



24th July 2020

High Firs Primary School

NEWSLETTER

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Visit our school website at www.high-firs.kent.sch.uk

Message from Mr Turtle

Wednesday saw the end of the academic year for what has certainly been one of the most challenging and unusual school years any of us have faced. I am incredibly grateful to all of our fantastic staff team who have continued to work so hard to support our children and families - including during the holiday periods. My thanks also to our parents who have had to adapt to "home schooling" and to those parents who have additionally provided such vital support by continuing to work in their keyworker roles. To our children, whether they have been in school or at home, a huge "well done" for all your hard work, both with your learning and adapting to your new circumstances - we are very proud of you all. I have been incredibly touched, as have other staff, by the very many emails, conversations, cards and gifts from families in appreciation of what the school has been doing in the past few months - we really do very much appreciate your kind words, gestures and support. Thank you.

As we now move towards September we are particularly looking forward to welcoming back those children who have been unable to return to school this term. We have missed you! For those who have been in school, there are new guidelines which will be in place from September so things may be a little different for you too. Details of our plans for return to school are later on in this Newsletter - we appreciate that there is a lot to take in but we would appreciate your attention to this information so that everyone is able to return to school in as safe a way as possible for the new school year.

Finally, I hope that you all have a wonderful and safe summer break. While holidays away may not be possible for everyone this year, hopefully there will be lots of sunshine and fun activities for you all to enjoy, wherever you are!

Have a great

Autumn Term 2020
starts on
Weds 2nd September
(Tuesday 8th for Reception)



Year 6 Leavers

We are always proud of our Year 6 children but no more so than this year. They have missed many of their usual leaving events but we hope that we have still been able to give them a happy and memorable end to the seven years that they have had at High Firs. Throughout their time here they really have been a fantastic class and we wish them all the very best as they leave for their secondary schools; we are sure that they will all continue to do well and wish them every success for the future. We are looking forward to catching up with them and their families at their postponed Leavers' Party in October!





Staff News

We send our very best wishes to Miss Durrant as she starts her maternity leave - we look forward to being able to share baby's arrival news with everyone at home soon! After a number of years on our premises team we are saying "goodbye, thank you, and we'll miss you" to Mrs Parkin as she moves on to pastures new.



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Community Awards and Sports Awards for Year 6

Each year, Community Awards are presented to Year 6 Leavers who have shown a great commitment to the school community throughout their time at High Firs. We were delighted to present this year's awards to: **Faye, Amy T, Kerime, Joseph and Francesca.**

Our Sports Awards this year, for both achievement and their fantastic sportsmanship, were presented to: **Grace and Taylor.**

Well done!

Year 6 Outstanding Attendance Awards

Our Year 6 leavers this year have the highest attendance ever! An amazing 17 children achieved either an outstanding 98% or 99% attendance for their entire time at High Firs. Certificates were presented to:



Faye, Amelia, Amy T, Alec, Harley, Jack, Taylor, Ellie and Morgan.



Dru, Kerime, Joseph, Bobby, Freddy, Francesca, Mia and Grace.

New class emails

To contact your September class teacher please use the worded class email addresses eg: yearone@ etc. These are available now and will continue to be in use for the 2020-21 academic year. The full address is on the letter in your new class transition pack if you aren't sure!

If you would still like to contact your class teacher from the class you have just left, please use the numerical class email addresses eg: year1@ etc. These will be available only until the start of the new school year.

The Reception class address remains the same - reception@



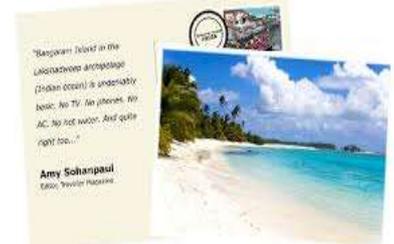
Congratulations to **CHESTNUT** who are the House Cup Champions!

	This Week	Term 6 Total
BEECH	17	148
CHESTNUT	17	170
OAK	13	140
ASH	9	157

Holiday Postcards

Don't forget over the holiday to send a postcard to the school! It doesn't matter if you aren't going away anywhere - just write and let us know what you are up to... we would love to hear from you.

Our address is -
*High Firs Primary School
Court Crescent
Swanley
BR8 8NR*



VACANCIES

We currently have vacancies for:

Site Supervisor

Cleaner

For further information please visit - <http://high-firs.kent.sch.uk/staff-vacancies/>



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We hope to see you soon!

Need support?

Although some children have returned to school already, for many, the new autumn term will be their first time stepping into a classroom since lockdown began. Understandably this may be a strange or worrying time for some children, parents and carers.



We know that supporting children's mental wellbeing during the return to school is a key priority for many of you. So, here are some useful resources all focused on making sure the return to classroom in the autumn is a mentally healthy one.

Self-care summer activity pack - Anna Freud Centre for Children and Families

Help children create their own self-care plan for the summer holidays with this activity pack

<https://mentallyhealthyschools.org.uk/resources/self-care-summer-activity-pack?pdf=coronavirus-toolkit-return-to-school>

Tips for returning to school video - Nip in the Bud

In this short video, clinical psychologist Dr Jess Richardson shares straightforward suggestions for parents and teachers to deal with any potential apprehension or anxiety children may experience on returning to school. There is also an accompanying factsheet.

<https://nipinthebud.org/information-films/tips-for-returning-to-school/>

'My Back to School Bubble' e-book - e-Bug and NABU

This simple, illustrated e-book is ideal for parents of young children to explore what the return to school might look like, and help them feel more prepared.

https://e-bug.eu/eng_home.aspx?cc=eng&ss=1&t=Information%20about%20the%20Coronavirus

Self-care kit - NHS

Practising good self-care is another important way children can get ready for the return to school. This self-care kit has lots of ideas and activities for self-care for children, including mindful colouring, breathing exercises, an emotional check-in, a self-soothe box and more.

<https://mentallyhealthyschools.org.uk/resources/self-care-kit?pdf=coronavirus-toolkit-return-to-school>

Wellbeing Bingo Cards

For both parents and carers, think about the ways the whole family can look after each other during the summer holidays. Use the Wellbeing Bingo cards and see how many activities you can complete!!

<https://youngminds.org.uk/media/3916/wellbeing-bingo.pdf>

Covid 19 - wellbeing resources - Partnership for Children

This website has some useful resources to help your children with going back to school, to life after lockdown and with mental wellbeing over the summer holidays.

<https://www.partnershipforchildren.org.uk/what-we-do/resources-for-parents.html>



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Preparing Your Child For the First Day Back in School

As schools begin to open to more children, parents and children may well be feeling anxious. Here's some ideas of how best to prepare.

Be Calm.

Your child will take their lead from you and be reassured if you are steady and matter of fact.



Be Curious.

These are strange times and their imagination may run away with them. Listen, and try not to dismiss or minimise their fears but validate how they are feeling – “it’s completely fine to feel like that at the moment” or “I can really understand why you would feel like that”



Be Positive.

Remind them of all the ways they have learnt to keep themselves safe: washing their hands regularly, sneezing and coughing into their elbow, not hugging others and staying in their own space.



Be Thankful.

Help your child think of things they are looking forward to: being with their friends, seeing their teacher, favourite activities but be mindful some of these may not be available for them



Be Supportive

Younger children particularly may struggle with separation anxiety and may become tearful, clingy or act out. Reassure them that you will miss them too and think of them through out the day. It might be helpful to draw a little heart on their wrist and one on yours too. You can call it the hug button and when they find they are missing you they can press the heart and know that you will be doing the same at home. Sometimes having a little object to remind them of you through the day helps but please check this out with your school first.



Be Prepared.

Support your child to be aware of changes that may have happened to their classroom environment since they were there last and rehearse any new routines that school may have shared. Rehearse and practice your ‘goodbye’ routine and create a ‘hello’ greeting for the end of the day for them to look forward to.





We are looking forward to welcoming ALL our classes back to school in September!

For some of our children and their families, this will be your first time at school in nearly six months and we know that you may be anxious about returning. For those who have been in school, it will be a change to return to full class sizes.

As you know, school has remained open since March and so, for the staff and some of the children, the virus control changes that have been put in place now just seem part of our normal every day school routines! However, we appreciate that for those of you who are returning that these will be new for you and we would like to reassure you about the good practice that is already in place and how we will be preparing to make even further changes over the summer break to ensure that everyone can return safely. Some of the government guidelines have now changed since the early days of the outbreak so we will be making changes to ensure that these are met too.

In summary, the government guidelines state that:

- there is a requirement that people who are ill stay at home but that all other children should now return to school
- there must be robust hand and respiratory hygiene
- there must be enhanced cleaning arrangements
- all members of the school community should have an active engagement with NHS Test and Trace
- contacts should be reduced and distancing maximised wherever possible; minimise potential for contamination so far as is reasonably practicable

Consideration for reducing contact will include:

- grouping children together (this will be in year group classes in our school)
- avoiding contact between class groups where possible (eg: designated play times and areas / designated hygiene facilities)
- arranging classrooms with forward facing desks where possible
- staff maintaining distance from pupils and other staff as much as possible

Keep your distance! How will distancing and classes work?

We will be following the government guidelines regarding distancing and groupings:

- It is recognised that primary age children can not be expected to keep apart from each other and/or staff at all times.
- Children will be supported to maintain distance and not touch staff and their classmates where possible. However, this is likely to not be possible for the youngest children and some children with specific needs, and it is not feasible where space does not allow.
- The children will remain within their class group where possible all day, including breaktimes and lunchtime.



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- Mixing of groups is allowed for extended care eg: Breakfast Club and After School Club. We will not, however, be operating our “recreation” clubs after school for the time being in order to reduce contact.
- Staff can operate across different classes in order to meet children’s needs and for effective delivery of the curriculum, while maintaining distancing where possible. We will, however, be endeavouring to keep movement of adults between groups to a minimum. Cover staff can also work in different classes.
- Desks in classrooms will be arranged to be forward facing where possible, with teachers aiming to “teach from the front” when they can (not in Early Years!)
- Children can now sit side-by-side within their class group.
- There will be no “large gatherings” in school – this means that there will be no key stage or whole school assemblies and that children will eat their lunch in their classrooms. (Additional cleaning takes place to accommodate this.)
- There are staggered break times and lunch times to ensure reduction of contact points.
- Additional equipment has been removed from classrooms.
- Each child will be provided with a school pencil case & items for their own use – they do not need to bring in their own items from home.
- Equipment such as books, PE equipment, and other resources can be shared where necessary within a class; it must either be cleaned thoroughly or isolated for the agreed period before use by another class.
- All classes will have use of identified toilets and handbasins.
- Classes may use shared areas of the school (eg: computer room) following cleaning after the previous class.
- Specialists, therapists, clinicians and other support staff for pupils with SEN should be able to provide interventions as usual.
- Other visitors to the site, such as contractors, will be arranged outside of school hours where possible.

What will be taught?

We know that our children will have had many different learning experiences over the past few months. On return to school we want to help those children who need it to “catch up”, while continuing to meet the individual needs of all. The government advice is that schools should focus on the following:

- **Reception** - teachers will assess and address gaps in language, early reading and mathematics, particularly ensuring children’s acquisition of phonic knowledge and extending their vocabulary.
- **Years 1 to 6** – teachers will identify gaps and re-establish good progress in the essentials (phonics and reading, increasing vocabulary, writing and mathematics). Children will be given opportunities across the curriculum so they read widely develop their knowledge and vocabulary. The curriculum should remain broad, so that the majority of pupils are taught the full range of subjects over the year.

Attendance expectations

The government have advised that **school attendance will be mandatory again from the beginning of the Autumn term** and all children should therefore return to school as normal. This means that the usual rules on school attendance will apply.

What if my child is unwell?

We have been required to identify an “isolation room” in which any child who becomes unwell with coronavirus-like symptoms in school will be placed while parents are contacted to collect from school as soon as possible. It is essential that parents identify contacts who are able to collect their child quickly in an emergency.



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Your child MUST NOT attend school if they or a member of your family are unwell with the signs of coronavirus. You should all isolate at home and arrange for testing to be undertaken. The outcomes of the test, and ongoing health, will determine when your child can return to school. Please let us know the outcomes as soon as possible.

If someone tests negative, if they feel well and no longer have symptoms they can stop self-isolating and your child can return to school.

If someone tests positive they must continue to self-isolate for at least 7 days from the onset of their symptoms and then return to school only if they do not have symptoms other than cough or loss of sense of smell/taste. This is because a cough or anosmia can last for several weeks once the infection has gone. The 7-day period starts from the day when they first became ill. If they still have a high temperature, they should keep self-isolating until their temperature returns to normal. Other members of their household should continue self-isolating for the full 14 days.

What will happen if an adult or child in my child's class is unwell?

If a child or member of staff in your child's class presents as being unwell it is not immediately necessary for your child to be tested or to be isolated at home; they can continue to attend school as normal.

If the school subsequently receives notification that someone in your child's class has tested positive for coronavirus the school will contact the local health protection team, who will carry out a rapid risk assessment to confirm who has been in close contact with the person during the period that they were infectious. The health protection team will then provide definitive advice on who must be sent home. Those identified will then be asked to self-isolate for 14 days since they were last in close contact with that person when they were infectious. If they then develop symptoms themselves within their 14-day isolation period they should then follow the test guidance and self-isolate for a minimum of 7 days following the onset of symptoms.

Household members of those contacts who are sent home do not need to self-isolate themselves unless the child, young person or staff member who is self-isolating subsequently develops symptoms, in which case they should self-isolate for at least 14 days.

If the school has two or more confirmed cases within 14 days, or there is an overall rise in sickness absence where coronavirus is suspected, this may be considered to be an outbreak and the local health protection team may advise that additional action is required; for example, a larger number of pupils / staff may be asked to self-isolate at home as a precautionary measure.

Where schools are implementing controls and addressing the risks, whole school closure based on cases within the school will not generally be necessary, and should not be considered except on the advice of health protection teams.

Learning that can be undertaken at home will be provided for any child who is self-isolating, assuming that they are well enough to undertake this.

What can my child take to and from school?

It is still recommended that pupils limit the amount of equipment they bring into school each day, to essentials such as lunch boxes, hats, coats, reading and contact books. School-issued bags can be brought in but should not be filled with other items please! Reading books can be sent to/from home now and will be isolated / cleaned before reissue. Please make sure your child brings their water bottle to school each day,



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already filled with fresh water. There will be the opportunity to refill this during the day but if it can start full, it would be much appreciated! Our water fountains in the playground are not currently in use.

Will there be changes to drop-off and collection to support social distancing?

Rather than identifying staggered dropping off and collection times for each class – which we know causes difficulty for those picking up more than one child or where parents are fitting this in around other commitments – we will be continuing with the longer drop-off and collection period that was introduced from 1st June. Parents can choose the most convenient time to arrive within the extended times and this provides a natural “stagger” to the process which seems to work well!

Children can be **dropped off between 8.30am and 8.55am** at the pedestrian gate as normal, and make their way to their classroom.

Children can be **collected from between 2.50pm and 3.20pm**. Blue cones are situated at collection points, which will be signed) to ensure distancing is in place while waiting. Staff will be looking out for parents’ arrival to dismiss.

Reception	Year 1	Year 2
<p><i>8th to 17th September:</i> To be confirmed!</p> <p><i>18th Sept onwards:</i> On playground, alongside Reception fence.</p>	<p>Children will be dismissed from Yr1 Fire Exit; collection point on playground perpendicular to Yr1 fence.</p>	<p>Children will be dismissed from Yr2 Fire Exit; collection point on playground perpendicular to Yr2 fence.</p>

Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6
<p>Children will be dismissed from Activity Area door; collection point on playground perpendicular to Yr1/2 fence.</p>	<p>Children will be dismissed from Yr4 Fire Exit; collection point on grass opposite (just inside pedestrian gate).</p>	<p>Children will be dismissed from Yr5 fire exit (turn left inside pedestrian gate).</p>	<p>Children will be dismissed from Yr6 Fire Exit; collection point on grass outside (just inside pedestrian gate).</p>

We have a new **one way system** for exiting after collection so once you have come into the school through the pedestrian gate as normal and collected your child(ren) then please continue around the playground and the outside of the hall & staff room to the containers / car park and exit via the main car park gate. A walkway is in place for guidance & safety.

Apologies to Year 4 & Year 6 collections! We know this is a longer way round but please bear with us... hopefully it won't be for long...

If you are picking up from the Year 5 fire exit only then after picking up please continue on as if going to the office and then enter the walkway at this point rather than turning back and going round!

Please ensure children are closely supervised at all times.

We are relying on the support of parents in maintaining social distancing – for both adults and children - once they are on the school premises and if they have to wait outside at any time. There are lots of reminders and signs!



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Unless government advice changes before then, where possible, **children should only be collected by a member of their own household, an agreed childminder or someone within their “family bubble”** in order to fulfil government guidelines. Exceptions to this would be one-off circumstances which could otherwise result in a safeguarding concern or for children in Yr5 or Yr6 whose parents are confident that they are able to socially distance themselves and walk safely unsupervised and who have filled in the walking home form (see below).

Please can we ask that **only one adult per child comes onto the school site** to collect and that other children are also not brought onto the site unless absolutely necessary; **they must be under very close supervision, please.**

Can my Year 5 or Year 6 child walk / cycle home rather than being collected?

We will leave it to parents’ discretion as to whether their child is able to maintain social distancing and to therefore walk home without an adult whilst maintaining this appropriately. If we hold permission for your child to walk then they will be dismissed **at 3.15pm** to leave independently. If your child is in Year 5 or Year 6 please complete the form at <http://high-firs.kent.sch.uk/56walkingpermission/> if you give your consent for your child to walk; this will then be applicable from 2nd September.

Will there be Breakfast Club and After School Club?

Both Breakfast Club and After School Club will be available from **THURSDAY 3rd SEPTEMBER (not Weds 2nd)**. Children in Reception may attend BC from Weds 9th September and ASC from Friday 18th September.

BC & ASC are able to go ahead within the mixed groups guidelines but we will also follow, where possible, the same procedures for distancing, equipment and hygiene as the normal school day. We will aim to keep children sitting & playing within their class groups or sibling groups where possible when they are attending BC & ASC to continue to minimise risk. In order to do this, both Breakfast Club and After School Club will be held in the hall for the time being in order to maximise available space. Whilst we want to continue to support the children’s independence, there will be less “self-serve” of food items for the time being.

Breakfast Club – due to our changes in drop-off arrangements (where children can arrive and go to classes from 8.30am) our Breakfast Club times will now be shorter! Children can **arrive for Breakfast Club between 8am and 8.15am** (not 8.20am as previously). Entrance will be via the pedestrian gate and through the playground to the rear hall door (not the cloakroom door as previously). Breakfast will be available as normal but due to the shorter period of time there will be a much-reduced activity / play period, if any! Because of the changes of provision, our Breakfast Club charge has been reduced from £2.50 per day to **£2.00 per day** for the time being and places **MUST be booked in advance (by 3pm on the previous day)** so virus control measures can be planned for each day; we can not take “drop-in” attendees until further notice. A maximum number of children will be able to attend each day so please **book as soon as possible** to secure your place. Payment should be made in advance or on the day at the latest; children may not attend if payment has not been received. To book your place(s) please visit <http://high-firs.kent.sch.uk/breakfast-club-after-school-provision/>

After School Club – this will run from **3.15pm to 6pm with activities and meal included** as usual, with the charge remaining at **£9.00 per session** –Children will be collected from the front office entrance – please ring the ASC doorbell. Places will be limited and **MUST be booked in advance**. If you require a place at short notice then this may be possible until 12pm on the day of booking; cancellations must also be made by this time or the charge will still apply. Collection after 6pm will continue to incur a charge per child of £5 per 15 minutes. Payment should be made in advance or on the day at the latest; children may not attend if payment has not been received. To book your place(s) please visit <http://high-firs.kent.sch.uk/breakfast-club-after-school-provision/>



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Uniform

All children in school should wear uniform as per the usual guidelines. For the time being, on the day(s) on which your child's class has PE (this will be notified) your child should wear their PE kit to school (and back home again!) instead of their normal uniform.

Playtime & Lunchtime

Children will be playing in identified areas outside with their own class groups. They will be eating lunch in their own classrooms, with additional cleaning in place to support this.

We are currently unable to offer hot school meals at lunchtime as we can not use the hall to serve meals; a cold packed lunch alternative has been made available by our school meal providers or children may bring their own packed lunch as normal. We have new caterers who have been providing our packed lunch meals since June and we have been very pleased with the quality and variety of cold meals they are providing. The menus can be seen here <http://high-firs.kent.sch.uk/school-meals/> These are provided free for all of our KS1 children who would like them and at a cost of £2.25 for our KS2 children who are not eligible for free school meals. Payment can be made in cash on the day or in advance; online payment details will be issued shortly.

Children who are bringing their own packed lunch are asked to bring this, where possible, in either a plastic lunch box which can be wiped clean or a disposable paper or plastic bag, rather than a cloth lunch box.

School breaktime fruit is not currently available as the government have currently redirected this funding to the NHS. Free milk for our under 5s should resume from September.

Handwashing

Children are asked to wash their hands at least eight times a day... –

- On arrival at school
- Before & after break
- Before & after eating lunch
- After lunch play
- Before & after PE or other period of exercise
- Before going home

Soap provided is "gentle" and anti-bacterial; sanitiser is not required.

Contact with school staff

Please continue to email or telephone the school office with any queries rather than calling in person. Class contact books will resume use in September so please use these for messages for your child's class teacher. There is currently no access for parents to the school building.

Helping us to keep your family safe

The safety of our pupils, staff and their families is more important to us than ever at this time. We ask for our parents' cooperation and support in maintaining social distancing on our site and ensuring that their children do the same. The government's guidelines have brought huge changes to many of our lives and we know that most of our families are working so hard to keep to these guidelines, despite the affect this is having on our daily lives and the interactions we would normally have with our extended family and friends. Should we have any concerns that the government guidelines are not being met, however, (both in and out of school) then we will tackle these directly with those concerned to ensure the wellbeing and safety of the rest of our community - **Kent County Council have advised schools that if children and families are not complying with government guidelines either in or out of school that the Headteacher is able to refuse admittance to the child and/or family members.**



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Our Volunteers

We have a fantastic team of volunteer readers and classroom helpers at our school and we have really missed their support! We hope to be able to welcome them back from October, with virus control measures in place.

Behaviour

We know that lots of things will be new for some of our children and we do understand that returning to school may take some getting used to! Children will, of course, be supported in this by staff. Our Behaviour Policy remains in place, however, and children will be expected to respond to school rules, adults' requests and directions as normal – which, of course, may now include virus control measures. Should adults in school have any concerns regarding this and your child they will get in touch to discuss this with you.

Need support?

As well as their classroom staff, our children will continue to be able to access pastoral support and Emotional Literacy Support as always if they are finding things difficult. Our Family Worker will also still be available to talk to any parents or children who would like advice or support. Please do let us know if you would like to access any of these options. For our children with additional needs, staff are able to continue to support these.

ANY QUESTIONS?!

We know that there is lots of information to take in and that you may still have some questions! If you need to get in touch please email us at office@high-firs.kent.sch.uk



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