

PTA *extra*

**Applying
for grants**

*Top tips to boost your
chance of success*

*Welcoming
new parents*

*Introductions, information
and invitations*

Trick or treat?!

*Autumnal fun for
every school*

**COUNTDOWN
TO CHRISTMAS**

*Organise your winter
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Welcome from Frank



Hello and welcome to the autumn/winter 2026 edition of PTAextra. Over the summer, we received a very special letter of congratulations on behalf of Her Royal Highness The Princess of Wales to mark Parentkind's 70th anniversary. The letter recognised the dedication of Parentkind members over the past seven decades and the positive impact your efforts have made on pupils, families and schools.

The letter serves as a powerful reminder that, 70 years on from our founding, the work of PTAs continues to make a real and lasting difference in the lives of children and families. Last year we estimate that Parentkind PTAs raised over £140 million for schools and organised more than 100,000 events, bringing communities together.

This year has been a particularly special one for Parentkind. In 1956, a small group of pioneering parents came together with a simple but powerful ambition: to ensure that parents had a voice in education. 70 years later, that mission remains at the heart of everything we do. Every fundraiser organised, every event hosted and every hour volunteered by PTA members helps strengthen school communities and improve life chances for children and young people across the UK.

Alongside this special anniversary celebration, this issue is packed with ideas and inspiration to help you make the most of the months ahead. From applying to grants to planning your winter festival, we've got everything you need for a fun and successful term.

Thank you for everything you do to support your school community. Your passion, generosity and commitment are an inspiration to everyone at Parentkind.

Warmest wishes,

Frank
Chief Executive Officer, Parentkind



Discover our top tips on applying to grants on [page 18](#)



Read all about one PTA's incredible bike bus scheme on [page 23](#)

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PTAextra

Interim Head of Marketing:
Mart-Marié du Toit

Editor:
Emily Babb-Doherty

Senior designer:
Anna Tuck

Designers:
Kerry Fleming
Freddie Parker

Feature writer:
Taran Knight

Contributors:
Clare Jenner
Caroline Hayward
Donna Hill
Marie Chapman
Gabrielle Carroll
Lisa Pascoe
Matthew Dent
Racheal Smith

Advertising: Bourne Media
07771 881251 / 01202 028065
mark@bourne-media.co.uk

Have a story to share?

If you would like to feature in a future edition of PTAextra, email us at:
editorial@parentkind.org

Share the digital version of PTAextra with your committee:



On the cover
This issue, Friends of Kender

PTAextra is published by Parentkind, a national federated charity and the network of Parent Teacher Associations, which collectively raised more than £140 million during the past year to fund vital equipment and services for our schools. All information contained in this publication is for information only and is, as far as we are aware, correct at the time of going to press. Parentkind cannot accept any responsibility for errors and inaccuracies in such information. You are advised to contact manufacturers and retailers directly in regards to the price of products/services referred to in this publication. Apps and websites mentioned in this publication are not under our control. We are not responsible for their contents or any other changes or updates to them. No part of this magazine may be reproduced in any way without prior written permission from Parentkind.

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THE loop

Keeping you up to date
with all things PTA

HMRC update for PTAs

HMRC has continued to move towards digital tax reporting. As part of this, they closed their free CT600 online filing service as of 31st March 2026.

Some PTAs, particularly those registered for Gift Aid, may get a notice from HMRC asking them to submit a Corporation Tax return. HMRC now expects these returns to be filed using compatible commercial software, with paper submissions only accepted in very limited circumstances. A list of approved software providers can be found on the HMRC website – some banks may provide access to accounting software at no additional cost, so it's worth checking with your provider.

Although most PTAs are tax exempt and will not have any Corporation Tax to pay, this does not remove the requirement to file a return where HMRC has issued a formal notice. Returns must still be submitted, even where all figures are nil.

Paper filing is only permitted where a valid 'reasonable excuse' applies or where the return is filed in Welsh. Examples of reasonable excuses include serious illness, bereavement, fire or flood affecting records, or issues with HMRC systems. The following are not accepted as reasonable excuses:

- Preferring to submit on paper
- Lack of confidence using software
- Lack of funds
- Having a nil return

If your PTA receives a notice to file, the return must be submitted by the deadline using compatible software unless HMRC agrees that a reasonable excuse applies. Penalties may apply even where no tax is due.

If you have any queries, contact
HMRC on **0300 123 1073**.



Reminder!

Plan your AGM

Time to get something in the diary!



From the socials

Your burning questions and
comments from PTA Hangout

Q Advice please! The field the school uses for PE, sports day etc. has been offered up to purchase by the social club, which has a huge Crowdfunding total to meet. If they don't buy it then it will be sold to developers and the school will lose the use of a field – and it's our only green space. Are we able to help raise money for the field as it's in the children's best interest? The school gets to use this free of charge now and ongoing if the club purchases it.

A Unfortunately, this isn't something that would be within the PTA remit to fund. However, there is nothing to stop you as parents supporting the wider campaign to raise money for the social club. You could run joint events, as long as the destination of the funds are made clear.

Q For various reasons, our last PTA meeting was postponed. We've decided to give online a try, in the hope more people will attend from the comfort of their own home. Does anyone do online meetings and have any tips?

A Unless your constitution explicitly states that virtual meetings are allowed, the Charity Commission takes the view that they should be in person. The most recent Parentkind Constitution has been updated to allow the provision for virtual meetings – for details see our page here: parentkind.org/your-pta-expert/governance/pta-constitution



Reminder!

Christmas will be here before you know it

We're sorry to have to bring it up, but the earlier you can get started on planning your Christmas events and activities, the better...

Parentkind's first ever marathon runner!

Liz Skelton from the **Guinness Partnership** ran the 2026 TCS London Marathon for Parentkind and raised **over £3,000!** She is our very first ever marathon runner, and we're so proud of her achievement.

Congratulations, Liz, you deserve that medal and more!



Photography: Elizabeth Brown, iStock.com/DrAfter123

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Parentkind in the NEWS

Stay up to date with our policy, research and media work as we champion the voices of parents and influence the issues that matter most to families



Time in the classroom, or time in the sun?

For too many families, the choice between creating lasting memories and maintaining perfect school attendance is becoming increasingly difficult.

Our forthcoming **National Parent Survey 2026** reveals the financial pressures many parents face during the school holidays:

- ✓ Two million parents have taken their child out of school to afford a term-time holiday
- ✓ More than a quarter of parents were unable to afford a family holiday in the last year
- ✓ Half of parents would support reducing the summer holiday to five weeks and moving an additional week elsewhere in the school year

These findings highlight the tough decisions families face to balance rising costs, work commitments and opportunities to spend quality time together.

This September, our **National Parent Survey 2026** will share more insights into parents' experiences, the challenges they are navigating, and the conversations we need to be having to better support families.

**The National
Parent Survey**

You can read last year's survey
at nationalparentsurvey.com

The National Parent Survey

We are really pleased to have gathered the views of more than **6,000** parents in the UK for the **National Parent Survey** – giving us strong insights into parents' views across the country.

Working with YouGov, a nationally respected polling agency, the **National Parent Survey** will publish nationally representative data on:

- ✓ School trip destinations and costs
- ✓ School and parent engagement, including messaging groups and parents' evenings
- ✓ Costs of schooling such as uniforms, technology, and school meals
- ✓ Enrichment activities including after-school clubs

Look out for our publication this September, and more coverage of our findings. As the voice of parents in education, we make the survey findings freely available to give parents a voice in education debates and offer an authoritative, up-to-date insight into parents' views across the UK.



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Quick guide to minute-taking

Let's take the stress out of taking minutes! If you've never made notes for a meeting before, here are our top tips

Please note

This guidance is for committee meetings – AGMs, for example, have a different format.

Before the meeting

Take a look at the meeting agenda so you know what's going to be discussed, as well as any previous minutes so you can get a feel for how they've been taken before. Set up a template – it will help a lot during the meeting.

Your minutes should include:

- ✓ Name of your association
- ✓ Date
- ✓ Time of the meeting
- ✓ Who is present and who sent apologies
- ✓ Approval of the minutes of the previous meeting
- ✓ Actions/matters arising – the Secretary will usually give a brief update on any matters discussed at the last meeting or confirm action that has been taken
- ✓ Treasurer's update on income and expenditure since the last meeting, and the current bank balance. If the Treasurer is unable to attend, they should provide a written report for another committee member to read out
- ✓ Items of business – general admin, organising events and/or discussion of any requests for funding received from the school
- ✓ Any other business – this is an opportunity for people to raise questions and make suggestions
- ✓ Time of adjournment
- ✓ Date of next meeting

During the meeting

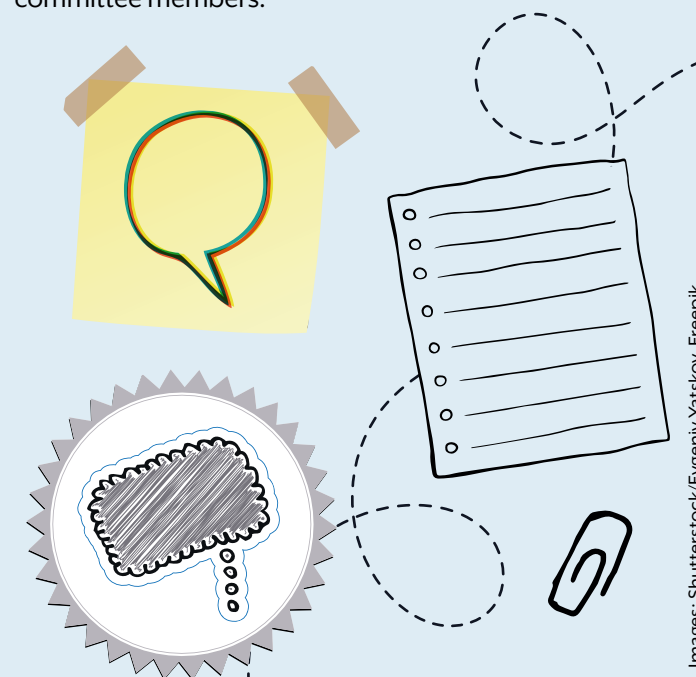
Write simply, clearly and factually – avoid opinions or assumptions. And you don't have to write down every word. Your role is to record what was decided, not what everyone says. If there's a lengthy discussion on one topic, for example, just summarise the main points.

If your meeting is online, you could always record it – most video call software has AI transcript-writing built in. However, please note that only the 2021 Parentkind constitution includes virtual meetings.

Sit as close as possible to whoever is chairing the meeting. That way they can clarify anything you're unsure of.

After the meeting

Write up the minutes as soon as possible while the meeting is fresh in your mind. Have a read through to make sure everything is correct. Give a draft to the Chair for their review before sharing it with your committee members.





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Burnley Road PTA

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Owlsmoor Primary PTA



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Everyday PTA:

*How to welcome new
parents to your school*

Ever wondered how other PTAs tackle the everyday issues, both big and small? In this edition of PTAextra, we look at how (and why) to welcome new parents to your school with the help of **Becky Sutton, Chair of Owlsmoor PTA**



*The benefits of
welcoming parents?
Keen, enthusiastic
families, invested in the
school as their children
have seven years ahead
of them!*

- Becky Sutton, Chair of
Owlsmoor PTA

*Welcoming parents has
so many benefits.*

For parents? You can answer some of their burning questions, give them an insight into school life, provide opportunities to make friends with other parents and offer additional support with preloved uniform sales (and it's a great way to let them know they can donate their child's uniform to you when they grow out of it).

For the school? Your PTA can free up some of their time by answering questions, help them forge those important early connections and uncover any pain points parents might be facing. Plus, parents who feel valued and included from the outset are more likely to engage with school life, which has a hugely positive impact on pupils' educational outcomes.

And for your PTA? By giving parents a great first impression, they're more likely to attend your events, volunteer when they can and support fundraising activities. It really is a win-win!

*Our PTA has a bit of
a strong reputation
locally. We hold
some brilliant events
which are open to the
community. Parent
feedback is often that
they have chosen our
school due to the PTA.*

Many PTAs choose to welcome new parents in the summer term before the holidays, but you could (and should) welcome them at the start of the autumn term too.

You don't need to spend lots of money or organise a big event – in fact, it would probably be more impactful to arrange several smaller touch points during those first few weeks. A couple of coffee mornings, a small welcome pack and a printed flyer is a great way to get your PTA's name out there.



Images: Becky Sutton, Freepik

“

We attend the [summer] welcome evening hosted by the school where the headteacher and the EYFS (early years foundation stage) teachers give an introduction to the school. I do a presentation where I talk about the PTA.

On this evening, we also sell drinks and give each parent an information pack. The pack includes:

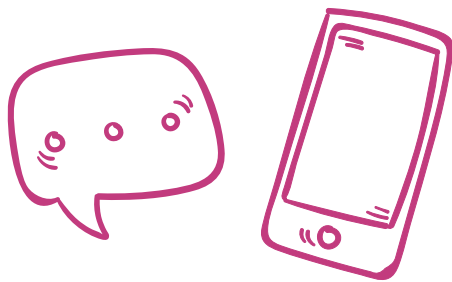
- The Parentkind Be School Ready guide
- A QR code to join the reception WhatsApp group
- Top tips for new parents
- Information about upcoming PTA events
- A parents uniform list (which says what you REALLY need!)
- Personalised labels produced by Stikins – we submit names in advance so they are ready to go!

On the first day of school, we also provide a little welcome pack including a small poem, a pack of tissues, biscuit and teabag.



When planning your welcome activities, think about the information you want parents to come away with, such as:

- 1 The names (and faces!) of your members.
- 2 What your PTA actually does – most new parents won't know the amazing work you do to enhance their child's school experience.
- 3 The events you typically hold – tell them all about the fun!
- 4 What you're currently fundraising for, or what you've already funded.
- 5 How they can help – from small things like spreading the word about events and activities to volunteering their time.
- 6 How parents can keep in touch via your social media accounts.



A huge thank you to Becky Sutton, Chair of Owlsmoor PTA, for providing such great advice for this edition of Everyday PTA. If you've got some great everyday advice you'd like to offer our community in our next magazine, email editorial@parentkind.org

Images: Owlsmoor PTA, Freepik

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Ask Clare

advice & support



When running a PTA, you're bound to encounter challenges – and that's where we can help. At Parentkind, we have a dedicated team of advisers, headed up by our PTA Community Manager, Clare. With 25 years of experience and a wealth of knowledge to share, she offers her straight-talking advice on your issues

Q Our school won't allow us to host Halloween-themed events, what can we do?

A We're aware that some schools, especially faith-based schools, aren't always keen on Halloween. You can talk to them to find out if they'd be happy with you changing to a broader 'autumn' theme. You could also suggest calling it a 'Monster Mash' or 'Monster's Ball' instead of a Halloween disco. If you're really keen to go ahead with the Halloween theme, ask how the school would feel if you held the event off school property. Whatever you choose, it's worth bearing in mind that a PTA works more effectively when there is a good relationship with the school. If you think this could be jeopardised by hosting a Halloween event, then maybe don't push it.

Q Does Santa need a DBS check?

A Being Santa once a year doesn't give someone enough access to children to require a DBS check, however it is a safeguarding issue that needs to be addressed when you do your risk assessment for the event. No adult should have unsupervised access to children, so have a 'Mother Christmas' or elf present, and make sure the child's parent stays with them for the visit.



Q We'd like to set up our own email address independent of the school – is this okay?

A Absolutely! Having your own generic PTA email address for committee members to use is a great way to communicate with your members. With your generic email address, you don't need to wait for school to pass an email on, you don't have to use committee members' personal email addresses to share information, and your members have one clear, simple communication channel. You can also use it when you apply for licences and charity registration, when working with partners and even add it to your Parentkind account. We love a generic PTA email – if your key contacts ever go out of date, it means we can still get hold of you if we need to. You can add your generic PTA email in the 'My PTA Account' section of our website.

Q We've been raising funds for school play equipment for several years now. We advertised that when we held the events, but now the school have changed their mind and don't want to refurbish the playground. Can we reallocate this money to something else that they do want?

A If you've been raising funds for a specific purpose and clearly communicated this, then these are called 'designated funds' and in theory should only be spent on this cause. When people have attended events or donated to the PTA, they believe this is where their money is going. However, priorities do change sometimes. In this case, what you'd need to do is inform your members and any major donors that, due to school no longer needing 'X', the money will now be re-allocated to 'Y'. It's always best to be clear about how the money will be re-allocated, and if anyone who made a donation to the original cause wants their money refunded, then you'll have to comply with this. Hopefully no one will, as long as they're fully aware of how the money is being spent and how this will benefit the children.



Got an issue you need advice on? Contact Clare and her team:

 Live Chat

 parentkind.org

 Helpline
0300 123 5460
(Mon-Fri 9am-5pm)

 info@parentkind.org

 Message us at PTA Expert by Parentkind or post a question in our community group PTA Hangout by Parentkind



How to: apply for grants

Grants can make a huge difference to what your PTA can achieve. Here are a few pointers to make sure your application has the best chance of success

1 Finding a grant

Your community is a great place to start when looking for grants. From supermarket token schemes to donations from small businesses and societies, there are loads of fundraising opportunities waiting in your local area.

Other organisations you should check for grants include:

- The National Lottery
- FundEd
- GOV.UK

Top tip!

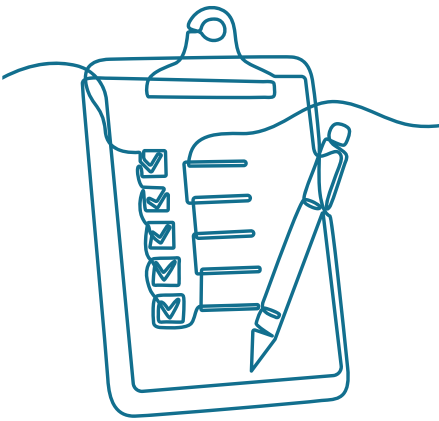
Grants4Schools is really handy as it has a searchable database. Our members get 50% off a 12-month subscription – find out more in our supplier directory on [page 66](#).

2 Are you a good match?

Before applying, thoroughly read the criteria to check that the grant:

- Supports PTAs
- Backs the type of activity you're looking to fund
- Is offering enough money to cover your project and, if not, you're able to cover the rest
- When you need to apply by – grants can take a bit of time to put together
- How to apply – most grants need to be submitted online, but some can be sent in the post

Not sure if the grant you've found is suitable? Get in touch with the funder. They may even give you tips on your application.



Top tip!

Don't pin all your hopes on one application – there can be thousands of applicants for a single grant, so up your chances by applying to multiple grants.

3 Introducing your PTA

Before you make a start on the application, make sure you have all the main points of information you need to introduce your PTA to the funder, such as:

- The size of your PTA and the school
- Information about your local area, including your Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) level if applicable
- Your PTA's aims and objectives
- If you are a registered charity
- Past projects you've funded
- Past fundraisers you've held
- Why you need a grant and details of the project you're looking to fund, such as how it fits in with your PTA's aims and objectives

Top tip!

Save all your notes so you can use them for another grant application.

4 The impact

Showing why and how your school community could benefit from the grant you're applying for and the impact it will have on pupils is arguably the most important part of your application. Speak to the school to see what helpful information they can provide. It's a good idea to provide relevant statistics and research, but also paint a picture of your PTA and your community with examples, quotes and case studies from real people wherever possible.

Top tip!

For every point you make in your application, back it up with evidence.

5 Clear communication

Your application needs to be well-structured (see point 6), easy to understand and provide the exact information the funder is looking for. If you've never applied for a grant before, search online for some examples to get a feel for how they're written.

If you're filling in a form, read each question carefully to make sure you understand what it is being asked. Please note: some funders instantly reject applications written with AI, so if you plan on using it, check the terms and conditions first.

Top tip!

Get a second pair of eyes on your application – the person who wrote the grant application should not be the one to proofread it.

6 Structure and flow

If writing an application letter, we recommend you follow the below structure:

1. Project summary/proposal
2. Introduction to your PTA and background
3. The problems and issues you want to address
4. How your project will address these problems
5. How you will measure success
6. Your budget/costs
7. Future funding/exit strategy



7 Exit strategy

You'll need to demonstrate to the funder that the grant will pay for the entirety of a project, or your PTA has the means to cover the rest of the expenses if there are any. Sustainability is an important factor for most grant givers.

Top tip!

If the project is for something like a minibus, detail how you will pay for maintenance, such as insurance, repairs, parking and so on.

8 Key documents

Most grants require additional documentation to support the application. This might include:

- Your constitution
- Bank account information
- Budgets
- Quotes for the cost of the project, e.g. from suppliers
- Management structure
- Committee structure
- Cash flow forecasts

Top tip!

Don't put the pressure on one person to supply all of the documents, spread the work across your members.

Scan the QR code to find out more about applying for grants:





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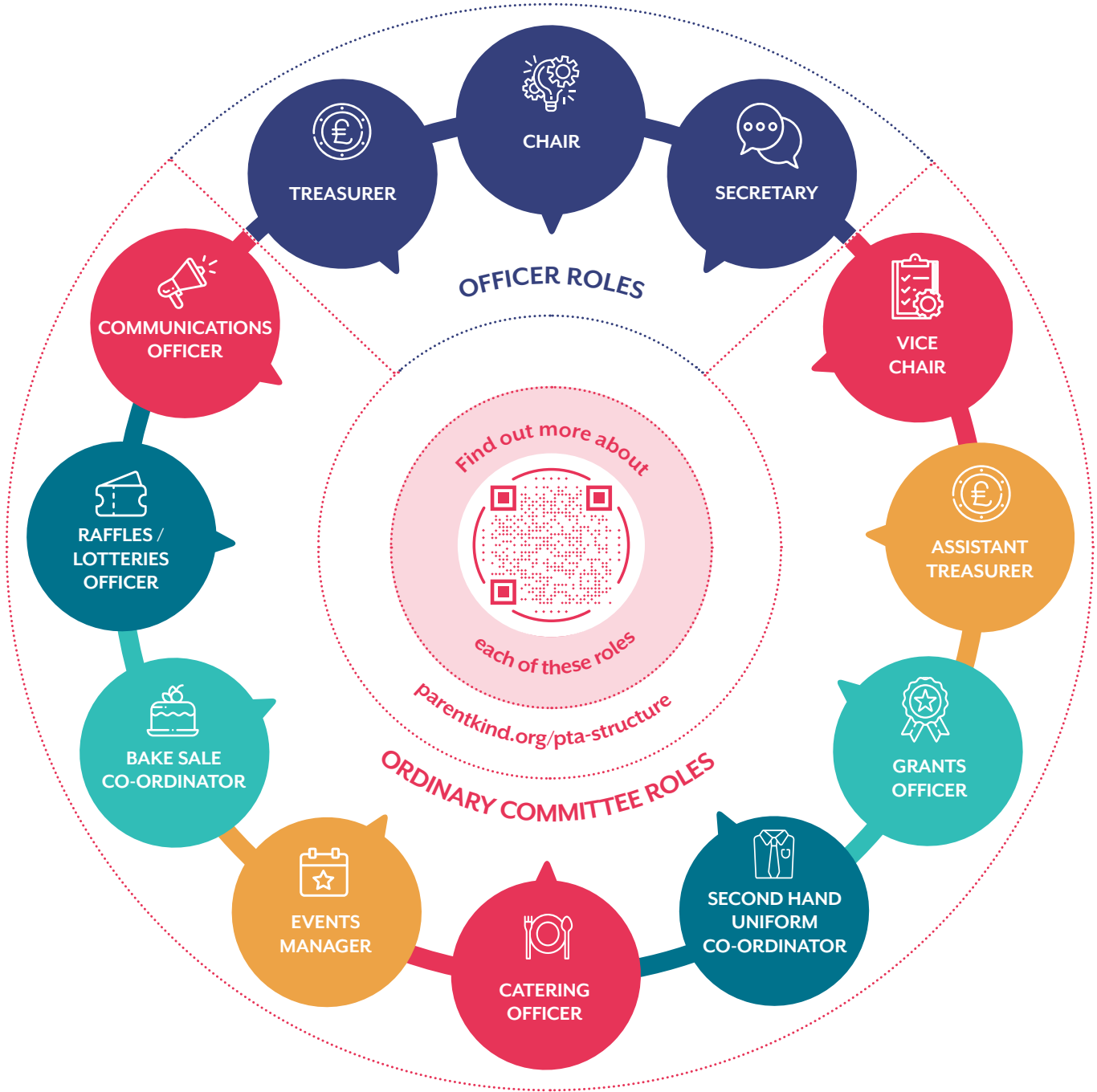


Join today



The PTA structure

The make-up of a PTA varies between schools, but essentially there are two parts: the elected officer roles, which oversee and manage the association, and the PTA volunteers or ordinary committee roles who provide support at events, fundraisers and more. The officer positions are usually Chair, Treasurer and Secretary, however, there are other informal positions which can be beneficial to fill in order to spread the workload. Here's how a committee could be formed...





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PTA voices



Want to inspire pupils to stay active, promote safer cycling and give parents a new way to travel to school, all while doing your bit for the environment? Then a bike bus may be a great option! We spoke to Mary King, former Chair of Friends of Kender, to find out how this incredible initiative came about

“The biggest highlight so far has been seeing the kids having a good time and riding their own bikes confidently on the road”

Mary King, Friends of Kender Primary School



Kender Primary School is very representative of the area, which means it's super diverse – lots of different languages are spoken, and we've got ethnically diverse teachers, which is super important for the kids to see. I think that's a real strength of our school, and it's a really lovely community. As we're in a neighbourhood with quite high levels of deprivation, with a lot of main roads, traffic and pollution, and a lot of high-rise flats, the school is a really important place for the community.

Our PTA has a core base of really helpful, supportive volunteers, but we have some challenges engaging with the parents. It's not easy to get volunteers, and there's still a lot of the parent community we feel we're not managing to communicate with. As we have parents from lots of different backgrounds, and many haven't gone to school in the UK themselves, it can make getting involved more intimidating for them. I think quite a lot of our parents would like to help, but they're not confident speaking

English, so that's a barrier. But we're trying to meet people where they're at, for example by translating our communications, and also through our bike bus initiative.

“Bike bus is just such a brilliant initiative because it unites so many benefits – whatever you're interested in, if it's children's physical activity, air quality, reducing vehicles going to school, road safety – there's just so many benefits.”

I've been vaguely aware of the idea of a bike bus for a few years. I'm really passionate about action on climate change and reducing carbon emissions, but I felt like I didn't have the capacity or confidence to start a bike bus myself. Then a new campaign started up in Lewisham, which is a parent-run group called Solve the School Run. They're really good. They do work specifically about reducing the number of cars at school runtime. It was my nudge to start the bike bus.

Although I'm doing the bike bus under the Friends of Kender banner, three different schools are involved in it now. I knew at Kender we might struggle with numbers, and the other schools are really close by, so I thought it would be a good opportunity for us to do something together.

I started a WhatsApp group and managed to get people from the different schools added to it. I then sent an email around to the headteachers of all three schools. I started planning in September to launch it in the summer term because I wanted to give myself loads of time to promote it.

“I didn't want bike bus to be a few families who are really into bikes and cycling with their kids. I knew I could get those people on board. What I wanted to do was encourage people who haven't thought about cycling or who don't see cycling with their children as a transport option.”

There are different ways of doing a bike bus. My bike bus is a weekly event, and we meet every Friday at a fixed point at 8.30am. When people hear 'bus', they often think it means collecting people from their houses. Some bike buses might do that, but we meet at a specific location.

As part of my goal to be inclusive, we welcome scooters as well as bikes. We have some parents who don't have bikes and just come on foot. I've got one dad who just runs beside his daughter, which is great. We even had some roller skaters!





We cycle a fixed route on quiet roads to the three schools in turn. We drop off the pupils for that school at the school gates, but parents have to join. A lot of bike buses do drop off, where the children come by themselves. I'm not doing that, partly because of health and safety, but also because my goal with the bike bus is to include more adults in cycling and active travel as well.

"It's a fun atmosphere. We're ringing our bells. We're saying hello to people. We're cheering. It's a very quick activity. It's only like 25 minutes on a Friday morning. It's very easy to fit into the day."

From a safety point of view, I'm there in high vis and I lead the ride. And then I've got a volunteer dad with a high vis at the back. We try to stick together as one group. We ride on the road, but we try to have the adults on the outside. We have a few right-hand turns and a few slightly busier roads, so we have an adult – it's normally Rob, who's one of the deputy heads at Kender – who stays in the road to hold up the traffic while we all go around the corner.

Although this is a neighbourhood that does have a problem with traffic, bike bus always feels really safe. Drivers are so nice. They stop for us. Most drivers see us coming and will just stop and wait until we

all go past. They don't try and drive past us. They don't try and overtake us. And most drivers are pretty happy to see us, I think, because it is a nice atmosphere and it's lovely to see the kids out.

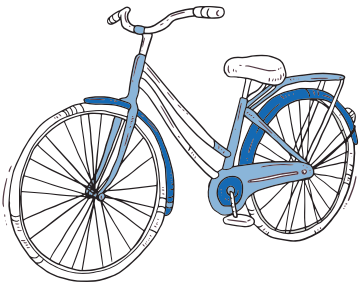
One of the really big purposes with bike bus is to increase the visibility of kids travelling actively and independently, and increase the visibility of kids cycling, because I know the more cyclists you have on the road, the safer cycling gets because drivers get used to it and adapt.

"In September, we're going to be joined by Will Norman, who is the Transport for London Walking and Cycling Commissioner. He works for the Mayor and is quite active campaigning for and working on better cycle and walking infrastructure."

When I started the bike bus a few weeks ago, I thought, oh, I'll reach out to Will Norman and ask him to come and join us for the very first bike bus. We had lots of councillors join us. It was just before the local elections, so it was good timing for them! Will Norman's PA said he can't make it, but he would like to

come and ride in September. That will obviously be a big opportunity for us to celebrate bike bus and also talk to him about road safety, making the pedestrian crossings give us more time to get across, making the roads safer for cycling and so on. That will be a big highlight for us, I'm sure.

The biggest highlight so far has been seeing the kids having a good time and riding their own bikes confidently on the road. Every single week it comes around really fast and I feel it's another thing I have to do, but once I'm there I just think it's really great. I really enjoy it.



Images: Crispin Hughes, Paul Meyler
Illustration: Freepik

“It’s been hard to get people to make time for bike bus. I think a lot of people think it’s a great idea when they’re chatting on WhatsApp, but it has been hard to get people to show up.”

I think it’s easier now we’ve launched, but I found it really hard to get volunteers to come and meet me and plan it. I did a day when I rode around with a woman from Lewisham Cyclists, who came to just advise us on what’s a good route. We did have two parents join us, but I would have liked lots more parents to have been there. I really wanted it to be not just my opinion, but for other parents to decide what would be a good route. It was quite difficult to get other people along, but I dealt with that by thinking, right, we just need to launch and then we’ll get people’s opinions as we go along.

And that has worked, we did six rides in between Easter and the half term, and then I did an online survey to try and get people’s opinions. I got about ten responses, which was better than just the two that came along at the beginning. I feel like sometimes people just need to see something running before they want to feed back. Sometimes you just have to do the change and then talk to people as you go along.

“Start a bike bus. That’s my key tip for other PTAs, and that’s why I wanted to do this interview. I want to spread the word about bike buses. I think people might assume you need to be a really amazing cyclist or you need to be trained in some way, but actually, a bike bus is a really easy community activity to organise.”



You don’t need to be an expert or an amazing cyclist. You’re going to be cycling really slowly. And you don’t even need a bike, you know, you can do it on a scooter. It’s a really lovely intervention that parents can do that supports so many outcomes – health, wellbeing, educational attainment, carbon emissions, equality, climate action – it just fits into so many areas.

Getting the volunteers and parents involved can be tricky, as a lot of people are a bit scared. People are scared of taking on the responsibility or are worried about it taking up some time, and I get that and feel the same sometimes. But ultimately, it’s just about building a team that supports you so you don’t feel alone with it, and enjoying this really wholesome activity with the children.

Images: Crispin Hughes, Paul Meyler

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Spending wisely

“The children loved it and were buzzing about it for days after”

Angela Broadhurst, Chair of Friends of Diggle School, invited real dinosaurs into her school for an educational workshop pupils will never forget!

Tell us about your PTA

I started in the PTA nearly three years ago when my son started reception. This year is my first as Chair, after taking over from a longstanding member whose children had moved on. I currently have a seven-year-old in Year 2 and a nine-year-old in Year 5. We're a very active PTA – we have six committee members with official roles, but we have a wider group of 16 members who organise events and communicate to classes.

What does your regular fundraising calendar look like?

We have a good programme of events all year round. We regularly run 'Break the Rules' days and the usual Mother's and Father's Day sales. We tend to do a large event at the end of the year like a colour run, fair or circus. We also have a very popular Scarecrow Trail

We did a 'Sponsor 2026' event for the first time which was hugely successful and raised over £5,000

that runs in Easter and Halloween half terms every year – people come from far and wide to visit the scarecrows that community members display for us! This is usually our biggest fundraiser, raising around £6,000 a year. This year, we did a 'Sponsor 2026' event for the first time which was hugely successful and raised over £5,000.

How does your fundraising support the school?

We usually raise between £15,000 and £20,000 per year for school. We agree our funding objectives at the start of the year. Last year, most of our funding went on interactive whiteboards for all the classrooms, which have improved the children's learning experience greatly. This year, we're focusing on improving the outdoor areas. So far, we've paid for an outdoor classroom, an extension to the trim trail, a gardening and bedding area, bike racks, and we've had our storage containers decorated using pictures the children designed. Oh, and we invited a real-life fossil hunter into the school...



Tell us more about that! How did you find a fossil hunter?

My son has always been obsessed with dinosaurs and fossils, so last year for his birthday I was looking into present ideas. Something that kept getting recommended was a private tour with Mark Kemp, 'The Yorkshire Fossil Hunter'. I looked into it further and realised how popular he was, as he only had one date left for the whole year! It was in November, which sounded a bit chilly to me, but I went ahead and booked it. We went on the tour on a beach near Whitby – it was four hours long, but absolutely flew by! While we were chatting on the tour, Mark mentioned he'd been doing some work with schools. As I'd recently taken over as Chair, I asked him to send me further details after the tour.

How did you fund the session?

We used PTA funding, so the session was free to parents and children. It was very easy to organise. The main thing to decide was whether to do a more detailed curriculum lesson with the older children, or a more 'broad-brushed approach' where he tries to cover more children across the school, but with less detail.

What were the sessions like?

The sessions were great! He covered the whole school (approximately 190 children) over a three-hour period. We brought the classes into the hall, two year groups at a time. He'd brought lots of fossils and props with him. Then he gave a brief

overview of how fossils are formed and handed some of them around to the children – the dinosaur poo was a big hit! The children then asked lots of questions, which he answered. The school were really pleased with the session and it linked into some of the curriculum for the older children. The children loved it and were buzzing about it for days after!

Do you plan to organise more education-focused sessions for the children in the future?

Yes! During their yearly planning sessions, the school are going to request workshop themes for us to look into.





Hosting a teddy bears' picnic

It might not be a fundraiser, but hosting a teddy bears' picnic for new starters coming to your primary school is a great way to strengthen your school community, and it gives parents an insight to the work your PTA does. You never know, you may even end the day with a few new volunteers! Here's everything you need to welcome the little ones (and their cuddly friends)

Getting things off to a beary good start

While planning your picnic, you might be envisioning a grassy meadow in the sunshine with blankets and baskets and cake. An outdoor space would certainly be a lovely setting. But that's not available to everyone – and what if the weather turns?

If you don't have a picturesque field at hand or it looks like rain (and let's face it, with the British weather it's good to plan for a downpour),

a hall or an empty classroom would work just as well. If you have a large intake, you may even need several empty classrooms to accommodate everyone.



All cuddly friends are welcome

Not every child's favourite cuddly toy is an actual bear, so let new starters know that the invite is open to non-bears too!

Little gifts

When the children arrive, why not give them each a little gift pack to remember the day? You can purchase some inexpensive A4 plastic wallets and fill them with anything you want, such as:

- Parentkind's Be School Ready guide to help parents and their children prepare for their learning journey
- An information sheet about your PTA and how parents can get involved
- A reading book suitable for the age range of the new starters
- A laminated handwriting worksheet and a whiteboard pen so the children can practice
- Some fun activity sheets
- Any vouchers or discounts you may have from local businesses

Preloved and reloved

Does your school have a second-hand uniform stall? Consider setting it up on the day (and it's a great way to let new parents know they can donate their child's uniform at the end of the school year).

Hungry bears

What delectable delights will you be serving at your picnic? For the children, you could offer individual packed lunches. This will help cut down costs as you will know exactly how much food to buy. Alternatively, picky bits and nibbles are always enjoyable.

For the parents, you could have simple refreshments such as tea, coffee and biscuits, or go all out and have a more substantial fare of sandwiches and cake.



Safety first

You'll need to carry out a risk assessment for your picnic. You can find out more about risk assessments and safeguarding on our website.

You'll also need to comply with food hygiene legislation and have a good think about health and safety, especially if you're going to be outside. This includes being aware of any allergies the children or parents may have, as well as special dietary requirements. For more information, we have health and safety and food hygiene guidelines on our website.

A good way to wind down before the end of your teddy bears' picnic is to read a book to the children while they are eating – bear themed, of course! We recommend that you speak to the school about a book's suitability before your event.

Stay in touch!

Before wrapping up, ask the parents if they'd like to stay in touch. When gathering contact details, don't forget you'll need to comply with GDPR.

Fun and games

There are many fun things you could do during your picnic. You could let the children mingle and play using what you have at school, such as the outdoor play equipment or toys and games from the classrooms.

You could also plan some activities, such as a treasure hunt, or singing some songs. Consider your space, how much time you have and the age of your little ones.

Our ultimate PTA guide to teddy bears' picnics has everything you'll need to host the bestest picnic ever, including adorable name stickers, activity sheets and more. Download it from our website:



This term calendar

Looking to make the first few months of the school year a term to remember?
Here are some significant days and dates to keep in mind for autumn/winter 2026



12 September

World First Aid Day

You can't predict a medical emergency, but you can be prepared for one. Your PTA could mark this day by checking whether your volunteers know the basics and refresh their skills if needed. You could also fundraise for pupil first aid training – you're never too young to learn!

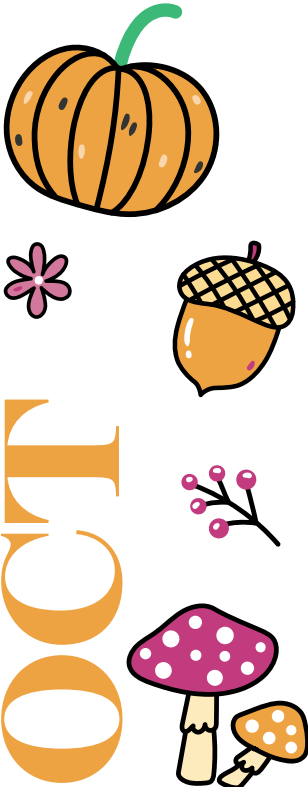
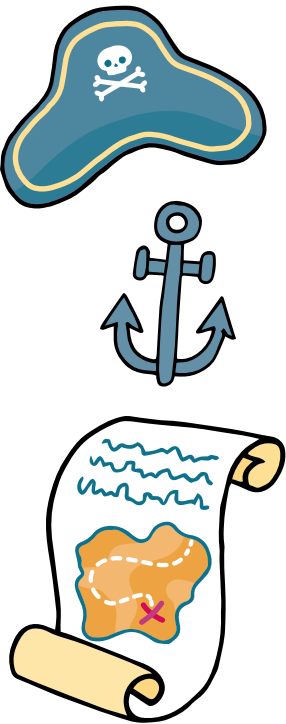
Ask your school if they can recommend a certified first aid instructor. Alternatively, the British Red Cross and St John Ambulance offer amazing courses, plus they have free online resources you can share with your community.

Brush up on your health and safety knowledge over on our [website](#):

19 September

International Talk Like a Pirate Day

Ahoy, PTA crews! On International Talk Like a Pirate Day, help pupils find their sea legs and turn fundraising into a swashbuckling treasure hunt by hosting a pirate non-school uniform day, a 'walk the plank' sponge-throw or a cake sale packed with rum-less cupcakes and gold chocolate coins. If your parents are brave enough to embarrass themselves publicly, how about a best pirate accent contest? Shiver me timbers!



5 - 9 October

Cycle to School Week

Cycle to School Week is an opportunity for families to make cycling part of the school run. Get your PTA involved with a sponsored cycle, a 'bike bus' morning ride or a bike decorating competition. You could also host a second-hand bike sale, road safety workshop or coffee morning specially for cycling parents – we're sure they'd appreciate the caffeine boost after all that exercise! If your community is keen, your next fundraising project could be a bike shed...

10 October

World Mental Health Day

This day is all about raising awareness around mental health issues and is a great opportunity to advocate for better mental health care and support. You could organise a coffee morning, bringing your community together to recognise the importance of positive mental health and signpost to support if anyone needs it. You could also look into funding wellbeing spaces for pupils, such as a beautiful garden or a peaceful area in the school.



8 November

Diwali

Also known as Deepavali or the Festival of Lights, Diwali is one of the most important festivals for Hindus, Sikhs and Jains. It symbolises the spiritual victory of light over darkness, good over evil and knowledge over ignorance.

There are so many ways your PTAs can celebrate Diwali – food stalls, henna artists, lantern-making, Bollywood dance workshops and a family craft evening to name just a few. With so many ideas to choose from, why not do them all and have a mini festival?

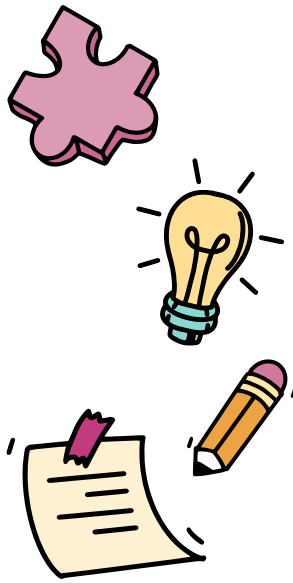
Not sure what licences you'd need for a Diwali festival?
Visit our [website](#) for more information:

16 - 22 November

Global Entrepreneurship Week (GEW)

Inspire creativity and raise funds by turning pupils into mini business owners for the week! Host a young entrepreneurs' market where the pupils can sell whatever they want, with stall fees supporting the PTA. If you have a good relationship with local business owners, ask if they'd be willing to give a short talk or judge a Dragon's Den-style pitch competition. If you want to do something really simple, grow a pound competitions are always well-received.

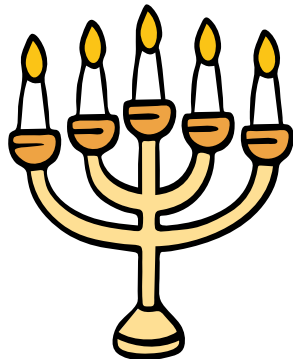
If you've never organised a grow a pound competition before, read our [blog post](#) to get started:



4 December

First day of Hanukkah

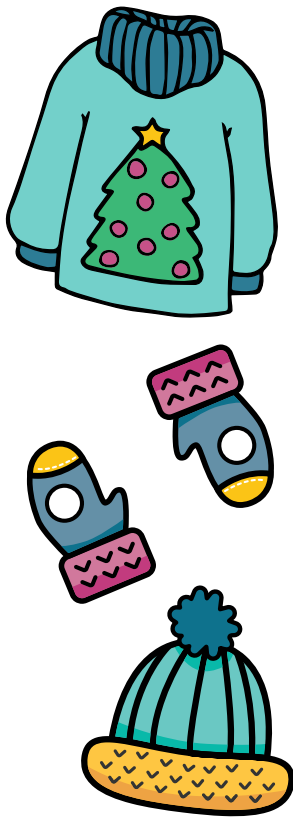
The start of the Jewish eight-day 'Festival of Light' is marked with prayers, the lighting of candles, and traditional foods such as brisket and latkes. Commemorate the day with menorah or dreidel-making, or invite families to share their music, stories and Hanukkah traditions. It's also a lovely opportunity to teach children about themes of hope, resilience and togetherness – with enough doughnuts involved to keep everyone happily engaged!



10 December

Christmas Jumper Day

Whether your Christmas jumper of choice is garish, fluffy, classy, bah humbug or glow-in-the-dark, now is the time to wear it! You could run a competition for the best (or worst) jumper in school. Wrap the day up with extras like a hot chocolate stall, festive bake sale or winter disco for extreme levels of cosiness.



Want to go plan even further ahead?
Scan here to download your [PTA planner](#) for the 2026-27 academic year:



Novelty Imports Celebrates 25 Years of Lighting Up the Leisure Industry

Novelty Imports, one of the UK's best-known suppliers of light-up event novelties and fundraising merchandise, is proudly celebrating 25 years in business. Since its founding in 2001, the company has supplied the leisure, schools and entertainment industries with fun, fast-selling novelty products that have been lighting up events across the UK.

Based in Cannock, Staffordshire, at the heart of England and located just a 10-minute drive from the M6 motorway, Novelty Imports is a Parentkind trusted supplier and an associate member of The Showmen's Guild of Great Britain. The company has built a reputation as a reliable and specialist supplier across a wide range of sectors.

Novelty Imports is widely known as "No.1 for Light-Up Fun", offering an extensive range of UKCA CE EN-71 toy safety tested, high-profit light-up flashing novelty items including best-selling LED swords, windmills and wands designed to generate valuable fundraising income at events. Unlike many cash-and-carry warehouses that only stock novelty items seasonally, Novelty Imports maintains a strong product selection year-round, ensuring customers can source stock whenever they

need it. Customers can order online 24 hours a day, while those visiting the Midlands can also take advantage of warehouse collection and over-the-counter sales by appointment. After 25 successful years supplying the leisure industry, the outlook remains as bright as ever.

Parentkind members can benefit from using discount code: PKIND (conditions apply).

The future still looks bright and flashy for Novelty Imports.

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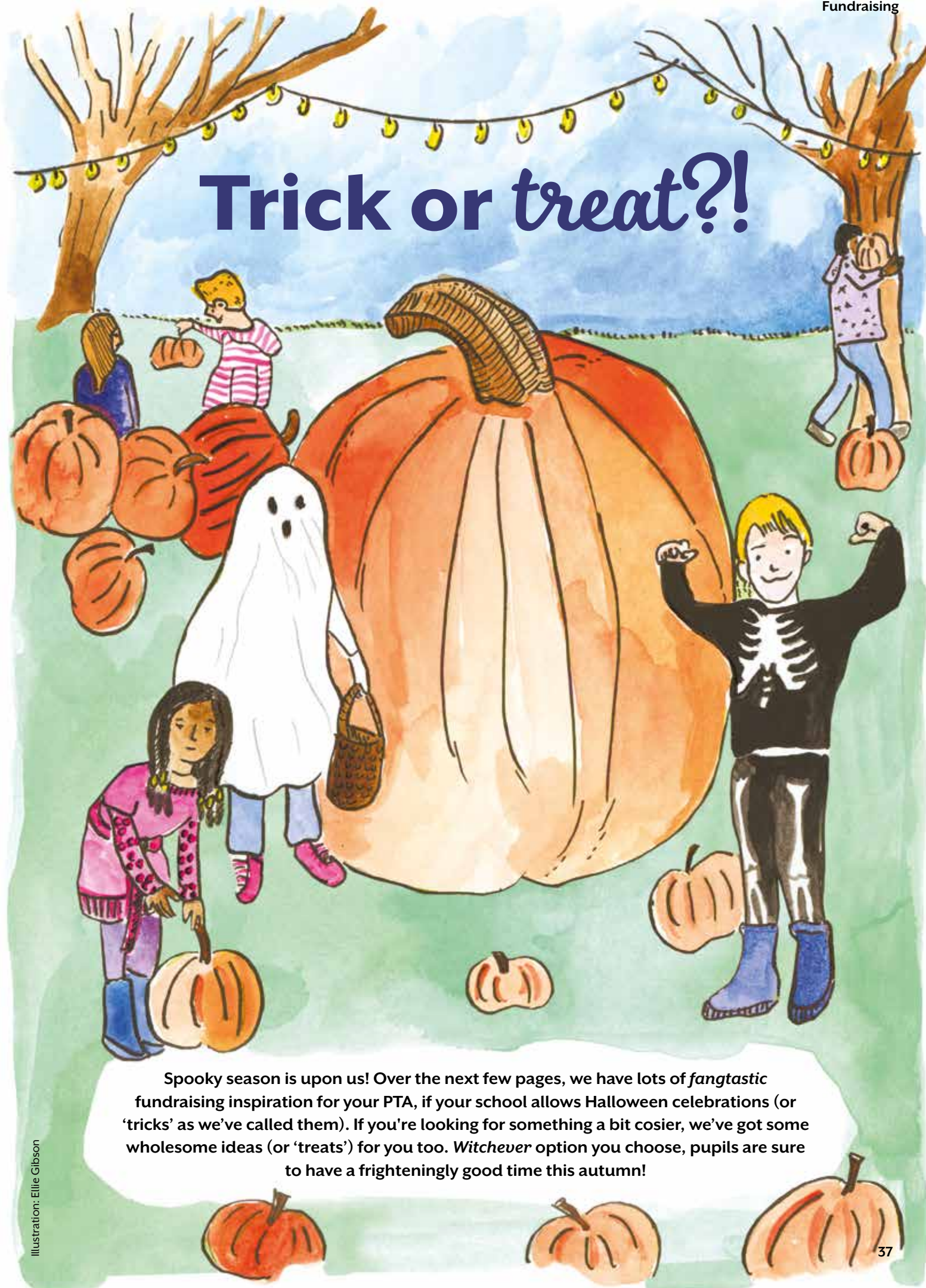
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Parentkind SUPPLIER



Spooky season is upon us! Over the next few pages, we have lots of *fangtastic* fundraising inspiration for your PTA, if your school allows Halloween celebrations (or 'tricks' as we've called them). If you're looking for something a bit cosier, we've got some wholesome ideas (or 'treats') for you too. *Witchever* option you choose, pupils are sure to have a frighteningly good time this autumn!

Tricks

Fundraising ideas for all the Halloween-loving
boos and ghouls in your school...

For primary schools

Trick or treat lucky/unlucky dip

If the standard lucky dip game isn't Halloweeny enough for you, how about a trick or treat lucky/unlucky dip? All you need to do is wrap up a bunch of treats, such as sweets or cheap toys, as well as some tricks, like vegetables or extra homework. Mix all the prizes together and watch the chaos unfold! This is great as a standalone Halloween fundraiser, or you could run it alongside a bigger event.

 Top tip!

If having booby prizes feels a bit mean, you could wrap something the kids could do tricks with instead, like yo-yos or joke books.



Creepy cake sale

Let's take the classic PTA bake sale and turn the creepiness up to 11! You can get really creative with Halloween cakes, making monstrous creations like ghost cake pops, chocolate traybake graveyards and mummified bananas. If you're not much of a baker, gummy worms and red icing go a long way!

 Top tip!

Looking for inspiration? Check out our recipe for eyeball cupcakes on [page 42](#).

Costume competition

Calling all witches, werewolves and Where's Wallys! Nothing says Halloween quite like a costume competition. You can hold one as a non-school uniform day, as part of a Halloween disco or before a trick or treating session in your local area. Whenever you run one, make sure to have prizes for the best (or worst!) dressed.

For secondary schools

Screen kings and queens

Horror video games are very popular, so hosting a spooky game night in a spare classroom is bound to be a hit. Ask around to see if anyone has consoles and games you could borrow and either charge for entry, per play or for a set time on each game.

Luigi's Mansion, Plants vs Zombies and Hollow Knight are fun game choices for younger pupils (all suitable for ages seven and up). For older pupils, Five Nights at Freddy's, Little Nightmares and Hello Neighbour are a bit spookier, but do your research to make sure they're appropriate for your school community and tell parents ahead of time which games will be available.

 Top tip!

If you'd rather hold a fundraiser that doesn't involve screens, you could host a horror board game night instead. The 'Horried' board games are suitable for ages ten and up, and the Five Nights at Freddy's Night of Frights game is suitable for ages eight and up.



Images: Ellie Gibson

Terrifying tales

All Hallow's Eve is the perfect time of year for storytelling, so why not run a scary story competition for the budding writers in your school? To spark imaginations, provide a theme or a location that pupils must include in their short story (and provide a word limit too). Charge a small fee per entry and hand out prizes to the winners. You could also assemble the entries into a printed booklet for families to buy as a keepsake.



Role play mystery party

Role play mystery parties are a lot of fun and can be as elaborate or as lowkey as you want. There are lots of kits you can buy online with character sheets and scripts – some even have links to videos and apps to make the mystery really immersive. Depending on the level of interest you get from pupils, you could run just one game or have a few separate games in different classrooms.



Treats

Seasonal fundraising ideas for the pumpkin-loving pupils in your school...



For primary schools

Pumpkin fest

Nothing screams autumn more than pumpkins! There are so many pumpkin-related activities your PTA could run. So many in fact, that you could easily create an entire pumpkin festival – pumpkin painting, pumpkin piñata, pumpkin crafts, pumpkin costumes, pumpkin growing kits (to be sown April to June time), pumpkin baked goods (either pumpkin shaped or included as an ingredient), pumpkin patches, pumpkin quizzes – the possibilities are truly endless!



Woodland creature walk

Take the children on a magical adventure with a woodland creature walk. Simply pick a route, either on school grounds or in a local area, and set up a trail using paper cutouts of woodland creatures as markers, or cuddly toys if you have them. Perch the creatures in trees, on fences and laying on the ground so the children really have to hunt for them. Then create a map of the route and give the children a list of the creatures they need to find. Once they've found them all, a hot chocolate or a bag of sweets would be a lovely way to wrap up the event.



Top tip!

When planning your woodland creature walk, don't forget to carry out a thorough risk assessment: parentkind.org.uk/your-pta-expert/health-safety-gdpr-and-licences/risk-assessments.

Make a monster

The monster factory is open! Ask the children to make up their very own monster – perhaps it demolishes schoolwork, comforts them when they're sad or gobbles sweets! Whatever their monster does, you can help the children bring them to life by providing art supplies. Decorate paper plates to make a monster face, toilet roll tubes for a monster's body or egg cartons that can open up like a big monstrous mouth!



For secondary schools

Food festival

Autumn is traditionally the time of year for bountiful harvests and is the perfect season for a food festival. You could book food vans and local restaurants, invite parents to bring their family recipes or ask pupils to rustle up something special for their friends to try. Charge for entry to the festival and set a pitch fee for businesses, if you're using them. To really embrace the harvest vibe, consider setting up a space for food donations to give to your local food bank.

Top tip!

We've got all of the health and safety, food hygiene and allergy guidance you need on our website: parentkind.org.uk/your-pta-expert/health-safety-gdpr-and-licences/health-and-safety.



Images: Ellie Gibson

Autumnal art exhibition

So many artists have been inspired by autumn – Monet, van Gogh and Pollock to name a few. Your PTA could provide an incredible opportunity for the young artists in your school by setting up an exhibition for pieces that show what the season means to them. You could put the pieces up for sale and ask for a small percentage to be donated back to the PTA, or charge for entry. Refreshments and programmes would be nice additions that add a little extra profit.



Pumpkin spice stall

There's nothing better on a bright yet cool autumn day than warm drinks and baked goods. If you run a seasonal stall with hot chocolates, cinnamon buns, pumpkin spiced lattes and apple pies, we guarantee you'll sell out in no time!



Eyeball cupcakes

Makes 30 cupcakes
Free from: nuts, dairy, eggs, soy (if not using soy milk)
Contains: gluten, soy (if using soy milk)

Ingredients

For the cupcakes

560g self-raising flour
420g caster sugar
375ml dairy-free milk
1 ¼ tbsp apple cider vinegar or white wine vinegar
185ml vegetable oil or sunflower oil
3 tsp vanilla extract
1 ¼ tsp baking powder

For the decoration

625g icing sugar
150g dairy-free butter or margarine
2.5 tbsp dairy-free milk
1 ¼ tsp vanilla extract
Strawberry lace sweets or red food colouring gel

And either

- 30 dairy-free chocolate buttons
- White fondant icing, black food colouring and food colouring of your choice

To make the cakes gluten free, swap the self-raising flour for a gluten-free flour blend (not a single ingredient flour, like oat or rice flour), plus one and a half teaspoons of cornflour.

To make the cakes soy-free, use oat milk.

Method

For the cupcakes

1. Preheat your oven to 180°C (160°C fan)
2. Mix the vinegar into your milk and allow to sit for five minutes. It will curdle – which is exactly what you want!
3. In a large bowl, whisk together your dry ingredients
4. Pour all your wet ingredients into your dry, including the vinegar-milk mixture, and mix until smooth. Do not mix too much, just until the lumps are gone
5. Spoon the mixture into 30 cupcake cases
6. Bake in the oven for about 18 to 20 minutes, or until baked through
7. Allow to cool fully before moving onto the decoration

For the decoration

- Beat the butter with a whisk until creamy
- Gradually add the icing sugar, milk and vanilla, whisking until light and fluffy
- Spoon or pipe the white icing onto the cupcakes.
 - If you've chosen dairy-free chocolate buttons, press them into the middle of your cupcake
 - If you've chosen the fondant, mix in a few drops of black food colouring for the pupil, and a few drops of the colour of your choice for the iris. Cut into circles and place in the middle of your cupcake
- Use the strawberry lace sweets or red food colouring gel as blood vessels. Then you're ready to serve your eyeballs!

Not a fan of baking? We have three spooky non-bake recipes for Halloween on our blog: parentkind.org/about-us/news-and-blogs/blog/3-spooky-non-bake-recipes-for-halloween



Images: Ellie Gibson

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The parents lottery

Looking to raise more funds without adding to volunteers' workload?
The Parents Lottery could change everything

★ Every PTA knows the challenge

You're juggling events, chasing volunteers, managing budgets and somehow trying to keep your school community engaged all at the same time. The result? A constant cycle of planning, pressure and limited return. But what if you could take some of the pressure off without sacrificing income?



★ A smarter, simpler solution

The Parents Lottery has been created specifically for PTAs and schools like yours, offering a reliable, low effort way to bring in funds every single week. Once you're set up, it runs quietly in the background, giving you a steady stream of income that builds over time.

"As the chairperson of our PTA, we set this up for our school parents to get involved as the rewards for the PTA/school were great and an incentive to be in with the chance of winning. It is an easy fundraiser that takes place in the background without having to do very much."

Gamble responsibly
A Lottery is a form of gambling. If you, or someone you know, needs information and/or help with a problem gambling, please call the National Gambling Support Network on 0808 8020 133 or visit www.begambleaware.org
*Parentkind PTA Members will receive 56% and non-members and schools will receive 42% of each ticket sold naming them as beneficiaries. You must be 18 or over to play or claim a prize. The lottery is licensed and regulated by the Gambling Commission. (Licence number 057904). The Parents Lottery is a weekly lottery promoted by Parentkind Enterprises Ltd, a wholly owned subsidiary of Parentkind. It is run under our remote operating licence (Licence No: 057904) and all proceeds will come to us, allowing us to ensure the highest return to PTAs and schools on the market.

★ Why PTAs are signing up now

- **More impact from every pound**
Generates strong returns for your school, helping you fund more, faster
- **Saves valuable volunteer time**
No stalls, no stock, no logistics, just simple, ongoing fundraising
- **Reaches beyond the school gates**
Friends, family and supporters anywhere in the UK can take part
- **Easy to promote**
Share your unique link through WhatsApp, email, newsletters and social media

Join over a thousand PTAs who already know it's the low effort fundraiser, raising thousands.

★ Set up in minutes, benefit all year

Getting started couldn't be simpler:

- 1 Go to theparentslottery.org/join
- 2 Register your school and create your page
- 3 Share your link with your community

That's it – you're live!
No complicated onboarding. No hidden hurdles. No licence required. Just a simple, effective way to start raising funds instantly.



★ A powerful incentive for supporters

For just £1 a week, your supporters can:

- Help fund vital resources and opportunities for your school
- Be entered into weekly draws
- Have the chance to win up to £25,000, plus guaranteed prizes every Friday
- Leave a top-up donation, adding to their support of your work

It's a compelling reason to get involved and an easy 'yes' for busy families.

"I was shocked to have received a letter from The Parents Lottery to say I had won £1,000. I had previously won small prizes but never expected to win this much!"

Players can win up to £25,000

★ Less pressure, more possibilities

Imagine having a reliable stream of income supporting your PTA in the background, while you focus on creating memorable experiences for pupils instead of constantly plugging funding gaps.

That's what the Parents Lottery delivers.

Start today!
Your supporters are ready.
Your school deserves it.

Register now at theparentslottery.org/join and start building a sustainable future for your PTA – one week at a time.

What to find out more or move from another provider?
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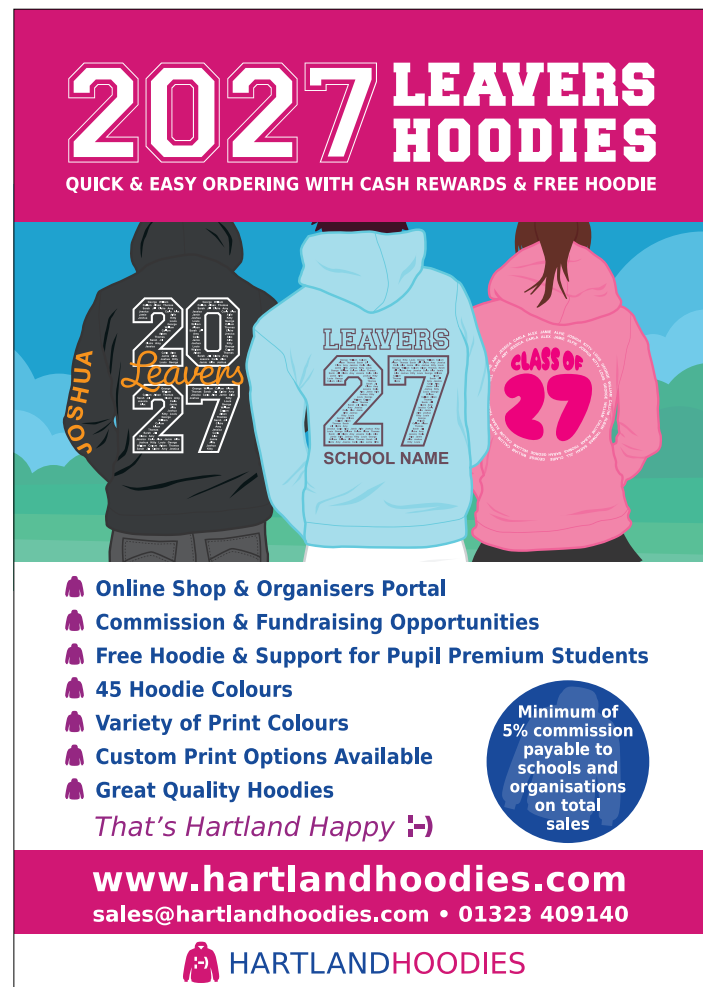
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Black History Month

Every October, the UK takes a month to reflect and recognise the incredible contributions Black people have made to British history, culture and communities.

Here are some ideas to help you share Black history with your school

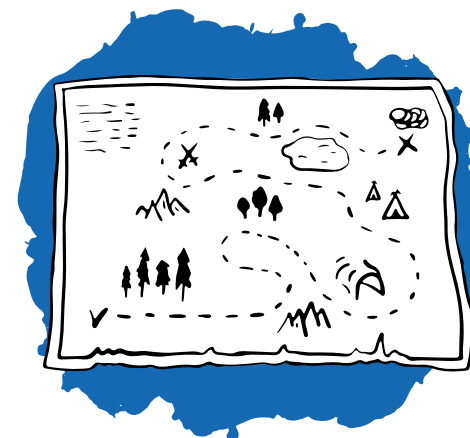
This year, Black History Month's theme is 'Honouring Our Communities' and aims to 'recognise the individuals whose everyday contributions shape, support and sustain Black life across the United Kingdom'. Whether you've run a Black History Month event before or it's your first time doing so, BlackHistoryMonth.org contains amazing guidance and useful resources to inspire you.



For primary schools

Treasure trail

Spark children's curious minds and sense of adventure with a themed treasure trail! Set up clues, puzzles and illustrations around the school, inviting pupils to search the environment and uncover unique facts about key moments in Black history, ground-breaking historical figures and more. You'll be giving children an opportunity to play and explore, all while strengthening their knowledge of Black history – why not end with a quick quiz to see how much they've learned?



Afro-Caribbean food festival

Africa and the Caribbean have some of the most diverse food cultures on Earth. From richly-spiced Jollof rice and North-African tagines, to Jamaica's famous curries and the versatile plantain, these dishes are packed with unique flavours and ingredients. That's not to mention the drinks – like sweet rooibos tea and refreshing Jamaican sorrel. Bring these flavours to your school with a food festival, inviting local businesses to sell their favourite dishes.

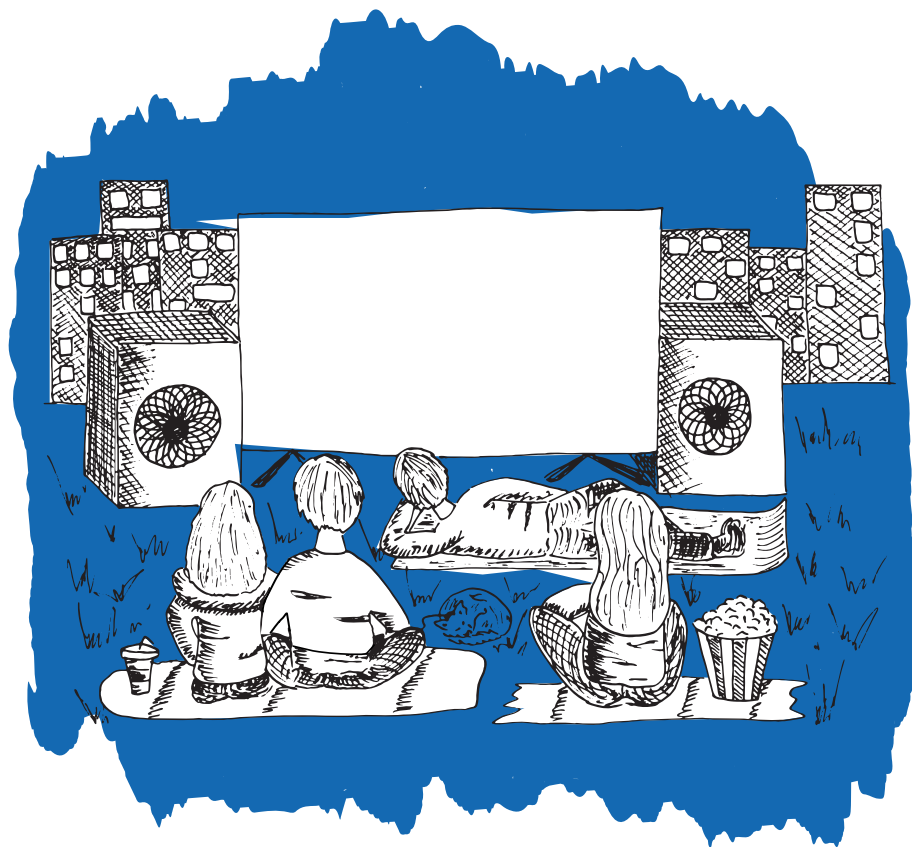
Book sale

Whether it's a powerful work of fiction or an essential piece of history, books help children to understand the world around them. Thankfully, there is a wealth of incredible writing from Black authors and about Black experiences and identity to choose from. Share these vital stories with your community by hosting a Black History Month book sale.

Music workshop

The W drum and the steelpan drum of Trinidad and Tobago are iconic sounds worldwide, and plenty of companies offer exciting drumming workshops for pupils of all ages. These workshops are energetic and immersive ways to celebrate Black culture, and help children build their rhythm and motor skills while having fun! Many companies offering these workshops are also highly sensitive to the needs of pupils with special educational needs and disabilities, so that nobody feels left out.





For secondary/post-primary schools

Black cinema celebration

There has never been a greater variety of Black stories on the big screen, from historical dramas like Hidden Figures and Queen of Katwe, and powerful documentaries like Amazing Grace, to modern-day hits for younger audiences like Marvel's Black Panther and Pixar's Soul. Directors like Ryan Coogler, Steve McQueen and Ava DuVernay have all challenged stereotypes and representation to create their own authentic work. We can't think of a better way to celebrate this work than organising an amazing movie screening.

Black history quiz night

Quiz nights don't just have to be about friendly competition. Why not host a quiz featuring questions about pioneering Black Britons, key moments in Black history, and trivia about Black artists and filmmakers?

You'll be bringing people together for a fun and cosy winter fundraiser, and providing an opportunity for everybody to refresh their knowledge of Black history and culture in an engaging, exciting way.

Art and performance workshops

Performance and expression are powerful ways to build empathy and understanding. Get pupils involved in drama, spoken word or dance surrounding the themes of Black History Month, whether they take part as performers or watch as the audience. Alternatively, explore the rich variety of art and fashions across Africa with workshops in Adinkra pottery and Kente cloth. Many theatre companies run drop-in workshops for schools, focusing on historical narratives and traditional dances – why not ask if a Black artist in your community would be willing to share their work?

Black History Month festival

Stitch together some of our ideas to create an incredible Black History Month festival! A festival is an opportunity to bring together flavoursome food, exciting workshops and opportunities for learning into a whole day of celebration. Add live music, guest speakers and a raffle into the mix, and you've got an event to be remembered. You can organise it the same way you would a winter or summer fair, and charge an overall entry fee or sell tickets for individual events.



Find everything you need to host an amazing film night in our **Ultimate PTA Guide to Film Nights:**



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Santa Claus is coming to town

Thinking about setting up a Santa's grotto in your school this Christmas? **Michelle Benstead, Chair of Oaklands PTA**, gave us some tips on how to properly deck the (school) halls



Some children [in our school] have never met Santa, never seen real reindeer, and some have never even had an advent calendar. I wanted to create magical memories that they would remember forever!

I booked the biggest inflatable grotto and props I could find, along with a sleigh. We also wanted to gift every child an advent calendar, so we scheduled the event for the last Friday in November. All risk assessments, permissions and welfare arrangements were completed well in advance.

Parents could let us know if their child required a different type of advent calendar due to allergies or dietary requirements.

The grotto company arrived from 6am to set everything up, including the inflatable grotto and props.

Classes arrived in 15-minute slots and walked through the falling snow, played the games and met the reindeer. They then moved over to the grotto where Santa came outside to greet them before inviting the whole class inside together.

Every child left with a wooden Christmas tree decoration, along with their advent calendar and a template letter to write to Santa.

Our Santa is a local vicar and also the husband of one of our teaching assistants, so he was the perfect choice.

Santa was never left alone with the children. A teacher, teaching assistant or DBS-checked PTA volunteer was always present.

Hearing the children's reactions after the first event absolutely melted my heart.

Every single child, from nursery through to Year 6, left with the biggest smile on their face!



Michelle's top tips

- 1 It doesn't need to make a profit.
- 2 Include a letter to Santa template in your information pack. Families can pay a small optional fee to receive a personalised reply from Santa and help offset event costs.
- 3 Get a snow machine – or a snow globe – they were both an enormous hit with our children!
- 4 Just do it! If our small team can create something this magical, then so can any PTA.

Images: Oaklands PTA

Ten festive game ideas for all ages

Whether you're planning a big winter fair or just want some fun before the Christmas break, here are some games pupils will love (that will also give your funding pot a bit of a boost)



For younger children

1 Drop the coin on Rudolph's nose

Fill a big tub with water and drop a laminated picture of Rudolph in the bottom. Ask the children to drop a 50p on his nose to win. A super easy money spinner.

2 Penguin race

Mark out a short course and get the children to place a beanbag or soft balloon between their knees. They must waddle like a penguin to the finish without dropping it. Cross the line to win a prize – or race against the clock for the fastest time of the day. A simple game that's guaranteed to get plenty of laughs!

3 Pin the carrot on the snowman

Just like pin the tail on the donkey! You could also pin the tail on the reindeer.



4 Rudolph's magic carrots

All that's needed for this one is a bunch of carrots, a coloured pen (permanent marker works best), a tray of fake snow and some cheap prizes. Mark some of the carrots on the tip with your pen and bury them, colour-end down, in the snow. Charge a small fee – anyone who pulls up a coloured carrot wins!

5 Snowball toss

Paint a snowman onto a large piece of cardboard and cut different-sized holes into the body, each worth a different number of points. Ask the children to throw white pom-poms (or 'snowballs') into the holes to score points. The higher the score, the bigger the prize!

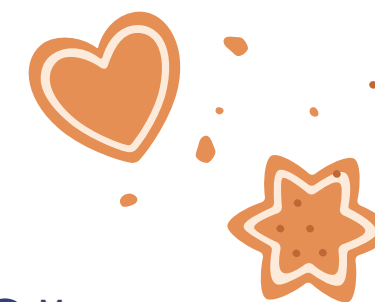
For older children and teens

6 Candy cane hook

Hang some mini candy canes up loosely with string and, with a normal-sized candy cane in their mouth, players have to knock off as many as they can in a minute. The more they knock off, the better the prize. Much harder than it looks and great fun to watch!

7 Naughty or nice Christmas stockings

Fill some Christmas stockings with nice prizes (such as sweets) and naughty prizes (such as brussels sprouts!). It's up to you whether you let pupils feel the stockings before they buy one!



8 Merry quizmas

Time for the classic Christmas quiz. Write down a selection of multiple-choice festive questions on films, music, food and traditions. Get the pupils to assemble into teams and have prizes for the winning group (and perhaps a booby prize for the losing team!).

9 Challenge the elf

Ask a PE teacher (or an adult with good coordination!) to be the elf and set a score on a quick festive challenge, such as throwing paper 'snowballs' into a basket from a distance. Pupils then pay to see if they can beat the elf's score. If they do, they win a prize. Alternatively, you could ask pupils to guess how well they think the elf will do on their festive challenge. Whoever's guess is closest wins!

10 Name that festive tune

Play the first three to five seconds of popular Christmas songs and challenge the pupils to name the title and artist. Easy to run with just a speaker, playlist, pens and paper.

Considering adding these games to your winter fair? Time to get planning! **Turn the page** for a three-month countdown to your winter fair.



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Three-month *countdown* to your winter fair

Got a winter or Christmas fair planned? Here's a breakdown of
everything you need to do three months before



12 weeks before

Set the date, time and place

- Consult the headteacher to avoid clashing with other school activities/major local events
- Decide how long your fair will last (usually between two to four hours), allow time for setting-up and clearing away
- If you can't hold the fair on school grounds, book a venue
- Share the date with parents
- Start recruiting volunteers



10 weeks before

Decide on your activities

- Make sure there's a mix to attract adults and children

Work out a schedule and site plan

- Break the event down into what you need and schedule what needs doing, by when and by whom
- Create a site plan outlining where each activity will go, factoring in the need for power and water



Top tip

If you have the resources,
establish a subcommittee with
a leader and team.

Get people involved

- Share your schedule with your members, asking for volunteers
- Find a volunteer to be Santa, or book now if you're hiring one



8 weeks before

Recruit more volunteers

- If you know anyone with skills you need, don't wait for them to volunteer – ask them!

Get your paperwork in order

- Carry out a risk assessment for each element of your fair, as well as the overall event – monitor this throughout the event and review it afterwards
- Check insurance requirements for your activities. Parentkind members automatically receive insurance cover, managed by Marsh Commercial*
- If you're using external suppliers, they must have their own public liability cover
- If selling raffle tickets in advance, you'll need a lottery licence. If providing alcohol, you'll need to apply for a TEN licence at least ten days before your event

- Share food hygiene best practices with those handling food
- Arrange First Aid – either a qualified first aider for a small event, or a professional presence, such as St John Ambulance or the Red Cross, for larger events (500+ attendees)



6 weeks before

Publicise your event

- Put up posters/flyers
- Send a press release to local newspapers/radio
- Launch a campaign on social media
- Ask your community for volunteers and raffle prizes

Organise sponsorship/raffle prizes

- Speak to local businesses for sponsorship/raffle prizes

Food and prizes

- Work out how much food and drink you'll need
- Consider how many prizes you need or, if you're having a Santa's Grotto, how many presents you need, and start buying them

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4 weeks before

Prepare a programme

- Make a simple programme detailing the activities, stalls and locations and timing of any displays. It should include the location of the First Aid post, and list details of the raffle if you're having one. Include sponsors if you have any

Top tip

If you're charging an admission fee, programmes can be sold before the event and at the gate. Consider setting a family ticket price, as well as individual admission charges.

3 weeks before

Payments

- Choose your payment methods (cash, tokens or card) and let parents know what the options will be on the day
- Make sure you have enough card readers and/or ask your Treasurer to order the float for each stall from the bank

2 weeks before

Confirm your volunteers

- Work out your rotas
- If there are gaps, launch a final recruitment drive
- Distribute a spreadsheet listing each stall, including names and time slots

Top tip

Appoint at least two people to collect the cash/tokens and keep a written record of money raised.

Get ready early

- If you're selling pre-order items, like Christmas puddings, send letters home with the cost and date the orders should be returned
- Sort your prizes and attach raffle tickets/make up hampers
- Wrap up Santa gifts



The week before

Make some signs

- For toilets, First Aid, refreshments, bar, and to direct participants to the stalls and activities that are not sited in the main area
- Consider assigning an announcer – give them a running order with timings and names of key people

Put together instructions

- To help volunteers, put together instructions for each stall including cost, rules and advice
- Collate essentials into a box, like stationery and bin bags
- Review your risk assessment



On the day

- 1 Hold a safety briefing and have a copy of the risk assessment
- 2 Distribute information for each stall so volunteers know the rules, how much to charge, and what to do with the money they take
- 3 Issue a float, bin bag and drink token to encourage everyone to clear up their section, hand in their takings and have a well-earned drink
- 4 Check on stall holders and top up stock/prizes
- 5 Have fun!

Need more help planning your fair? Read our **Ultimate PTA Guide to Christmas Fairs:**



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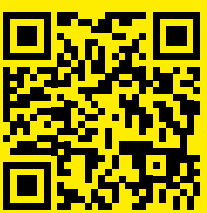
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Four fun festive winter crafts

Bored of making the same old stuff with pupils at winter time? Here are some ideas that you probably haven't done before!

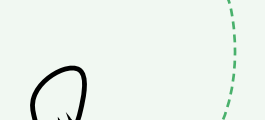
Paperchain penguins

You will need:

- Black paper
- White paper
- PVA glue
- Scissors
- Thread
- Stapler
- Colouring pens or pencils
- Other decorations, e.g. googly eyes (optional)

Instructions

- 1 Cut black paper into six strips. These will be the links of your chain.
- 2 Glue the first strip together into a loop to make the first link.
- 3 Thread the second strip into the first link. Glue the ends of the strip together to make the second link. Continue until the chain is complete.
- 4 Draw and cut out a penguin's face and feet out of white paper. Colour them in and/or decorate them.
- 5 Glue the feet to the bottom link and the face to the top.
- 6 Staple a loop of thread to the top link so you can hang it up and show off your penguin!



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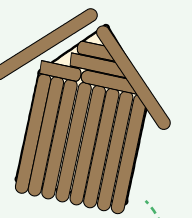
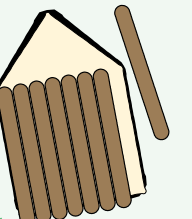
Stick gingerbread house

You will need:

- Ice lolly sticks
- Card
- PVA glue
- Decorations such as paint, stickers, craft paper, felt – anything you have to hand!

Instructions

- 1 Glue ice lolly sticks onto a piece of card to make a house shape. For the base of the house, glue five sticks in a row horizontally or ten vertically to make a rectangle.
- 2 For the roof, you could just glue down two ice lolly sticks in an upside-down V-shape, or use lots of cut-up sticks to fill in the space beneath the V-shape.
- 3 Now it's decorating time. The children can do whatever they want, but we highly recommend lots and lots of glitter! And don't forget the gingerbread person, who could be made out of card or felt (or actual gingerbread!).



Photography: Shutterstock.com/Pixel Shot

Pipe cleaner Christmas tree

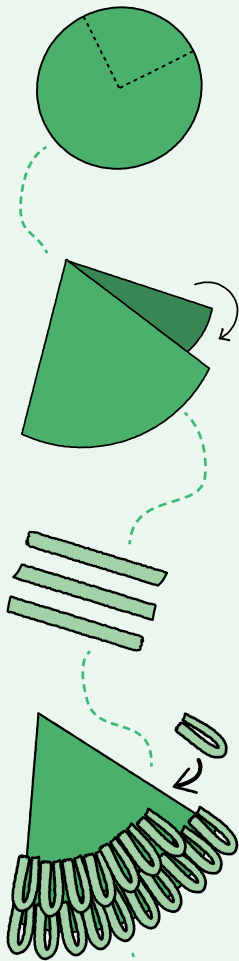
You will need:

- Card
- Scissors
- Tape/PVA glue/stapler
- Hot glue gun
- Green pipe cleaners
- Mini pompoms (available in craft shops)

Instructions

1 Make a cone shape out of card:

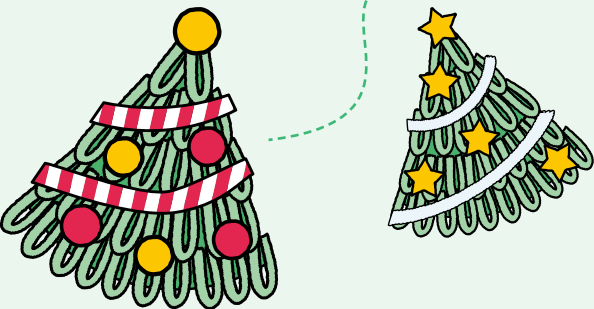
- Draw and cut out a circle
- Make a mark in the centre of the circle and draw two straight lines from that mark with a ruler to make a wedge (we recommend the wedge taking up about a quarter of the circle)
- Cut out the wedge
- Bring the sides of the circle together and tape, glue or staple it together to form a cone shape



2 Cut up the green pipe cleaners in 5cm strips to build the layers of the tree.

3 Use the hot glue gun to stick the green pipe cleaners to the cone. Glue them in complete circles starting at the bottom, and slightly overlap each layer over the previous one.

4 Once you've reached the top, it's time to decorate!



Skating rink

You will need:

- Blue paper or card
- Cotton wool
- PVA glue
- White card
- Scissors
- Colouring pens, pencils or paint
- Other decorations, e.g. glitter (optional)

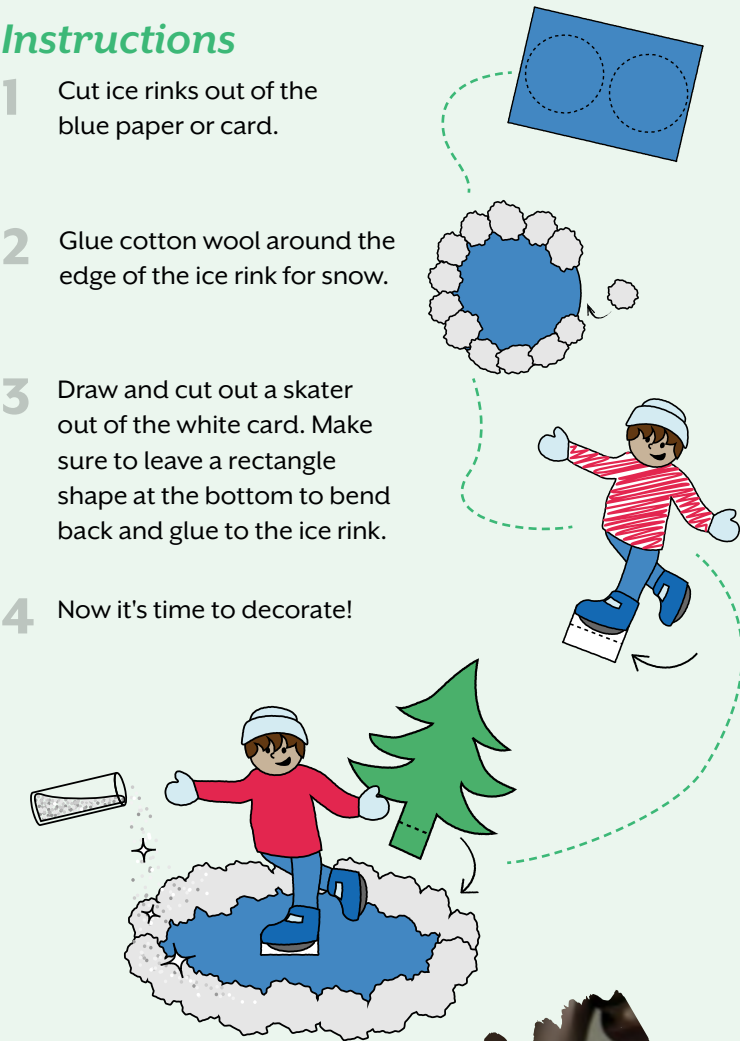
Instructions

1 Cut ice rinks out of the blue paper or card.

2 Glue cotton wool around the edge of the ice rink for snow.

3 Draw and cut out a skater out of the white card. Make sure to leave a rectangle shape at the bottom to bend back and glue to the ice rink.

4 Now it's time to decorate!



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Carly Steel

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Lisa McLeod

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How to choose a secondary school for your child

Racheal Smith and Sarah Anyan, Parentkind

16/09/26 | 7.30 - 8.30pm

Helping your child achieve in school

Liz Keable

23/09/26 | 7.30 - 8.30pm

How to choose a primary school for your child

Racheal Smith and Sarah Anyan, Parentkind

24/09/26 | 12.30 - 1.30pm

Coping tools for your child's big emotions

Jennifer Wyman, Bridge the Gap Child Mental Health C.I.C

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Nurturing your child's reading journey throughout primary

BookTrust

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A parent's guide to EBSA and barriers to attendance

Carly Steel

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Caring for ADHD Children Matters

Gwendolyn Jones, Educating Matters

19/10/26 | 7.30 - 8.30pm

How to communicate effectively with your teenager

Michael Whitworth and Miranda Perry, Abrial

03/11/26 | 7.30 - 8.30pm

Building your child's brain for lifelong health: The Oxford Brain Story

Professor Elizabeth Rapa and Professor Louise Dalton, Oxford University

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Understanding your child's anger

Jennifer Wyman, Bridge the Gap Child Mental Health C.I.C

18/11/26 | 7.30 - 8.30pm

Find out more and sign up to our webinars here:
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The most successful PTAs have a strong relationship with the schools and families they support. Is it time to celebrate your connection with the school by working alongside the leaders to become a Standard Award Parent-Friendly School?

"I think all schools should put themselves through this process because it has really highlighted all the great stuff we already do, but made us strive to be even better."

– Sarah Wilson, Pastoral Leader, Thorden Wood Primary School (Gold Award school)



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Parent-Friendly Schools rewards schools that create a culture where parents feel welcomed, listened to and involved. Parent-Friendly Schools then supports the school to deepen the relationship even further.

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Why should your school choose us?

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Could your school community benefit from Parent-Friendly Schools?

Support the school by investing in the accreditation. The school team can work with you to celebrate your connection with your school.

Find out more:

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7

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Whether you're after new fundraising initiatives, event supplies or other services to support your PTA, look no further than our supplier directory. Everything listed here has been tried, tested and recommended by at least one other PTA, and many also offer exclusive member discounts

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Kittle
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Saronti
saronti.com/school-fundraising-and-leavers-books



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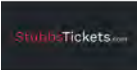


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Creature Dash
creaturedash.com



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Health & safety

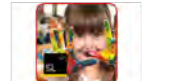
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