

Hillesley

PRIMARY SCHOOL



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January 8th 2021

Term 3 Newsletter 2

Dear Parents,

I hope you are all healthy and well?

Thank you for engaging with our learning platform so far. We appreciate that this is not an easy time and you will be trying to juggle home learning with many other aspects of your own work and home life, along with some IT and technical issues.

This is the start of a relatively new process, particularly for younger children and primary schools so I hope we can work together (remotely of course), and help each other along.

It was lovely to see lots of children's faces and waves during the first Google meets earlier this week. The teachers understand that some of you were not able to join due to other children and adults using the IT devices at the time.

The teachers are spending a great deal of time sourcing, watching, adapting, converting and uploading work for the children and then they will be reviewing the work turned in and commenting back where needed. To prepare one lesson is taking twice as long as usual and we have had a few technical issues at this end too. The ability to finely nuance the work for each individual child is much harder to do of course but the teachers know the children well and from last term's assessments they have a very good understanding of where the children are in their learning. Some children need more adult input and help than others but please be mindful that even the older children need help and encouragement to engage and to check their work.

If you have any technical issues please let us know via the class emails.

We also have a number of key workers' children in school each day so the teachers are planning and delivering to them as well as working on the remote provision. The children attending will also be doing the online work which has been set on laptops here at school. For most of the day, the children attending are in their own Key Stage class but are now treated as one bubble, so both classes will mix for some activities and playtimes.

We will shortly send out some information about the Rising Stars online reading materials. You will find that your child will be assigned only those books in the reading band that your child is on to make it easier to select a book, however, there is still a good choice of reading materials and some follow up activities that you can use.

I am sure you have seen that the BBC, Bitesize and Joe Wickes are providing some televised and online lessons for the children. We know from previous experience that the PE and physical activities that Joe Wickes offers are very good. The BBC Bitesize is used in school and the resources are generally very good so I am sure the BBC programmes will be of a good standard. The teachers will not have the time to review or monitor the content of these programmes.

It looks as if this lockdown and the home learning will continue for several weeks ahead and at least for this half term, and during this time we hope that the online learning will develop and evolve but we ask you to bear with us whilst we try to make the most of what there is available for your child / children.

We are hoping to hold Google meets on a weekly basis and we will send out information about any scheduled meets in advance.

A few other considerations that I need parents to be aware of are the ongoing challenges for school staff that could impact their ability to work. We already have two staff members self-isolating and some others who have child care and home learning for their own children and other family issues such as bereavement and caring for elderly relatives. Nearly all the staff members here are part time and are already working more than their regular hours to facilitate the in-school key worker provision at the same time as doing the online work. In fact, the current situation makes it harder than usual for all staff. All staff members are rising to the challenges with the usual stoic determination to get on with the job in hand however, I feel I need to make you all aware that there are many pressures that need to be taken into consideration. I am sure many of you face similar challenges at the moment.

For those of you who are key workers thank you for your cooperation and correspondence whilst we were putting together staff rotas and planning the lessons.

Can I remind parents that although the recently updated key workers' guidance put out by the government includes various occupations and categories, the whole point of the national lockdown is to stop transmission of infection so we are happy to make in-school provision for **CRITICAL** key workers; the local authority has advised that the expectation is that we should keep schools open for critical front-line NHS, education and national security staff. The safety and well-being of the children and staff in school has to be a main safety and safeguarding priority and if we have too many children in school at any one time the risks are higher for all concerned. If the school finds itself in a position of a staff shortage through staff illness and other reasons as listed above, then key worker children provision might move to a hub elsewhere. Government guidance also quotes “**Parents and carers who are critical workers should keep their children at home if they can.**”

The weeks ahead are not going to be without issues but we will do our best to keep both the in-school and remote work going so that all the children can access learning.

Thank you in anticipation of your patience and support,

J. Pedley