BRING CHRISTMAS BACK TO SCHOOLS

THE PARENT ACTION PACK

Children only get one childhood. Let's make Christmas part of it.

A practical guide for parents who want every primary school to stage an annual traditional nativity play, including opportunities for Years 5 and 6; teach the Christmas story; and keep the Christmas Fair by name. For secondary schools: a traditional annual carol concert.

For schools in England | November 2026

Free to copy and adapt for your own school. Replace all text in [square brackets] before sending.

WELCOME: THE CHILDHOOD WE WANT TO PASS ON

Remember the school hall at Christmas? Paper stars, painted scenery, a nervous shepherd waiting for his cue, an angel whose halo would not stay straight, and a room full of families singing together. Or the school Christmas Fair, with its decorations, carols, stalls and anticipation of the big day.

For so many of us, these are among our happiest childhood memories. We remember rehearsing, acting, singing, making decorations and seeing our families in the audience. The story of Mary, Joseph and the birth of Jesus belonged to our school Christmas, whether we were six, ten or eleven. Older children are not too old to be in a play; they can enjoy more demanding parts and a bigger production.

Children only get one childhood. The excitement of a nativity missed at ten cannot be recreated years later.

This pack is for parents who want children to have the opportunity to make those memories, whatever year group they are in. It helps you ask questions, speak to the school, gather support, offer practical assistance and request a lasting annual commitment.

Our campaign is positive and focused on celebrating Christmas: a school-run nativity play for primary pupils of all ages, the Christmas story, traditional carols, a Christmas Fair called the Christmas Fair, and a secondary-school carol concert. These are traditions worth carrying on, year after year.

The two requests

PRIMARY SCHOOLS: An actual nativity play staged by the school every December, with meaningful opportunities for pupils from Reception through Year 6 - including ten- and eleven-year-olds - to act and perform; annual teaching of the Christmas story; traditional carols; and a Christmas Fair that remains a Christmas Fair.

SECONDARY SCHOOLS: An annual Christmas carol concert, with opportunities for pupils to sing, perform, play instruments, give readings and attend with their families. Where a Christmas Fair is held, keep that traditional name.

These are school-wide traditions that should be genuinely available to children across the relevant age groups. Teaching, performance and worship are distinct; schools must respect applicable rights to withdraw from RE and worship and should make sensible arrangements for any pupil who does not participate in a performance.

Start here: your first 20 minutes

1. Check your school's website, calendar and most recent newsletter.
2. Find out what is already taught and which Christmas events are planned.
3. Choose the appropriate letter in this pack and personalise it.
4. Send it to the headteacher or relevant school contact.
5. Make a note of the date and follow up courteously if necessary.

The first step is a constructive conversation with a clear outcome in mind: a date in the calendar for an actual school nativity, a carol concert, or a Christmas Fair bearing its traditional name.

1. THE CHRISTMAS PROMISE

What we are asking primary schools to adopt

The Christmas Promise for Primary Schools - Reception to Year 6

We ask our school to:

1. **Teach the Christmas story every year.** Plan age-appropriate lessons about Mary, Joseph, Bethlehem and the birth of Jesus, its meaning and its place in British Christmas traditions.
2. **Stage a traditional nativity play every December.** The school should organise a real dramatisation of the Christmas story - with children acting, singing and telling the story - rather than replacing it with a generic winter show or classroom lesson alone.
3. **Include older pupils in the play.** Ten- and eleven-year-olds are not too old for a nativity. Years 5 and 6 should have the chance to act in substantial parts and perform on stage, not be confined to helping backstage. A larger school could stage age-group plays or rotate roles.
4. **Sing traditional Christmas carols.** Give pupils the opportunity to learn, practise and perform familiar carols as part of the school Christmas season.
5. **Create Christmas memories.** Keep decorations, crafts, festive storytelling and seasonal activities in classrooms and assemblies from Reception to Year 6.
6. **Keep the Christmas Fair a Christmas Fair.** If the school or PTA holds an event celebrating Christmas, retain that name and the familiar traditions of a Christmas Fair rather than renaming it a Winter Fair.
7. **Put all of this in the annual school plan.** Schedule the nativity, Christmas teaching, carols and Christmas Fair every year, so traditions continue even as staff and pupils change.

What we are asking secondary schools to adopt

The Carol Concert Promise for Secondary Schools

We ask our school to:

1. Hold a traditional Christmas carol concert every December.
2. Include recognisable carols and Christmas readings.
3. Involve pupils as singers, musicians, readers, presenters, technicians and organisers.
4. Invite parents and carers to enjoy the performance where practical.
5. Give the carol concert a standing place in the annual school calendar.
6. Where a school or PTA holds a Christmas Fair, preserve the name Christmas Fair and the traditions that go with it.

What success looks like

For a primary school: a confirmed date for a school-produced nativity play, with Years 5 and 6 included in meaningful ways; Christmas teaching and carols in the annual plan; and a Christmas Fair retaining its name. For a secondary school: a dated annual carol concert. In both cases: a named staff coordinator, a workable plan and written confirmation.

This is a request for traditions that continue every year, rather than a one-off compromise or an event that disappears as soon as a child reaches Key Stage 2.

2. BEFORE YOU WRITE: CHECK YOUR SCHOOL

If a school calls its event a 'Winter Fair', first find out who organises it and whether it was previously called the 'Christmas Fair'. A change of name does not by itself tell you what is taught, but parents can still ask for the Christmas Fair name to be restored. Also check whether the school stages an actual nativity play, and which year groups are included.

Check the facts first. It will help you make a clear and fair request.

School name: [SCHOOL NAME]

School type: [MAINTAINED SCHOOL / ACADEMY / FREE SCHOOL / OTHER / NOT SURE]

Your contact: [HEADTEACHER / RE LEAD / MUSIC LEAD / PTA / GOVERNORS]

Question	What I found / where I checked
Is the Christmas story included in the RE curriculum?	[ANSWER]
Is the school staging an actual nativity play? Which year groups act, including Years 5-6?	[ANSWER]
Do pupils learn or sing traditional Christmas carols?	[ANSWER]
Is there a Christmas Fair under that name (not Winter Fair)? Who decides the name?	[ANSWER]
Is there a secondary-school carol concert?	[ANSWER]
When did arrangements last change, and what reason was given?	[ANSWER]
Can parents help with costumes, music, venue or organisation?	[ANSWER]

Where to look

- The school's curriculum pages, particularly religious education and music.
- The school calendar and newsletters: is there a nativity play, which years act in it, and is a Christmas Fair listed?
- PTA announcements: is the traditional Christmas Fair being held under that name, and who decides the name?
- The school's music development plan, if published.
- The published complaints procedure, if you later need it.

If your school already stages a nativity with opportunities for older pupils, sings carols and has a Christmas Fair, thank the staff and PTA. Ask for the school to keep these traditions in the annual calendar. That is a success too.

3. THE TEN-STEP PARENT PLAN

STEP 1 — Establish the facts. Check whether there is a school-organised nativity play (not merely a lesson), which year groups take part, and who organises and names the Christmas Fair.

STEP 2 — Make a clear request. For primary schools, ask for a nativity every year with opportunities from Reception to Year 6, Christmas teaching and carols, and the Christmas Fair name. For secondary schools, ask for the annual carol concert.

STEP 3 — Write to the headteacher. Use one of the letters in this pack. Keep your language polite and your proposal specific.

STEP 4 — Listen to the response. Schools may raise timetabling, staffing, costs, rehearsal space or cast size. Ask what it would take to include upper-primary children in a real production.

STEP 5 — Find other interested parents. Invite them to sign the support statement, not to confront or criticise individual staff.

STEP 6 — Offer help. Parents can support the school's production with costumes, scripts, props, scenery, printing and Christmas Fair stalls, under school-approved arrangements.

STEP 7 — Request a short meeting. Bring the one-page proposal and a short list of practical solutions.

STEP 8 — Ask for an annual commitment. Request a fixed calendar entry for the school nativity and the Christmas Fair (or, at secondary level, the carol concert) and a plan that survives staffing changes.

STEP 9 — If necessary, ask the governors or academy trust to consider the proposal. A declined request for a nativity is not, by itself, proof that the school has broken the law. Use the school complaints procedure for genuine complaints about process or legal provision.

STEP 10 — Thank the school and share the outcome responsibly. Recognise everyone who helped, and protect children's privacy.

Keep a record: date contacted; person contacted; which year groups will be in the nativity; Christmas Fair name; response; meeting date; agreed action; next review date.

4. PRIMARY SCHOOLS: A READY-TO-PROPOSE CHRISTMAS PROGRAMME

Proposal: A school-produced traditional nativity play every December, including meaningful performance opportunities for Years 5 and 6, supported by teaching about the Christmas story, carol singing, and a Christmas Fair that keeps its name.

The school can adapt the script and scale of the production to its pupils and timetable. But a lesson about the nativity is not a substitute for actually staging the play. Ask for a cast, rehearsals, a performance date and an invitation for families wherever practical. Keep the event in the annual school calendar.

Suggested progression by age

Reception / Year 1: Learn the Christmas story and take part in a simple nativity, with short lines, songs and group roles, alongside paper stars, crafts and familiar characters.

Year 2: Retell the story and take speaking, singing or acting roles in a nativity. Help with simple scenery and learn a traditional Christmas carol.

Years 3–4: Take part in a school nativity through acting, longer readings, dialogue, music and ensemble scenes. Learn how nativity plays and carols became part of British school life.

Years 5–6: Take on substantial acting and speaking roles in a nativity with age-appropriate dialogue, movement and music. Ten- and eleven-year-olds can play leading characters, join a chorus or ensemble, and take creative roles - not just narrate for younger children or work backstage.

A four-week model

Week	Teaching or activity	Visible outcome
1	Read and discuss the nativity story	Children can explain the basic story and characters
2	Learn traditional carols; cast the school nativity and make scenery	Pupils of all ages, including Years 5-6, allocated suitable performance roles
3	Rehearse the actual nativity play with a school-led cast	Full cast rehearsals, songs and age-appropriate dialogue
4	Perform the nativity; celebrate at the Christmas Fair	A school nativity performance and a Christmas Fair under its traditional name

Make the nativity a play for the whole primary school

Give pupils across the primary years the opportunity to act, sing or take other meaningful parts in the school's nativity programme. A large school can stage separate productions for younger and older pupils; a smaller school can put on one mixed-age cast. Offer appropriate alternatives for pupils who cannot or do not wish to perform, and make sensible adjustments for disabilities or anxiety. Keep RE, collective worship and performance arrangements distinct, respecting applicable parental rights.

A child aged ten is not too old for the nativity. Give older pupils a more demanding script and real roles on stage. It needn't be costly: borrowed costumes, simple scenery, rehearsals and a school hall are enough to create lasting memories.

The nativity: ask for an actual school production

A school-run nativity has a named teacher or production lead, an agreed script, a cast including upper-primary pupils, rehearsal time and a performance date. Parents should be able to see that the nativity is on the calendar, rather than merely being told the story will be covered in lessons.

If one performance cannot accommodate all year groups, ask for two nativities (for example, younger and older pupils), or a rotating cast across performances. The important point is that reaching Year 5 or Year 6 should not mean the end of being in a nativity play.

The Christmas Fair: keep its proper name

Ask the school and PTA to hold the annual Christmas Fair under that name, with decorations, seasonal stalls, carol singing and familiar festive activities. If the event has been renamed a Winter Fair, request that the name Christmas Fair be restored. A fair may be organised by the PTA, so address the request to the people who actually choose the name.

The school nativity, Christmas Fair and classroom traditions reinforce one another. Together they give children experiences to remember and create a regular rhythm that new generations can inherit.

5. SECONDARY SCHOOLS: A CAROL CONCERT THAT CAN LAST

Proposal: A 45–60 minute annual concert, hosted in the school hall or another suitable accessible venue, with pupils involved in its organisation and presentation.

Suggested running order

1. Welcome from two pupil presenters.
2. **Once in Royal David's City** — opening carol.
3. A short reading telling the beginning of the Christmas story.
4. A choir item or instrumental arrangement.
5. **Away in a Manger** — familiar traditional carol.
6. A second reading from the Christmas story.
7. A solo, ensemble or school orchestra performance.
8. **Silent Night** — reflective carol.
9. A short message of thanks to pupils and staff.
10. **Hark! The Herald Angels Sing** or **O Come, All Ye Faithful** — closing carol.

Schools can choose their own readings, adapt the programme and include pupils who do not want to sing. Check that sheet music, lyric reproductions and arrangements are used with the necessary permissions.

A straightforward organisation plan

Eight weeks ahead: Identify a member of staff, agree the date and venue, invite pupil volunteers.

Six weeks ahead: Choose carols and readings, plan rehearsals and arrange any instrumental accompaniment.

Four weeks ahead: Invite families, recruit supervised helpers and check accessibility.

Two weeks ahead: Finalise programme, seating, sound and rehearsal arrangements.

Concert week: Rehearse, welcome families, perform and celebrate the pupils' work.

If December is already too full, ask for a commitment to start the following year. Some schools may prefer a lunchtime concert, an in-school performance or a recording made under their safeguarding policies.

The important thing is that the tradition exists and pupils know it will return.

TEMPLATE A — FIRST LETTER TO A PRIMARY SCHOOL

Subject: An annual nativity play for all primary ages, and our Christmas Fair

Dear [HEADTEACHER'S NAME],

I am writing as a parent/carer at [SCHOOL NAME] to ask that our school stages a traditional nativity play every Christmas, with opportunities for pupils of all ages - including Years 5 and 6 - to take part. I would also love the school's Christmas Fair to retain its familiar name.

I remember school nativity plays as some of the most joyful experiences of childhood. Acting in a play at ten or eleven is just as valuable as acting at five. A real school performance, with rehearsals, costumes and family members in the audience, creates memories that ordinary classroom teaching cannot replace.

Could you please confirm whether the school is staging a nativity play this year, which year groups will take part on stage, how the Christmas story is taught, and whether the school or PTA will hold a Christmas Fair by that name?

I would like to ask the school to make the following an annual commitment:

- Age-appropriate teaching about the nativity story in each primary year group.
- A traditional nativity play organised by the school and performed every December - not simply a classroom storytelling session or a generic winter show.
- Meaningful acting and performance opportunities for older children in Years 5 and 6, as well as younger pupils.
- Traditional Christmas carols, decorations and seasonal activities.
- A Christmas Fair called the Christmas Fair, with the name retained in the annual school calendar.

I appreciate the work needed to organise a school production and fair. I would be happy to help with costumes, props, scenery, refreshments or fundraising through the PTA, subject to the school's usual safeguarding arrangements.

My hope is that no child at [SCHOOL NAME] misses the chance to be in the school nativity simply because they have reached Year 5 or Year 6, and that the Christmas Fair continues as a much-loved tradition.

Thank you for considering the request. I would welcome a reply confirming the school's plans or a short meeting to discuss how a lasting annual nativity and Christmas Fair could work.

Kind regards,

[YOUR NAME]
[YOUR CHILD'S YEAR GROUP, IF YOU WISH]
[CONTACT DETAILS]

TEMPLATE B — FIRST LETTER TO A SECONDARY SCHOOL

Subject: Proposal for an annual school Christmas carol concert

Dear [HEADTEACHER'S NAME],

I am writing to ask whether [SCHOOL NAME] would consider establishing, or reinstating, an annual traditional Christmas carol concert.

For generations, carol concerts have been a memorable part of school life. They give pupils the opportunity to sing, play instruments, read aloud, rehearse together and perform for their families. They also create a wonderful sense of occasion at the end of the autumn term.

I would love to see our school make this an annual tradition, with recognisable carols such as Once in Royal David's City, Silent Night, Away in a Manger and Hark! The Herald Angels Sing.

The event need not be elaborate. A school hall, a small choir, a few musicians and a short programme of carols and readings would be a lovely start. Pupils could contribute through singing, music, presentation, technical support and event organisation.

Could you tell me whether an annual carol concert is planned and, if not, whether the school could put one in this year's or next year's calendar? If the school or PTA also holds a Christmas Fair, I hope that tradition and its name can be retained.

I would be pleased to help find interested parents who could support the event, under the school's usual arrangements.

Thank you for considering an idea that could become a treasured school tradition for many years to come.

Kind regards,

[YOUR NAME]
[YOUR CHILD'S YEAR GROUP, IF YOU WISH]
[CONTACT DETAILS]

TEMPLATE C — WHEN A CHRISTMAS FAIR HAS BECOME A WINTER FAIR

Subject: Please keep our Christmas Fair a Christmas Fair

Dear [HEADTEACHER / PTA CHAIR],

I noticed that the school event is advertised as the [WINTER FAIR / EVENT NAME]. Could you confirm whether this is the fair previously known as our Christmas Fair, and who decides the event's name?

A school Christmas Fair is a tradition worth keeping: children making decorations, parents organising stalls, familiar carols, handmade gifts and festive food. Its name is part of that shared school experience and the memories it creates.

If this is a celebration of Christmas, I would like to ask the school and PTA to call it the Christmas Fair, rather than Winter Fair, and to keep that title on the calendar in future years. The name can reflect what the event is actually celebrating.

I'd be pleased to help make the event a success, for example with decorations, stalls, refreshments, printing or carol singing, in whatever way is useful to the organisers.

Thank you to everyone who works hard to organise the fair. I would appreciate a response about whether the Christmas Fair name can be restored or retained this year and in future.

Kind regards,

[YOUR NAME]

Note for parents: Confirm who decides the fair's name before writing. A Winter Fair title is not evidence that nativity teaching or other Christmas activities have disappeared, but you can still make a clear request for the Christmas Fair name.

TEMPLATE D — POLITE FOLLOW-UP AND REPLY

If you have not received a response

Subject: Follow-up: Christmas teaching and events at [SCHOOL NAME]

Dear [NAME],

I am following up on my email of [DATE] about [AN ACTUAL PRIMARY SCHOOL NATIVITY PLAY FOR ALL YEAR GROUPS, INCLUDING YEARS 5-6 / OUR CHRISTMAS FAIR BEING NAMED AS SUCH / AN ANNUAL SECONDARY CAROL CONCERT].

I appreciate how busy this term is. Would you be able to let me know who is best placed to consider the proposal, and when I might expect a response?

I would be very happy to discuss simple, low-cost options and ways in which parents might help.

Thank you for your time.

Kind regards,

[YOUR NAME]

If the school says Christmas is already covered

Subject: Thank you for explaining the school's Christmas plans

Dear [NAME],

Thank you for explaining the Christmas teaching and activities at [SCHOOL NAME]. It is encouraging to hear what is already being done.

Could the school confirm an actual annual nativity play, including roles for Years 5 and 6 where this is a primary school; keep the Christmas Fair by name; or make the secondary-school carol concert a standing calendar event, as appropriate?

I appreciate the work that teachers put into making these occasions special. Please let me know if there are appropriate ways parents can help.

Kind regards,

[YOUR NAME]

TEMPLATE E — REQUEST TO GOVERNORS OR ACADEMY TRUST

Subject: Request for annual nativity, Christmas Fair and/or carol concert commitment

Dear [CHAIR OF GOVERNORS / CLERK TO GOVERNORS / ACADEMY TRUST CONTACT],

I am a parent/carer at [SCHOOL NAME]. I am asking the governing body or trust to consider [A SCHOOL-RUN NATIVITY PLAY WITH MEANINGFUL YEAR 5-6 INVOLVEMENT, CHRISTMAS STORY TEACHING AND A CHRISTMAS FAIR BY NAME / AN ANNUAL SECONDARY-SCHOOL CAROL CONCERT].

I first raised this with [NAME / ROLE] on [DATE], and the response was [BRIEFLY AND FACTUALLY EXPLAIN RESPONSE]. I appreciate the practical considerations raised by the school and would welcome a constructive discussion of how they might be addressed.

The specific annual commitment I am requesting is: [DESCRIBE THE NATIVITY PERFORMANCE AND YEAR GROUPS, CHRISTMAS FAIR NAME, OR CAROL CONCERT; INCLUDE THE CALENDAR DATE IF KNOWN].

A nativity is more than a lesson about Christmas. The rehearsals, acting, carols and shared performance matter, including for ten- and eleven-year-olds who can take substantial roles. A Christmas Fair is another tradition that deserves to keep its familiar name.

Parents are willing to offer practical support with costumes, rehearsal materials, scenery, decorations, Christmas Fair stalls and fundraising, within the school's safeguarding and volunteer arrangements.

Could this proposal be placed on the agenda for an appropriate governing body or trust discussion? I would be grateful for a written response explaining whether it can be adopted and, if not, what further information would assist reconsideration.

I am making a request for a positive addition to school life. I am not suggesting that the absence of a nativity or concert automatically amounts to a legal breach.

Thank you for your time and for the work you undertake for the school.

Yours sincerely,

[YOUR NAME]
[CONTACT DETAILS]

TEMPLATE F — LETTER TO THE PTA OR FRIENDS OF THE SCHOOL

Subject: Helping with the school nativity and keeping our Christmas Fair

Hello [PTA CONTACT],

I would love to help the PTA support a school nativity play that includes older primary pupils, and to keep our Christmas Fair as a Christmas Fair. If this is a secondary school, I'd be glad to support the carol concert instead.

The school nativity and Christmas Fair are traditions that children can enjoy from their earliest school years to the end of primary. I'd particularly like Years 5 and 6 to have opportunities to act and perform, not simply help behind the scenes.

Depending on the school's needs, parents could help with costumes, scenery, props, sound, decorations, printing, stalls, refreshments or small fundraising activities. I would be happy to assist with these practical tasks.

My intention is to support the teachers, not add to their workload. Any volunteering would of course follow the school's safeguarding rules and arrangements.

Could the PTA discuss with the school how to support an annual nativity for all primary year groups and keep the Christmas Fair name on the calendar?

Best wishes,

[YOUR NAME]
[CONTACT DETAILS]

Practical offers parents can make

- Make reusable nativity costumes and scenery sized for older as well as younger primary pupils.
- Create a simple printed programme or digital invitation.
- Prepare Christmas decorations, nativity props and festive displays for the Christmas Fair.
- Help with refreshments and ticketing, if the school permits.
- Help organise the Christmas Fair by name, including festive stalls and accessible venue arrangements.
- Help secure donated materials without pressuring families to contribute financially.

TEMPLATE G — LETTER TO YOUR MP ABOUT NATIONAL EXPECTATIONS

Subject: A traditional school nativity through Year 6, Christmas Fairs and carol concerts

Dear [MP'S NAME],

I am a constituent living in [TOWN / POSTCODE]. I am writing about the chance for children to experience traditional Christmas celebrations at school - including an actual nativity play in primary school up to Year 6, the Christmas Fair retaining its name, and secondary-school carol concerts.

For generations, nativities, Christmas Fairs and carol concerts have created lasting memories while helping pupils learn about Britain's heritage. Children of ten and eleven are not too old to perform in a nativity play; with an age-appropriate script, they can have important acting and musical parts.

I would like schools to give these activities a secure place in their annual plans. In particular, I am asking for:

- Primary schools to stage an annual traditional nativity play with meaningful participation across year groups, including Years 5 and 6, alongside teaching of the Christmas story and carol singing.
- Secondary schools to host an annual traditional Christmas carol concert.
- Schools and PTAs celebrating Christmas through a fair to keep the name Christmas Fair, rather than substitute Winter Fair.

I understand schools must provide religious education, but there is no general legal obligation in England to stage a nativity, hold a carol concert or use a particular fair name. I am asking for stronger expectations and practical support for schools to maintain these traditions, while preserving existing parental rights.

Would you be willing to write to the Secretary of State for Education to ask what steps the Department could take to encourage these annual traditions? I would also welcome information about any relevant consultations or other opportunities for parents to contribute.

Thank you for representing local families and for considering this proposal.

Yours sincerely,

[YOUR NAME]
[YOUR POSTAL ADDRESS OR POSTCODE]
[EMAIL]

TEMPLATE H — ENQUIRY TO YOUR LOCAL RE SYLLABUS BODY

Subject: Christmas and the nativity in the locally agreed RE syllabus

Dear [SACRE CLERK / LOCAL AUTHORITY RE CONTACT],

I am a parent/carer of a pupil at [SCHOOL NAME] in [LOCAL AUTHORITY AREA]. I am trying to understand how primary school pupils are taught about the Christmas story and how this is reflected in the locally agreed religious education syllabus.

Would you please advise:

1. Which agreed syllabus currently applies to [SCHOOL NAME], if it is a school required to use the locally agreed syllabus?
2. Where does the syllabus address the nativity and Christmas, and for which primary year groups?
3. Is there any accompanying teaching guidance or resource material that parents and schools can access?
4. When is the next syllabus review or consultation, and how may parents submit views?

I would welcome clear age-appropriate teaching about the Christmas story throughout primary education. I would also like schools to stage a real nativity play for pupils including Years 5 and 6, rather than treating classroom teaching as a replacement; I understand that organising performances and naming fairs are school-level decisions, not automatically requirements of an agreed RE syllabus.

Thank you for helping me understand the arrangements and how a parent can contribute constructively.

Kind regards,

[YOUR NAME]
[CONTACT DETAILS]

Note: SACREs and locally agreed syllabuses are particularly relevant to many maintained schools. Academies and some other schools operate under different RE arrangements. Check the school type before sending this letter.

6. A PARENT SUPPORT STATEMENT / PETITION

Bring Christmas Back to [SCHOOL NAME]

Children only get one childhood. Ten-year-olds aren't too old for a nativity.

We, the undersigned parents and carers, would welcome an annual commitment by [SCHOOL NAME] to carry on the Christmas traditions that bring families together and create childhood memories.

For a primary school: We ask the school to stage a traditional nativity play every December, involving children across primary school including Year 5 and Year 6 performers; teach the Christmas story each year; sing traditional carols; and retain the name Christmas Fair for the school's festive fair.

For a secondary school: We ask for an annual Christmas carol concert with pupil involvement in singing, music and readings, and for any traditional Christmas Fair to keep its name.

We recognise that the school will make practical decisions about casting, rehearsals, staffing, safeguarding and accessibility and that existing parental rights apply. Parents are willing to help; our request is for the school itself to commit to staging the nativity or concert each year.

Before circulating: remove the primary-school or secondary-school paragraph that does not apply.

Parent/carer name	Signature	Date

Petition organiser: [NAME]

School / date of submission: [SCHOOL] / [DATE]

Privacy notice to adapt before collecting signatures: [ORGANISER NAME AND CONTACT] is collecting the information on this sheet solely to present this request to [SCHOOL NAME]. It will be shared only with the school's authorised representatives, stored securely and deleted by [DATE]. For questions about this information, contact [EMAIL]. Do not collect children's details. If you also collect mailing-list details or use online forms, give separate privacy information, obtain any required permissions and check your data protection responsibilities.

7. THE SCHOOL MEETING PACK

Meeting requested with: [NAME / ROLE]

School and date: [SCHOOL] / [DATE]

Parents attending: [NAMES]

Our single-sentence request: We would like [SCHOOL NAME] to commit to [AN ANNUAL SCHOOL-RUN NATIVITY FOR EVERY PRIMARY YEAR GROUP INCLUDING YEARS 5-6, WITH THE CHRISTMAS FAIR KEPT BY NAME / AN ANNUAL SECONDARY CAROL CONCERT] every December.

Suggested 20-minute agenda

Time	Discussion
0–3 min	Thank the school and explain the positive aim
3–7 min	Ask what teaching and events already exist
7–12 min	Present the specific annual proposal
12–16 min	Discuss practical obstacles and offers of help
16–20 min	Agree next steps, a decision-maker and a response date

Questions worth asking

1. Is the nativity story taught and, separately, is a real nativity play staged each year?
2. Which years act in the nativity, including Years 5 and 6? Who decides on the cast and age groups?
3. Who organises the nativity play, carol concert and Christmas Fair, and who decides the fair's name?
4. What is the main obstacle to an annual performance for older children: timetable, staff, rehearsal space, cast size or cost?
5. Can a school nativity with older-pupil roles be arranged this year? If not, can the school confirm a date for next year?
6. What roles could older pupils play on stage? How could other pupils contribute in suitable ways?
7. Can the school and PTA confirm in writing that the Christmas Fair retains its name and that annual events are on the calendar?

Write down the outcome

What the school already does: [NOTES]

Concerns raised: [NOTES]

Agreed actions: [NOTES]

School contact / next meeting: [NOTES]

Date for written response: [DATE]

After the meeting, send a short thank-you email summarising the agreed actions so everyone has the same record.

8. IF THE SCHOOL SAYS NO

A refusal is disappointing, but it helps to identify the reason before choosing the next step.

“We have no time this year.” Ask for a simple, shorter nativity play this year with real acting roles, or a firm commitment and date for a full school-run nativity next December.

“We have no budget.” Suggest borrowed nativity costumes, a modest script, reusable props, existing school hall space and PTA support. A memorable performance needn't be expensive.

“We don't have a suitable venue.” Suggest a classroom, school hall or accessible community venue, subject to school approval and risk assessment.

“We already teach Christmas.” Welcome that, but explain that learning the story is not the same as acting in a nativity play. Ask separately for a school production and dates.

“We cannot accommodate every pupil on stage.” Suggest two age-group nativity productions, rotating casts or multiple performances. Make sure Years 5 and 6 are offered proper acting opportunities, not excluded because they are older.

“The governors or trust decide.” Ask the headteacher to pass on your written proposal, or contact the relevant clerk or trust office yourself.

“We will not change the event name.” Ask the school or PTA who chooses the name, why Winter Fair is preferred, and whether the Christmas Fair name can be restored for future years. Discuss the actual Christmas activities separately.

When to use the formal complaints procedure

Disagreement about a school event is normally for discussion and school governance. There is no general English legal duty to hold a nativity, stage a carol concert or use the title Christmas Fair. Do not describe a refusal alone as unlawful.

If you believe the school has failed to provide required religious education, published misleading curriculum information, or mishandled a formal concern, consult its published complaints procedure. Keep dated copies of correspondence and follow the stated stages. The Department for Education generally reviews the handling of eligible complaints; it does not normally direct schools to put on a particular performance.

For questions about the locally agreed RE syllabus at a maintained school, parents can also ask the local authority about its Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE). Academies and schools with a religious designation may have different RE arrangements.

Keep the campaign constructive. Do not publish allegations about individual teachers or involve children in adult disputes.

9. READY-TO-SEND PARENT GROUP MESSAGES

Short message for a parent WhatsApp group

Hello everyone. I'd love [SCHOOL NAME] to stage a traditional nativity play every year, including acting opportunities for Years 5 and 6 - ten-year-olds aren't too old for a nativity! I'd also like us to keep the name Christmas Fair. (For secondary schools, the aim is an annual carol concert.) These are treasured childhood memories. I'm sending a positive proposal and wondered if any other parents would like to support it or help with costumes, sets or the fair. Please message me privately if you're interested.

School newsletter or PTA notice

Can you help us keep the school nativity and Christmas Fair alive?

Parents would like to support [SCHOOL NAME] in staging a traditional school nativity each December, including Years 5 and 6, and keeping the Christmas Fair under its familiar name. At secondary level, we'd love to support an annual carol concert. If you can help with costumes, scenery, decorations or stalls, please contact [CONTACT]. All activities and volunteering require school approval and follow its safeguarding arrangements.

Short community post

Children only get one childhood. Nativity plays, carols, Christmas Fairs and family concerts are memories worth passing on. Ten-year-olds aren't too old for a school nativity, and our Christmas Fair deserves its proper name. We are helping parents ask for these traditions to be kept in every year's school calendar. Find the free Parent Action Pack at [CAMPAIGN WEBSITE].

How to keep communications positive

- Describe what you want the school to offer, not what you assume its motives are.
- Thank teachers and school staff for the work they already do.
- Keep other parents' contact information private.
- Do not photograph or identify pupils online without the appropriate permissions.
- Share confirmed outcomes, not rumours or unverified claims.

10. PRINT-READY A5 LEAFLET TEXT

FRONT

CHILDREN ONLY GET ONE CHILDHOOD.

LET'S MAKE CHRISTMAS PART OF IT.

Do you remember your school nativity?

The excitement of being an angel or shepherd, or playing a bigger part when you're ten. A cardboard star above the school stage. Christmas carols in the hall. A Christmas Fair full of festive stalls. Proud parents watching children perform.

These aren't just activities. They're childhood memories.

Let's keep actual school nativity plays - including Years 5 and 6 - Christmas Fairs by name, and carol concerts in our schools.

[CAMPAIGN LOGO / WEBSITE / QR CODE]

BACK

BRING CHRISTMAS BACK TO SCHOOLS

For primary schools: We're asking schools to stage a traditional nativity play every December, including opportunities for ten- and eleven-year-olds to act; teach the Christmas story; sing traditional carols; and keep the Christmas Fair as a Christmas Fair.

For secondary schools: We're asking for an annual traditional Christmas carol concert, and for any Christmas Fair to keep its name.

You can help in four simple steps:

1. Find out whether your primary school stages an actual nativity and includes Years 5 and 6, and whether the Christmas Fair keeps its name.
2. Download the free Parent Action Pack.
3. Write to your headteacher using our ready-made letter.
4. Offer practical help and ask for an annual commitment.

Our traditions. Our Christmas Fair. Our children's memories.

Find your free action pack: [CAMPAIGN WEBSITE]

[QR CODE]

11. REPORT YOUR SCHOOL'S RESPONSE

Use this form for your own records or to make a factual report to the campaign, if a reporting service is available.

School: [NAME / TOWN]

School type: [PRIMARY / SECONDARY / OTHER]

Date of contact: [DATE]

What I asked the school to do (include nativity play, older year groups, Christmas Fair name or carol concert): [SHORT DESCRIPTION]

What the school offered, including nativity year groups and current fair name: [FACTUAL DESCRIPTION]

Who replied (role only): [HEADTEACHER / PTA / GOVERNOR / TRUST / OTHER]

Outcome:

- [ ] Already provides the requested activities
- [ ] Agreed to introduce them this year
- [ ] Agreed in principle for next year
- [ ] Considering the proposal
- [ ] Declined, with an explanation
- [ ] No response yet

Agreed follow-up date: [DATE]

Details the school has agreed may be shared publicly: [DETAILS / NONE]

My contact details, if I consent to a follow-up: [CONTACT]

Do not submit children's names, private staff correspondence containing unnecessary personal details, or school photographs without permission. A public campaign map or list should use checked information and should distinguish confirmed school commitments from individual reports.

12. QUESTIONS PARENTS OFTEN ASK

Is a primary school legally required to put on an annual nativity play?

No. In England there is no general legal duty to stage a nativity play, include every year group in a performance or use the name Christmas Fair. This campaign asks schools to make these positive annual commitments voluntarily.

Is the Christmas story already part of school education?

State-funded schools in England must provide religious education, subject to the relevant framework for the school. The exact content and timetable depend on the applicable RE syllabus or arrangements. Ask the school to show you where the nativity is taught, rather than assuming it is absent.

Can the school teach the Christmas story to every child?

Schools can make age-appropriate teaching available across the school, while respecting parents' legal right to withdraw their child from all or part of RE. Teaching about the Christmas story is distinct from requiring a child to participate in religious worship.

What if my child doesn't want to act or sing in the nativity?

Ask the school about other suitable contributions, such as instruments, scenery, props, narration, artwork, technical support or joining the audience. All pupils should have the opportunity to participate, but nobody need be forced into an individual role, and applicable legal rights concerning RE and worship still apply.

Are ten- and eleven-year-olds too old to be in a nativity?

No. Years 5 and 6 pupils can act, sing and perform more sophisticated versions of the nativity story. A school could stage a separate upper-primary nativity or assign older pupils substantial roles in a mixed-age performance. Being older should not mean being excluded from the play.

Should the school itself put on the play?

That is the campaign's request. A nativity lesson, outside-school parent production or generic seasonal performance is not a substitute for an annual school-organised nativity play with rehearsals, a cast and a date in the school calendar.

Does the school have to call its festive fair the Christmas Fair?

There is no general legal requirement to use that name. But if the fair is a Christmas celebration, parents can ask its organisers - often the PTA - to keep or restore the familiar title Christmas Fair rather than Winter Fair. First check who names the event and what is actually being celebrated.

Can parents arrange a nativity independently if the school has not agreed to put one on?

A parent-led production is possible only with the relevant permissions and safeguarding arrangements, but the campaign's objective remains for the school to stage its own annual nativity for pupils of all ages, including Years 5 and 6.

What if the school says a nativity costs too much?

Suggest a shorter school-produced nativity using borrowed costumes, a reusable set, a small cast or two age-group performances. Ask the PTA whether it can support costs without pressure on families to contribute.

What if the school refuses to stage the nativity or rename the fair?

Ask the school or PTA for its reasons, offer help, and ask for a written review or decision. You may request that governors or an academy trust consider the proposal. Use a formal complaints procedure only when there is a complaint that falls within the school's rules - an event not being held is not automatically a legal breach.

Can we share photos from the nativity?

Follow the school's rules. Never post identifiable images of children publicly unless you have the appropriate permission. Volunteer photographers acting for the school must follow its data protection and safeguarding policies.

13. OFFICIAL INFORMATION FOR PARENTS

This pack is designed for parents in **England**. Curriculum arrangements and complaint routes differ in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. These official sources help you check your school's actual responsibilities.

Primary curriculum, including religious education and withdrawal rights
https://www.gov.uk/national-curriculum/key-stage-1-and-2

National curriculum: music at key stages 1 to 3
https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-curriculum-in-england-music-programmes-of-study

What maintained schools must publish, including curriculum information
https://www.gov.uk/guidance/what-maintained-schools-must-publish-online

What academies should publish about their curriculum
https://www.gov.uk/guidance/what-academies-free-schools-and-colleges-should-publish-online

RE in local-authority-maintained schools
https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/religious-education-guidance-in-english-schools-non-statutory-guidance-2010

RE and collective worship in academies and free schools
https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/re-and-collective-worship-in-academies-and-free-schools

School music development plan: summary template
https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-music-development-plan-summary-template

How to complain about a school to the Department for Education
https://www.gov.uk/complain-to-dfe

DfE guidance on taking and using pupil photographs and videos
https://www.gov.uk/guidance/data-protection-in-schools/taking-and-using-photos-and-videos-and-using-cctv-in-schools

Important: This is a practical campaigning resource, not legal advice. In England schools must provide religious education, subject to withdrawal rights, but no general law requires a nativity play, secondary carol concert or the title Christmas Fair. Check the arrangements at the individual school before making legal claims or pursuing formal complaints.

YOUR CHRISTMAS PLEDGE

For parents and carers who want a traditional school nativity - including older primary children - and a Christmas Fair and carol concert that return year after year.

The Christmas experience I would like my child's school to offer:

[WRITE YOUR REQUEST]

One practical thing I can offer to help:

[WRITE YOUR OFFER]

The person I will contact first:

[NAME / ROLE]

The date I will send my letter:

[DATE]

The date I will follow up:

[DATE]

Children only get one childhood.

The school nativity with real parts for ten- and eleven-year-olds, the Christmas Fair, the carols and the hall full of proud faces - these are traditions worth passing on.

Let's give today's children those memories, right through primary school and beyond.

BRING CHRISTMAS BACK TO SCHOOLS

[CAMPAIGN WEBSITE] | [CAMPAIGN CONTACT]