



# FAMILY NEWSLETTER

12<sup>th</sup> October 2020

Dear Parents & Carers,

**Covid-19 Update** – At Ellen Tinkham College on Friday, we received notification of a confirmed case of Covid-19. Following Government guidance, steps were quickly taken resulting in FE pupils and staff needing to self-isolate. There has been lots of information provided to families about the symptoms of Covid-19, so please seek medical advice if needed.

**Free Online Virtual Training – Developmental Language Disorder** – Babcock has organised a training event for parents and carers, details below. If you are interested, please email Sue Vanstone to register your free place.



## Parent event: What is Developmental Language Disorder?

Does your child have language and literacy difficulties? Developmental Language Disorder (DLD) affects 7-10% of children, causing them to struggle in their learning of oral language as well as impacting on their literacy development.

If you would like to learn more about DLD, and language needs in general, including how to support your child at home and how to access further information, please join us for this free, annual training event taking place in recognition of National DLD Awareness Day. This year our session will be virtual.

An advisory teacher and a speech and language therapist from the Communication and Interaction Team will lead this informal session. There will also be an opportunity for questions.

**Wednesday, 14<sup>th</sup> October 2020**  
**Online (virtual session)**  
**13:30 – 15:00**

To book your free place, please contact Sue Vanstone  
[sue.vanstone@babcockinternational.com](mailto:sue.vanstone@babcockinternational.com)

**Bidwell Brook Proposal to Increase Pupil Numbers from September 2021** – Devon County Council continues its consultation to increase pupil numbers at Bidwell Brook. If you would like to make a comment, please do so via the email link within the “Full Proposal” document on the BB website.

**School Uniform** – Both Bidwell Brook and Ellen Tinkham have school uniform available for our pupils to wear. Although we appreciate some of our pupils find wearing a uniform difficult eg our sensory learners, we ask and encourage all remaining students to wear uniform from Reception right up to and including Year 11. The privilege of non-school uniform is only extended to our FE students. If you would like to find out about uniform available to purchase, please put a note in the Home School Diary and we will send information home. Thank you.

**English and Phonics Update** – In March 2020 (which seems SUCH a long time ago!), Ofsted Inspectors visited Ellen Tinkham to carry out a full two day inspection. Whilst the school remains “outstanding”, there were obviously areas which could be developed and one of these related to English and phonics.

Since March, the English Leads have reviewed our curriculum offer and put into place various initiatives to raise the profile of phonics in the classroom. Individual student 'reading bags' have been created which contain phonics assessments; resources such as sound cards, common exception word cards etc; an appropriate reading book (based on your child’s phonics assessment) and a reading record book to record daily reading sessions. These bags will be kept in class.

English (reading comprehension and writing) is being taught in classes at least four times a week and phonics will be taught daily to those students for whom it is appropriate.

We suggest all families might like to share a book or story with their child daily – even a couple of minutes would be great. Children gain so much from either looking or reading a book or magazine, or hearing you read. You could also try asking some questions whilst you share a book for example:

- How many “blue” things can you find on this page?
- Let’s look at the cover – what do you think might happen in this story?
- Which character did you like and why?
- *[Before turning a page]* What do you think is going to happen next?
- Can you make up a different ending to this story?

And don’t forget - picture books are just as valuable to share with your child as those with text.

The online home learning pages on our websites have lots of stories and features supporting English and phonics, so please dip into these resources every now and again.

**Digital Parenting Week + online safety during Covid-19** – Please follow this link from Parent Zone to find some useful information about apps and games your child may be accessing at the moment. This includes TikTok, Minecraft, Houseparty <https://parentzone.org.uk/advice/parent-guides>

Kind regards,



**Jacqui Warne – Executive Head**

Dear Parents/Carers,

Free School Meals: We know that the circumstances of many parents and carers change, and if you are not already registered for free school meals and think you may be entitled, please do register. This helps the school as some of our funding is allocated on the percentage of students on free school meals. This helps your family and the wider school community. Even if your child prefers to bring in a packed lunch, you can register for free school meals and have the occasional morning free from the chore of sandwich making! You could qualify if you receive:

- Income Support
- Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance
- Support under Part 6 of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- The guaranteed element of State Pension Credit
- Child Tax Credit (as long as you're not also entitled to Working Tax Credit and have an annual gross income of no more than £16,190)
- Working Tax Credit run-on (paid for four weeks after you stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit)
- Universal Credit: if you apply on or after 1 April 2018 your household income must be less than £7,400 a year (after tax and not including any benefits you get. This is also called the 'minimum income floor'.) If your child is eligible for free school meals, they will be eligible until they finish the phase of schooling (primary or secondary) they are in on 31 March 2023.

The Local Authority website, <https://www.devon.gov.uk/educationandfamilies/schoolinformation/school-meals> has all the information you need and you can apply 'on line'. Please contact Laura Mann (Finance Administrative Officer) in School if you need more information ([school@ellentinkham.devon.sch.uk](mailto:school@ellentinkham.devon.sch.uk) or telephone 01392 467168 and ask for Laura Mann).

*Kind regards*

*Laura Mann*

*Finance Administrative Officer*

*Ellen Tinkham School*

*Hollow Lane*

*Exeter, EX1 3RW*

*01392 467168*

*Hours of work: 8.30am - 3.00pm (Mon-Fri)*