



Godalming Confederation of Schools



Parents & Carers Newsletter December 2010



Dear Parents and Carers

A very warm welcome to our Christmas 2010 Newsletter! Where has the year gone? As the temperatures drop again, we hope that you keep warm and safe. So what has been going on over the last 12 months?

Hopefully you have located and used the Confederation website www.godalmingconfederation.org.uk to signpost you to the many services, facilities and events happening in and around Godalming. We try to keep this regularly updated with school and Children's Centre news, with details of local Christmas, Easter and Summer holiday activities for children and young people, with information about parent courses and events for families including drop in and scheduled facilities at the Children's Centres, plus any other information and news that you ask us to or which we feel may be useful to you. Schools use the site to advertise some of their community activities.

Home School Link Workers (HSLWs), our largest area of funding, continue to make a difference in every Godalming Confederation school and now that all three Children's Centres are in full operation we can see the added value that their Outreach Workers, together with the HSLWs, make to our children and their families. Children, young people and families are undoubtedly benefitting from the wider benefits that this joined up outreach brings and the day to day work that helps keep children focused and ready to learn, enjoying learning and keeping healthy and safe.

This year, like other Confederations, the Godalming Confederation has been running a Government funded subsidy scheme that we call "**Go For It**" where pupils who are eligible for Free School Meals or whose families need a bit of extra support in 2010 -11 can be helped with a small financial subsidy to take part in after school or holiday activities. It can also help with the costs of a residential trip or pay some travelling costs. It can even go towards necessary equipment or clothing that the activity requires. The scheme operates in 15 Confederation schools and is usually accessed via the school's HSLW. The sums of money involved are not large but the aim is to help give the child or young person a chance to try something different.

Looking ahead, whilst Local Authorities wait to find out more details of the Government's Comprehensive Spending Review, we are not certain at the time of going to print, what will happen to our funding after 31 March 2011. By working together as a group of schools and Children's Centres however, we have already started a new and more efficient way of working with which to face the future. We will tell you more next term.

In the meantime, we wish you a very happy Christmas and Happy New Year

Sue and the Confederation Team

Sue Dasey, Director, Godalming Confederation of Schools

Email confederation@green-oak.surrey.sch.uk Tel. 01483 422924 or 07775 707187

www.godalmingconfederation.org.uk



Christmas Holiday Activities

You should have received by email (or paper copy) a copy of the Confederation's Christmas Holiday Activity Sheet sent direct from your child's school. This contains information about lots of holiday activities in and around Godalming, including those arranged at Broadwater School, Loseley Fields, the Wharf and Elstead & Villages Children's Centres.

You can find a copy on the home page of the Confederation website www.godalmingconfederation.org.uk, or ask your school for a copy.



Free ICT grants from BECTA for Home Access computers

ICT Grants were awarded to 43 Godalming families this year to provide free internet access, training and the purchase of computers and software.

Unfortunately, BECTA, a Government Quango, was a victim of the new Government's cuts, so no more new grants unfortunately!

Home School Link Workers Your help needed please

Are you working with your Home School Link Worker? If so, we would like to know what you think the benefits have been to you and your child and how important you feel that the provision is within your child's school.

We will shortly be asking Home School Link Workers to seek your views through a questionnaire that you can return to us anonymously if you wish. Your response on this is very important to us as we make plans for the future.



“Go for It” Update

This year, 2010-11, with the benefit of a ‘Go for It’ subsidy, over 320 of our children and young people are able to do things like learn to swim and play organised football in the school holidays, join other Holiday Clubs or Sports Activities Camps, visit the theatre for the first time and join residential trips that they would not normally be able to afford. The subsidy is for this one year only and is part of the Government’s Extended Services Offer. Have a word with your Home School Link Worker if you think that your child might be eligible.

Children’s Centre provision at Loseley Fields, The Wharf and St James, Elstead Have a look on the Confederation website or call the Centres directly

Loseley Fields Children’s Centre offers childcare 8am-6pm, Mon-Fri, 50 weeks of the year plus a programme of services offering help & advice to families with young children in Binscombe, Farncombe, Shalford & Godalming, including Play & Learn sessions, one year health checks, ante-natal and post-natal groups, well baby clinics, baby massage classes, positive parenting courses, with an Outreach/home link worker who can visit parents with advice on the care & education of your child. Child nutrition courses, a support network for child minders, a toy library, behaviour management courses from 2s to teens, links to Jobcentre Plus & Next Steps & bringing together local health visitors, paediatric specialists, speech & language development officers, school & CAHMS nurses & local community & voluntary groups. The aim is to offer a service that can equip families to ensure their children are receiving the best of local health & childcare services. Call the Centre on **01483 419325** or visit www.loseleyfieldsc.com

The Wharf Children’s Centre offers childcare 8am-6pm for children on roll and will offer holiday activities. Services include Play and Learn sessions for 0-5s, Twins & Multiples Sessions for 0-5s. The Wharf Nursery & Children’s Centre also offer an outreach service for families with children with special needs, a speech & language therapist, Parenting Puzzle courses, toy library. Call The Wharf on **01483 415220**.

Elstead & Villages Children’s Centre (based at St James Primary School, Elstead) Open Monday to Thursday 9am-1pm. For information & advice drop in 9.30-11.30am on Mondays. The Centre offers Stay & Play sessions for 0-5s, Storytelling, Baby Massage, Healthy Eating sessions, Gym Club for 1-6s, Help at hand advice sessions, New Mums group. Not all the sessions are based at the centre. Call the team on **01252 706915**.

Parenting Puzzle Parent Support Groups

The Parenting Puzzle, a 10 week course for parents & carers, has been running very successfully in the evenings since October, at Busbridge Junior School, led by Rachel Jones and Carol Lowries.

Another course starts at Loseley Fields Children’s Centre in January & a third for parents of older pupils at the end of February. Have a word with your HSLW if you think that you might be interested, or keep an eye on the Confederation website for details.

The Confederation’s Three Main Action Plan Objectives - To raise standards by:

- 1) collaboration between schools, Children’s Centres and all the other partners and providers that work with children, young people and their families, to share best practice and achieve best for all and maximum value for money;
- 2) improving the quality of transition (the move up between schools), building on work in previous years;
- 3) providing help as necessary to vulnerable families and children so that they have full access to and benefit from education & other services to maximize full potential.



How we are meeting the Government’s Extended Services Core offer?

Childcare and/or A Safe Place To Be: Two of the three Children’s Centres and some schools offer childcare facilities on their premises; other childcare facilities are available locally (there is a list on the Confederation website). The two secondary schools offer a wide range of after school sport and other activities. Take a look at their websites.

A varied menu of Activities: All schools have widened the range of clubs and activities available before, within and after school. In some, pupils have set up and now run their own clubs. Music, sports, arts & crafts, dance, drama, language and volunteering are the main examples of activities taking place.

Parenting Support is provided mainly by the HSLWs and Children’s Centre Outreach Workers in a huge range of examples and circumstances. HSLWs see pupils, parents and carers at school, make individual home visits, run groups and courses and work with the County’s other services and with the voluntary sector as needed. The Children’s Centre Outreach workers work similarly with families of the under-5s, backed up by more in-depth provision at their centre.

Swift & Easy Access/referral to a wide range of specialist services has been helped by the HSLWs, who work closely with the PCT, CAMHS, Social Services, behaviour support services, speech & language services and others to help provide what some children and young people [desperately] need. The Children’s Centre Outreach Workers work similarly with families of the under 5s, again backed up by provision at their Centre.

Wider Community Access is being provided by schools and Children’s Centres where they can e.g. opportunities for using computers with associated ICT training & support, using grounds & facilities, particularly for sport & recreation and opening up other adult education opportunities such as maths and literacy.