

Keeping in Touch – 5th February 2021

Dear all,

I hope the end of this week finds you all safe and well at home.

It is easy to feel a little overwhelmed by the negatives at the moment, but the lockdown has brought opportunities as well as losses. There has been great excitement amongst the staff in school this week, as Acorn is taking advantage of the school being relatively empty in order to get some re-decorating done. Autumn Classroom is having its finishing touches done as I write, before they will move onto Spring Classroom and then Summer Classroom next week. Winter Classroom was re-painted just over a year ago, so is not meriting a spruce up at this time. The children who have been in school this week have been rather unimpressed with our choice of a neutral colour scheme! But the staff are very pleased that this is creating a clean, bright work space in which the children's work can be best displayed and shown off. Due to the re-decorating, the Keyworker group will be based in Autumn Classroom next week. I would like to take this opportunity to say a big thank you to the Acorn decorating team who have been very accommodating of us, and to all the staff who have worked extra to clear rooms and move furniture to enable this to happen.

One of the losses that the school closure has brought are the parent meetings that we would normally be holding next week, in the lead up to the February half term. We discussed this as a staff, and felt that this time would not enable the most productive discussions to be had. Therefore we decided to postpone them until later on in Term 4 - during the lead up to the Easter holiday. Our hope is that children will be back in school by then, which will enable us to have in-depth conversations with you about both their wellbeing and learning. If schools remain closed to most pupils at this time, we will still hold the meetings. Let's keep everything crossed that this is not the case. We will send out more information about this after half term, but we will be using the same virtual system that we did in October. However, if you have any concerns or questions about your child in the meantime, we are always here and ready to help. It is always best to contact their class teacher first, either via email or through a private message on e-schools.

On the following page you will find a message from Sara Edwards (CEO of the Acorn Education Trust) regarding support that you can give to the whole school community to keep everyone safe and well at this time by wearing a face mask. We appreciate your understanding and support with this.

We are incredibly aware in school how difficult a time this is for both children and yourselves at home. Children are used to learning in the routines and structures of their classroom and the school day, surrounded by their peers and adults who are trained to teach and support them in this environment. What they are having to do now – work in isolation with adults who they relate to in a very different way to the 'professionals' in the classroom – is completely alien to them. And it is hard. Very, very hard. As is what is being asked of you – to be their teacher, TA, friends and parent. We know that this is taking its toll on lots of individuals, who express this stress in all manner of different ways. So if you are finding it a struggle at home, firstly you are not alone, far from it. And please, get in touch with us in school. There are all manner of ways in which we can support you and your child, and already are for lots of people. The end is drawing closer, but we want to make sure that you all get there in one piece.

I hope you all have a lovely weekend, and find some small things to do that help to make it feel special and joyous.

Best wishes,
Lindsey Hermon

Compulsory face masks and school drop off and pick up

Dear parents

I hope you, your family and friends are well.

As we prepare for the wider re-opening of our schools and consider all the latest information and guidance on Covid, to ensure our children, staff and parents remain safe, we have decided to make **the wearing of face masks compulsory for all parents at school drop off and pick up**. From next week (Monday 8th February), we ask all parents to respect this decision and begin to wear a face mask to drop off and pick up their child(ren). From Monday 22nd February it will be compulsory to wear a face mask when you are outside the school site on Main Street and if you enter the school building or playground.

I am sure like us, you are looking forward to a return to some form of normal and cannot wait for all the children to return to school. We cannot wait to see them! As yet, we have no further details on the wider re-opening of schools apart from a potential date of March 8th, and we expect to learn more on February 22nd. Until then, all we can do is make sure we are doing everything we can to protect one another and keep all bubbles open when they return. So, I am sure you will be happy to support the mandatory wearing of facemasks from February 22nd.

As always, thank you for all your support during these last few months. Take care.

Very best wishes

Sara Edwards