



26th Feb 2021

High Firs Primary School

NEWSLETTER

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

Message from Mr Turtle

The last half term was certainly not what we had expected or hoped for! I know for me personally this lockdown has been much harder, but I have tried my hardest to always look for the positives and remain hopeful that we would all be back together soon. Thankfully we know that will now be happening very soon and we look forward to welcoming the children back to school on Monday 8th March.

I could not be prouder of our wonderful children, both at home and in school. They continue to adapt to all of the changes that have been put their way. They are truly incredible. I understand and appreciate the immense strain this lockdown has put on parents - juggling work, home life and teaching your children too. You have all shown that our school values extend beyond our children to our families as well. The determination, courage, kindness and responsibility you have shown in so many different ways is inspiring and I have been so grateful for your support at this time.

I would also encourage you to be kind to yourselves- we are in an extraordinary situation. We know that our parents have done their best to support their children's learning and your best is good enough. We always say these things to children but we often don't take our own advice as parents!

The media is full of worries and concerns about children being behind and catching up with learning, and parents (and children) have also shared their worries about this with us too. However, we also know that many of our families have worked so incredibly hard at home over the past months to support and continue learning, and this is sadly not always being reflected or acknowledged.

Just as when the children returned to school in September, staff will be working over the next few weeks to ensure we gain a full picture of what we do need to do to support our children over the next few months to ensure they can continue to learn and to make good progress. One of the many things we learnt after the summer, when the children returned, is just how resilient and amazing our children are and so we will continue to work together - school, families and children - to ensure this time away from school does not have a negative impact on our children. Whilst, of course, we want our children to "catch up", we also want them to continue to enjoy learning and to have vital opportunities to reconnect with their friends and have time for play.

As we approach the (hopefully) final week of learning at home, I give you all my thanks for what you have done and renew our school's commitment to continuing to support both the academic progress but also the wellbeing of our children as they return.

Book Week - advance notice!

Our Book Week is usually held during the second week of March and we thought it would be really good to still go ahead with this as a great start for the children's return to school from 8th March. As part of this, children will be invited to come to school dressed as a favourite book character on Friday 12th March. We are also hoping to be able to hold our annual Book Fair that week but in a different format due to the current restrictions - more info to follow...



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Pancake Challenge and this week's Special Mentions Assembly

Well done to the children - and some of the staff - who took part in Mr Turtle's Pancake Flip Challenge! Lots of you managed to beat him 😊

You can watch today's Special Mentions Assembly at

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1bOJFFY5PE20Q3IYOsYeGVL7NRgbCsyjp/view?usp=sharing>

Headteacher recruitment

Thank you to the parents and children who responded to the survey by the deadline on Monday 22nd; your contributions are being considered by the governing body and will help to inform the recruitment process.

Parents Consultations

Our Parents Consultations would usually be held at the end of March. We are still intending to go ahead with these by telephone in order that we can discuss with you your child's return to school and their focus areas for the summer term. Details on how to book your appointment will be issued nearer the time.

Special Mentions

This week, our special mentions go to:

- Leo A - fantastic clock work.
- Roman T and Ellis A - independent shopping list writing
- Lottie W - a super explanation (after listening to the story of the Ugly Duckling) why we should be kind to everyone, even if they seem different to us.
- Alfie L - working hard in Maths, learning about fractions.
- Harry M - hard work on all learning tasks.
- Jessica T - a great week's learning.
- Emanuela M - amazing effort with Learning Log tasks.
- Bobby R - super enthusiasm in PE doing his superhero dance!
- Millie WS - a very good persuasive letter about zoos.
- Isla S - fantastic knowledge about the circulatory system.
- Harry L - fantastic description of the rainforest.
- Lewis W - brilliant writing describing the jungle.
- Chiana W - a super fact-file about Mary Anning.



In our classes this week

Reception - have enjoyed reading "Mr Wolf's Pancakes".

Year 1 - have learned to use comparison signs for numbers that are greater than / less than.

Year 2 - learned about Peru.

Year 3 - made their own model Viking boats & found out about life on board a Viking ship.

Year 4 - compared the layers of the Earth to a crème egg!

Year 5 - are enjoying their new book, "Brightstorm".

Year 6 - found out about the clothing of the Ancient Maya.



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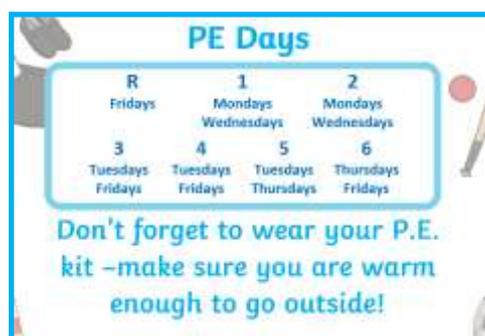




HOUSE POINTS

| | This Week | Term Total | Top Scorers this week |
|----------|-----------|------------|------------------------------|
| BEECH | 51 | 1315 | Harrison A, Ella V |
| CHESTNUT | 62 | 1278 | Annie-Grace G, Amie S |
| OAK | 48 | 1089 | Daniele M, Evie B, Millie WS |
| ASH | 36 | 1123 | Hannah C, Mabel R |

Coming up next week



Friends of High Firs Primary School Association

Supporting Our Children's Education
Registered Charity No. 1137633

Thank you to everyone who supported FHF by using the Amazon Smile site in the run-up to Christmas – we raised **£36.41**. It's not too late to start using it now... just register at <https://smile.amazon.co.uk/ch/1137633-0> and then access every time via the Amazon Smile site.

amazon smile
You shop. Amazon gives.

- STEP ONE** Go to <https://smile.amazon.co.uk/ch/1137633-0>
- STEP TWO** Confirm Friends of High Firs as your charity
- STEP THREE** SHOP! 0.5% of your spending will be donated to FHF
- STEP FOUR** Access your Amazon account via smile.amazon.co.uk every time to donate

Important Information

Important Health Information - PLEASE REMEMBER!

Please remember to **let the school know immediately** if you suspect your child has any of the following (even if it has not been confirmed): **measles, chicken pox or shingles**. It is also important to let us know if your child has been exposed to these illnesses (eg through a friend at a club or a family member) but has not shown the symptoms themselves. Please also let us know if your child has also been in contact with any other infectious diseases.

We are a **NUT FREE** school - this is **ALL TYPES OF NUTS**. Please can we therefore ask for the support of all our school families in ensuring that none of our children or visitors bring any nuts or nut-based products (eg: Nutella spread / Snickers / nutty cereal bars etc) into school. Thank you for your understanding and support in helping to ensure the safety & wellbeing of those members of our school community for whom these products pose a serious risk.

NUT FREE



THANK YOU
for keeping our school safe!



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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.





Free school meals

Your child might be able to get free school meals if you get any of the following:

- Universal Credit - your household income must be less than £7,400 a year (after tax and not including any benefits you get)
- Income Support
- Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance
- Support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- The guaranteed element of Pension Credit
- Child Tax Credit (provided you're not also entitled to Working Tax Credit and have an annual gross income of no more than £16,190)
- Working Tax Credit run-on paid for 4 weeks after you stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit.



Some schools in Kent manage their own Free Schools Meals application process. For more information, go to:

kent.gov.uk/freeschoolmeals



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We are looking forward to welcoming ALL our children back to school from 8th March.

Arrangements for the return to school will be very similar to those which were already in place during the Autumn Term. Some reminders and updates follow below; this includes updated guidance from the DfE and NHS.

Class arrangements

Children will continue to be in their class “bubbles” with minimal contact with other classes. Our enhanced cleaning & handwashing routines will continue!

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.

However, we are also aware that many children are anxious about the need to “catch up” - particularly following the recent extensive media campaigns - and we will also be working hard to ensure that children’s mental health and wellbeing are also supported. For the first 2 ½ weeks back before the Easter break we will be looking at getting the children back “up and running” and enjoying their school and learning experiences with us again and we are looking forward to our **BOOK WEEK** on 8th March and **SCIENCE WEEK** on 15th March, which we hope will really get the children enthused about being back in school.

Attendance expectations

The government have advised that **school attendance will be mandatory from 8th March** and all children should therefore return to school as normal. This means that the usual rules on school attendance will apply.

Your child must NOT attend school if:

- they have one or more of the coronavirus symptoms – a test must then be arranged.
- a member of their household (including someone in their support bubble or childcare bubble if they have one) has coronavirus symptoms – a test must then be arranged.
- they or someone in their household, support bubble or childcare bubble has had a positive test
- they have been contacted by NHS Track & Trace and told they are a close contact and have to isolate.
- they are required to quarantine having recently visited countries outside the Common Travel Area

They must immediately cease to attend and not attend for at least 10 days from the day after:

- the start of their (or their contact’s) symptoms



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- the test date if they did not have any symptoms but have had a positive test of either kind

Please contact the school as soon as possible to let us know if any of the above apply to your child or one of their household. You can email us at office@high-firs.kent.sch.uk including at weekends to notify us.

What happens if my child is unwell in school with coronavirus symptoms?

- your child will be isolated in school, under adult supervision, and a contact asked to collect them from school as quickly as possible.
- the affected person should have a test as soon as possible and advise school of the outcome.
- Other members of their household (including any siblings and members of their support or childcare bubble if they have one) should self-isolate until test results are available.

Isolation periods includes the day symptoms started for the first person in their household, or the day their test was taken if they did not have symptoms and the next 10 full days. If a member of the household starts to display symptoms while self-isolating they will need to restart the 10 day isolation period and book a test.

If anyone tests positive whilst not experiencing symptoms but develop symptoms during the isolation period, they must restart the 10 day isolation period from the day they developed symptoms.

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 determine those who have been close contacts of the child. Those identified will then be asked to self-isolate for 10 days since they were last in close contact with that person when they were infectious. If they then develop symptoms themselves within their 10 day isolation period they should then restart the 10 day isolation period from the day they developed 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 then start a 10 day isolation period from the day they developed symptoms.

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.

Children who are self-isolating but who are not unwell will be given learning to complete at home.

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, 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.



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

We will be continuing the drop-off and collection procedures from September.

- **Drop-off between 8.30am and 8.55am** at the pedestrian gate
- **Collect between 2.50pm and 3.20pm.** Please enter the school via the pedestrian gate and exit via the playground / car park walk way. Please wait by a designated blue cone for your class.

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!

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.

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. Adults who are able to do so are requested to wear a face mask / covering when picking up or dropping off.**

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.

Will there be Breakfast Club and After School Club?

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 or sibling groups where possible when they are attending BC & ASC to continue to minimise risk.

Breakfast Club – Children can **arrive for Breakfast Club between 8am and 8.15am**. Entrance will be via the pedestrian gate and through the playground to the rear hall door. The charge is **£2.00 per day** 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) to Easter, please visit <http://high-firs.kent.sch.uk/breakfast-club-after-school-provision/> as soon as possible.**

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.** Cancellations must be made by 12pm on the day 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/> as soon as possible.**



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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 your child should wear their PE kit to school (and back home again!) instead of their normal uniform. PE days before Easter will be confirmed in each week's Newsletter.

Playtime & Lunchtime

Children will be playing in identified areas outside with their own class groups. KS2 will be eating lunch in their own classrooms. KS1 children may eat in the hall with a maximum of two classes present at one time, with no mixing between classes and wide distancing in place between the class bubbles.

We are pleased to let you know that we will be able to offer hot meals again from 8th March onwards. We are asking that you please make your booking for hot meals for the remainder of the term **by Thursday 4th March** so that we can let our caterers know how many to prepare for. Please visit at <http://high-firs.kent.sch.uk/school-meals/> to see the menu available and to make your booking. Meals 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 for KS1 and free milk for under 5s will also be available.

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 continue to be in use so please use these for messages for your child's class teacher. Class emails will continue to be monitored but please bear in mind that teachers have a full-day teaching commitment and so they may not be checked at set times or seen before school each day so the contact book is a better method of communication if your message is time-restricted.

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**



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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.

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.

Staffing

Guidelines allow for school staff to work in more than one class, but we will endeavour to keep this to a minimum. As per new guidance, primary school staff now undertake asymptomatic Covid testing twice a week and also wear face coverings in communal areas of the school building (but not in their own classes).

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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