

Hillesley

PRIMARY SCHOOL



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Friday 27th November Term 2 Newsletter 4

Dear Parents,

I can't quite believe the end of term is in sight but we are about to go into the last three weeks of term, still covid free and soldiering on! We have done very well so far and the children have been working hard, with the usual and catch-up curriculums. There is an upbeat positivity in school, including smiles and laughter throughout the day. There have been 22+ schools in Gloucestershire and many more in South Glos and Bristol that have had to close or partially close recently, so we are lucky so far!

After my illness last week, negative for covid thankfully, we were, at the start of this week, back to full strength with no absences, amongst children and staff! Sadly we now have two other members of staff feeling unwell. Again we do not think it is covid related and tests will be done if there is any doubt. I only bring this to your attention in case we are faced with a situation where we might have to temporarily close a bubble. In usual times staff can work across key stages and help cover for one another. Under the current restrictions we can't do this and so the possibility of being under-staffed is greater. Even when all staff are here, classroom staff are working all day with very few or no breaks, to make sure everything is being covered safely, including longer play times and lunch times. I do not tell you this to solicit sympathy as I know lots of people are finding working conditions much tougher, however I just need to explain why a bubble closure is a real possibility. I keep my fingers crossed that we will not be faced with a closure situation through either illness, lack of staff numbers or weather conditions. If there were to be a closure, you would be informed as soon as possible via the parents' WhatsApp, email, the school website and Gloucestershire Schools' emergency closure website.

G Suite Online Learning Platform - I am very pleased to report excellent progress with the setting up of the G Suite online platform. This learning platform will soon be accessible to you and your child. The teachers have worked hard making sure they have set up the various functions that most suit our situation, uploading resources and teaching the KS2 children how to access it. You will receive login details and some instructions on how to use the platform. Please go through this guidance and instructions with your child and look for any communications from the teachers. They will set simple tasks for you to try out in the first instance. I must point out that KS1 and Reception children will not need to use the platform as much, or in the same way, as the older children. The keyboard skills and radial reading competencies needed to use on-screen resources, is something that younger children will find much more challenging. It is also the case that the types of hands-on activities that younger children do in much of their learning, are not that easy to adapt to on-screen learning.

When you receive your child's logins, instructions and guidance you will also find a task that you will be asked to carry out and return. All of this will become clear once you have followed the guidance and login information. I must also thank Mrs Iddon, as she has had a major input into setting up logins, producing guidance and dealing with admin control of this new system. It is very important that you store and remember the login details and also it is parents' responsibility to make sure their child is engaging

appropriately with the online learning platform. This facility has become necessary as we face the possibility of future temporary closures or periods of covid-related self-isolation. The KS2 children will use it for homework too, which will be particularly useful for Years 5 & 6 in preparation for their move to secondary school where these online learning platforms are used more frequently.



Christmas Bubble Parties – these will take place the morning of Thursday 17th December. The children can wear their party clothes to school that day. We have invited Santa to pop in. He always manages to do this even though he has a very busy schedule! This year's Santa visit has to be covid-safe too!

- When Santa arrives he will be invited to set up his chair under the canopy outside Class 1 and each Bubble will in turn, go outside to say a quick hello. Santa will have separate sacks for each bubble and the Bubble staff will be the ones to handle and distribute the presents on Santa's behalf back in the classroom.
- We would ask that parents provide a small gift for their child/children, up to the value of £8 per gift, wrapped and named, to help Santa out. These presents need to be deposited in the school lobby into a marked Bubble Box, ideally by Friday December 11th and by the deadline of Monday morning 14th December when the boxes will be removed from the lobby area so that the presents can be put in Santa's sacks and quarantined for 72 hours before the party date.
- The boxes will be in the school lobby next week and you will be able to add your gifts when you drop off or collect your child. I understand the extra pressure on parents right now so if you have any problems with this, please let us know asap. Traditionally, there are always late submissions of gifts but this year the deadline cannot be breached for health and safety reasons and if gifts are late to arrive they cannot be part of Santa's sack and school will need to provide a small substitute gift.

We have also booked a pre-recorded, Christmas theatre performance of The Snow Queen that will be watched in school, in our bubbles, on the big whiteboards.

A reminder of other Christmas events-

Friday 11th December – Christmas Jumper Day – wear a festive jumper for £1 donation for Save the Children

Monday 14th Dec – Big Write (instructions and ideas have been added as a homework assignment on Google Classroom for KS2, so parents can refer to this to help their child prepare); Christmas online theatre show The Snow Queen

Tuesday 15th Dec – wear a Nativity costume to school; making Christmas cards and messages

Wednesday 16th Dec– Christmas Maths and English; Big tidy up/Christmas art activities

Thursday 17th Dec – Bubbles Christmas parties; DVD afternoon

Friday 18th Dec – Free time to play games within our bubbles; **school closes at noon.**

Growing Together in Learning and Life

Congratulations and thanks go to the FOHS who have managed to raise over £1000 in a fantastic fundraising effort selling Christmas cards. They have also prepared their usual wonderful Christmas Hamper raffle, with seven luxury festive hampers this year - tickets are now on sale. Please contact Rachel 07808 582510, Mary 07849 833001, Jasmine 07709 498094 or Richard 07966 125207 in Tresham for tickets. The tickets are £1 each and the draw will be held on 16th December.

FOHS are also organising a special Christmas tree of hopes and wishes that will soon appear at the front of the school. This tree has been kindly donated by a local company and this Christmas FOHS have chosen to support the charity kidsout.org.uk which supports children in refuge places across the UK who are escaping domestic violence. Your donations for decorations will go towards their Giving tree scheme buying Christmas presents for disadvantaged children, so please come and see the tree, take a moment to write a message and hang a decoration on our tree.



Other reminders –

- The phonics screening will take place for Year 2, at some point, next week. This is a short(10 to 15 minutes) reading exercise based on the phonics the children learned in Year 1. There is nothing to worry about as Mrs King will carry out this screening and the children are very used to doing phonics work with her, so they will not find this screening very different from regular phonics work.
- Year 5 & 6 will be going to the allotment on Monday 30th – please come dressed for the outdoors and bring suitable footwear to change into.
- Please could you make sure your child does not bring unnecessary items into school but please remember to send in your child's water bottle daily and their home reading books on the appropriate days for changing them.
- Only KS2 children need to bring in a morning snack as KS1 are provided with fruit. KS2 parents please be mindful of the types of snacks being sent in with your child and try to make it a healthy snack with no sweets or chocolate please.
- Please remind your children not to walk along the wall at the front of the school as it becomes high very quickly and the fall-zone is onto the road.

Thank you for your continued support.

J Pedley