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Stephanie Severn (Mrs.) – Head Teacher

7 January 2022

Dear Parents/Carers,

Well it has been an eventful start to the New Year. Along with many schools in the country, we had anticipated that we might have to face the prospect of some positive cases in the school community. I would just like to clarify the situation with face coverings. On Thursday, we were unclear about the situation we were facing so asked the children in KS2 to wear face coverings as a precautionary measure. They have not been asked to wear face coverings today. Ordinarily, we would not expect children to wear face coverings in school. We have asked for children to have their own face coverings in school in case we are faced with another unpredictable situation. It is only in these circumstances we would ask the children to wear face coverings – and I should be clear that no child will be 'made' to wear a face covering. It is a precautionary measure.

I know many parents took our advice and completed lateral flows (LFT's) yesterday. That was very helpful as it means we started the day knowing that we weren't dealing with an 'outbreak' situation. As mentioned yesterday, it appears to me that the use of LFT's will become commonplace for children and adults. The new guidance indicates that it is appropriate to use LFT's with all children, including the under 5's. The children will become as familiar with this process as we are as adults. I would recommend that every family ensures they have a good supply of LFT's. As you are probably aware, if your child is identified as a close contact, the child will be asked to complete daily LFT's before attending school. FYI currently, 4 children have received positive test results.

Increased ventilation

Following a Government initiative, each classroom currently has a CO2 monitor to ensure adequate ventilation in our classrooms. If the monitors reach a certain level, we are expected to increase the air flow – by opening doors and windows. In the current weather conditions, this can mean our classrooms are not as warm as usual. It is for this reason that we have sent reminders about appropriate clothing i.e. jumpers/cardigans and covered legs. We want our children to feel as comfortable as possible but also want to ensure there is adequate air movement in the classrooms.

Swimming

We started our 'catch-up' swimming sessions last Wednesday. These are 1 hour swimming sessions mainly aimed at the children that missed out on swimming last year and had not managed to achieve the confident 25m swimmer award. The first session was an assessment session. As a result of that session, the swimming instructors felt that all of those children would benefit from further swimming instruction. Therefore, the same group of children will continue to attend swimming sessions for at least the next two weeks.

Sports events

We know this will be disappointing for the children, but we have decided to withdraw from the Sportshall Challenge event that was supposed to be happening on Monday. We suspect the whole event might have to be cancelled – so hope that it will be rescheduled for later in the term. We have also been informed that the New Age Kurling event, that was due to be held on 19th January, has been cancelled. We have decided to continue with a school based tournament for the team members. New Age Kurling is an adapted inclusive sport, similar to bowls. Success depends on good tactics.

Clubs

Clubs will resume next week – so Hockey will restart on Tuesday evening and Netball will restart on Friday. These clubs are open to the same children that attended last term. The 'Catch-Up' clubs in Kingfishers and Kestrels will also start on Monday 10th January. Children who are due to attend the 'Catch-Up' clubs were contacted via email before the Christmas holidays.

Catch-Up

All the children are receiving some form of catch-up curriculum this year. We have adapted our curriculum topics to cover some elements of missed learning; we have run extra maths, reading and phonics sessions for some children – within the school day and we have run after school catch up sessions for some children. Alongside these sessions, we have invested in the White Rose Maths workbooks this year (Y1-Y6) – so if children don't complete their maths work during lesson times they can return to the workbooks when they have a spare few minutes i.e. registration times. All these strategies are being used to plug any gaps in learning that have arisen due to the lockdowns. We have planned to use these strategies throughout this year as we know there is no quick fix model for the amount of school time that has been missed. We have been very pleased with this model so far – and have been very impressed by the progress the children have made.

Eco-Challenge

You might remember that at the end of last term, the Eco-Council challenged the children of Hope Brook to use their Christmas rubbish to make something else. There were three possible challenges:

Challenge 1 - to make an animal house, shelter or feeder

Challenge 2 - to make a game to play, maybe a board game or card game

Challenge 3 - to use wrapping paper or Christmas cards to create some Origami.

Children were welcome to take part in as many challenges as they wanted to, and to enter, they were asked to simply send a photo to School via email or directly to Miss Kay using the Messages tabs on the E-School accounts. If you have an entry, please ensure they have been sent to school by Wednesday 12th January 2022 so they can be judged by the Eco-Council.

I am always surprised by how tiring the first week after Christmas can be. I am sure the children have felt this too. Have a lovely weekend – and hopefully find some time to relax.

Stay safe

Stephanie Severn