



Woodhouse Primary Academy

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Wednesday 20th May 2020

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RE: Wider opening of Woodhouse Primary Academy

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Dear Parents/Carers,

I hope that this letter finds you and your family well, and that you are managing to cope with the current situation as best as you are able. As a school community, I know that we are all missing being together “as normal” and that the weeks since the end of March have been hard for children, families, staff and the wider community. I am now able to share with you our plan for the gradual, safe, wider opening of our school. Thank you for your patience. I apologise for the length and detail of this letter – I hope you appreciate why I have written so much.

You will have seen government announcements and in the media that schools will be encouraged to reopen where it is safe to do so from, at the earliest, 1st June. It has been made clear that this is subject to change if the wider national or local conditions for wider opening are not met. It may be the case that the gradual return of more children will be delayed. The government has issued guidance on how this will be done, and wants us to open for children from Nursery, Reception, Year 1 and Year 6. This means we have had to develop a plan to do this safely.

Our school has not been closed. We have continued to offer care for children with parents who are key workers throughout this time, opening through holidays to ensure this provision is there for those who have needed it. Our staff team have been supporting this in school alongside ensuring that all children are safe and providing our distance learning provision to all children. They have not stopped and I am grateful for their dedication and commitment to the children and community of our school. This emergency care will continue to be provided full time for extended hours as it currently is. Parents who require Emergency Care will receive an additional letter explaining the limited changes to that provision, but this care remains our highest priority in school.

In light of the plan from the government to open schools more widely, we will be able to take children from Nursery, Reception, Year 1 and Year 6 on a staggered basis beginning on Tuesday 2nd June or Thursday 4th June. However, this will look and feel very different to what the children left in March. Please be under no illusion that this will be a return to normal for any child – it will not.

Our plan is based on the children, parents and staff being as safe as it is possible to be and this has been our primary concern. We have worked closely with our trust, the University of Wolverhampton Multi Academy Trust, and our Health and Safety advisors, Elite Health and Safety, to establish a highly detailed plan which will reduce risks to children and keep all as safe as it is possible given the circumstances. We have tried hard to be fair for **all** children, not just those in the government’s chosen year groups who choose to attend – but all those who choose not to return at this time, and those in Years 2, 3, 4 and 5 who cannot currently return to school.

Challenges for our school:

There are some challenges which we have to work with:

We will need vastly reduced group sizes. The government suggests 15 in a group, or “bubble”. As a trust, we have decided that there will be **no more than 10 children** in a fixed year group bubble with **1 or 2 consistent members of staff**. Fewer children enables us to encourage social distancing and spread the children out. These bubbles will need to be spread around school in a **consistent learning space** with all resources and materials remaining within that bubble.



In order to keep the children safe by limiting numbers in school, we will be introducing a **split timetable**, where half of the eligible children who want to attend in YN, YR, Y1 and Y6 will attend for the early part of the week, and the remaining half will attend for the latter part of the week. This phased return keeps numbers lower in school at any one time, and enables the children to gradually experience a return to school. It also enables children to only be in school for a shorter period of time each week. **Emergency care for key workers will continue for 5 days a week.**

- Children and adults will need to socially distance wherever possible and this will mean we need to stagger the entry and departure of children, and have to adhere to social distancing as much as is possible in and around school.
- We will undertake significantly increased cleaning, including a deep clean of the school every Wednesday and Friday evening. There will be cleaning happening all through the day of communal areas like toilets, but also of the rooms each bubble is using. All classes have handwashing facilities with hot water, soap, paper towels, tissues and hand sanitiser. Bins will be regularly emptied throughout the day.
- We have undertaken a full, on-site risk assessment of our proposals with our Health and Safety advisors, Elite Health and safety. This has created a range of risk assessments which dictate our provision and how we will operate, and in which staff will be carefully trained. Staff will work from these risk assessments to deliver the changed provision and our plan meets these.
- Some of our staff team, including teachers and teaching assistants, are not able to return to work due to health concerns, so our overall staffing is reduced. As a result, not every child will be able to have their teacher, teaching assistant or even a familiar adult. We will do this where we can, **but it will not be possible for many.**

All of the above presents a very complicated and difficult situation, which has required very careful planning and a clear way of operating for all children and adults. This will be very different to what our school usually is.

Organisation

Children whose families choose for them to return to school will be split into bubbles – either group A or group B. There will be a maximum of 3 bubbles in each year group in school at any one time. We will endeavour to put children with their friends and with a familiar adult – but this may not always be possible. We are not in a position for parents to choose group A or B at this time. Once in a bubble, the children will not be able to move bubbles. They will have a consistent adult from now until the end of term, and be based in the same learning space on the days they are in school. This may not be the room they are used to. You will have to consider this when you make your decision over whether your child will return. We will make the decision of which group (A or B) your child will be in as soon as possible, and we will notify you during half term about this.

Our phased wider opening for the first two weeks will look like this, with the first week being a planning and establishing week with reduced time in school for children:

For the first week only:

- **Monday 1st June** – Inset day – school closed to all except Emergency Care children.
- **Tuesday 2nd June** – 3x Bubbles for each of YN, YR, Y1 and Y6. **School Group A**
- **Wednesday 3rd June** – School deep clean – school closed to all except Emergency Care children.
- **Thursday 4th June** – 3x Bubbles for each of YN, YR, Y1 and Y6. **School Group B**
- **Friday 5th June** – Inset day – school closed to all except Emergency Care children.

Once this is established, from Monday 8th June onwards, each bubble will be in school for two full days each week – group A on Monday and Tuesday, Group B on Thursday and Friday. Wednesdays will only have emergency care children in school, to give us time to deep clean rooms, equipment, corridors and other shared spaces before the next group come in, as the same learning spaces will be used for Group A and Group B. We will also deep clean on a Friday after school, for the same reason.



This will look like:

- **Monday 8th and Tuesday 9th June** – 3x Bubbles for each of YN, YR, Y1 and Y6. **School Group A**
- **Wednesday 10th June** – School deep clean – school closed to all except Emergency Care children.
- **Thursday 11th and Friday 12th June** – 3x Bubbles for each of YN, YR, Y1 and Y6. **School Group B**

Curriculum – what we will do in school:

We will deliver a modified and reduced curriculum based on the minimum entitlements which staff prepared for the summer term which has been shared on our home learning site. The learning which will take place will be very similar to the learning we are running for children at home and will use the same resources, so that all children can access it. We will work with all children in relation to their personal, social and health education, including emotional/mental health and well-being. This will match the work which has been set since school was closed and will follow a similar form and balance through to the end of term. We will not be attempting to deliver the full curriculum usually on offer at Woodhouse and we will be careful to balance the days so the children do not get tired, overwhelmed or demotivated. **Our distance learning offer will continue as currently for all children – whether attending school or staying at home.**

Safety:

We will rearrange classrooms so that this enables social distancing wherever possible. Where possible children will have their own equipment and not share with others within their bubble, but definitely not between bubbles. There are a lot of rules which we have had to put in place to keep children and adults safe. It is vital that these are respected and followed by all, otherwise we jeopardise the safety of those in school and at home. We will not be having external agencies in school and any support which is delivered normally may not be able to take place at all, and certainly won't take place face to face.

Arrival and departure from school:

The school site will be closed to all but the children attending school each day. Parents will need to communicate with school by phone or email if there is anything you need from us. You will not be able to come into school at this time. One parent only will be able to drop off and collect their child from the appropriate entrance in staggered time slots, whilst carefully adhering to social distancing at all times. If a parent has to attend with other children not attending school, they too must socially distance at all times. It is vital that all parents understand the need to socially distance at these times as this has the potential to undo the positive effect of the bubbles if not followed.

Child arrival and departure will be as follows:

- Emergency Care Bubbles: to arrive 8-8:50 to the main entrance; Leave 3:20-5:00pm from the main entrance, as currently.
- Nursery Bubbles, who will be based in the Year 1 Block to enter from Cinder path (Ridgacre Road Entrance): Arrive 9:00am, Leave 3:00pm
- Reception Bubbles, who will be based in the Reception Block, to enter from Main entrance: Arrive 9:00am, Leave 3:00pm
- Year 6 Bubbles, who will be based in the 3 Y6 classrooms, to enter from car park doors outside the Year 6 classrooms: Arrive 9:30am, Leave 3:30pm
- Year 1 Bubbles, who will be based in Year 2 and Year 3 classrooms, to enter from Cinder path (Ridgacre Road Entrance): Arrive 9:30am, Leave 3:30pm
- Rainbow Room Bubbles to enter from round back of car park to the Rainbow room playground gate: Arrive 9:15am, Leave 2:30pm

It will be vital that you follow this time and that your child is neither early or late. If a family has children attending in multiple groups, then they should all arrive together for the **latest** arrival time and place, and leave from the **earliest** departure time and place for their children. *E.g. a Y6 and a Y1 child, will both arrive at 9:30am, but can enter from the Y1 place of entry. A YR and a Y1 Child will both arrive at 9:30 to the Y1 arrival place and leave at 3pm from the reception departure place.* This is complicated and will take some getting used to.



Lunch and play times

Children will remain in their learning spaces for the whole day, including eating their lunch – which will be provided for free by school. No child will be allowed to bring in any item from home – including book bags, bottles and lunchboxes. All these will be provided in school – a packed lunch will be given to every child, and they will be able to make choices about what they have. We will make these as exciting and tasty as possible for all children. We will stagger outdoor play at break times and lunchtimes so children are able to remain distant from those in other bubbles. We will establish routines around using toilets and other shared spaces, all of which will be subject to significantly increased regular cleaning – which will occur throughout the school day.

We will not hold any assemblies or gatherings where bubbles could mix – they will remain apart. It is important to be honest and open here: whilst we will do everything we can to encourage the children to social distance and wash their hands regularly, they are young children and so they will certainly touch each other, play with each other, share things and forget to keep their distance. We will do all we can to support the children to do so, and we are mitigating this by limiting the potential interaction to a group of no more than 10 children within their bubble. As a staff team, we will of course do our best, but we cannot guarantee they will not come into contact with others, or where others have touched, during the school day. It is for you as parents to assess the risk for your children and make your own decisions about whether they will come into school.

Children will where possible wear school uniform, but it is accepted that they may have outgrown their uniform. Children should try to wear uniform tops alongside comfortable bottoms. Children can wear trainers so that they would not need to change for any physical activity as we are not able to bring in things from home. Whatever they wear should be washable and changed **daily**.

Before and after school wrap around care:

At present this will not be in operation for anyone but the children in the emergency care group who require it for key worker roles. If others were to attend, this would mix bubbles and increase risk for all sets of children involved. I apologise for the inconvenience this will cause, but this is not possible at this time.

The Future:

Whilst we recognise that the two days a week will be difficult for parents to manage, this is the only safe way we can welcome more children back into the building in June. Our plan needs to be sustainable and enable our staff the time to support home learning as we have been doing for all children not in school, by choice or because they are unable to attend at this time. This plan will be reviewed regularly and we will give further guidance as we make changes to improve our provision for the children.

Hopefully this letter has given you all a better idea of how we intend to manage our wider opening. The key thing driving our decision has been to open safely for the children who will attend. I have been clear that this will not be the same as it would be in normal operation. There are significant changes for children, and there will be a level of risk about coming to school. Parents have the choice over whether they feel ready to send their children back to school. Whatever choice you make, I fully respect that choice and I will support you. No parent will be penalised if they choose to keep their child at home. Children are allowed not to attend at this time if that is your choice, regardless of year group. There will be no letters, attendance prizes, fines etc. for any parent who makes this choice – you have my full support.

For those who do not attend school, we will continue with our distance learning provision for all children. We feel it is important that **all** the children of Woodhouse still have the learning and care from distance which we can offer. We will continue to offer support to families as we have done so far during the crisis.

If you do send children into school, we respectfully ask that families are rigorous about practicing social distancing and other government guidelines at home too; and remember, **DO NOT** send any child in if they, or anyone at home, are displaying symptoms. If a child displays symptoms, then they will be isolated from their bubble and be



sent home for a period of isolation. We must protect our children, staff and families by following this strictly. Thank you in advance for your contribution to keeping our school community safe.

I know that you will have questions and thoughts to share. If your child is currently in either Nursery, Reception, Year 1 or Year 6, please can you use this form to indicate what your plans will be for your child(ren) at this time. <https://forms.gle/h371ST1vZvhkg5oo9> I would appreciate if you can respond by at the latest 5pm on Friday 22nd May. You will be able to change your mind, but we will need advanced notice of this, no child can just “arrive” in school without being planned for. There is a space for you to ask questions and I will endeavour to answers these – either personally or more generally through a letter to all parents. If you wish to email me you can do so on wideropening@woodhouse.priacademy.co.uk and I will get back to you. If your child uses the emergency care, there is an additional letter for you.

I hope this has given you some clarity and some answers to your many questions. Though we will be opening wider – it will be very different. At this time, we are not able to be Woodhouse in the way you know – but we will do everything we can to make it as Woodhouse as possible. We will look after your child with the same care, compassion and dedication if you choose to send them into school.

Thank you for your continued support and understanding throughout this difficult time. Though we are apart, I want you to remember that we are one school community and we are here for you if you need us. Take care and stay safe.

Yours sincerely



Oliver Wilson
Head Teacher
Woodhouse Primary Academy

