

**Branston Bulletin:**

**Friday 9th February 2024**

Wow! What a busy Spring term it has been so far! Lots of exciting events, including yesterday’s Squishmallows Bingo, which was superb. We raised about £300! Thankyou to all the children for making it so enjoyable….a big thankyou to the staff who gave up their free time to hold the event….and a huge thank you to Miss Perkins for organising it all!

On Monday of this week our Year 5 and 6 children went to Branston Community Academy to watch their performance of Singing in the Rain. They all thoroughly enjoyed it. I was thrilled when I was invited to attend their Gala performance last night (after our bingo!) and I can honestly say that the acting, singing and dancing was superb! It was so lovely to see some of our ex-pupils performing so confidently.

Also, Big Pickles will be running a Theatre Group at Branston Junior Academy on a Friday, starting Friday 1st March. Please see the Local Events section below.

**Our half-term ends today, Friday 9th February and will restart on Monday 19th February.**

**Please note, in the first week back (week commencing 19.02.24) ONLY the Y5/6 swimming (Thursday 22.02.24), and Year 6 Boosters start.** All other after School/Lunchtime clubsstart the second week back (week commencing 26.02.24).

I hope you all have a restful and relaxing half-term holiday and I will see you all on the gate on Monday, 19th February.

Rachael Shaw

**What exciting events are coming up?!**

**Swimming**

Parents of Y5/6 children have already been sent information regarding the swimming session taking place during the Spring term. Our remaining sessions will be 22.02.24; 29.02.24; 14.03.24; 21.03.24. Once your child can swim 25m, I will inform you that they will no longer come swimming, and I will allocate the space to another child on the waiting list. Please note, that we walk to and from the swimming pool, so a coat / warm clothing is definitely recommended.

**Non-Uniform Day for Chocolate Raffle – Friday 1st March**

By bringing in some chocolate (such as an Easter egg), children can come to school in non-uniform on this day. [Easter Chocolate Raffle tickets will go on sale soon afterwards.]

**Wrates School Class Photos – Tuesday 5th March**

Wrates will be visiting Branston Junior Academy to take class photographs.

**Parents Evening – Thursday 7th March**

Appointment times and information will be sent out to parents next week (week commencing 5.02.24).

**Red Nose Day – Friday 15th March**

We will inform parents nearer to the time as to what, if anything, we will be doing on this fundraising day. (Usually we keep it really simple and just do non-uniform.)

**School Visit to Conkers in Derbyshire – Friday 22nd March**

As part of our topic eco-warriors, we are planning a visit to Conkers in Derbyshire on Friday 22nd March. Children who do not wish to attend the trip will be in school as usual that day, participating in a range of activities until 3.30p.m.

**Saturday 27th April – 10am to 2pm. Ground Force Day!**

I want to develop several areas of our school grounds. The Environmental Area has recently been cleared of all the undergrowth so we can redesign it with various features in mind. I want the children to be able to use this area as part of break and lunchtimes as well as part of relevant lessons. We also have the area where, until recently, a small wooden shelter stood, but we had to have taken down due to some of the wood rotting.

You will recently have had a letter asking for any ideas you might have regarding the development of these two areas. You are most welcome to arrange a time to come into school and visit these areas with me (Mrs Shaw) so you can get a better idea of what I want to do with them.

We will be using fundraising from this academic year (which includes the very successful 2023 Christmas Fair and the forthcoming Easter Chocolate Raffle) to purchase anything we wish to buy to develop these areas.

**I intend to hold a ‘Grounds Force Day’ on Saturday 27th April (10am to 2pm) whereby we get as many parents, children, staff and members of the local community as possible, to help us do the manual work of creating the areas.**

***Please note, children are most welcome to come, but MUST be accompanied by an adult to ensure their safety.***

Please can you put this date in your diary and see whether you, a member of your family, or a member of the local community might be able to come and help us on this day. Or perhaps you (or someone you know) has something you’d like to donate to school to put in the areas we are developing?

**Please do look at our website (**[**www.branstonjunioracademy.co.uk**](http://www.branstonjunioracademy.co.uk)**) and scroll down to the ‘Forthcoming Events’ section – where I have typed in all the dates of events for the 2023-2024 academic year.**

Contents

[Bad Weather Information 4](#_Toc158365519)

[Club Term Dates for Spring Term 2 5](#_Toc158365520)

[Holiday / Medical Appointments 5](#_Toc158365521)

[Mobile Phones 5](#_Toc158365522)

[Second-hand Uniform 5](#_Toc158365523)

[School transport 5](#_Toc158365524)

[Is your child entitled to Free School Meals? 6](#_Toc158365525)

[School Meals 6](#_Toc158365526)

[IF YOU NEED HELP… 7](#_Toc158365527)

[Branston Junior Academy website 7](#_Toc158365528)

[Branston Food Bank 7](#_Toc158365529)

[Lincoln Community Grocery 7](#_Toc158365530)

[‘Your School Lottery’ 7](#_Toc158365531)

[LOCAL EVENTS 8](#_Toc158365532)

[February Half Term - Premier Education Holiday Camps 8](#_Toc158365533)

[February Half-Term – Lincoln City Foundation Holiday Club and Football Evolution Sessions 8](#_Toc158365534)

[February Half-Term at Wildings Holiday Club 8](#_Toc158365535)

[February Lincoln Rocks Newsletter 9](#_Toc158365536)

[Sunday 25th February, North Kesteven Snowdrop Event 9](#_Toc158365537)

[Starting Friday 1st March - Big Pickles Theatre Group 9](#_Toc158365538)

[Panto 9](#_Toc158365539)

[Sunday 24th March – Branston Easter Trail 9](#_Toc158365540)

[BANDWISE & STRINGWISE Workshops and Concert in April 10](#_Toc158365541)

[Saturday 25th May – Free Open Day Event at Lincolnshire Energy from Waste 10](#_Toc158365542)

[May 27th to 31st – Swimming Lessons at Billinghay Swimming Pool 10](#_Toc158365543)

[WaitLess App for urgent and emergency care services in Lincolnshire 10](#_Toc158365544)

[Your Guide to Health Services in Lincolnshire 11](#_Toc158365545)

## Bad Weather Information

From now on, we are in the time of potential bad weather – cold, wet, icy etc. Unless the weather/ ground becomes hazardous, or we have exceedingly heavy rain, we still send the children out to play. Indeed, if we have lots of snow, we go out and build wonderful snow sculptures on the field!

Appropriate footwear and clothing

Can I ask that you ensure that your child has suitable footwear and coats for the inclement weather. Should we get lots of snow, your child will only be allowed to go and play in it on the field, if they have a coat and if they bring a change of shoes, such as wellies, or other suitable shoes for being in snow. As you can imagine, having 170 pairs of wellies in the cloakrooms can be tricky, so if they are brought in, please can they be named and in a bag. Thankyou.

School closures due to bad weather

The decision to close the school, due to bad weather, is one that is not taken lightly. The decision is only made after consultation with staff and Governors from our school and the Infant and Secondary schools in Branston. Every attempt will be made to keep Branston Junior Academy open, so long as it is safe for both pupils and staff.

There are three reasons why a school might close first thing in the morning, due to bad weather:

* Not enough staff are able to get to the school and thus it would be unsafe to open.
* The bad weather has caused problems to the school in such a way that it would be unsafe to open or

remain open during the day.

* Schools have received information from the County Council or Police or other such establishment,

which advises schools to shut for safety on the roads etc.

Should the school not be open for the start of a day, parents would be informed by text message (using Scholar Pack Parent App) and we would endeavour to use “BJA” in the text, so that you know it is from us and not from the Infants or Secondary School.  If you do not already have the Scholar Pack Parent App, please do contact us on [enquiries@branstonjunioracademy.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@branstonjunioracademy.co.uk) and we will forward you the details.

There would also be announcements on radio:

* Radio Lincolnshire 94.9FM
* Lincs FM 96.7, 97.6 or 102.2FM

There are only two reasons why a school might shut part way through the day:

* The bad weather has caused problems to the school in such a way that to remain open would be

unsafe for children and staff.

* The weather is so bad that people (staff and parents) are recommended to return home earlier, due

to dangerous driving conditions.

In these circumstances a decision would be made in the morning, to close the school at lunchtime. Texts and phone calls would be made to contact all parents, to organise safe collection of children at lunchtime. Any child who is unable to be collected would remain at school with a skeleton staff of those who would be able to return home safely at the usual time of 3.30pm.

I can assure you all that the school has only had to close due to bad weather, four times in the 15 years I have been here….so I don’t envisage having to close the school this winter. However, I believe it is better that everyone knows what would happen just in case.

## Club Term Dates for Spring Term 2

Clubs will be running: w/c 26/02, 4/3, 11/03 and 18/03. **However, please note that there will be no clubs on Thursday 7th March due to parents evening taking place.**

With regards to the finish times for our after-school clubs, please can you ensure that you collect your child/children promptly when clubs finish at 4.30p.m., (or 4.15p.m. for football clubs). This is so that staff can also leave promptly to carry out all the other tasks they need to do in order to best cater for your child’s learning the next day.

## Holiday / Medical Appointments

Please can I remind parents/carers that if you need to take your child/children out of school for any reason you need to complete a Leave of Absence Application, these can be found on the BJA website, [www.branstonjunioracademy.co.uk](http://www.branstonjunioracademy.co.uk) under the ‘Parents’ tab>Letters and Forms>BJA LOA (Leave of Absence) Application.

Simply download the form, complete and return to school, either via email [enquiries@branstonjunioracademy.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@branstonjunioracademy.co.uk) or direct to school.  If your request is relating to a medical appointment, please provide a copy of the appointment attached to the Leave of Absence Application.

## Mobile Phones

We discourage pupils from bringing phones to school, as there is a risk of them being lost, damaged or used inappropriately in school. However, we do understand that there may be a reason why a child needs to bring a phone to school; although we class this as a ‘privilege’ and not a ‘right’. As such, should a child be found to be using a mobile phone to cause upset, it is feasible that this privilege be denied and they are not allowed to bring a mobile phone to school with them.

If you would like your child to bring in a mobile phone, please contact school by emailing [enquiries@branstonjunioracademy.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@branstonjunioracademy.co.uk) to request a Mobile Phone Parental Consent Form, or alternatively, a copy of this document, can also be found on our website [Letters And forms - BranstonJunior (branstonjunioracademy.co.uk)](https://www.branstonjunioracademy.co.uk/lettersAndForms.asp) for you to download, sign and return to school.

## Second-hand Uniform

With thanks to kind donations of good quality second-hand uniform from some parents, we have created a ‘Uniform Swap Shop’. It is in the Meeting Room at the front of the school (just off Reception) and will be open from 8.45-9.15am every day (unless otherwise informed). You are most welcome to bring in good quality uniform to add to the ‘shop’, or take what you need. All items are free, but you are most welcome to leave a monetary donation to the school if you wish.

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## School transport

If your child is starting primary school or transferring to secondary school in September 2023, they may be eligible for school transport.  If you think your child is eligible, please apply for transport as soon as you have your offer of a school place (1 March for secondary school or 17 April for primary).  Applications can be made online at the website below or a telephone application can be made by contacting the Customer Service Centre on 01522 782020.

For more information about the home to school transport policy and online applications please go to [www.lincolnshire.gov.uk/school-college-transport](http://www.lincolnshire.gov.uk/school-college-transport).   Queries can be emailed to [schooltransportapplications@lincolnshire.gov.uk](mailto:schooltransportapplications@lincolnshire.gov.uk).

## Is your child entitled to Free School Meals?

Given the current situation of rising costs, your financial situation at home may have changed. You might not be aware that families who receive certain benefits may be eligible for free school meals. Your child is eligible for free school meals if you are in receipt of one of the following benefits:

* Universal Credit with an annual net income of no more than £7,400 (after tax and not including any benefits you get)
* Income Support
* Income-based Jobseeker’s Allowance
* Income-related Employment and Support Allowance
* Support under Part 6 of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
* The guarantee element of state Pension Credit
* Working Tax Credit run-on (paid for the four weeks after you stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit)
* Child Tax Credit (provided you’re not also entitled to Working Tax Credit) with an annual income of no more than £16,190

Healthy school food has obvious health benefits and can help pupils establish healthy habits for life. Healthy school food can also help to improve pupils’ readiness to learn.

Registering for free meals could also raise an extra £1,320 for our school, to fund valuable support for your child, such as extra tuition, additional teaching staff or after school activities. This additional money is available from central government for every child whose parent is receiving one of the benefits listed above.

If you believe your child may be entitled to free school meals, please go to [www.lincolnshire.gov.uk/schools-and-education/free-school-meals](http://www.lincolnshire.gov.uk/schools-and-education/free-school-meals) or phone (01522) 782030.

If you do apply and your child(ren) is eligible for free school meals, please can you contact the school on [enquiries@branstonjunioracademy.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@branstonjunioracademy.co.uk) or telephone us on 01522 880555 to let us know.

## School Meals

Please order school meals with our provider, Ideal School Meals. If you should have any problems registering your account details/ordering your child(ren)’s meals, you can contact Ideal School Meals by telephone on 01522 246424:

Monday & Tuesday between the hours of 9.00am-4.00pm

Wednesday and Friday 9.00am-2.45pm

Alternatively, you can email them on [enquiries@idealschoolmeals.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@idealschoolmeals.co.uk)

**Please remember that it is your responsibility to order your child a meal for lunch.**

If you forget to do so, you will need to speak with Ideal School Meals to see if you can organise a meal for your child and/or provide a packed meal for your child.

Full Terms and conditions are available at [https://www.lincsmusicservice.org/learning-an-instrument/individual-small-group-tuition](https://www.lincsmusicservice.org/instrumentallessons)

# IF YOU NEED HELP…

## Branston Junior Academy website

If you look on our school website ([www.branstonjunioracademy.co.uk](http://www.branstonjunioracademy.co.uk)) you can find lots of guidance and advice. If you look on the ‘Curriculum’ tab, you can click on pages which give you advice on subjects, such as Maths and English. If you click on the ‘Parent’ tab ‘I need help!’ brings up links to website pages which can help your child with their mental health and wellbeing.

## Branston Food Bank

The helpline mobile number is **07395906220**. ***However, please note this service is for Branston residents only.***

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## Lincoln Community Grocery

Lincoln Community Grocery is located at Beaumont Manor, Beaumont Fee, Lincoln, LN1 1UL and is open Monday to Friday between 9.30 a.m. to 4.30 p.m.

For more information, please visit their website [https://communitygrocery.org.uk/lincoln or telephone 01522 265511](https://communitygrocery.org.uk/lincoln%20%20or%20telephone%2001522%20265511).

**E-Safety News**

AI Chatbots is a computer program designed to simulate/mimic conversation with humans. It offers exciting opportunities, providing information and assisting with problem solving it also comes with potential dangers. Please see our website for more information.

## A screenshot of a computer Description automatically generated**‘Your School Lottery’**

Thank you to all parents who are supporting us by being part of the School Lottery. Congratulations to all those winners and thank you to those who have donated their winnings to the school. It is very kind of you and most appreciated!

**Win a Nintendo Switch Bundle or £1,000 cash prize!**

**Get your tickets before Saturday 24th February to be in with a chance to win!**

The draws take place each Saturday night and offer the opportunity to win cash prizes each week, including a jackpot prize of £25,000. Tickets cost £1, and Branston Junior Academy receives at least 40p from every £1 ticket purchased, it’s so simple to register, just click on the link  <https://www.yourschoollottery.co.uk/lottery/school/branston-junior-academy>

which will take you to our School Lottery Website.  Click on Buy Tickets and it will ask you for some personal details, such as name, email and postal address before registering you and letting you choose how many tickets you would like to buy each week. You can pay by Direct Debit or Debit Card.  So, if you would like to raise funds for Branston Junior Academy please spread the word to family and friends within the UK.

Details for each draw results are published on Your School Lottery website, as well as on their Facebook and Twitter, plus winners will be contacted directly by email.  Winnings are paid directly into your nominated bank account, or if you wish, can be donated to Branston Junior Academy.

Good luck for the coming weeks draws!

# LOCAL EVENTS

We are often contacted by external providers etc, who send us information about local events and ask us to advertise them to our parents. If it is only 1 or 2 things, previously we have sent them out as attachments to our weekly Branston Bulletin, however we are acutely aware that this can mean that sometimes this document becomes very long! We have come up with the solution of putting such information on our website instead. If there are any new events, we will list them below. ***To find out more information about any new, or previously advertised events, simply click on the Local Events tab in the Parents Menu of the*** [***https://www.branstonjunioracademy.co.uk***](https://www.branstonjunioracademy.co.uk) ***website.***

# February Half Term - Premier Education Holiday Camps

Premier Education multi-activity holiday camps are now taking bookings for half-term They are offering a blend of activities for all ages, every day is different and include activities children may have not tried before, for instance roller skating and fencing. Please see our website for further information.

# February Half-Term – Lincoln City Foundation Holiday Club and Football Evolution Sessions

Bookings are open for February Holiday Club and Football Evolution sessions at the LNER Stadium, the home of Lincoln City Football Club. Holiday Club offers creative crafts, games, sports etc and Football Evolution Club is for children who want to have fun and develop their football skills. Please see our website for further information.

# February Half-Term at Wildings Holiday Club

Land and Leaf Collective are running a February half-term range of holiday club sessions at their Ofsted registered Wildings Holiday Club. Their Inclusive Wildlings Holiday Clubs are small group sessions (maximum 8 children) that have been adapted to meet the needs of autistic and neurodivergent children. These sessions offer a quieter environment and more adult support. Children have the opportunity to take part in any of the available activities at their own pace, without pressure. Sessions that draw from a wide range of resources such as games, bushcrafts and nature crafts. The forest school leaders will carefully scaffold learning and experiences in order to create a safe and welcoming environment which prevents overwhelming sensory experiences.

# February Lincoln Rocks Newsletter

Lincoln Rocks are an online resource for families looking for low cost things to do with their free time together.

The Lincoln Rocks website is busy with lots of community events and free activities including parks, walks, and play areas to help keep the kids entertained this half term break. For more information please visit our website.

# Sunday 25th February, North Kesteven Snowdrop Event

In partnership with the Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust the Snowdrop Event in aid of Child Bereavement UK is taking place between midday and 3p.m. at Whisby Nature Park. Snowdrop bulbs will be kindly provided by Pennells Garden Centre in South Hykeham and will be available on the day for a small donation. Volunteers will also be on hand to help with the planting.

All proceeds will be donated to Child Bereavement UK, which supports families and educates professionals when a baby or child of any age dies or is dying, or when a child is facing bereavement. Information on the charity is available via the link <https://childbereavementuk.org/about-us/> . Please see our website for more information.

# Starting Friday 1st March - Big Pickles Theatre Group

Does your child like singing or dancing? Are they keen to try new things? Why not come and join Big Pickles after school on a Friday to become part of the new ‘Big Pickles Theatre Group’ lead by Miss Chelsea.

Starting on 1st March: collected by Big Pickles straight after school at 3.30p.m. to 4.30p.m. It will cost £5.50, includes snack and drinks.

Please contact Mrs Kate at [big-pickles@little-pickles.com](mailto:big-pickles@little-pickles.com) to reserve space.

# Panto

Mr Murderies’ Players present their panto Aladdin on:

Saturday 2nd March at 2pm and 7pm

Sunday 3rd March at 2pm

At Branston Village Hall. Adult tickets cost £8; Children tickets cost £6 and Family tickets cost £20.

Please call the Box Office on 07942 314068 to book your tickets between 10 a.m. and 7 p.m.

# Sunday 24th March – Branston Easter Trail

Branston & Mere Parish Council are organising a free easter trail for children within the parish. If you would like to take part, you will need to register before 20th March. The event will take place between 10 a.m. to 1.00 p.m. with every child taking part receiving a prize at the end. For more information, please go to our website.

# BANDWISE & STRINGWISE Workshops and Concert in April

Bandwise and Stringwise are holdingworkshop days for young wind, brass, percussion and string players at South Nottinghamshire Academy, Radcliffe on Trent. Rehearsals are led by experienced conductors with other instrumental specialists joining them for other activities to get everyone involved.

**Bandwise workshop: Saturday 20 April:**

[**https://www.music-for-everyone.org/event/byme-bandwise-apr24/**](https://www.music-for-everyone.org/event/byme-bandwise-apr24/)

Bandwise 1: grade 2 – 5 players

Bandwise 2: grade 5+ players

**Stringwise workshop: Sunday 21 April:**

[**https://www.music-for-everyone.org/event/byme-stringwise-apr24/**](https://www.music-for-everyone.org/event/byme-stringwise-apr24/)

Stringwise 1: grade 0 - 1 players

Stringwise 2: grade 2 - 4 players

Stringwise 3: grade 5+ players

All players are then invited to come together for the **Big Youth Music Experience** **concert on Sunday 28 April at Nottingham’s Albert Hall.**

## Saturday 25th May – Free Open Day Event at Lincolnshire Energy from Waste

Lincolnshire Energy from Waste are holding a Free Open Day Event from 9.00a.m. to 3.00p.m. where you are invited to learn about the journeys of Lincolnshire’s waste and see what happens to the non-recyclable waste at the facility. There will also be free face-painting, catering and eco-focused stands including local produce and handmade products amongst others. For further details see: <https://lincolnshire.fccenvironment.co.uk>

# May 27th to 31st – Swimming Lessons at Billinghay Swimming Pool

Billinghay are holding one week intensive swimming lessons, costing £35, at their local swimming pool for Yr 1 to Yr 6 pupils in May. For more information, please contact them by email on [billinghaypool@gmail.com](mailto:billinghaypool@gmail.com) or alternatively drop them a message on their Facebook page.

# WaitLess App for urgent and emergency care services in Lincolnshire

We have been advised that there is a **smartphone app to help people WaitLess for urgent and emergency care** services across Lincolnshire which is designed to help people choose the least pressured urgent and emergency care services and to understand waiting times better.

The WaitLess app combines current waiting time, queue numbers and travel-time at urgent care facilities in the county.  This displayed information helps people make an informed decision about where to seek the fastest treatment for minor illness and injuries. Along with this, the app displays all available pharmacies in the area as an alternative treatment option.  **The app can be downloaded from Google Play or the Apple App Store.**

# Your Guide to Health Services in Lincolnshire

Please see our website for more information about Self Care, Pharmacy, Your GP Practice, NHS 111, WaitLess, Urgent Treatment Centre, Dental Treatment and Mental Health Crisis.