

Friday 15<sup>th</sup> May 2020

Dear Parents and Carers,

This is your Friday update from Woodloes and I'd like to start by saying that I hope you and your families are all staying happy and well.

I wrote to you on Monday following the PM's announcement to confirm our understanding that **the government would like all pupils in Nursery, Reception, Year 1 and Year 6, plus key worker and vulnerable pupils to return to school on 1<sup>st</sup> June**. They have stated that schools will be asked to open if the 5 key tests have been met. They are:

- The NHS is able to cope with demand for critical care and specialist treatment
- There is a sustained and consistent fall in the daily death rate
- The rate of infection is decreasing to manageable levels
- There is confidence that operational challenges such as testing capacity and PPE can meet demand
- There is confidence that any adjustments will not risk a second peak of the virus.

If these tests are not met, then schools might not open on 1<sup>st</sup> June. However, we have been advised to plan to be ready to re-open for the named year groups on 1<sup>st</sup> June and I'm sure we would all hope that the situation continues to improve to the point where we can be confident that re-opening schools is the right thing to do.

We have received a lot of guidance this week from a range of sources and have been in discussions with our Trust, the local authority and the consortium of schools in Warwick and Southam to ensure the plans we develop at Woodloes reflect the very best advice and practise. Safety is the number one priority and we are looking very carefully at the detail to ensure we can all feel confident that we are robustly following the guidelines and the return to school is managed as safely as possible.

The government has stated that class sizes should be reduced to no more than 15 to facilitate safe distancing in school which means that your children might not be taught by their previous teacher when they return. All of our teachers are qualified to teach any age group so we will see this as an opportunity for some professional development and a chance to develop some new positive relationships. Some of our children might need a little time to get used to this which is why I am mentioning it now. This could be a really positive opportunity to do something exciting and different so I hope we can all help to make this work by approaching this with a positive outlook.

Sub-dividing our classes in this way will help us to maintain a safe environment and we will be managing these smaller groups as independently as possible from the other groups in school to minimise contact. They will have social opportunities within their own group, but we need to be sensible and maintain a healthy level of separation in school to avoid any risk of further transmission of infection.

We will also be asking parents to come to school at staggered start times, dropping the children off 'supermarket style' to ensure that we keep the number of people on site to an absolute minimum. I will write to you in due course to provide you with further specific details, but I am keen to give you an idea of what this might look like if we open after half term so you can start to prepare yourselves and your children.

We are in the final stage of our planning and need to ensure we have enough staff to cover all of the groups. **Therefore, we are asking parents in Saplings, Reception, Year 1 and Year 6 to let us know if they anticipate sending their children to school from 1<sup>st</sup>**

**June** if we do re-open. A link to this response form is on the homepage of the website and is being emailed to parents in these year groups; **it will help our planning if you could get a response back to us, using the form, on or before 12.00 midday on Monday 18<sup>th</sup> May.**

When we have assembled our staff and pupil plans, we will contact you again to let you know how this will operate. We will then be able to provide you with detailed instructions which will ensure that the return to school is successful and above all else safe.

For our **key workers pupils**, we will continue to operate a booking system and the link to the booking form will be on the homepage of the website.

For our **children in Year 2, 3, 4 and 5 please don't think that we have forgotten you- we certainly haven't!** We will continue to provide the best home learning curriculum possible but there might be some slight modifications to this as nearly all of our staff will also be teaching groups and taking care of children in school.

**Unfortunately, we will not be able to open OSCAR** and will not be able to offer a wraparound service. We do apologise in advance for this but we are following strict guidance from the DfE about keeping the children in small manageable groups.

I appreciate this is a long email but I felt it was only fair to let you know that we are working very hard on everyone's behalf to develop a robust plan for our school community that will give confidence to everyone that we can manage a phased re-opening sensibly and safely if it is required on 1<sup>st</sup> June. Our families and colleagues will only just be starting to come to terms with these proposals and the guidance I have referenced is literally hot off the press. There have been several iterations of plans this week but my sense is that the model I have outlined in this update is likely to be delivered in some form when the time comes but if there are any further changes then I will of course keep you informed.

I have been immensely proud of the way our school community has responded during the lockdown and there have been many inspirational moments along the way. Many of us will feel anxious or unsettled by the prospect of returning to school in June and it is perfectly natural to feel this way after such a prolonged period of stability and security at home. Whether we return to school on 1<sup>st</sup> June or not, I dearly hope that we will start to get back to some sense of normality as soon as possible. The plans we have to re-open after half term are the first steps that we will take together back to a more normal routine and now is the time for us to start thinking in a more practical way about how that might be achieved.

Many thanks for your continuing patience and support and best wishes from me and the team at Woodloes for your continued good health. We are looking forward to seeing more of you in the next few weeks.

Yours sincerely,



Andy Mitchell (Head Teacher)