

# The Forest News

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Issue number: 9



Kings' Forest  
Primary School

Dear Parents/Carers

Well it's been quite a term already! I hope that you are all well and staying safe. I wanted to use this newsletter to communicate with you the latest lockdown updates and also address questions that we have received. We have received overwhelmingly positive messages but do take any suggestions seriously and we used our staff meeting this week to discuss these. I also wanted to give you some insight on how we are managing to keep the school safe and open during this time.

I appreciate that there has been so much for you (and us!) to digest and that you've had quite a few communications from school including surveys. We still receive daily updates from the Department for Education often asking us to take action or make changes with very little time to implement these. I apologise if things do change or you receive more letters than usual. We find out about changes to education policy at the same time as you by watching the daily news.

Best wishes

Ms Porter

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

The home learning offer looks different to last time and seems to place more demands on parents. We are struggling to get through everything.

Please don't worry you are not alone! The offer this time around does look different and this is because we have now been instructed by Government to provide 3 hours of home learning for KS1 pupils and 4 hours of learning for KS2 pupils. This was not the case in the first lockdown. We have also been instructed that there must be some kind of video element to this.

We absolutely recognise that this places greater demands on parents and there is increased anxiety around this. Our guidance to you is to do what you can, when you can. The most important element to keep up is reading. We are understanding in our approach and trust that you will do as much as possible to support home learning but that you are also trying to juggle your own home working and often multiple children. We do not want to place additional pressure on families but we must follow the Government instructions. Please don't forget that we place equal value on play, inside and outside, and wellbeing. It is so important that you and your families also enjoy time together and have as stress free a household as possible!

Please could you post the home learning the day before so that I can prepare everything? It's a bit of a rush in the mornings.

Yes. We have now changed this and as of next week the next day's learning will be posted between 3:30 and 4:30pm.

You use Google Teams but it doesn't always work properly on all of my IT equipment at home. Could you send links using Zoom instead?

Yes. As of next week, all links will be sent using Zoom. This seems to be a more reliable platform and is supported on all devices. It's very easy to use and you can just click on the link as you would for Teams.

My child is missing their friends and really enjoys the Connect Time. Are there more opportunities available to connect with their class.

Yes. We have discussed this. From the week of the 25th January you will be sent a link to join a whole year group assembly/drop in hosted by both teachers from the year group. This is completely OPTIONAL as we do not want to add to your already busy workload but if your child would like further connection then this will be available. They will also link up to the children in school. We thought this might be a good way to keep a sense of year group community for those that would find this useful. We will timetable this so that year groups don't cross over and we avoid other online live sessions. Please don't feel any pressure to fit this in but it's there for those who might find it helpful.

How do you keep the staff safe at this time?

As we are now required to provide a much more compressive home learning offer, one teacher each week works on this in isolation either at home or at school while one teacher teaches within school. The teachers then swap roles each week to allow a weeks break from face to face contact. Our TAs also work in the same way with the ones at home working on producing the class resources or the bespoke resources for those with complex SEN needs. The senior leaders attend everyday to continue to manage the organisation and to ensure that safeguarding work continues. All meetings are now online. The office staff continue to work in isolation as does Wendy. We wear masks at all times around the school and continue to socially distance and wash our hands. We receive a very small amount of PPE from central stores and the school is required to cover the cost of additional PPE. We have just received notification from the DfE, via the media, that as of Monday school staff will be able to access weekly tests. We have been told rapid test kits will be sent to us but have no other details. We have not yet received the tests.

During this lockdown the key worker lists have been expanded by the Government but we are required to keep numbers as low as possible as the new variant is much more infectious. Thank you for your understanding. I would love for all children to return to school but we must take the safety of everyone extremely seriously.

We currently have 30% of children attending as well as the nursery. In order to achieve this we need to be able to continue to staff the following on site each week:

7 teachers;  
10 TAs and 1 sports coach  
Family Support Worker;  
2 office staff;  
Business manager;  
3 senior leaders,  
3 cooks  
6 cleaners  
1 caretaker,  
1 librarian;  
4 reading assistants  
8 lunchbreak supervisors  
All nursery staff

Will you be testing the children?

No. The DfE have decided that it is not possible to test all primary children each week within school.

When will schools reopen to everyone?

We have no details of this at all and await the Government review.

What can we do to help?

It is a testing time for everyone and staff are also worried about the safety of their loved ones but we understand and are proud of our duty to support the community during this time. Thank you for your lovely messages of support and kindness. They really do keep us going especially as most of us now work in isolation so are also missing friendships and human contact. Together we will get through this with brighter days ahead.