience participation was a huge hit... *oh no it wasn't... oh yes it was!*

A massive thank you to our wonderful PTFA for bringing such a fantastic show to The Firs and creating magical memories for our children!



Baubles, Bubbles and Festive Fun!

On Friday 14th November, we were delighted to host our PTFA *Baubles and Bubbles* event. Twenty-five parents and carers joined us to kick off the festive season with a relaxing evening of bauble-painting, led by Zoe from Crafty Little Things Ltd. Guests enjoyed a selection of perfectly curated nibbles provided by Jo at Bits & Boards, and of course, the PTFA



made sure there were plenty of bubbles to go around!

The raffle was a great success too, helping the evening raise an impressive £411.

Thank you to everyone who purchased tickets and to all the parents and carers who attended. Your support is truly invaluable, and we appreciate it more than words can say.

A huge thank you also goes to Zoe from Crafty Little Things Ltd and Jo from Bits & Boards for helping make the event such a memorable one.

PTFA Christmas Craft Fair

The PTFA Christmas Fair returned with festive sparkle on Saturday 22nd November!



What a fantastic day it was — the hall was buzzing with excitement, and it was wonderful to see so many families come together to celebrate. The children threw themselves into all the activities, from writing heartfelt letters to Santa in the Elves' Workshop, to testing their luck at *Spin the Wheel* with Mr. Campbell, and browsing the treats and treasures in our Christmas Market. Smiles were everywhere!

This year's raffle was our biggest yet, boasting an incredible 23 prizes — including beautifully curated hampers, bottles of festive cheer, and even a Tevaplanter. We are so grateful to everyone who donated, helping us create such an amazing prize lineup.

A special shout-out goes to our brilliant Year 4 helpers, who transformed into Elves for the afternoon. They supported younger pupils with their letters, kept the workshop running smoothly, and even took on "bouncer duty" at the doors! You were all stars — thank you!

A heartfelt thank you to every single person who donated items, baked cakes, ran stalls, or braved the cold and rain to join us. Your enthusiasm and support are what make events like this so special.

And finally, The Firs would like to say a huge thank you to our fabulous PTFA Team, who put on this annual event as well as the **Baubles, Bubbles and Festive Fun event**, with enthusiasm and creative flair, and they have more events and surprises planned for the Christmas period!

Autumn Term SEND Coffee and Catch-up – Anxiety focus

We recently held our termly SEND coffee and catch-up session for families where we were joined by members of the Mental Health Support Team. Parents were able to learn more about the impact of anxiety for our children in their daily lives and discuss useful strategies that can be used at both home and school.



We shared ideas, resources and interventions that can be accessed by children at The Firs and Saplings, as well as how the Mental Health Support Team can provide further support for families.

Families who attended said:

'Talking to professionals for support and signposting was beneficial, but also getting to meet other parents who are facing similar situations. The space felt safe and it's great the school is providing these resources for parents.'

'It was nice to know that we are not alone.'

Please see the attached presentation to learn more about how you can support your child if they are experiencing anxiety.



Reading At The Firs

On Thursday last week we sent out the letter 'Reading At The Firs' along with our 'Reading Partnership Agreement'.

We want to do everything we can to make sure there is a clear picture of how we can work together to help children make great progress with and enjoy their reading.



To support this, along with copies of these documents, we have attached a '**Reading With Your Child At Home**' guide with this newsletter. These can also be found on the [Letters Home](#) page of our website.

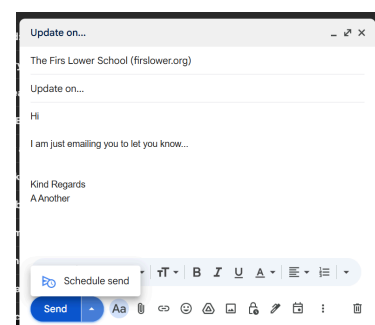
Emailing Your Child's Class Teacher

It is very important to us that we are working closely with all our parents and carers in the best interests of our children and good / prompt communications are, we know, a very important part of developing that relationship. This is why we give parents /carers access to teacher's email addresses as we know that it is not always possible to catch them and communicate face to face.

At the same time, it is really important that we look after the well being of our teachers and try to ensure they have a reasonable work / life balance.

In striking this balance, we would like to set out these expectations for these communications:

- Teachers will endeavour to respond to any email within **36 hours** during the **working week**. (Please bear in mind that some staff work part time and this may mean their working week is not Monday - Friday)
- In the interests of the teacher's well being, we would be grateful if you could ensure that you send emails to teachers between **8:00 am and 6pm** (perhaps set a Schedule Send!)
- Our teachers work very hard and they often spend a significant amount of their time working at weekends but please don't *expect* a reply over the weekend and if possible, send or schedule your email for Monday morning.



Thank you in advance for your help with this, it is really much appreciated.

Payment of School Lunches

Our school meals provider, Caterlink, has asked us to remind parents and carers of children in Saplings, Year 3, and Year 4 to pre-book and pay for school meals in advance.



Recently, some meal accounts have remained in arrears, even after reminder notifications have been issued. To help Caterlink continue providing a smooth and efficient service, please ensure that all lunch bookings and payments are made promptly.

If your child's account is currently in arrears, we kindly ask that you provide a home-packed lunch until the outstanding balance has been cleared.

Thank you for your cooperation and support

Starting School and Transfer to Middle 2026 - Message from Central Bedfordshire Council...

Please can schools remind parents to submit their applications for Starting School and Transfer to Middle 2026 by the deadline 15 January 2026. We strongly recommend that parents name their nearest school as one of their preferences.

It's important to use all three preferences and to name three different schools. If their other preferences are full and they haven't listed their local school, their child may be allocated a place much further away. By law, we must allocate places to pupils whose parents/carers have expressed a written preference for that school ahead of those who have not.

Any applications received after 15 January 2026 will be considered LATE, there are no exceptions. Parents can apply online at https://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/info/5/school_admissions.

Please can you also advise parents to consider the home to school transport policy for September 2026 when they make their application. The policy can be accessed via www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/schooltransport.

This will help a lot as we still have some parents who have not applied for a school place for transfer to middle and many that have children in nurseries attached to schools that have not yet made an application either.

Yours sincerely,



Adam Campbell
Headteacher