

# Hillesley

## PRIMARY SCHOOL



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Newsletter 2 Term 5

Dear Parents,

The children have been very busy with both their regular lessons and a few special events during the past few weeks. On Wednesday we welcomed a cricket coach from Gloucestershire Cricket Chance to Shine initiative. All the children seemed to enjoy their cricket experience. We are also taking part in a special competition run by the Royal Mail, to design a postage stamp celebrating heroes of the pandemic. When discussing this with Key Stage 2 you will be pleased to know that parents made the list as the children sagely suggested and agreed that parents had a hard time during lockdown as they had to work, look after all the usual household matters and do some home learning. There is a letter attached about this competition so please take a look. Weekly Forest School activities are being enjoyed and Year 6 have had a trip up to the allotment. Year 5 were due to go yesterday but we had to postpone due to the very wet weather. This will hopefully be rescheduled to Thursday 10<sup>th</sup> June. Next week on Thursday 20<sup>th</sup> May it will be the turn of Year 4 and the final week of this half term on Thursday 27<sup>th</sup> May will be Year 3. Children will need suitable clothes and footwear for their allotment session.

Mrs Cooper started a new lunch time running club and it was well attended. The chance to join this club has now closed for the time being. Mr Whitbread continues his lunch time chess club twice weekly and I have to say that there are a few possible grand masters in the making!

Yesterday I received an updated guidance document (of many pages) regarding changes to covid protocols and restricted practices in schools. It seems that all the existing protocols and safety measures, including social distancing, grouping the children in as small a group/bubble as possible, staggered arrivals and departures, extra cleaning, children sitting spaced apart and minimise sharing, all need to remain in place. There might be further changes after June 21<sup>st</sup> but I believe there is still a degree of uncertainty about the spread and new variants popping up. There have been several cases in a neighbouring primary school in the past two weeks, resulting in the closing of a class/bubble. This reminded me that the virus is still very much out there and we still need to be vigilant to keep it out of the school to avoid any closure periods. If your child appears unwell please keep them at home and you can also now access lateral flow testing by ordering free test kits online. <https://www.gov.uk/order-coronavirus-rapid-lateral-flow-tests> Once ordered they seem to arrive the next day. The government and PHE are promoting the use of tests to make sure any local spikes are quickly identified and dealt with. I thank you for your continued cooperation with these restrictions.

We are working with the secondary schools to plan transition activities for our Year 6 and although we cannot hold meetings with parents in larger groups yet we are hoping to hold covid-safe taster sessions for our new Reception intake. Again these events have to be scrutinised and planned according to rigorous

risk-assessments. We continue to limit the number of adults who come into the school and any contractors are not permitted entrance until all the children are off site.

School trips are allowed now but there are many more layers of risk-assessment to carry out to make sure that during the travelling to and from places as well as whilst at the destination, we remain covid compliant. The staff are very much hoping to organise something for term 6 and are willing to do all the extra risk-assessing so we are currently exploring options.

Thank you to all who returned the surveys about wrap around care. A small group of parent volunteers are now actively working towards setting up some form of care for next year and we will let you know how this develops over the next few weeks.

Mrs Iddon is sending out information about the Spring Scholastic Book Club today along with this letter. Please take a look and see if there are any books you might like to order. There are just a selection in the leaflet, with hundreds more on the Scholastic website. The books are offered at reduced prices and the school benefits by receiving reward points to put towards new books for school. Go to <https://schools.scholastic.co.uk/hillesley-ce-va/digital-book-club> to browse the latest books and order online. The deadline for orders is 7<sup>th</sup> June.

We say welcome and thank you to our new parent governor – Katherine Knight who joins the board of governors this term. If you are not sure who our governors are please take a look at the school website. Governors' and many other meetings and staff training are still being mostly conducted remotely.

Reminders – please look out for emails and respond accordingly. Interestingly we still have extra admin to do chasing and reminding parents even though practically all communications are sent via email. These longer newsletters are being sent out every other week on Fridays but there might also be communications separate to these letters and at different times. Our admin is not full time and as I am a teaching head, going into the classes every day at some point, it is vital that parents play their part by reading and responding to emails and correspondence without having to be reminded and re-issued with information that has already gone out. Your help with this would be very much appreciated.

Y5/6 reminder that a meeting is being held to view and discuss the materials to be used in the sex education lessons in term 6. There is also a requirement for parents to sign to give their consent and if this is not returned then your child will not be included in these lessons. Thank you to those parents who have already responded. The meeting is with myself and Mrs Cooper for about 40 minutes, so we can show you the materials we will share with the children. I appreciate that some parents have viewed these before and we do not expect you to attend the meeting if you do not wish to do so but we will need the consent form. Those parents attending the meeting will be given a consent form to sign at the end, those parents not attending must return the letter already sent home.

The return reading books box is in the school lobby and a few books have been placed in it. Thank you very much to those who have checked and returned outstanding books.

Uniform – as we reach the last term of the school year I understand that children grow out of shoes and uniform but although we often make allowances about footwear as long as we have been informed, please can I ask that the children wear correct uniform/school colours/PE kit as usual. Once one or two children start wearing their own hoodies and clothes then it starts a precedent that others tend to follow! The exceptions to this are of course when going to Forest School and allotment.

### Growing Together in Learning and Life

There are national changes afoot regarding Ofsted inspections and the teaching of phonics. The staff are actively engaged in training and preparation for these and some other changes. The way in which additional funding for high needs is allocated by the county is also changing. There is much made in the media about extra funding for catch up programmes but the reality of a small school is that we get this extra funding per pupil so we do not receive any large amounts. Teachers have and continue to do catch up work with additional sessions timetabled. This will continue throughout term 6 and most likely into next September.

The weather has not been too kind this past week but we have still managed to get outdoors. Today, unfortunately our regular PE coach, Mr Guest, is unwell so PE carries on delivered by KSI staff and myself this afternoon with KS2!

I hope you all have a very pleasant weekend no matter what the weather decides to do!

Regards,

J. Pedley