



Dear Parents / Carers, Governors and Friends,

Well what a start to the new term! Definitely not what any of us were expecting, and this situation is set to continue until at least February half term.

The children who are attending school have settled back in very well and seem to be enjoying getting to know the children from their parallel class a bit better.

We have received many more requests for school places this time round and perhaps understandably received a large number of additional requests once Boris Johnson announced that schools would be 'closed' until at least half term. We currently have about 120 children in school each day and we are still processing late applications. I realise that this is an extremely difficult situation for everyone, and that this is far from an ideal situation for parents and children alike, but schools have been 'closed' to try to reduce the amount of social contact between people, which in turn will reduce the spread of the virus – which is currently at an alarming level. The guidance still states that 'Parents and carers who are critical workers should keep their children at home if they can' and we ask that you do this if at all possible. I have a legal duty to protect employees and others from harm and the more children and adults we have in school, the more challenging it is to do this. If there is anyone who has requested a school place who can manage without it, please contact the school office.

The staff in school and the staff working from home have worked together to try to ensure that the children in school and at home receive the same learning. Thank you for your patience this week as we have tried to grapple with the technology both in school and when the teachers have been working from home - this is still a bit of a learning curve for us, but on the whole things seem to have gone fairly well and we are expecting things to go more smoothly next week. We hope that the children at home have found the welcome videos and the live teams meetings useful – it has certainly been lovely for the teachers to be able to see the children and to be able to talk to them.

We are aware that there are some limitations to SeeSaw and we are currently exploring different platforms so that we can ensure that remote learning is easy to access and effective.

We all understand that it is much more difficult for the younger children to focus on their home learning and the teachers will try hard to plan activities that will interest and motivate them. We also know that many of our parents are working from home while they try to support their child's learning.

We have shared the government expectations regarding the amount of time the children should be spending on their learning, but we realise that all family situations are different and this is just a guideline – please encourage your child/ children to do what they are able to, but please do not let this become a stress for you or for them. The teachers are monitoring what the children are doing and will be in touch if they have any concerns or think you may need further support. Please continue to upload the learning whenever this is convenient, however if the learning is uploaded after 4pm the staff may not be able to look at it until the following day.



I would like to take this opportunity for thanking all of the parents and staff for doing their very best to ensure a continued high level of education for our children, even in these difficult times. A huge thank you to the children who are working from home – you are all doing a great job and we miss you all.

Last term we were very fortunate that the number of positive COVID cases amongst our school community was very low. However this increased dramatically over the Christmas break and several parents, staff members and children all tested positive and were required to self-isolate – luckily this did not affect the wider school population because school had been closed for more than 48 hours. Currently, we have two members of teaching staff who have tested positive for COVID, both are self-isolating and both are quite unwell and we also have several parents in a similar position. It is very important that we all work together to try to stop the spread of this illness and I would like to take this opportunity to remind you about the importance of regular hand washing and what to do in the event that one of your children or a member of your household has COVID symptoms, tests positive for COVID or is awaiting test results.

If you develop symptoms of COVID-19, stay at home and self-isolate immediately. If you have a positive test result but do not have symptoms, stay at home and self-isolate as soon as you receive the results. Your household needs to isolate too. This means that if someone in your household has symptoms or tests positive or is awaiting a test result, the other family members must also self-isolate and the children must not come to school.

Your isolation period includes the day your symptoms started (or the day your test was taken if you do not have symptoms), and the next 10 full days. This means that if, for example, your symptoms started at any time on the 15th of the month (or if you did not have symptoms but your first positive COVID-19 test was taken on the 15th), your isolation period ends at 23:59 hrs on the 25th. If you are isolating because of a positive test result but did not have any symptoms, and you develop COVID-19 symptoms within your isolation period, start a new 10 day isolation period by counting 10 full days from the day following your symptom onset.

Finally, several parents of Reception children have asked if they are able to collect their child's Forest School clothing. We will set up a table with the clothing on the grass by the main entrance on Tuesday and Wednesday from 8.45am to 10.00am. Parents from Monkey class please collect your child's things on Tuesday and parents of Lion class on Wednesday to limit the number of parents collecting at any one time.

Thank you for your continued support.

Stay safe

Have a good weekend,

Kath Margetts and all the Staff