



Wensum Junior School - An Evolution Academy Trust School

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Dear families.

This morning we discovered that a colony of Ivy bees have taken up residence in the polytunnel in the school garden. As a precaution I made the decision to keep the children in for break and lunchtime today until I was able meet with an expert on site and decide the best and safest course of action.

Michael Armes (Pest Control Services) visited the school this afternoon and we both spoke to Dr Matthew Davies from Killgerm on speakerphone. The good news is that the Ivy Bee is essentially harmless and poses no threat to children or adults. They are not aggressive and showed no interest to us when we went in to observe them more closely. They will be with us for a couple of weeks, depending on the weather - the late summer weather we are enjoying is ideal for them as well - before they move on. Although they pose no risk to us, the fenced area provides a natural exclusion zone ensuring a distance of approximately 20 feet from the polytunnel which is considered a safe distance. The children will be kept out of that area, but play will resume on the field from tomorrow, with the exclusion zone enforced by supervising staff. For your information the following has been taken from BWARS (Bees, Wasps and Ants Recording Society ([:https://www.bwars.com/content/colletes-hederae-faqs](https://www.bwars.com/content/colletes-hederae-faqs)):

*: “the females **can** sting, but to get them to do this you'd have to pick them up and squeeze them. I have sat in the midst of nesting aggregations of tens of thousands of these bees and never been touched, let alone stung. The vast majority of the bees in these so-called swarms are males, and have no sting whatsoever. They are swarming over the ground on the look out for emerging females. Basically, C. hederae is all but completely safe with children and pets”*

Further information can be found here:

https://www.bwars.com/sites/www.bwars.com/files/info_sheets/01_Colletes_hederae_20100908.pdf

As always, if you have any concerns, let us know.

Yours sincerely,

Peter Hubery



