

# THE OTTER

THE NEWSLETTER OF OTTERBOURNE CHURCH OF ENGLAND PRIMARY SCHOOL.



Dear Families

I am aware that there was a bit of a glitch with Hotmail recently that caused a delay in the newsletter getting to you. I hope it didn't affect things too much. I am still trying to make the newsletter regular but, as you can imagine, the school timetable can change in an instant. Please do get in touch if there is anything you need more information about though as it would be a shame to miss something.

This afternoon, we have the first of two Year R Open Events (the second being Thursday morning), which is the chance for new parents to bring their children in to spend a little time with the Year R team. If you aren't aware of these, and have a child starting with us in September 2025, you are more than welcome to come along - more details are on our website ("Thinking of us for September 2025").

Christmas is nearly upon us and we are excited to see the return of the Christmas Fair, 'OtterFest'. Lots of details for this have been circulated on FOS WhatsApp groups already - if you don't subscribe to these yet, it really is a great way to stay up to date. If you don't know who your Year Group Representative is, please let me know.

Best wishes for a good week.

Mr Geraghty

## The voluntary one-way system

With the additional traffic that the change in weather brings each year, it seems a good time to mention this again, although it is purely a suggestion to help with the drop-off/pick-up and nothing official. The suggested route is for parents to enter Cranbourne Drive where it meets Main Road at the end closest to school/White Horse, and exit at the further end (via Coles Mede). Taking this route will ease congestion outside the main car park.

If you are looking for a tutor to work with your child(ren), you might find this guidance from the NSPCC of some use:

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/away-from-home/find-tutor-child/>

## NOT FOR SCHOOL PLEASE!

**Trading cards have made a comeback but sadly they only lead to problems within school, so please do not let children bring them in.** Toys should also be left at home unless there is an agreement with the SENCo or class teacher. **We are also aware that some older children are visiting NISA on the way to school and buying sweets, which are then being given out to younger children at school. Please speak to your children about this as we don't allow sweets at school.**

Thank you for all of the generous donations so far.

Last year, this event focused on exchanging Christmas jumpers but it's bigger this year. There is still time to find a new home for those pre-loved winter clothes - just bring them to the school gate where our council children will collect them. Thank you.

On the day, in that same spirit of re-use, we are asking families to bring their own cup if they are going to be purchasing hot chocolate too.

# WINTER CLOTHING SWAP SHOP AND

## Hot Chocolate

Friday 29th November 3.30pm - School Hall

Come along to our swap shop to grab a bargain and a festive hot chocolate!



£2 suggested  
donation per item



We are so excited to announce Otterfest! Our Christmas Fair will take place on the 13th December from 4-6pm. Expect fantastic stalls run by our Year 6 students, festive refreshments, Elfridges and Santa's Grotto! This year we will also have a free Chris Cringle's Crafts area and some delicious food for everyone to enjoy.

You won't want to miss it!



# Otterfest

**SANTAS GROTTTO, FESTIVE STALLS RUN BY THE  
CHILDREN, ELF EMPORIUM, MULLED WINE,  
DOMINOES PIZZA & MUCH MORE**

**13TH DECEMBER 4-6pm**

# SANTA IS COMING TO OTTERFEST!

13TH DECEMBER 4-6 PM

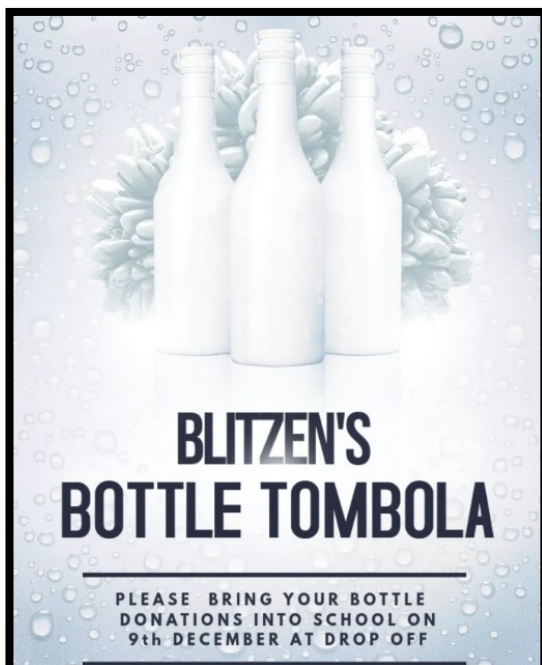
"The Otterfest Grotto is open for bookings, but there are only a few tickets left!

Settle in for a festive story session with Santa and his team of merry elves. We hope you have been good this year because Santa will have a special gift for you.

For tickets, please visit: <https://www.pta-events.co.uk/friendsotterbourne/index.cfm?event=event&eventId=89373>

## Otterfest bakery

Bake or donate your festive treats for the Otterfest Bakery. Baked goodies can be brought into school during the day (on the 13th). Please ensure you label any containers you wish to keep



*On the 9th December, in exchange for a Christmas dress down day, please bring in a bottle donation for Blitzen's Bottle Tombola at Otterfest! Please ensure bottles are new and in date - thank you!*

# 10 Top Tips for Parents and Educators

## TEACHING CYCLE SAFETY

Cycling is an amazing way to spend quality time together as a family, as well as keeping everyone healthy and active – and it's an excellent exercise, whatever the age of your children. Getting started can sometimes be daunting, and there are obvious safety concerns over youngsters who are still getting used to a bike – so follow our top tips to help you ride with confidence.

### 1 CONSIDER CYCLE TRAINING



Courses like Bikeability are extremely useful, and training in general has come a long way since cycling proficiency began; there are Bikeability courses for adults, too. Cycle training teaches invaluable skills (such as good road positioning, signaling and visibility), and can help both parents and children feel more at ease on busy streets.

### 2 USE A SUITABLE BIKE



Find a bike of an appropriate size for its rider and resist the temptation to have children 'grow into' theirs by buying one too large for them. A bigger bike will be heavier and more difficult to control, making accidents more likely and potentially putting youngsters off cycling forever. If your child has any specific physical needs, or has dyspraxia, then try out a trike, handcycle or other adaptive cycle to see what works best.

### 3 TRY A CARGO BIKE



Cargo bikes, particularly the box-bike style, are ideal for transporting small children around. Depending on the type of bike chosen – as well as the size and age of the children – it can be possible to transport up to four little ones in this way, with additional space for other cargo as well.

### 4 INSPECT YOUR CYCLE



It's a good idea to do some routine checks on any bike before going for a ride to make sure everything's working correctly. The 'M check' is particularly useful: assessing the condition and position of the bike's wheels, handlebars, brakes, pedals, chain and saddle, working from front to back. Online tutorial videos can also teach you how to carry out basic repairs if needed. For more complicated fixes, head to your local bike shop.

### 5 BRING SUITABLE GEAR



Ensure whatever you're wearing, and any attachments for your bike, are suitable for the ride. A waterproof jacket will let you cycle safely in almost any weather. Make sure any helmets are fitted correctly. If you're riding after dark, remember to fit your bikes with a white front light, a red rear light and a red rear reflector. These are required by law.

### 6 STICK TO FLAT TERRAIN

Take a smooth, flat route if possible, so it's more suitable for younger cyclists. You might be surprised by how many quiet roads or back streets there may be in your area. Don't be put off by an indirect but easier path as opposed to a shorter, busier one. Look out for the National Cycle Network, canal towpaths and even parks that you can cut through.

### 7 STAY ALERT AND IN SAFE FORMATIONS



For maximum protection and visibility, ride in a line with children in the middle and adults at either end. If you're the only adult present, take up a position at the rear to ensure all children remain in your sight. Don't be tempted to hug the kerb if cycling on the road – riding approximately a metre out will make you more noticeable to other road users, and you'll also stay clear of any debris in the gutter.

### 8 AVOID PARKED CARS



When riding past parked cars, try to stay at least a metre away, just in case anyone inside opens a door unexpectedly or the vehicle itself starts to move. This precaution will also deter anyone driving behind from trying to squeeze past you when there isn't enough space, so don't be afraid to ride in a prominent position.

### 9 START A 'BIKE BUS'



Cycling to school with other families is a potentially fun experience – one which comes with the added benefit of safety in numbers, in case anything goes wrong along the way. Team up with other parents, carers and educators and pick a day to cycle to school together. Who knows – maybe, in time, you'll have other folks asking to join you?

### 10 HAVE FUN!



Keep in mind that cycling should be fun! A good bike ride can be really enjoyable for adults and children alike, while also being a superb form of exercise. Ease children into the hobby by starting them off with shorter journeys – such as a trip to the park – and build them up to longer, more complicated outings. Some children may get bored on a longer ride, so try to keep a conversation going with them.

### Meet Our Expert

Sophie Gordon is the campaigns manager at Cycling UK, a charity which inspires and enables people to start cycling. She has spent six years campaigning for safer roads and more protected cycle paths, while supporting communities to call for better cycling conditions where they live.

we are  
**cycling**  
UK

#WakeUp  
Wednesday®

The  
National  
College®

# Pop Up Ensemble

# FREE



## Pop Up Ensemble Winton Community Academy, Andover

JMST Theatre, London Road, Andover,  
Hampshire SP10 2PS  
Sunday 15th December 9.15 - 13.15

## Beginner to Grade 4



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'from scratch' orchestra!**

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Hampshire  
County Council

[www.hantsmusichub.org.uk](http://www.hantsmusichub.org.uk)