

December Newsletter

Welcome



I cannot believe that we are at the end of Term 2 already. Once again, it has been another jam-packed term. The children and staff have all worked hard and this means that there has been lots of learning and lots of fun. Thank you to you all for supporting the school to be the best it can be and living our values both in and out of school. Team work truly does make the dream work.

Collective worship

We completed learning about respect both through our Christian value and also our British value. We have spent a lot of time discussing 'ohana.' Ohana means Family, and Family means nobody gets left behind or forgotten.



Our work on protected characteristics and spirituality has also continued. We have looked at different news items from around the world and explored which protected characteristics this fits in with as well as understanding the rights of a child. This term we have looked at the following news items and asking ourselves Big Questions that the children have expressed their opinion on:

What does it mean to feel included?



The Football Association have laid out new plans aimed at raising awareness and increasing participation in disability football.

British Value: Individual Liberty

Protected Characteristic: Disability

Rights of the Child: Everyone with a disability should enjoy the best possible life in society.

Should everyone have the opportunity to be a star?

We looked at the premiere of the film Wicked the Musical and Karis Musongle from Manchester who played young Elphaba.

British Value: Individual Liberty

Protected Characteristic: Age



Rights of the Child: Everyone has the right to explore and pursue artistic interests.

Why is discovery important?



In Valeriana in Mexico, a discovery of more than 6,000 ancient Maya structures including a city of pyramids has been uncovered in a jungle canopy.

British Value: Mutual Respect and Tolerance

Protected Characteristic: Race

Rights of the Child: Everyone has the right to get information from a range of sources.

Blessing on the mural and prayer garden

On 17th December, Bishop John came in to bless our Prayer and Reflection Garden. Mr. Lovett, our Chair of Governors, officially opened it for us. It was a beautiful service and the children representing the school read bible stories with such beauty and sincerity. We are looking forward to using our garden for some quiet reflection time and taking some time to just 'be' in the moment.



Samba concert

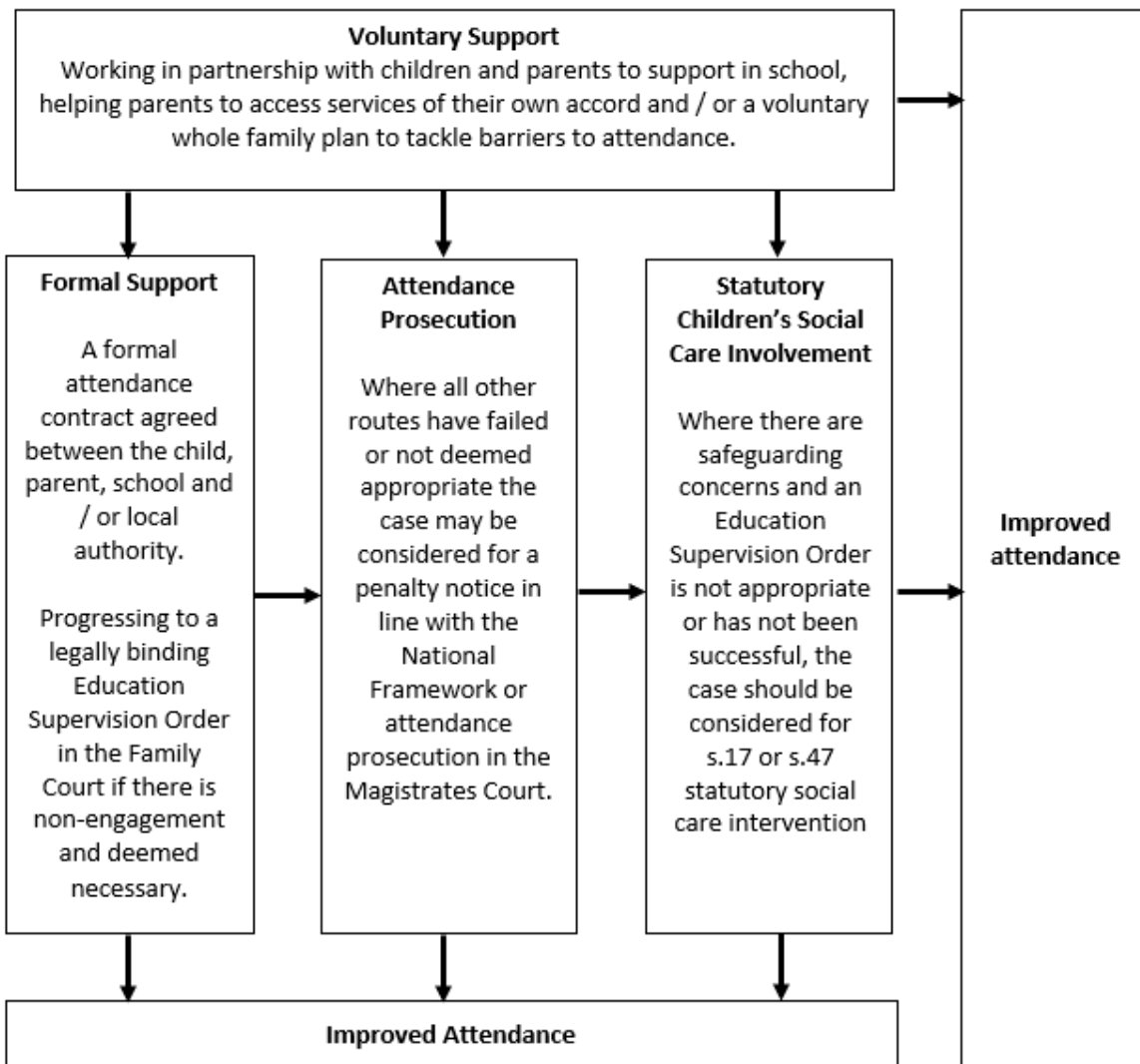


Our Year 4 children were fantastic in their samba performance to parents and the rest of the school. It was a vibrant, heartwarming display of energy, rhythm and teamwork. The children brought the lively spirit of Brazilian culture to life, showcasing their hard work and enthusiasm. It was loud but amazing! Well done Year 4.

Attendance



Our Attendance Policy has changed as of September 2024. This is on our school website <https://www.stmaryscebl.info/parents/attendance/> but I thought it may be handy to share with you the flow chart for actions should your children be classed as persistently absent from school.



Heritage centre visit

Year 5/6 had a great day visiting the local Heritage Centre. We had the opportunity to speak to local experts and learn about the impact WW1 had on our local area. The visit began with a talk which showed the children the original war memorial and talked them through some of the men's experiences of war. We learnt that many families believed the war would be over quickly, so they were happy to send their men to protect the country. However, this sadly was not the case and Burton Latimer ended up losing 132 men during the 4 years.



Secondly, we learnt about how families communicated with their loved ones during the war. We were lucky enough to see cards and postcards which were sent. We also had the opportunity to see a range of other artifacts from this time which the children hugely enjoyed.



RE day

Big question: How do people celebrate Christmas?

We had our first ever R.E. day involving all the children across the stages and it was huge success!

We used our Natre subscription to select relevant resources for all children to access the big question.



key

our

In EYFS and Key Stage 1, our children had the chance to explore which artefacts and images were most and least Christian or most and least Christmas. It presented great discussion amongst our younger children as we found Christmas trees in many non-religious homes and in our churches. Our youngest minds realised that Christmas is celebrated by many people across England and the World but for many reasons. We learnt this from the Russian story of Babushka and made links between our Father Christmas and Babushka.

Key Stage 2 dove deeper into who celebrates Christmas and why. It linked well with our values as we understood and respected it is not an exclusive Christian celebration. Year 5/6 were astounded by the survey results when it was revealed only 16% of people reflect on the birth of Jesus.

We created 3 prayer spaces called, Light in the night, Thankful Scents and Christmas: Preparing hearts. All our classes had the opportunity to visit each space using all their senses throughout the day. (sight, sound, smell)



Florence Nightingale Experience Day for Year 1 and 2



Monologue: We had a visit from 'Florence Nightingale'. She taught the children all about her life and why she is a significant person in history.

Timeline: The children explored key events from Florence's life and placed them in chronological order. They worked in groups to create roleplay and freeze frames of the significant events.

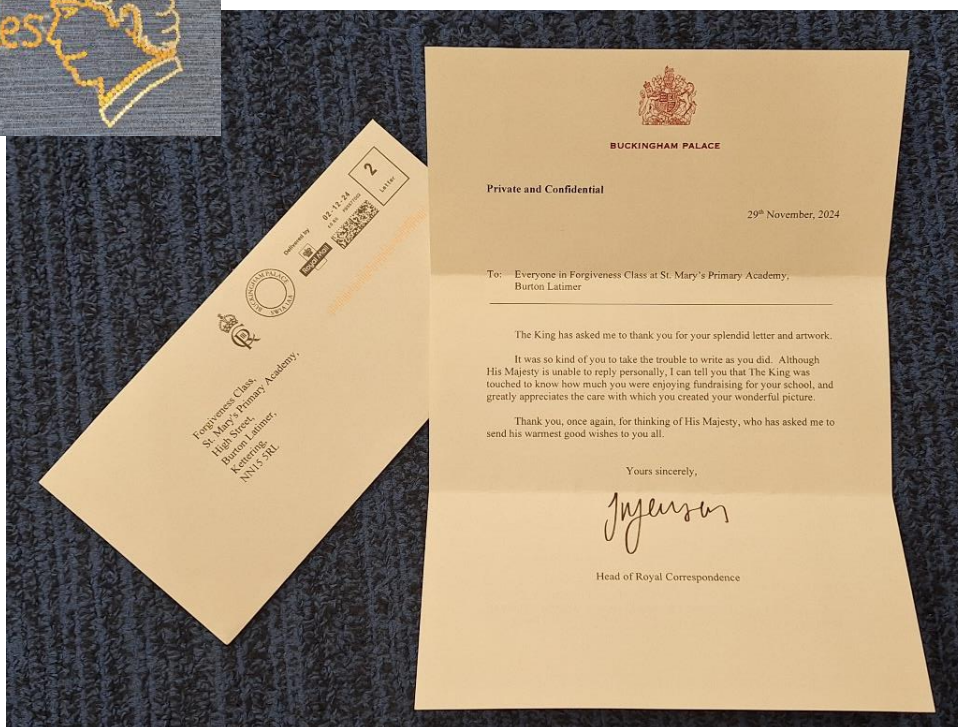
Drama workshop: The children were taken back to 1854, they arrived at the grotesque Scutari Hospital. 'Florence Nightingale' showed the children the awful surroundings and explained the task at hand. The children got involved in sweeping the floors, extinguishing the rats, cleaning the beds, caring for the soldiers, spreading positivity, serving food and clean water, changing bandages and talking to the patients. The children were shocked with the state of the hospitals before Florence intervened!

Artwork: We finished off the day with applying our portrait skills to creating a detailed portrait of Florence. The children first perfected the proportions using pencil and then used charcoal. They used photographs of Florence to ensure the portraits were as accurate as possible.

Reply from King Charles



In November, I told you that Forgiveness class had written to King Charles and shared their picture with him. We are very proud to say that they have had a reply.



Jumper day swap

What a success! In total we have swapped 56 jumpers! This is incredible and a great way of helping to look after the environment. Watch this space as we will be carrying out more events like this soon. We are working hard to become an eco-school and this is our first step.



We can't wait to see you all dressed up next Friday for Christmas jumper day!

Thank you for your support!

Miss Farrer and Miss Cooke

Back Packs

This is a gentle reminder that backpacks are not allowed in school. This is for health and safety reasons and has been the case for several years. If your child has a backpack as a school bag, they will be asked to leave it at home. If it is a backpack for a sleep over etc, this can be stored in the teacher's cupboard on these occasions.



Sport and PE

PE Kit

As you are aware we are in the process of changing our PE uniform (from September 2025 it will consist of the school logo navy PE T-shirt, school logo navy PE jumper, navy shorts, navy joggers/leggings and plimsolls/ trainers). However please note the old PE uniform is still permitted to be worn this academic year (white PE t-shirt, royal blue shorts or joggers, sky blue PE jumper and plimsolls/trainers).



Earrings must be removed for PE, and long hair tied back, children need to be able to do this themselves or arrive at school prepared. We are not allowed to put tape over the children's ears.



PE is a valued part of our pupil's education; we thank you for your support in ensuring they are suitably prepared for their physical education.

If you are unsure which days your child will be completing their PE lessons, please contact their class teacher.

School Sports Competitions and Festivals

We cannot deny that winning always provides a great feeling and sense of achievement, however more importantly we hope pupils who attend gain a sense of pride, awareness of varying sports and the benefit physical activity provides, increasing their self-esteem and a desire to continue participating in sport.



We promote our school and school games values at these events which include Respect, Determination, Honesty, Passion, Self-Belief and Teamwork, our motto is "win, draw or lose we always show our values."

Boccia

Last week we took 10 children (2 teams) to a Boccia competition. Despite not having a great amount of practice before the event both teams had great success, both winning every game in their pools.

Unfortunately, our 2 teams then had to face themselves in the semi finals! Overall we finished 1st and 3rd and are through to the county finals in February.

The children had a fantastic time and for many this was their first time playing, but they listened well to advice and quickly became very tactically aware. Next term Boccia will be played as part of Monday morning Target club, all children are welcome to attend.

Forthcoming competitions:

KS2 Gymnastics Finals, KS1 Gymnastics, KS2 Boccia Finals, Years 3-4 Tag Rugby Finals and KS1 New Age Kurling

Sports Clubs

We are committed to providing a variety of sports clubs to children both before and after school; they may change term to term depending on the forthcoming events and weather. Please see the below clubs which will be available for next term. Some are the same and some have changed. They will start on the first day back – Tuesday 7th January. A separate email will be sent when they are live on ParentMail to book.

Day / Time	Sports Club	Year Groups
Monday AM - 8:00-8:45am	Target Club (Boccia, Archery & New Age Kurling) CHANGED FROM ONLY ARCHERY	All Years
Monday PM - 3:15-4:15pm	Karate	Years 1-6
Tuesday PM - 3:15-4:15pm	Dodgeball	Years 4-6
Wednesday AM - 8:00-8:45am	TBA	TBA
Thursday AM - 8:00-8:45am	Gymnastics – CHANGED TO ALL YEARS	All Years
Thursday PM - 3:15-4:15pm	Dodgeball	Years 1-3
Friday AM - 8:00-8:45am	Tag Rugby	Years 2-4

Fire engine

On the 5th December the Early Years children were visited by local firefighters as part of their People who help us theme. The fire fighters brought their fire engine on to the school site and talked about the important equipment they use in emergencies. The children had the opportunity to spray water from the fire hose and were able to ask questions about a fire fighter's job. The children really enjoyed the experience and found out lots of new information.



Christmas Sing-a-long

On Friday 13th December the whole school joined together for our annual Christmas sing-a-long! Mr Stenson provided us with the amazing music while Miss Sanders did a brilliant job leading everyone in the singing, she even got the teachers involved. We sang a selection of Christmas classics such as Frosty the Snowman, Walking in a Winter Wonderland and Merry Christmas Everyone which the choir beautifully signed for everyone. It was an absolutely brilliant time and it really made us all feel in the Christmas Spirit!

Kindness Ambassadors Update

Exciting news for this term... we are officially 'A Kind School'! We already knew all our staff and children show so much kindness each and every day, but now it is official!

What is a Kind School?

A Kind School is one that has hosted a 52 Lives Kindness Workshop and signed our Kind School pledge. The pledge demonstrates a commitment to encourage a culture of kindness in the classroom: including both kindness to ourselves and to others.



Kind Schools understand that kindness doesn't happen in isolation, but ripples out of the classroom into homes, the local community and ultimately the world!

Kind Schools see kindness not just as single acts, but as an attitude and approach to life that threads through everything we do and every interaction we have.

Kind Schools understand the important role kindness plays in boosting children's mental and physical health.

And finally....Kind Schools believe that 'Kind' is the most important thing a person can be.

So what have the Kindness Ambassadors been hard at work doing to achieve this wonderful accolade?

Not only have we signed the School of Kindness pledge, we have written our very own. This has been signed by every child and adult in the school and will help us all to remember how to practice kindness and keep it in the front of everything we do. Our kindness pledge is shown below, but will soon be put around school to remind us about being kind every day.

St Mary's Kindness Pledge

I pledge to always choose kindness.

I pledge to be kind with my words and my actions.

I pledge to be friendly, honest, helpful, caring, and supportive.

I pledge to listen, forgive, apologise when wrong, and treat others how I would like to be treated.

I pledge to share, play nicely, take turns, be patient and help others to make the right choices.

I pledge to check in on my friends and look out for them, to help everyone feel included, and to show respect to others.

I pledge to follow our golden rules, show school values, and share my kindness with everyone, every day.



During November, we celebrated our Month of Kindness. This not only involved activities for anti-bullying week, and wearing our odd socks to celebrate difference, but we also joined in on the School of Kindness Virtual Assembly on World Kindness Day, with thousands of other children from all across the world. During the assembly we learnt about what it really means to be kind, how kindness is contagious, the impact kindness has on our physical and mental health and how we can each play our part in creating a kinder world.

Every child also sent out a postcard to someone they thought was amazing, and gave the reasons why they thought this. There was an incredible amount of kindness being shared around the school and so many happy smiling faces.

We held our own class challenge throughout November too, asking each class to take part in a Kindness Bingo game! We set 35 tasks for classes to complete, ranging from helping to make dinner, to cleaning up a mess we didn't make, to writing a thank you note for someone who helps us. Every class did amazingly well at marking off lots of their bingo squares – some more than once! Well done everyone who contributed to their class Kindness Bingo.

And finally this term, we thought about what we could do during December, where spreading kindness becomes particularly important for the Christmas period. So we have asked everyone to design either a Christmas present, a Christmas light, or a Christmas stocking, and write down their ideas about how they can share kindness over this festive break. We look forward to hearing about all this kindness shown when we return in January.

We hope everyone has a happy and kind Christmas, and we look forward to bringing more kindness to all in 2025!

St Mary's Kindness Ambassadors

“I don't think Christmas is necessarily about things. It's about being good to one another, it's about the Christian ethic, it's about kindness”

Carrie Fisher



PTFA NEWS!

Christmas fundraising smashed another record this year

- 🌲 Christmas Cards
- 🌲 Wreath Making Workshop
- 🌲 Christmas Fair
- 🌲 Raffle

YOU have made an incredible

£4,000!!



With a new financial year starting in September, we also voted in the new committee to lead the team's efforts over this school year. Keeping everything in order, and legal, here they are!

Chair – Kylie England



Secretary - Lois Seaman



Trustee - Betty Neuman



We would like to thank Katie Lee for her support as a trustee over the last few years, knowing she'll continue to be active and involved, and a keen advocate of the PTFA work.

Next Meeting

Monday 13th January 2025, 7pm

At school – come to reception to be let in

Dear parent, carer, family member,

You all support the PTFA so much, whether buying a raffle ticket, donating a tombola prize, suggesting ideas, or sharing your children's time with us, we are always so grateful and in awe of St Mary's School family! THANK YOU!!

I would like to share a personal thank you to the volunteers that help with all of the details, planning, arranging, and help on the day. Without you nothing would happen!

Staff play a huge part in everything we do, and taking time from your own lives and families is a lot to ask. Discos, fairs, and what we ask of you in the classroom is so helpful and we wouldn't be able to do half of what we do without you!!

We are a great team, with lots of skills and enthusiasm, but we always need more!! We WANT more!! We want your ideas, we want more people to join the fun of everything we do, so please do consider coming to the next meeting in January and getting involved.

We welcome everyone, and we only ever want you to commit to the time and events that suit you and your families.

This will be my last year as Chair of the PTFA, so now would be a great opportunity for anyone considering taking a leading role to get involved! This time next year we will be voting on a new committee, and without a new chair is essential in the running of the PTFA. Please do join us now to keep this brilliant team and school support going for the future!

The children will all be receiving their gift from us, and Santa, next week, and are excited to see the pantomime, that we fund, visiting the school next Friday! We will also be giving all of the children a popcorn treat to finish off the term! We are thrilled to have been able to provide these Christmas experiences for the children

Merry Christmas from all of us,

Kylie

Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)



Individual Support Plans

You should have all received your child's new Individual Support Plan (ISP) on Tuesday 26th November. If you have not yet received your child's ISP or if you have any questions about the contents of your child's ISP, please talk to the class teacher in the first instance or contact the office to arrange a meeting with myself.

MHST

In the last newsletter, I explained the support that MHST will be providing school with and asked you to please complete the questionnaire about our wellbeing offer at school. If you have not yet completed this, please can you do it at your earliest convenience, to support the development of our mental health and wellbeing offer at school.



Enfold



One of the members of our community works with Enfold and would like to come into school to support the parents and families of children who are neurotypical, including those with [Autism Spectrum Disorder](#). This will be a 'drop in' session and will either be at the beginning or the end of the day. We will be sending out dates after Christmas, so please keep your eyes peeled, if this is something that you would be interested in attending!

Spotlight

At St. Mary's, we have children with a wealth of different needs. This section of the newsletter will highlight a particular area of need and explore how you can help to support your child at home. Each newsletter, we will explore a different area of need. If you have a specific [area](#) you would like us to cover, please send your suggestions into the school office.

Spotlight on...Christmas!

Christmas can be a tricky time for neurodivergent children or children with SEND. This could be the case if your child has autism, ADHD or a sensory processing disorder, or if your child experiences anxiety or anxious feelings. They may find it hard to adjust to different light, colour, sound, smells, textures and tastes. It might be that their senses become overwhelmed. Changes in routine can also affect how they feel. Planning in advance can help you all adapt and enjoy the festive period.



Tip 1

Acknowledge that Christmas can bring up some big feelings. Make space to share worries.

The relentless drive to have fun and enjoy Christmas can feel out of place for children who may be worried about changes to routine, seeing unfamiliar people and the loaded expectation to enjoy the festivities. Giving time and space for children to feel and express worries about Christmas means that they can feel heard, understood and supported.

Tip 2

Include things like parties, Nativity rehearsals and other special events on visual timetables in advance. If activities are dysregulating, then find different ways to include and involve the child.

As school routines become more flexible, support systems that children have used to help them remain regulated in school can become useless if they are not updated. Make sure that all support structures are updated to take account of Christmas activities and changes to timetables. Talk with the class teacher about finding creative ways to include a child who may struggle or not want to be involved. Social stories can be a great way to prepare children for changes to routines.

Tip 3

Keep to normal routines as much as possible, such as the start and end of the day, breaks and lunchtime.

Daily classroom routines can act as anchor points for struggling children. Even if the school week is full of unusual activities for Christmas, keep as many daily routines in the same format as usual at home and outside of school to help children stay regulated.

Christmas in the Community

We know that whilst Christmas can be a busy time, it can be tricky to find things to do to fill the days, that don't break the bank. Find below some festive events going on in the local area.

Christmas Crafts for Families at Wellingborough Family Hub

Monday 23rd December from 3.15-4.45pm

Fun for parents, carers and children. FREE. Enrol using the QR code or visit [Enrol on an Adult Learning Service course](#) and enter course title Christmas Crafts for Families and course code APJ1MA05.

Wellingborough Family Hub, Penrith Drive, Wellingborough



Free Christmas Family Cinema at Manor School, Raunds

Saturday 21st December Doors open at 2.15pm and the film starts at 2.30pm
Bring some cushions and blankets (chairs will be available for those that need them) and camp out for the screening of *The Star*. There will be colouring at the back for those who can't mange to keep still. If you want you can come in your Christmas pyjamas or Christmas jumpers or onesies for maximum Christmas fun!
Free Popcorn and Refreshments. **Book your free tickets ASAP by visiting [Christmas Family Cinema: The Star \(21-Dec-2024\) - ChurchSuite Events](#)**
Please bring a donation for Raunds FoodBank if you can.

Free Christmas Breakfast

Join us on Christmas Day for a free breakfast from 8.30am-10.30am.

At the Salvation Army Café, Church Street, Rushden, NN10 9YT. Everyone is Welcome. Free hot food and drinks and friendly company. Come on your own or with family or a friend. No need to book in, just turn up on the day. Tel 07722843821 for more information



Beauty and the Beast

Monday 30th December 2024. 1pm (Doors open 12.30pm)
Ringstead Social Club, Ringstead, NN14 4DA

Monday 23rd December 2024 10.30am (Doors open 10am)
Barton Seagrave Village Hall, Kettering, NN15 6WF
All tickets £6 (Under 2's go free)

To book please visit [Laugh Out Loud Theatre Company online ticket sales powered by TicketSource](#)



Kettering Christmas Tree Festival

There's a new Christmas tree festival for Kettering, hosted by the [Mayor](#) of Kettering in partnership with St Andrews Church, Lindsay St, Kettering, NN16 8RH. Come and see the church filled with beautiful trees - and vote for your favourite. The six-foot trees will be displayed across the festive period:

Saturday 21 December, 2pm to 4pm
Friday 27 December, 2pm to 4pm
Saturday 28 December, 2pm to 4pm



Family Activities at Corby Library in December

Saturday 21 December. 2.30pm to 3.30pm. Christmas Craft Activity. Drop In
Saturday 28 December. 2.30pm to 3.30pm. LEGO Freebuild. Drop In.

Thursday 2 January 2025. 10.30am to 2.30pm. Board Games Session. Drop In.

Saturday 4 January 2025. 10.30am to 2.30pm. Board Games Session. Drop In.

Join us for our best Christmas craft fayre yet! Refreshments, FREE activities for Children from Made with Many, Raffles, Tombola's and even a burst of festive music as local choir Big Roots, Tall Trees join us and sing some Christmas Carols!
Don't miss it. Located on floor 2 of the Corby Cube, fully accessible via lifts and ramps.
Choir sing at 1.30pm all welcome.



Coping at Christmas

The added pressures of Christmas can be tough, but it's important to know there's always someone you can talk to.

NHS 111 Online

Call 111 and select option 2 to speak to the NHS Mental Health Crisis Response Service 24/7 [Mental health - NHS](#)

Papyrus

Under 35's can call 0800 068 4141. Text 88247 or email pat@papyrus-uk.org 24/7

[Papyrus UK Suicide Prevention | Prevention of Young Suicide](#)

Samaritans

Call 116 123 to talk to Samaritans or email jo@samaritans.org for a reply within 24 hours. [Contact Us | Samaritans](#)

MIND

Call MIND's Mental Health Helpline 9am to 6pm, Monday to Friday on 0300 102 1234

[Home - Mind](#)

SHOUT 85258

Text 'SHOUT' to 85258 to contact the shout crisis text line, or text 'YM' if you are under 19. [Get help - free, 24/7, confidential mental health text support service | Shout 85258](#)

CALM

Mental Health Forum and chat for Men from 5pm to midnight every day. Call or ~~Whatsapp~~ [Whatsapp](https://www.whatsapp.com/channel/00299a66400000000000000000000000) 0800 585858

[Homepage | Campaign Against Living Miserably \(CALM\)](#)

COPING AT CHRISTMAS

The Added Pressures of Christmas can be Tough, but it's Important to know there's always Someone you can Talk to...

<p>Call 111 & select option 2 to speak to the NHS Mental Health Crisis Response Service 24/7</p> <p>Nhs.uk/mental-health</p>	<p>Under 35s can Call 0800 068 4141, Text: 88247 or Email: pat@papyrus-uk.org 24/7</p> <p>Papyrus-uk.org</p>	<p>Call 116 123 to talk to Samaritans, or email: jo@samaritans.org for a reply within 24 hours</p> <p>Samaritans.org</p>
<p>Call MIND's Mental Health Helpline 9am to 6pm, Monday to Friday on 0300 102 1234</p> <p>Mind.org.uk</p>	<p>Text "SHOUT" to 85258 to contact the Shout Crisis Text Line, or text "YM" if you're under 19</p> <p>Giveushout.org</p>	<p>Mental Health Forum & Chat for Men from 5pm - midnight every day Call or Watsapp 0800 585858</p> <p>Thecalmzone.net</p>

[ChristmasCountdown.uk](https://www.christmascountdown.uk)