

Cheapside C. of E. Primary School

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Headteacher

Mrs Kate Searle

Dear Parents,

As we are now in our second year of Forest School we are looking at ways to measure the impact of our outdoor forest space on the wellbeing of our children and the impact of time spent outdoors on educational attainment. We have also been looking at how we can make the most of the outdoor space for our older children and looking at how we can use the forest to teach high quality outdoor science lessons.

To this end, we have made contact with Royal Holloway University; who have begun working with 14 local schools, about taking part in a research biodiversity programme with Years 5 and 6 (Kestrels and Owls) This is a research project to investigate whether learning about nature and science in the outdoors could help to improve children's' wellbeing, mood, educational attainment, and connection to nature. Emotional and social difficulties in children and young people are becoming increasingly more common.

Taking part in the project will mean that Royal Holloway will visit every week, to work with your child in the Forest school site on projects designed to help them learn about the species and habitats in the grounds in a fun and interactive way. The sessions will run for an hour on a Thursday afternoon and will be supported by myself. We will be incorporating some forest school skills into some sessions, so the children will still get opportunities for camp fire cooking and tool work. Children will need forest school clothes with them in school on a Thursday.

In order for Royal Holloway to work with our children, we need your permission for your child to take part. Attached is an explanation of the project from Royal Holloway, along with some contact details of the project leaders should you require any further information. They do also request that you complete the attached questionnaire.

Royal Holloway will share the outcomes of any surveys, interviews or any data collected with school so that we can also monitor and track the impact of our forest school site and the project work.

Please could I ask that all consent forms and questionnaires are returned to school by **Monday 1st October** as we would like to begin the sessions during this week. Please could I ask that all consent forms are returned to your child's class teacher in a sealed envelope and marked for my attention.

I hope you will agree that this is an exciting opportunity for the children and I am delighted that Royal Holloway want to work with us. I will post regular updates and photos on the forest school page on the website so you can see what the children have been up to! Should you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to contact me or the project leaders from Royal Holloway.

With thanks

Mrs Summers