

Dear parents,

I am writing to you at the end of Term 1 with an update and the news from the ASPIRE schools. I, for one, am very tired and in need of a break having not had one like many of the staff since February. I sent an email to my staff earlier this week with the following poem, which I think sums up the term well. It was my small way of expressing my thanks to my team of dedicated staff of which I am very proud.

Esther Nzenza 2020

T'was the week before half term and all through the land
The teachers were tired of washing their hands
Of cleaning the desks, and the drawers and the pens
Of reminding their class not to cuddle their friends
Of handgel and soap, of bleach and of wipes
Of passwords and google and all things that swipe
Of trying to stand at the length of a lion
From friends whose shoulders they wanted to cry on

T'was the week before half term and all through the land
The parents were trying to make up great plans
That don't involve meeting, or greeting, or places
That in these strange times don't resemble safe spaces
They look to the teachers, and all they have done
To make school inviting, inspiring and fun
To see past the problems, the issues and rules
To bring back the joy and excitement of school

Thank you being the safe place, the learning
For standing there strong with the children returning
For finding solutions that don't feel so strange
With no funds or magicians to help you arrange
For stories and spellings and phonics and play
For taking the fear of this moment away

Positive Covid Case at Kingswood This Week

On Wednesday evening I received the news that a pupil in the year 5/6 class at Kingswood had tested positive for covid 19. The child had experienced no symptoms and was attending school as normal as the test was part of research and the family's household was selected as part of a random sample.

Following consultation with the DFE and public health we have closed a bubble at Kingswood, therefore meaning that pupils in years 3-6 plus some children who attend a club cannot attend school for 14 days and must self-isolate.

In light of this I am writing to remind you of the government guidance, the ASPIRE risk assessments and the routines within our schools

Government guidance states that in the case of a positive case in school, children and staff that have been in direct contact with the child or adult must self-isolate for 14 days. Other members of the household including siblings do not need to isolate as they have not had direct contact, unless the family member develops symptoms.

The following has been taken directly from the gov.uk website.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-for-contacts-of-people-with-possible-or-confirmed-coronavirus-covid-19-infection-who-do-not-live-with-the-person/guidance-for-contacts-of-people-with-possible-or-confirmed-coronavirus-covid-19-infection-who-do-not-live-with-the-person#:~:text=Your%20household%20does%20not%20need,handwashing%20and%20respiratory%20hygiene.>

What should I do if I am a contact of someone who has tested positive for COVID-19?

If you have been informed that you are a contact, you must self-isolate at home for 14 days from the date of your last contact with the person who has tested positive for COVID-19. Self-isolation means you must stay at home and not leave the house for 14 days. It is very important that you follow this advice even if you feel well, as symptoms can take up to 14 days to appear from your last contact with the person who has tested positive for COVID-19. Self-isolating in this way will help protect your family, friends, the wider community and the NHS.

Do the people I live with also need to self-isolate at home with me for 14 days?

If you are a contact of a person who has tested positive for COVID-19, but you do not have symptoms, other people living with you do not need to self-isolate and should follow the general guidance.

Reminders of routines to keep parents, pupils and staff safe within the ASPIRE schools

We are following all guidelines to keep everyone safe within school, obviously we cannot stop the spread of covid 19, as there are many outside influences but we can do our best to prevent the bursting of our bubbles by keeping to the following guidelines:

- Parents are asked to wear face coverings when dropping and picking up their children
- Please sanitise your hands when entering and exiting the school
- Please follow any one way system and enter and leave by the correct gate
- Please drop and collect your child at the correct time for their bubble - if everyone arrives in the first time slot, social distancing becomes much harder
- Please social distance when waiting for your child
- Pupils and staff will be washing hands regularly throughout the day
- Staff have now been asked to wear masks if crossing bubbles or using shared spaces in school
- Parents are reminded that they cannot enter the school buildings
- Pupils will be reminded that they need to social distance wherever possible and certainly from children not in their bubble.

These measures, although somewhat prohibitive of normal school life, are essential to ensure that the one positive case does not spread throughout our schools. Thank you

If there are more cases within our schools which affect your child you will be informed by text or email as soon as possible. Last night for example I picked up an email at 21.30 and parents were texted at around 10pm. In the first instance, only the parents of the children in the affected bubble will be contacted.

Remote Education

As explained in my letter we will now provide remote education if a bubble is closed and children have to self-isolate. Kingswood parents for children in Key Stage 2 will shortly receive the login for their child. All pupils at the other schools will have theirs sent home after half term along with instructions of how to get into Google classroom.

The staff have so far received 2 hours out of 8 of training directly from Google, so are still learning - please bear with us !

Harvest Donations

Thank you all so much for your very generous donations of tins, packets and clothes. We were able to make up hampers for all of our families who are experiencing hardship at the moment. There was also enough to ensure that staff that have been affected by the pandemic were also supported. Any clothes and food leftover will be donated to charity. Thank you again for supporting our ASPIRE community.

Finishing on a positive note

I have been a Head for 15 years, and an Executive Head for 7 years and this has to be one of the toughest terms I have ever experienced for both staff and pupils. I would like to thank everyone for the part they have played and for their efforts. A special thank you to Mrs Sanchez Daviu, Mrs Knight and Mrs Serrecchia at Kingswood who have had a very long couple of days.

Blog

I have very recently started a blog should you wish to read any more of my thoughts - there is very little content on there at present, but I am hoping to develop it in time. The website address is:

theexehead.wordpress.com

Wishing you all a healthy and happy half term. To those who are self-isolating stay safe and well.

If you have any questions or queries I can be contacted via email at ehickling@aspirekent.org.uk

Kind regards,

Emma Hickling

Executive Headteacher

ASPIRE federation