

# The Forest News

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Issue number: 10



Dear Parents/Carers

I hope that you are all staying safe and well. We are all well in school and continuing to look after each other. As with the last newsletter, I have condensed any questions or queries we have received from parents/carers. I will continue to try and keep you as up-to-date as I can.

You may have already heard that Boris Johnson has announced in Parliament that schools will not return until at least the 8th March. There is no guarantee that schools will open then as this will depend on case numbers and vaccination targets. As I write this newsletter Kingswood has one of the highest case rates in the country. Please continue to socially distance and follow all guidelines so that we have the best possible chance of opening as soon as we can. We miss all of the children very much.

Once again, thank you for all your kind messages of support and goodies for the staffroom. We are so grateful and it really helps to keep us all going.

Best wishes

Ms Porter

## Feedback from parents: Your questions and queries answered.

What home learning should I prioritise and can we have more of a 'pick and mix' model like last time?

I have added a video to School Story on Dojo. This will explain our weekly plans which we will produce to help you prioritise learning and also offer some flexibility. You are all doing an amazing job so we've not added anything new. We hope the document will help you navigate the week and feel less anxious should you not get through everything. Feel free to use it if you find it helpful. Keep going— you are all marvellous!

My younger children struggle to concentrate.

We know! We are now providing Play Projects for the infant children. They are used to doing these in school and provide developmentally appropriate, play based learning. The feedback has been really positive and it's been great to see the children's work and creations.

Are teachers getting regular testing and will they get vaccinated?

This week we received our lateral flow tests which allow us to test at home twice a week. The idea behind these is to identify asymptomatic cases. As far as we are aware there are no plans to vaccinate teachers as a priority group.

I'm struggling, lacking motivation and feeling really down.

You are not alone. We are talking to many of you each week who are finding this lockdown really tough. Please reach out to us for support. We can help with emotional support and also help you to access food or other resources if you are struggling. I think this lockdown feels tougher for all of us. There is no shame in asking for help.

### I am worried about my child's mental health during this time. What help is available?

Please let us know if this is the case. Wendy Miles has a range of resources that she can suggest. If things are really difficult we may suggest a conversation with your GP or a referral to the school nursing service.

South Gloucestershire have developed a range of webinars for both parents and older children around mental health and wellbeing. The link is below. You may find some things of interest.

<https://sites.southglos.gov.uk/mind-you/webinar-series/>

If you have a child with Autism and/or learning difficulties the following information might help:

<https://councilfordisabledchildren.org.uk/help-resources/resources/supporting-children-learning-disability-asd-coping-covid-19-isolation>

It is really important to try and maintain a routine each day and to also take in fresh air/exercise when you can. Encourage your children to talk about how they are feeling and make links with their class through Connect Time and year group assemblies.

The main thing is to reach out and ask for help.

### I need to talk to someone as I think I may be at risk:

- ⇒ If you are in an emergency situation please call 999
- ⇒ The National Domestic Abuse Helpline: 0808 2000 247 (24 hours a day, 7 days a week)
- ⇒ Next Link, South Gloucestershire Domestic Abuse help: 0800 4700 280 ( 10am—4pm Monday to Friday)

### **If you have concerns about the welfare or safety of a child call:**

- ⇒ 999 in an emergency
- ⇒ **01454 866000** ☐ Monday to Thursday 9am—5pm (South Gloucestershire Safeguarding Team)
- ⇒ **01454 866000** ☐ Friday 9am - 4.30pm (South Gloucestershire Safeguarding Team)
- ⇒ **01454 615165** ☐ Out of hours and at weekends (South Gloucestershire Safeguarding Team)

### Please can my child come back to school!

We are really sorry. We want all children back as soon as possible but we are only able to fit 15 pupils in each class so that everyone remains safe and one teacher must work on home learning each week as the new expectations from Government are much more comprehensive and detailed than the last lockdown. This means that we only have capacity for one bubble per year group. We also recognise that the new variant is much more contagious and we must do all we can to minimise mixing. Kingswood has one of the highest rates in the country and so we must do our part to try and keep everyone safe. We know that this places pressure on parents in terms of work and home learning. Many of us are juggling this too. Keep going and do the best you can.

### Will my child have to sit tests this year? I am worried that they have missed too much and won't do very well.

The Government has cancelled the Year 1 phonics screening check, Y2 SATs and Y6 SATs. The only tests that your children will take will be in school as a normal part of any day to day teaching and assessment.

### When is half term and will we need to continue home learning during half term?

Half term is the week beginning 15th February. We will not be setting any home learning during this time and we will not be accessing Class Dojo. Home learning content will resume on Monday 22nd February. Use the half term to relax and enjoy time as a family.