

Hillesley

PRIMARY SCHOOL



Headteacher Mrs Jayne Pedley B Ed(Hons)
01453 843551
admin@hillesley.gloucs.sch.uk
www.hillesleyprimary.com

13th November 2020 Newsletter 2 Term 2

Dear Parents,

The parent/teacher phone call consultations have begun and thank you to those who have already engaged in these conversations with Mrs Cooper and Mr Whitbread. As we only have one phone line, these consultations are being spread over a period of three to four weeks. Admin and teachers have worked hard trying to arrange and re-arrange these appointment call times. Please be patient if you are yet to have your call and if we are re-arranging your originally suggested call time. This is a new way of working for all of us. If you wish to speak to me separately about anything please email to admin or call and ask to speak to me. I am more available during the mornings but I am teaching in the classroom – Bubble 2 – every afternoon.

There are many things that are different in school but from the viewpoint of parents these changes might not be so apparent. The children are having more and longer outside breaks; the lessons run as usual and are being run alongside extra input for catch-up support; the new online G Suite learning platform has required training and extra work for teachers; there have been a few staff members and a number of children who have had to self-isolate and get tests – all returned as negative to date; there is frequent additional cleaning being undertaken by staff throughout the day; the corridor and toilets are “policed” by staff to ensure safety; online meetings and training are taking place; staff are not able to take coffee breaks and are “on duty” for most of the day. There is a great deal of extra work going on that is helping keep us infection free and open!

You are likely to be aware of the rapidly increasing rate of infections in both Gloucestershire and South Gloucestershire. In fact South Glos are in danger of being placed in a severe restrictions tier when the current national lockdown ends on Dec 2nd unless the data changes significantly. I receive regular briefings and information from the LA and this week I have been told that there is a sharp and concerning rise in infection rates in schools, particularly secondary schools, with a big rise in teachers being off school either tested positive or through track and trace. This has resulted in huge demand on supply staff and so far we have managed within our own staffing structure. Most of the staff here, except myself and Mrs England, are part time and although the staff have been willing to cover colleagues, we cannot rely on this as part time staff have commitments elsewhere, some as carers and helpers within their own homes and communities, indeed reasons why they might have chosen to be part time in the first place. With all these factors in mind I felt I needed to point out that a bubble or school closure could occur if we do not have the adequate amount of staff to cover all the daily roles within the bubbles. Hopefully we will escape this but it is an ever-increasing possibility and it is already happening in other local schools. I therefore thank you all again for bearing with us and following the protocols that we are working so hard to keep going. Our aim and sincere hope is to remain fully open and infection free whilst we wait for the situation to improve, via the promising vaccination news, until we are safer to return to normal!

With all this in mind I also want to remind you that actions outside school can have an impact on the school and the local community. Gatherings of any sort are not allowed at the moment - even when outdoors there are severe restrictions. With Christmas fast approaching we need to remind ourselves and the local community about this. I urge parents not to undermine the work we are doing to prevent infection in school by arranging activities outside school which mix groups of children from different bubbles. The latest guidance can be checked here <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/new-national-restrictions-from-5-november> and on the parent guidance <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/what-parents-and-carers-need-to-know-about-early-years-providers-schools-and-colleges-during-the-coronavirus-covid-19-outbreak/what-parents-and-carers-need-to-know-about-early-years-providers-schools-and-colleges-in-the-autumn-term>

I am sorry to sound gloomy but I am determined to do all I can to keep everyone healthy! The fact that school can continue to provide education and the children can attend to experience being with their friends and teachers during a global pandemic, is actually quite remarkable and I intend to do all I can to keep that going.

Our G Suite (Google Classroom/Meet etc) learning platform is reaching a point of roll out now. I commend the teachers and admin staff for continuing their usual work plus covid related duties and catch up work, whilst also setting this up and attending the training. We all want this facility to be as useful as it can be so it will be ready for any enforced covid related closure or periods of pupils needing to self-isolate due to positive tests or waiting test results. We will shortly be sending you some login and user information and there will be a few things for you to try out. For KS2 pupils we are also carrying out some lessons in school to explain the G Suite login and a few functions, and KS1 pupils will be given demonstrations to familiarise them with how it looks. This is actually an exciting step and the teaching staff are extremely keen to get it working well. Look out for more information about this in the coming weeks.

A few reminders – Forest School will continue for KS1 every Friday; for Y3/4 Thursday 12th and 19th Nov; Y5/6 Thursday Nov 26th and Dec 3rd. Please help the staff by sending in any changes of footwear/clothes in just one, larger bag. Some children have been bringing in several bags at a time and this is making it harder for staff, particularly with the younger children in Bubble 1. The suggestion of a large, supermarket type shopping bag has been made by the staff who are involved in these sessions. Each year we collect donations from parents to help us fund Forest School and provide resources for the sessions – you will see a payment item for this donation on ParentPay and you can pay just as you would for school lunches. We suggest £10 per child for the school year, but it is a voluntary donation and if this would be difficult at this time you can choose not to donate, or donate a smaller amount.

The PE coach is the only other outside provider to still be visiting the school on a regular basis. Mr Guest has just finished a period of self-isolation and tested negative so we look forward to welcoming him back this week.

Last week I included our plans for Christmas week and although we cannot do any performances or full parties we are trying to make that last week of term special for the children. A calendar of those dates for December will be sent out by email with this newsletter. Please be reminded that events that are held outside school can still impact us so continue to be cautious and avoid gatherings.

Orders for Christmas cards/tags etc printed from your child's artwork by APFS have arrived at school and will be sent home this week. (Mugs are being dispatched separately and will be sent home as soon as they arrive).

Continuing the Christmassy theme, if you are looking for some present ideas whilst online shopping, we have set up a Scholastic online book club/shop which has lots of great children's books at reduced prices. We will send home a leaflet for each family, but there are also many more titles online. Go to <https://schools.scholastic.co.uk/hillesley-ce-va/digital-book-club> to browse the latest books and order online. There is also an added bonus that for every £1 you spend, our school will earn 20p in Scholastic Rewards to spend on books for school. **Deadline for orders is November 30th, 2020 to allow time for Scholastic to dispatch the books to school before the end of term.**

The FOHS are once again preparing their magnificent Christmas Hamper raffle and would be grateful for donations of Christmas food and drink items to make up the hampers. Please leave donations with Rachel Preece or on her porch, as we are unable to have the box in the lobby as we have done in previous years.

Looking ahead to Term 3 and 4, we have arranged a KNex Challenge for KS2 and instrumental music lessons (guitars and strings) for all the children and we hope these will be able to go ahead as planned.

Thank you for your continued support.

Kind regards, J Pedley

Growing Together in Learning and Life