



# FEDERATION NEWS



December 2025

Peter Pan & Cherry Trees Nursery Schools

Dear Parents and Carers

As the Autumn Term comes to a close, I would like to thank you for supporting your children to develop positive routines in their attendance, as well as a love of learning. It has been a very long and busy term filled with many memorable moments. The children have enjoyed the new play equipment at Cherry Trees, as well as visits from Toby Tall Tales, the Community Police Team and the owls. The children also had a very special visit from Father Christmas yesterday, who gave them all a book to share with you at home. I was extremely impressed by the children's engagement with the Christmas Concerts this year, they were fabulous and it's great to see their confidence growing each time we perform a concert.



We have been very fortunate to have both Mimi and Storm at the Nursery Schools to complete their final teaching placements throughout the Autumn Term. As they leave our Nursery Schools, we wish them every success in their future careers as teachers. They will both be an asset to the teaching profession. We also received some joyful news last week from Vicky who has given birth to a baby girl. We look forward to seeing both Vicky and her daughter in the new year.

We have included some useful information to support you with toilet learning which you may like to consider over the holidays if your child wears nappies. It is advised that children should stop using nappies between 18 and 30 months. Research shows this is best for children's bowel and bladder health. Some children will learn to use the toilet quickly, while others will need more time and support. Information is also included to support children with SEND or children with a diagnosed medical need. Toni and Clare will be available to talk to in the Spring Term if you would like some further help and advice with toilet learning. <https://startingreception.co.uk/potty-training/#introduction>

It just remains for me to wish you all a very Merry Christmas and a Happy and Healthy New Year for 2026. Enjoy the break with your family and friends. We return to nursery school for the Spring Term on 7th January 2026.



Best wishes  
Julie Smith  
Executive  
Head Teacher

## TERM DATES

Last day of the Autumn Term: Friday 19th December (no tea club)

Nursery reopens: Wednesday 7th January

Half-term: Monday 16th February - Friday 20th February

Last day of Spring term: Friday 27th March (no tea club)

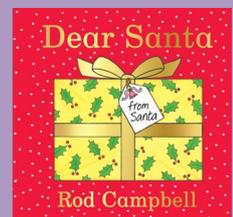
Nursery reopens Wednesday 15th April

## Our learning this term:

To conclude the Autumn term, we have learnt about Christmas traditions and the Nativity story through 'The First Christmas' retelling.



Children re-enacted the Nativity using songs learned during our music sessions. We also explored the books 'Dear Santa' and 'Stick Man'. The story 'Shark in the Snow' additionally supported early phonological development and discussions about seasonal change.



Our Christmas Stay and Play sessions were well attended and offered families a joyful opportunity to celebrate together. We finished the term with our performances of the Christmas Story. The children were keen to dress up and sing in front of their families. We were very proud of their performances!

On Thursday the celebrations continued with our Christmas parties and we were joined by a very special visitor – Father Christmas. What an exciting treat for the children who all received a wrapped story book to share at home.



# For parents' questions, BIG & small.



Can I get help with childcare costs?

How can I prepare my child to start school?



When should I wean my baby?

Get advice and support at [BestStartInLife.gov.uk](http://BestStartInLife.gov.uk)



# Christmas FUN

FREE DROP IN

Come and join us for our special Christmas Fun sessions to help keep your little ones (under 5) entertained over the festive period.

Scales will be available for you to self-weigh baby.

### Queens Park

Monday 29 December

10 - 11.30am

### Pine Cones

Tuesday 30 December

1.30 - 3pm

### Cherry Trees

Wednesday 31 December

10 - 11.30am

## Starting School September 2026

Children born between 1 September 2021 and 31 August 2022

All the information you need to apply for a school place is available on the Bedford Borough website.

[Click here](#) for details of all the schools in the area and a PDF copy of the admissions booklet, Starting School 2026, which explains how they process your application for a school place.

Application deadline:  
**Monday 15th January 2026**

### Parent Hub

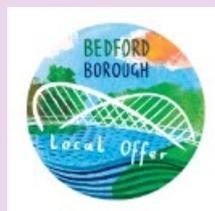
Please sign up to our Parent Hub app. This is the way we will be sending newsletters and other information home to you.

You can download the app from the Google store or Apple store.

Create an account and search for @PeterPan for Peter Pan or @CherryTrees for Cherry Trees.



Please remember to verify your account.



Please see details on the Local Offer for information, advice, resources and festive activities for the holiday season by clicking on the link:

[Local Offer](#)

## Toby Tall Tales is at The Higgins...



### Storytelling in the Gallery On Sun 28 Dec at 2.30pm

Join Toby's Tall Tales for a creative exploration of stories.

Children will be engaged with an immersive story reading experience that uses resources such as puppets, drawings, songs and the artwork from the gallery. Ideal for ages up to 7. Children must be accompanied by an adult.



For more information on family events at the Higgins click on the link:  
[https://www.thehigginsbedford.org.uk/whats\\_on/family\\_events.aspx](https://www.thehigginsbedford.org.uk/whats_on/family_events.aspx)



At Bedford Library:

### Grinch Story Time

Tues 23 Dec at 2pm

A festive Story Time with an appearance from the extraordinarily green grouchy guy himself.

### Free crafts

Monday 22 December to Friday 2 January

(except bank holidays)

**Festive drop-in family crafts will be available**

Please note some crafts may not be suitable for small children. Crafts should be supported by a parent or carer.

Monday 11am-3.30pm

Tuesday 11am-3.30pm

Wednesday 11am-3.30pm

Friday 11am-3.30pm

Saturday 11am-3pm

Lots of events at [Kempston library](#) too, click for more details.



The Family Hubs and Children's Centre session timetable for [Spring 2026](#) is now available at:

<https://familyhubs.bedford.gov.uk/family-hubs-timetables>



# FESTIVE ACTIVITIES

Please see details on the Local Offer for information, Advice, Resources and Festive Activities for over the holiday season or go to: <https://localoffer.bedford.gov.uk/kb5/bedford/directory/advice.page?id=mRKPX9XX5b0&localofferchannel=0>.



## Festive activities to try at home...

### Lollypop Christmas Tree Decorations

This is a crafty activity that the whole family can enjoy when it goes up on your Christmas tree!

#### You will need:

- Lollypop sticks
- Glitter/sparkles
- Colouring pens
- Strong glue
- Piece of string
- Scissors



#### Instructions:

1. Take 5 lollypop sticks and cut them to be 5 different sizes, starting with the largest stick, and getting smaller with each stick.
2. Next stick each of these 5 sticks onto another lollypop stick, with the largest stick being on the bottom, and getting smaller in size to form a tree shape.
3. Decorate the sticks, colouring them in and covering them with Christmas sparkle!
5. Finally, form a loop with a piece of string and attach it to the top of the tree decoration.  
It is now ready to hang!



### Christmas Baking

Have some festive fun and make some Christmas treats!



You could try making snowman biscuits or Elf & Santa cupcakes or gingerbread men.

There are lots of ideas [here](#).

### Make a Christmas Treat for the Birds



Why not treat some of your local birds to a little Christmas treat of their own?

#### You will need:

- Dry ingredients for the birds to eat: you could try a mix of bird seed, cooked rice, grated cheese, dried fruit, breadcrumbs or chopped nuts
- Hard cooking fat (lard or suet)
- A pine cone, coconut shell or yoghurt pot (use an old yoghurt pot that has been rinsed out and recycle it after you've finished with it)
- String

#### What to do:

1. Mix all the dry ingredients together in a bowl.
2. Add the fat and give it a good mix around until combined (if you need to melt the fat, ask an adult for help).
3. If you have chosen a pine cone, smother the mixture all over it; or if using a coconut shell or yoghurt pot fill the inside with the mixture.
4. Hang your feeders with string, or if using a yoghurt pot as a mould, pop it out and leave on a bird table.

### Christmas Stocking Challenge

Get an oversized stocking and lots of Christmas objects (about 25). Tie it shut at the top and pass it around the players.



They then have a certain amount of time each to feel the stocking and guess what is inside. The winner is the person who has guessed the most objects correctly in the given time.

### DIY Christmas Sensory Bottles

Create calming sensory bottles with glitter, water, and a few drops of food colouring. Shake them up for a soothing experience that can help your child relax and enjoy the lights and colours.

### Kim's Game - What's Missing?

On a tray put a selection of objects. These objects can be adapted to what your child needs to practice e.g. numbers, objects beginning with 'S', household objects etc. Look and talk about the objects on the tray. Ask your child to cover their eyes. Cover the tray and take away one object. Uncover the tray and ask the child to look - which object is missing? Increase the difficulty by increasing the number of objects and the number of objects taken away.



### Santa went to the Workshop

Santa went to the workshop and chose (speaker chooses an item) a bike'. The next person says 'Santa went to the workshop and chose a bike (choose an item) and a doll'. The next person says 'Santa went to the workshop and chose a bike, a doll (choose an item) and a pair of socks' ...and so on.



# A SEND Friendly Christmas



Christmas is a magical time but it can also be quite overwhelming for children and young people with SEND, here are a few tips that might help, the most important thing is to do what is right for you and your family

## Leading up to Christmas and over Christmas

- If you think that your young person may struggle with changes over the festive period, talk to schools or clubs about what reasonable adjustments they can put in place to support your young person, e.g. notification if things are going to be different
- Only decorate one area of the house or room so that it isn't too overwhelming
- Introduce decorations gradually, use soft calming lights rather than flashing ones
- Have a calm 'quiet area'
- Consider sensory needs and how to help your child or young person keep regulated, examples of things that can have a sensory impact
  - **Smells** – candles, perfumes, food & drink, log fires, Christmas dinner
  - **Sounds** – parties, Christmas music, new toys
  - **Sight** – decorations, lights, cards, displays, costumes
  - **Touch** – clothes, Christmas jumpers, costumes, wrapping paper, decorations, snow
  - **Tastes** – Christmas dinner, mince pies, chocolate, different eating times and patterns,
- You don't have to wear a Christmas jumper!
- Big Gatherings can be overwhelming, it is ok to
  - take breaks, say no, leave early, have an exit strategy
  - use ear defenders, noise-cancelling headphones, sunglasses and fidget toys
- Take quiet time when you need it
- You can agree on what the presents are before Christmas if the surprise causes anxiety, presents don't have to be wrapped if this causes anxiety or is a trigger
- Keep wrapped presents under the tree for the shortest period of time, as the anticipation of what might be in them can cause anxiety



## Christmas Day

- Open presents throughout the day, or on your own, so that it isn't too overwhelming
- Foods that your child and young person likes and can eat are fine for Christmas dinner, e.g. 'Chicken nuggets and chips', rather than something they cannot cope with which causes stress
- You know your child and young person best, so make your own Christmas; it is fine for it to be different
- Talk to family and friends about what they can do to help
- Stagger the number of people visiting so that it isn't too overwhelming
- If you have visitors, have a schedule with timescales
- Use visual timetables or communicate changes – plan ahead
- Keep a routine



## After Christmas

- It's ok to take the decorations down early
  - it is about what is right for your family
- Having quiet time to relax and recover after Christmas

