

Friday 18th September 2020

Dear Parents and Carers,

It's been a week of firsts this week; things have occurred that have never happened before in my 30-year school career, reflecting the challenging circumstances we all find ourselves in at the moment.

To summarise our current position briefly, we have had 3 positive COVID 19 tests this week and have closed both Reception classes and one Year 2 class (2T), for two weeks, on the advice received from Public Health England. We have checked in with everyone and I am very pleased to report that they are all starting to feel better and we wish them well for a speedy recovery and return to school. PHE have given us excellent support this week and I can reassure you that everyone who should be at home is at home and everyone who should be in school, is in school. I am aware that there has been some speculation in our community, but we have followed the guidelines to the letter and have implemented the advice received from PHE, so we need to accept the situation we are in and support each other to maintain a positive and safe working environment for everyone.

There has been an inevitable increase in nervous tension across school communities in recent weeks. Everyone has returned to their schools which has coincided with a sharp increase in positive cases and people are understandably concerned. However, I know for an absolute fact that schools are doing everything they can to keep their communities safe and working hard to provide catch up programmes, mental health support and a broad, balanced and ambitious curriculum both in school and online; it's quite a challenge when guidelines on all of the above are changing on a weekly basis.

We are very happy to rise to this challenge at Woodloes and do everything we can to keep you all safe and deliver a fantastic curriculum. We are also happy to discuss what we are doing and to explain why we are doing it, in a mutually respectful way, and I am very keen to encourage anyone who raises an enquiry with the school to do so in a polite and friendly manner at all times. We are on your side.

One question that has cropped up this week relates to the 5-minute intervals between classes coming in. We have these in place currently to create a safe flow of children and parents on and off site and it currently takes about 30 – 40 minutes for everyone to drop off and collect. We have kept it short to enable parents to get off to work without too much delay and also to avoid lengthy waiting times for parents with siblings in other classes. We have done this to meet the DfE guidelines regarding staggered entries and exits and also to support all of you, to keep this as normal as possible. This is working well overall: I know this because I monitor this daily and a lot of you have spoken to me directly to confirm this. Where we have needed to make some adjustments, we have done, and we will continue to monitor this and make improvements where required, but this will be carefully considered and clearly communicated.

Where there have been concerns raised these relate to some parents not social distancing, using the wrong entry and exit points or where parents and grandparents have been swearing in front of children and their families. Can I



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respectfully remind everyone that we all have a personal responsibility to keep each other safe and to make the school experience a positive one for everyone at all times.

Responding to C-19 and closing classes has only been one part of our week and I must draw your attention to the amazing work being done across the school currently. I have been monitoring curriculum progress carefully and am very impressed by the quality of work the children are producing. I am also delighted to see how happy they are to be in school and their general conduct has been fantastic. It may have been an unusual week in many ways but for most of the children in school, it has been business as usual.

Finally, I would just like to thank the overwhelming number of you who have taken the time to provide us with positive feedback and encouragement this week. Everyone has come together to implement a positive response to some tricky circumstances and I would like to acknowledge all of the positive support we have received; it is very much appreciated.

Best wishes to you all and to your families – stay well!

Yours sincerely,

Andy Mitchell (Head Teacher)

