

17/6/20

Dear Parents and Carers

Re: Partial reopening of school to more pupils in June

This is an updated version of the letter I sent out a couple of weeks ago as we move to open to Reception, year 1 and year 6 children.

One of the biggest issues we have is this idea of bubbles. Children will exist in school in bubbles and so will staff. No-one should work in different bubbles. So staff in, say, the year 6 bubble, should not expect to work in another bubble. The same applies for reception and year 1. We will also have a key worker bubble. So if your child is in say, Y4 and you are a key worker, they could come in but they would be in a separate group or bubble with a member of staff.

As it stands, we will combine year 1 and reception into one bubble which will help with staffing.

Needless to say, this will have quite an impact on the school day and limits what we can do during the day. Only one class will be able to use the hall because as soon as one class use it, it becomes part of their bubble. We will need to stagger lunches and breaks to minimize children from different bubbles mixing.

In classrooms, we will do our best to ensure children keep as safe as possible. Children will be on desks spaced out with walking space between. They will be provided with a tray and resources which they will not need to share. Children should not bring anything from home (apart from a packed lunch if required). Even Reception children will need to work individually which is going to be very difficult. Anything they play with will need to be cleaned after use. Break times will be staggered to reduce mixing and especially reduce congestion around the toilets. Staff will be unable to mark books so any marking will be done by children under guidance of teachers and TAs which is something we do quite a lot of anyway. Staff will plan to do as much formal work as possible but obviously will be limited on which resources they can use. Outdoor learning seems to be quite a popular option to reduce contamination. Weather permitting, we will do plenty of this but again, social distancing will apply. Obviously we will continue to keep up the handwashing message, bins will have lids and we will have someone on standby to provide cleaning whenever needed.

Children in year 6 should come in to school at the top pedestrian gate; infant children at the lower pedestrian gate (on the Hallwood Park end). Please respect social distancing and allow people to get through. There is no rush. Year 6 will be coming in and out of the usual door. Year 1 and reception will be coming in and out of the year 5 door round the back. Key worker children from Y2,3,4,5 will be in Thetford class (Mrs Hayes room) access should be round the back of school. Could infant children please arrive at 9am and be picked up at 2:45. Junior children should arrive at 9:15 and be picked up at 3pm.

At pick up and drop off, please space out to respect 2m guidelines. There should be room even if everyone turns up at once, but hopefully you won't if you stick to timings. There should only be one adult per child coming onto school grounds at this time. If you want to pick up at other times then that would be ok with us, please advise at the time. Staff will no longer be able to have conversations at the door as we used to. We want to still be available to discuss any concerns and needs though so you would be able to make appointments for face-to-face meetings (socially distant of course) or phone calls. We will have a policy of no more than 2 in the entrance area. Please look through the glass before ringing the bell. It will be a one out, one in policy.

Children (and staff) should be coming in to school in clean clothes each day. Guidelines make this quite clear. Obviously school uniform is preferable but I realise not many people have 5 sets of uniform or want to be washing every night. I would simply ask that parents do their best to get children in uniform but if this is not possible then any appropriate, clean clothes will be ok but they must be freshly laundered. (Please keep shoes sensible, no flip flops/sliders). If you cannot manage this then let us know. It would be acceptable for a child to stay at home. Staff will not generally be wearing masks but some are concerned for their health and we will wear PPE in the event of eg. First aid situations.

If you change your mind about sending your child in then it may be that we need to make arrangements and it might affect the bubbles we have in place. Please ring to check before making any decisions. You are probably aware that issues with attendance and punctuality will not be pursued as before. We will still be taking registers but no-one will be penalized for absence. If we are expecting your child in then please ring if they are not coming. We will continue with welfare checks for children that are staying off and staff will continue to provide work.

Key worker children are still welcome to come in as they have been during the lockdown. As always, please advise if you need a place. Key worker children will be taught in a separate group though (mixed Y2,3,4,5) in Thetford class. 9:15 to 3pm. If this presents difficulties then we can work around it. Speak to someone in school.

There will be no after-school provision for the time being. Breakfast club may start again but we will see how the next couple of weeks pan out. **If you are a key worker and need to drop off or pick up at different times then please speak with us to make arrangements.**

Suzanne in the kitchen will be doing hot lunches but the menu might be slightly different. She will be drawing something up in due course. Infants will still all get a free meal in school.

As always, if you or a family member show any Covid symptoms then ring to let us know as soon as possible and we can arrange for emergency cleaning. If any child develops symptoms during the day, we have designated a space for them to be while awaiting pick up. They will not be sitting alone, although it is unreasonable to expect a member of staff to sit close to them. They will be monitored at a distance. Parents should come and collect children as a matter of urgency in this case. This is to protect others in school and also to support their child at what will be a worrying time. Any detected rise in temperature will result in isolation. Please ensure we have up to date contact information.

One major thing that we all have at the back of our minds is children's welfare and well-being. This is going to be a very difficult time for children who will be anxious and this is compounded by the strange setting they will find themselves in. This is particularly true for the younger children who will not be able to learn the way they used to. Please be assured, we will do everything we can to make sure children are as much at ease as they can be. If a child needs first aid, they will receive it but only from the staff in their bubble. It may be that children need to receive first aid care at home more often in the coming weeks to protect the bubbles in school. If a child is upset then we will comfort them.

I am also aware that this is a difficult time for my staff. They will be anxious about their own health and their families. They are torn between doing the best for children and keeping themselves healthy. I am incredibly proud of the work they have all done over the last couple of months. Please consider their needs and well-being at this time. If staff fall ill then I will close classes and, if necessary, the school.

This is the plan as it stands for Woodside at the moment. It could well be that the government or council decide the national situation becomes unsafe. There is a lot of talk about a possible second spike due to various things you may have seen on the news. We will keep you informed of any changes but as it stands, school is now re-opening on 22nd June.

I know many of you have concerns about safety and being completely honest, I cannot give any guarantees. We all know that children and adults can carry the virus for days without showing any signs and we all know how children can easily forget the guidelines and engage in physical play and forget what 2 metres is. All I can do is give you my promise that we will try our absolute best in maintaining all reasonable precautions and putting as much in place as feasible to minimize danger. I have tried to give you as much information as I can but I am sure I haven't covered everything. I welcome any questions or concerns by email to head.woodside@halton.gov.uk

Best wishes to you all.