

Welcome to the Christmas 2104 edition of our Newsletter! The first page looks at how some other countries around the world celebrate Christmas, they are very different to ours. You might like to look at some of these with your children and, perhaps, investigate what other religions do or do not do over the Christmas period. You could even make the Xmas Pud Rice Crispie Cake with them.

Sadly, Christmas can be a time of stress for some families, as well as joy for many. We have included a helpful section on being a single or separated parent over Christmas from Family Lives on page two. It offers some very useful and solid advice.

As ever, we have included – on the back page – the names and details of the School Family Workers based in Berkhamsted, Hemel Hempstead and Tring. Please feel free to contact them directly, (term time only) should you have issues you may wish to discuss. They are independent of schools, non-judgemental and free.

Finally, I would like to wish you, on behalf of all the team at Dacorum Family Services, a happy and enjoyable Christmas. Enjoy being with your families and loved ones.

Mike Short - Family Services Manager



Christmas Traditions

from around the World...



Sweden Around Christmas time in Sweden, one of the biggest celebrations is St Lucia's Day on December 13th. St. Lucia's Day is now celebrated by a girl dressing in a white dress with a red sash round her waist and a crown of candles on her head. Small children use electric candles but from about 12 years old, real candles are used!

Christmas Eve is also very important in Sweden. This is when the main meal is eaten and presents are normally exchanged. People often go to Church early on Christmas morning. The end of Christmas in Sweden is on January 13th (twenty days after Christmas) which is called 'Tjugondag Knut'.

USA In America, Christmas wouldn't be the same without the exterior décor of homes with brilliant fairy lights, in an array of colours, faux reindeer, Santas and snowmen gracing front lawns. Many enjoy adorning their front doors with wreaths. Indoors, trees are laden with garlands made of popcorn and cranberries. It is also a time for families and friends to gather, exchange tokens in the form of baked goods whilst sipping on the traditional Egg Nogg.

Spain On Christmas Eve, most people in Spain go to Midnight Mass or 'La Misa Del Gallo' (The Mass of the Rooster). It is called this because a rooster is supposed to have crowed the night that Jesus was born.

Most families eat their main Christmas meal on Christmas Eve before the service. Children have some presents on Christmas Day, but most are opened at Epiphany celebrated on 6th January. This is the twelfth night after Christmas. In Spanish, Epiphany is called 'The festival of the three Magic Kings'. Epiphany celebrates when the Kings or Wise men brought gifts to the baby Jesus.

Some children believe that the Kings bring presents to them at Epiphany. They write letters to the Kings on Boxing Day, December 26th, asking for toys and presents. And on Epiphany Eve (January 5th) they leave shoes on windowsills or balconies or under the Christmas Tree to be filled with presents.

Poland Santa Claus Day is celebrated on December 6th. This is when St. Nicholas visits some children in person or secretly during the night.

On Christmas Eve a special meal (no meat) is eaten after the first star has been seen in the sky. At the beginning of the meal, a large wafer biscuit, is passed around the table and everyone breaks a piece off and eats it. A place is often left empty at the meal table for an unexpected guest, always provided for in hospitable Polish homes. After the meal they sing carols and go to Midnight Mass.

Christmas Day, called the **first holiday** by the Poles, is spent with the family at home. No visiting, cleaning, nor cooking are allowed on that day; only previously cooked food is heated.



How to make time together special

The time that you do spend with your children over Christmas should be special. Many separated parents try to outdo each other, which is likely to lead to stress and disappointment, as you often can't live up to the expectations and may end up feeling second best. Similarly, non-resident parents sometimes feel that they must compete with their children's other parent when it comes to buying presents. When one parent is spending a large amount on expensive gifts, or taking the children on a costly holiday, the other parent may feel that he or she can't offer the same amount. This can lead to heartache, as parents may feel like they have let their children down if they cannot afford to compete.

Family Lives

For support and advice, you can talk to a Family Support Worker through Live Chat, email or tel the confidential helpline on 0808 800 2222. 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Separated?



Seasonal and festive holidays like Christmas can be really hard for parents not living with their children. Separated families may feel as though everyone else is enjoying the perfect family festivities, while they feel more isolated and alone than during the rest of the year.

It's usually best to start the conversation with your children's other parent as early as possible, to give yourself plenty of time to come to arrangement about times and days to see the children. If, for example, the resident parent has the children on Christmas Day, you may want to arrange a time on Christmas Day when you can give the children their presents.

You could suggest an arrangement of alternating the years, so that you get to spend Christmas Day with the children every other year. In the other years, you could even arrange a 'fake Christmas', when you get to do all the traditional festive things you like to do with your family, just on a different day. That way, everybody gets to have a full festive experience, and the children get to celebrate twice.

Seeing grandparents

This situation can also affect grandparents. The parents of the non-resident parent will be

Top tips for parents at Xmas

unlikely to see their grandchildren at Christmas which can be upsetting. Like the non-resident parent, grandparents could try to organise a special day, or a time around Christmas, when they could give their grandchildren presents.



Parents who have to spend Christmas alone

If you will not get the chance to see your children on Christmas Day, and will be alone, see if you can make arrangements with your friends. If anyone close to you is in the same situation, why not organise to see them; volunteer or invite them round for lunch so that you will not be by yourself. Sometimes the parent living with the children can be caused stress by a non-resident parent who doesn't want to see his or her children over the festive period, or is unreliable.

It can be heartbreaking to explain that their other parent won't be visiting over Christmas, but it will be kinder if you remain positive, and try not to criticise him or her too much in front of the children, no matter how angry you feel.

Content taken from Family Lives
www.familylives.org.uk



Get Set, go Dacorum Get Active, Get Involved, Get Healthy

Get set, go Dacorum is set to help more local people get into sport and physical activity thanks to £250,000 of National Lottery funding from Sport England's Community Sport Activation Fund!



Individual and family sports and activities in local neighbourhoods will be run across Dacorum at a reduced cost, tailoring the activities based on feedback from residents of Dacorum from September 2014 - September 2017. To see what's going on in your area visit the Get Set, go Dacorum website or contact Gemma Roake - details over →

Contact Details

www.getsetgodacorum.co.uk

Email: getsetgo@dacorum.gov.uk

Telephone: 01442 228143

Mobile: 07900137679

Facebook page and Twitter for all the latest updates on activities happening in your local area

Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/getsetgodacorum?ref=ts&fref=ts>

Twitter:

<https://twitter.com/getsetgodacorum>



Keep Active this Winter

**DON'T MISS OUT
GET OUT!**

*Coaching me.com at Longdean
Sportspace 5-15 years*

22nd & 23rd December 2014

Sports, Arts & Crafts, Dance

8:30am - 5pm – 5 – 15 yrs

Doors open at 8:20 for registration £20 per day - Sibling rate £18 Pay on day rate £25

9am - 4pm – 5 – 15yrs

Doors open at 8:50 for registration £15 per day - Sibling rate £13 Pay on day rate £20

9am - 1pm - 4 - 7 yrs

Doors open at 8:50 for registration £7 per day Pay on day rate £10

**PLEASE PROVIDE LUNCH, DRINKS, SNACKS,
SPARE CLOTHES FOR YOUR CHILDREN**

Email coachingme.com@gmail.com or text / call our NEW number 07572 650576 Payment available by cash, cheque or bank transfer

Activities and Clubs



*Kidspace Holiday Activities at
Sportspace, Little Hay Golf
Complex and XC* 01442 507100

www.sportspace.co.uk www.thexc.co.uk

There are lots of fun activities running at Sportspace throughout Dacorum during the christmas holidays - please either ring for more details or visit the sportspace website.

Mums in the Know - a small, local company has set up a website to support parents to find out what's going on in Hemel Hempstead, Berkhamsted and Tring with details of clubs, classes, local articles, an events diary, details of local holiday clubs and school holiday guides. Also for this time of year a comprehensive guide on where to find and visit the big jolly man in red - **Ho Ho Ho!**



www.mumsintheknow.co.uk/hemelhempstead

Christmas Recipe

Xmas Pud Rice Crispie Cakes

50g rice pops, 30g raisins chopped, 50g butter, 100g milk chocolate broken into pieces, 2 tbsp crunchy peanut butter, 30g mini marshmallows, 80g white chocolate, ready-made icing holly leaves (available in supermarkets)



Put the rice pops and raisins into a bowl. Put the butter, milk chocolate, peanut butter and marshmallows into a small saucepan. Heat gently and stir until the chocolate and butter have melted.

Pour onto the rice pops and stir until well coated. Line an egg cup with cling film. Press about a tablespoon of the mixture into the egg cup. Press firmly and then remove, peel off the cling film and place the pudding into a cake case, flat-side down. Repeat with the remaining mixture. Chill until firm.

Melt the white chocolate in the microwave or in bowl over a saucepan of barely simmering water. Spoon a little chocolate over the top of each pudding. Top with icing holly leaves. Yum!



**FROGMORE
PAPER MILL**
Birthplace of Paper's Industrial Revolution

FAMILY FUN at FROGMORE

CHRISTMAS FAMILY FUN - Join the fun and join our 2 day, tutored, papercrafting session. A variety of creative activities for families to do together. **Booking essential.**

Monday 22nd & Tuesday 23rd December 10.00-2.30 £5

SUNDAY FUNDAYS - 15th and 22nd February 11-3.30

HALF TERM FAMILY FUN - 19th and 20th February 10-2.30

DROP-IN SESSIONS - untutored drop-in paper crafting in the holidays, when bookable sessions above not running. 11.00-1.00 and 1.30-3.30

Parenting Support

New one-stop parenting directory for parents - to find a parenting course in your local area visit www.hertsdirect.org/parentingsupport

More parenting courses and workshops going on throughout the Borough in the spring and summer terms - for more information please contact your School Family Worker or Jan Nethercoat - details at bottom of page.

KIDS West HUB



The KIDS West HUB offers information and support for parents and carers of disabled children and young people aged 0-19 in Hertfordshire.
Phone: 01923 676549
www.kids.org.uk



Track Santa with the children on Christmas

Eve to see where he is: www.noradsanta.org. Of course, Santa won't come if they are not asleep so if they are still up when he gets to France, they know they are risking it!!

There is lots going on at the **Children's Centres** during the holidays for 0-5's. Visit www.hertsdirect.org/servicesdlearn/css/childrenscentres/



01442 265410	01442 426922	01442 385152
Bennetts End & Leverstock Green	Tring	Berkhamsted

Dacorum Family Services

Berkhamsted Family Services

Hemel Hempstead Family Service

Tring Family Services

c/o Hobbs Hill Wood Primary School, Peascroft Road, Hemel Hempstead HP3 8ER. Tel: 01442 401222

Family Services Manager: Mike Short

mshort@hobbshillwood.herts.sch.uk M:07780008651

Administrator: jan.nethercoat@hobbshillwood.herts.sch.uk

Help and Advice Lines

We know that for some families school holidays can be a difficult time. If you are in need of some extra help and support please contact the following:

Family Lives - 0808 800 2222

Childline - 0800 1111
www.childline.co.uk

Christians Against Poverty - **0800 328 0006**

Free Debt counselling for everyone.

Dacorum District Citizens Advice Bureau - **08444 111 444**

Free, confidential, independent and impartial advice.

DENS Hemel - **01442 262274**
 Night Shelter

Frank - 0800 77 66 00

Confidential Drugs information and advice 24 hours a day
www.talktofrank.com

Samaritans

08457 90 90 90
www.samaritans.org

Herts Domestic Violence/ Abuse

08 088 088 088 Mon-Fri 10-8pm (no. will not show up on bill)

Gingerbread (lone parents)

0808 802 0925
www.gingerbread.org.uk

Family Information Service - 0300 123 4052 Info on caring for your family & activities available across Hertfordshire

NSPCC - 0808 800 500 Help for children and young people and help for adults concerned about a child

NHS Direct 0845 4647

National Debt Line - 0808 808 4000 Free phone advice on financial problems

SANE - 0845 767 8000 Mental Health Support and Advice
www.sane.org.uk

The Salvation Army - 01442 253607

Relate - 0300 100 1234 Relationship advice and counselling
www.relate.org.uk

Young Minds - 0808 802 5544 (parent helpline) Young people's mental health and wellbeing

ADD-vance - 01727 833963 Understanding ASD/ADHD
www.add-vance.org.uk

DENS Hemel - 01442 262274
 Night Shelter

Families Need Fathers - 0300 0300 363

Herts Mental Health Helpline - 01438 843322



Contact us

Term time only



Your local School Family Workers are:

Berkhamsted Family Services

Lisa MacGovern

Tel: 0778011 4079

lisamacgovern@hobbshillwood.herts.sch.uk

Hemel Hempstead Family Services

Vicky McKirgan Tel: 07780111862

vmckirgan@hobbshillwood.herts.sch.uk

Vicky Greig Tel: 07780115136

vicky.greig@hobbshillwood.herts.sch.uk

Tring Family Services

Sam Lindars

Tel: 07598 329823

s.lindars@hobbshillwood.herts.sch.uk

Covering Schools in Bennetts End, Leverstock Green, Corner Hall, Flamstead and Gaddesden Row, Tring and surrounding villages and Berkhamsted and surrounding villages

Disclaimer: The information provided in this newsletter is for general guidance only. Dacorum Family Services (DFS) does not endorse or recommend any of the organisations, services or information listed in this booklet. While DFS aims to provide accurate and up to date information we cannot guarantee at any time that all the information is up to date and accurate.