

Suffolk County Council Monthly Parish Newsletter: November meeting

Don't put off your flu vaccination

Health chiefs in Suffolk are reminding people to get a flu vaccination to ward off the worst effects of a potentially debilitating illness.

Parents of 2-3-year-olds are being encouraged to take their child to have a simple nasal spray vaccination at their GP surgery, while carers are also advised not to put off their free flu jab. With higher than usual numbers of people contracting flu in the Southern Hemisphere during their winter season earlier this year, it is more important than ever not to delay getting the vaccination.

Flu is a highly infectious disease and can lead to serious complications, especially among some of the most vulnerable groups. Public Health England's Chief Medical Officer has warned flu and the complications associated with it cause, on average, 8,000 deaths a year.

People with long term health conditions such as diabetes, heart, kidney or liver disease are eligible for a free vaccination, as are pregnant women and all those over 65.

Children from reception class to year four will receive their nasal spray vaccination at school as part of the national vaccination programme and those aged two and three years old can have the spray vaccination from their GP.

Flu can be especially unpleasant for young children, who in turn can spread it to the rest of the family, which is why parents of 2-3-year-olds are encouraged to see their GP for the painless nasal spray to ensure their children are protected.

The county's healthy lifestyle providers, OneLife Suffolk, will be working closely with many of Suffolk's GP practices, pharmacies and children's centres to raise awareness of the importance of getting the vaccination.

People should contact their GP, pharmacist or midwife to get the flu jab. Visit nhs.uk/staywell or healthysuffolk.org.uk for more information.

GCSE and A Level results on the rise in Suffolk

Provisional GCSE and A Level results have been published by the Department for Education today.

GCSE

Almost 7,000 students in Suffolk were entered for GCSE results this year.

The provisional figures show that 2% more students in Suffolk are achieving the expected standards in English and Maths at GCSE compared with last year.

This year, there has been a change to the way that English and Maths GCSEs are graded. Results are now graded from 9 to 1, (previously A to G) with 9 being the highest and 1 being the lowest. The

expected standard for pupils to achieve is now a grade 4 and above (previously a C grade and above), with grade 5 considered a 'strong pass'. These changes will be phased in to cover all subjects by 2020.

62.4% of students in the county are achieving the expected standard in English and Maths and Suffolk has closed the gap to national to just 1.1%. Suffolk has also risen by 24 places in national league tables for this measure, to 85th out of 151 authorities. The county has risen 7 places in national rankings for the percentage of students achieving the English Baccalaureate.

Progress of Suffolk students continues to be above the national average for state funded schools, with the county achieving an average Progress 8 score of -0.01, compared with -0.03 nationally.

Progress 8 measures how well pupils of all abilities have progressed by comparing them with students who achieved similar levels in Key Stage 2 across the country.

A Level

Almost 3,000 pupils were entered for A Levels in Suffolk.

The provisional A Level figures show that Suffolk pupils have once again performed well with the General Applied entry and Tech Level entries remaining above the national average figures.

A Level attainment is measured by the Department for Education using a points system. Points are given based on the type of A Level and the grade achieved. For example, an A Level at grade A is worth 50 points, whereas an AS Level would be worth half of this.

Suffolk's Academic average points per entry this year is 30.01. For General Applied, (previously referred to as vocational) the average points per entry has increased to 35.95 from last year's figure of 34.70. This has remained above the national figure of 35.6. At Tech Level, Suffolk's average points has increased by more than 3% to 34.66 and remains above national figure of 32.2.

These figures are provisional and are subject to validation by the Department for Education. Validated results will be published in the New Year.

Suffolk Fostering Service launches first in a series of fostering recruitment campaigns

Suffolk County Council's Fostering Service will launch a series of campaigns over the coming months to encourage more Suffolk residents to become foster carers.

820 children currently live in care in Suffolk and there is an urgent need for more people to come forward to foster. The first campaign will focus on the need to recruit more foster carers for teenagers.

Suffolk Fostering Service is the longest established provider of fostering services in the county, offering competitive fees, 24-hour support services and up to 21 days paid leave per year.

The first campaign focuses on the real-life experiences of two Suffolk Fostering Service foster carers, Ethel from Ipswich and Sammy from Lowestoft. Teenagers in care have often gone through a great deal in their lives and this campaign aims to give an honest reflection of what it takes to be a foster carer and the rewards that can come as a result.

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The campaign is accompanied by a [new promotional video](#) which features both Ethel and Sammy, providing an insight into what it takes to be a foster carer for teenagers and the positive difference they make to a young person's life.

The video addresses why the application process can be timely and thorough, with Ethel and Sammy both describing how the vulnerability of the children in care makes the timeframe absolutely necessary. It also makes clear that the robustness and intensity of the process is equally there to benefit and protect the prospective foster carer, ensuring that they are fully prepared and certain of the commitment they are making.

It's really important to get more people talking about foster care and I would encourage Suffolk residents to look at their own lives to consider whether they have the patience, compassion and the spare room required to provide a child with the secure home life they need."

For more information visit: www.fosterandadopt.suffolk.gov.uk

Suffolk Fostering Service will be hosting several pop-up events across Suffolk:

- Saturday 11th November, 9.30am - 12.30pm, Stowmarket Leisure Centre
- Saturday 11th November, 12.00pm - 6.00pm University of Suffolk, Ipswich

Reminder to check white goods as Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service marks UK Home Safety Week

People living in Suffolk are being urged to check their white goods and to not use them unattended in an attempt to reduce the risk of fires starting in the home.

As part of UK Home Safety Week, fire services up and down the country are recommending people register their appliances in case of recalls, but to also be aware that incidents can occur when a product isn't on a recall list.

Damage and severity of a fire, should one occur, is dramatically reduced if they are not left running while everyone is asleep or out of the house. Early indicators of potential risks can be quickly noticed, such as smells, unusual sounds or the appliance not performing as expected.

People are also being urged to check their smoke and carbon monoxide alarms, and making sure they know how they will exit their home if a fire does occur.

In 2015/16, more than 15,000 accidental fires in the home were caused by cookers and white goods across the UK. In 2016/17 in Suffolk, there were 29 incidents caused by white goods – to date in 2017/18, there have been 11.

We would urge people to spend a few minutes registering their appliances at www.registermyappliance.org.uk

This is the Association of Manufacturers of Domestic Appliances' (AMDEA) online safety initiative, which is supported by fire services and government. It represents nearly 90% of white goods brands and allows people to register appliances new and up to 12 years old so if there's a safety recall they can be contacted and a qualified engineer can visit the household to carry out a repair.

It is also advised that people use their appliances only when they are in the home and awake, as this is proven to significantly reduce the risk of a serious fire.

It is important people are well prepared in case of a fire. If you have an elderly neighbour or family member nearby, why not check in on them to make sure they're prepared as well

Parents urged to have their say on school admissions consultation

We are seeking views on its proposed admissions policy for the 2019/2020 school year; ensuring school places are offered to children in a fair way.

The consultation, which started on Monday 2 October, will run until Monday 13 November 2017.

There are proposals to make some minor changes to the admission arrangements and coordinated admissions scheme for schools in Suffolk for the 2019/2020 school year.

The governing bodies of voluntary aided, foundation, free schools and academies are responsible for admissions to their schools. If you want to view the arrangements for these schools you should contact the school directly.

To view the consultation documents and to have your say on the proposals, please visit www.suffolk.gov.uk/consultations.