Dear Parents,

**Dormansland in the Woods**

**Ashdown Forest Outdoor Enrichment Project**

We have had an overwhelmingly positive response from you to our outdoor learning consultation this term. Thank you so much to all those parents who took the time to reflect on this project proposal and to let me have their thoughts about both the educational benefits and the practical logistics. Needless to say, you know me well and I very much appreciated you drawing my attention to a number of key health and safety policies, in the kindest possible way, that I needed to consider in the midst of my enthusiasm for getting this project off the ground!

Thank you, also, to the parents of the children in Year 3, who have been extremely patient with us while we work out some of these practicalities in order for them to start today. With hindsight, we could possibly have left this for another week but, as ever, we were keen to have the children out in the forest as soon as possible.

Attached to this letter you will find the following:

- a more detailed leaflet, outlining our reasons for setting up this enrichment project, along with the dates for each class for the remainder of the year and the clothing and equipment your child will need for their trip
- a consent form, which we would ask you **all** to complete and return to the school office as quickly as possible, outlining the various possible ways we will be transporting your child to and from the forest and asking you to state your preference for your own child
- an insurance form, which we would ask any parents who would be willing to help us with transportation when their child's class goes to the forest to complete and to bring in the relevant documents listed to Ms Blyde

On some occasions we will be able to make use of a minibus from Lingfield Notre Dame School, and have had offers from a few parents, who hold the relevant driving licence, to take this to the forest. Otherwise, should you choose not to make alternative transport arrangements with another parent, we have four members of staff, all of whom hold 'business use' cover on their vehicle insurance, who will take the children there.

I have made the decision, according to the latest central government guidance, that, **if your child is being transported via a staff member's car, they have a car seat.** While we hold a small stock in school, it would...
be really helpful if you are able to send your child in with one on the morning of the trip and we will see that this is safely returned to you at the end of the school day.

One of the initial issues that we had considered was the timing of the day and whether or not we would need to make separate provision for any siblings or pre-schoolers on these days. However, working in collaboration with the team at the Ashdown Forest, we have managed to simplify this so that the children’s day among the trees does not extend beyond the usual school day. **This will enable them to continue to attend before- or after-school clubs and for them to be dropped off and collected from the school site as usual.** If you are a parent accompanying your child’s class for the day, and taking your own child to the forest, we would ask that you come into school with your child, in order for them to be registered as usual and for the class teacher to ensure that we know exactly who is going with whom.

All of this sounds really complicated but I’m delighted to say that this morning we managed to transport Year 3 safely to the forest, using this system, and it was completely pain- and panic-free. If we are able to continue to take the children there throughout the year under our own steam, it will make a huge difference to the cost and, therefore, the longer term sustainability, of this project.

As always, please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any further questions or suggestions about this work. I am also working closely with your class representatives to help us compile transport lists for each class, so please speak to or email them instead and they can pass on any questions to me, if necessary.

Thank you for your support for this project.

Best wishes,

Sarah Stokes