



Friday 12th February 2021

Dear parents,

Congratulations for achieving a full term of homeschooling, or working and sending your children to school when most people aren't. After almost a full year of the pandemic, every week seems like an achievement. I know you will join me in thanking the staff for all their efforts both in school and with the remote education. Although I am sure we could improve it further our provision during this lockdown has improved hugely from the first one, when we had no IT to support any kind of online learning. The staff completed their training for this, whilst teaching full time, and have done a great job of putting their learning into action this term.

#### Holidays in 2021

I am sure like me you have seen on the news this week, that the government has advised us not to book holidays yet for this year either in the UK or abroad. This is of course disappointing but will hopefully save the stress of having to cancel flights etc and claim back money paid. It does of course also mean that no children should be missing time off school because of a holiday, which with so much in school learning missed is a good thing. Please see below for a media article regarding holidays.

Transport Secretary Grant Shapps said it is "too soon" for hopeful travellers to start booking holidays as it is currently "illegal" to go on holiday in the UK or abroad.

"First of all, I should say, people shouldn't be booking holidays right now – not domestically or internationally," he told the BBC's Radio 4 Today programme.

"The Prime Minister will say more about the route to unlocking this country, starting when he speaks about it on February 22.

“But we don’t know yet whether that will include information on things like holidays, simply because we don’t know where we’ll be up to in terms of the decline in cases, deaths, the vaccination.

#### Update from the government - 22nd February 2021

The government will be updating us on the future of the lockdown, and when schools may open on the evening of Monday 22nd February, which is an INSET day for ASPIRE. I shall of course be listening with everyone else and will write to parents on Tuesday 23rd February with an update. The date that seems to have been proposed for school reopening is Monday 8th March, but of course we don't know what that looks like yet.

#### Half term hampers

Mrs Steer has worked very hard to put together hampers this week, so that our families who have been hardest hit by the pandemic are supported over the half term. These hampers have been possible because of donations from our local churches, who have been very supportive with their financial donations. Thanks also to a customer of Lenham Storage who was very generous in their donation of chocolate biscuits! We shall continue to provide this support throughout the time schools are closed. If you and your family are struggling please contact your school office or head of school and we would be happy to help. We shall also continue to collect donations from Tescos and inform parents when this food is available.

#### Weekly testing of staff for Covid 19

The staff who are in school - team C and a back up team Team A have all tested twice this week using the rapid lateral tests. All tests have been negative and Team C have been able to attend school. Some staff have also taken part in the postcode specific testing - all these tests have been negative too.

#### Numbers of children attending school

Our bubbles are NOW ALL FULL at Kingswood, using the cap of 20 that I have applied to keep everyone safe. Thank you to those parents who contacted me after my letter last week.

If you need a place for your child at Kingswood as you are a key/ critical worker or your family has an attached social worker or your child has an EHCP please contact me at [exehead@aspire-kent.org.uk](mailto:exehead@aspire-kent.org.uk) and I will try my best to assist you.

### This week and the snow !

Thank you for your patience with us this week, if your child normally attends Kingswood. It is always a hard decision to make, as to whether to open the school in the snow. Kingswood is a rural school only accessible via country lanes, which are not gritted. The village itself often has a snowfall higher than other areas and the school has no caretaker. Therefore the decision made is always about the safety of staff and pupils travelling to the school and the safety of the site. I am pleased that we were able to open on Wednesday and today. Thank You to the members of staff who turned up to grit and snow shovel to make this possible, especially to those who were not due to be in school.

### Half term and INSET day - reminder

The week beginning Monday 15th February is half term and all ASPIRE schools will be closed to all pupils.. After half term we have an INSET day on Monday 22nd February so the schools will also be closed on that day. Kingswood will open again on Tuesday 23rd February. Remote education will also begin again on Tuesday 23rd February for term 4.

Wishing you all restful family weekends and enjoyable half terms.

Kind regards

Emma Hickling  
Executive headteacher  
ASPIRE federation