



Woodhouse Primary Academy

Woodhouse Road
Quinton
Birmingham
West Midlands
B32 2DL

Tuesday 26th May 2020

Head Teacher: Oliver Wilson

RE: Wider opening of Woodhouse Primary Academy

Dear parents and carers,

Tel: (0121) 464 1769

Email: enquiry@woodhouse.priacademy.co.uk

Website: www.woodhouse.priacademy.co.uk

I trust that you are having a good half term and where possible you are able to rest and recuperate with your children. You should have now seen my letter to all parents, but especially to those in Nursery, Reception, Year 1 and Year 6, regarding the wider opening of Woodhouse Primary Academy in June dated 20th May (<https://tinyurl.com/y97maxa6>). If you have not already done so as a parent in Nursery, Reception, Year 1 or Year 6, please respond to the survey (found here: <https://forms.gle/h371ST1vZvhkg5oo9>) as soon as possible so that we have some indication of what you are considering for your child to assist our planning.

As it stands at the moment, any return is not yet set in stone. We are awaiting further confirmation from the government and they have said that they will make a definitive decision about the gradual wider opening, which could begin from the 1st June, on **Thursday 28th May**. If this decision is to postpone, then we will do that, and implement our plan when told it is safe to do so. If this decision is to begin the wider opening of schools from 1st June, then we will communicate this to you then – and your will need to share what you plan to do within a relatively short timescale. We will again use a Google form and operate the wideropening@woodhouse.priacademy.co.uk email address to gather this information from you.

Our school remains open to the Emergency Care group of children until further notice. This will continue regardless of any decision about wider opening. Please continue to use the email address: COVID19Care@woodhouse.priacademy.co.uk to discuss any needs you have.

At that time, **I will need you to make a firm decision on a return to school for your child(ren)** in those year groups. We will share details of what group they would be in (Group A, Tuesday 2nd June, then Mondays and Tuesdays from the 8th of June onwards; or Group B, Thursday 4th June, then Thursdays and Fridays from the 8th of June onwards) and you will confirm your child's place in school from that week. If you choose not send your child to begin with, you will be in a position to change your mind later. However, we will always need to know **the week before any return** to enable safe provision to be made for your child. E.g. if you decide initially not to have your child return, but you decide on Tuesday 9th of June that you would now like them to attend, they will only be able to begin in school from the following week (beginning Monday 15th June) in either group A or group B. **No child will be allowed to enter school unless you have confirmed their attendance in advance. If we do not hear from you, then we will assume that your child will not attend – they cannot just arrive in school.** You can of course withdraw your child from the provision at any point too, but again you will need to communicate this clearly with us at school. This is a crucial role that parents will play to ensure that children have safe staffing and provision provided for them. Thank you in advance for your cooperation and support with this.

In my letter to all parents, I encouraged parents to share questions which they still had. I have given a response to each of these, which I hope will support your decision making regarding a possible return to our school. We have done all we can to mitigate the risks to children as much as is possible in our school, but of course some risks remain. Here are your questions:

Q: If we decide not to send our child to school until the next academic year, will he be able to continue attending the lessons virtually? Will the school continue to send materials like the past six weeks? How it will affect my child's education if we decide to bring them in September?



A: Our plan ensures that we can continue with home learning as we have done since the school closed to most children in March. We will continue to use Google classroom and send resources for children to support home learning for children in **every** year group. Children in school will generally complete the same work as that which is set for home learning on their days in school. We will continue to send packs of work home if this would be helpful, you just need to ask.

Q: What procedures would you apply to help my child with asthma, should they return?

A: It is important that families consider the medical risks of a return to school, especially if there are other health concerns. A conversation with your child's GP may support this further. We will continue to follow our usual procedures for supporting children with medical needs.

Q: How do I arrive at school for the staggered arrival and departure? Will this be different from normal apart from the times?

A: Only children will be allowed onto our school site. Parents should wait in a socially distant manner at the appropriate entrance for their child (see map attached to this letters). Adults from school will collect and return the children to you in these locations and at these times.

Q: Will the children in the bubbles still have physical contact from their teacher or will the teacher have to keep a distance from them at all times?

A: Staff will be socially distant where possible, especially inside the classrooms. They will encourage the children to do the same as much as possible, making full use of the space in each classroom. If necessary adults can have physical contact with a child, but this will be much less frequent than in normal situations. Each adult will stay just with their bubble and adults will not move between bubbles.

Q: I don't want my child thinking they have done anything wrong when they cannot play with their friends. How will this work at break and lunch times?

A: Each bubble will have a separate space and time for break and lunch time play. The bubbles will not be able to mix and will keep socially distant from each other. Children will see their other classmates and friends at this time, but will not be able to mix with them. Staff will support the children with this positively and I know that parents will support this at home so that no child becomes upset about this.

Q: How can they maintain the two metres distance? How will social distancing be observed at all times?

A: We will support the children by how we lay out the school grounds and our classrooms, so that there is space for each child to work in. Even for young children, we will encourage social distancing, although this will not always be possible. We will expect this from their arrival until their departure and know that families will support this by setting the right examples. By staggering the arrival/departure, outdoor break time play, outdoor lunchtime play and by using different areas, we will support this social distance.

Q: Will my child have their normal teacher? Will they be in their classroom?

A: It is not possible for all children to have their teacher. We will try hard to have children with a familiar adult – but even this is not possible for some bubbles. We have some staff who will not return at this time as they are clinically vulnerable, and this means not every member of staff is available. Not all rooms will be familiar, and every room will look different to support social distancing.

Q: If my child will not be with their teacher and they are feeling upset and confused, can I change my mind to not let her return to school?

A: It will be possible for families to change their mind and choose to keep their child at home if they are not happy. We will do everything we can to help them through this difficult time.

Q: What will you do to limit the transmission of the virus within a bubble?

A: We will use well ventilated classrooms, with a much smaller number of children than normal. Where possible children will access the outside space around school as much as possible whilst maintain their bubbles and social distance. There will be regular cleaning throughout the day as well as each night. Children will generally not share resources, and where they do, these will be cleaned regularly. Soft furnishings which are harder to clean will be removed from rooms.



Q: What will happen if a child has symptoms in school?

A: If a child shows any symptoms during the school day, then they will be isolated in school and parents will be called to take them home. All children who attend (currently if 5 or over) are able to access a test to check if their symptoms are Covid19. If the test for Covid19 is positive, then the child and family will self-isolate as per government guidance, currently for 14 days. In the event of this positive test result, all children and staff in that bubble will also self-isolate for 14 days as a precaution. The school would take advice from Public Health England if any further action was warranted and we would communicate this to families. This is why it is so important not to allow bubbles to mix together and for children to continue to follow the rules set out by the government both in and out of school.

Q: Is it possible that my child can be in the same class as their friend?

A: We will try our best to put children with friends, although of course this is not always possible. We will not be able to move children between bubbles.

Q: Will staff and students wear masks?

A: Staff will generally not wear PPE (masks, gloves, aprons). Only when dealing with children for few specific reasons (intimate care and for medical reasons) will this happen. Generally, staff will not wear masks. **Children are not to wear masks or face coverings in school at any time.**

Q: Will temperature checks of the children be taken each day?

A: No. We do not have the equipment or expertise to do this. If children are exhibiting **any** symptoms of coronavirus, then parents must keep them from attending school. Children who show symptoms during the school day will be sent home.

Q: What will school do about Year 6 and their missed opportunities for the usual Leavers events? What about transition to secondary school?

A: We will work with all children, both in and out of school, through a range of transition work to support their moving on to secondary school. We are currently planning a range of special activities and events which all children can be a part of. We know how important the last days of primary school are and we will certainly celebrate this with all children. We also recognise that **all** children will need support to move into a new class next year. We will work hard with all the children to enable children to be able to have closure from this current year before moving on to a new class.

Q: If we choose to keep children at home, will the support for Free school meals continue or will that stop?

A: At present the government has not yet confirmed this. We provided vouchers for half term. Regardless of what the government decides, our school will continue to provide food packs to any family who require this. We can also refer to the local food banks or support you in accessing financial assistance if it is needed. Get in touch if this would help you.

Q: How will there be the sanitisation required? Will there be regular cleaning of surfaces?

A: Each bubble will be in a single space, which will be regularly cleaned throughout the day and each evening. Staff work hard to ensure that school is clean and since February have been undertaking significantly improved measures to combat the spread of Covid19 in school. This will continue. Staff will undertake a deep clean each Wednesday and Friday of all the spaces in school.

Q: As work can't be sent home, will photos be taken during the day?

A: We will do all we can to share the work which happens in school through class dojo and our newsletter. It has been wonderful to see the work going on each week in our newsletter and we will continue with this. I am afraid that children won't be able to bring things to and from school.

Q: Will my child be able to be in their class group, but then use the Emergency care for key workers on another day?

A: This will not be possible. If a child needs irregular days, or more than might be offered in Group A or Group B, then they must be in one bubble only. Parents can choose which is best for them. I will do all I can to support parents in this situation, get in touch with me to discuss this further if needed.



Q: What will be the effectiveness of education in the Emergency Care, since my child will be taught separately as both parents are key workers?

A: We currently give children time each day to work through the home learning and other tasks set by their teachers when they are in Emergency Care. This will continue. Many of the children in this group have already worked without a break since February and the support we offer them recognises this.

Q: Would it be a good idea to have a space where children can voice their worries and have them addressed by teachers?

A: We have a special email address for this: worrybox@woodhouse.priacademy.co.uk which the children can email any issues or worries that they have. They will also be able to speak with the adult in their bubble at any time. They will continue to have regular contact from their teachers through their home learning and regular communication between home and school.

Be sure to contact me if you have any further questions and I will do my best to answer them for you. Thank you so much to those who took the time to share their thoughts and ask questions – it is crucial for us as a school to hear the views of parents, especially about something so important. I am grateful for the continued support of parents and families at this difficult time. If we can help you in any way, please do get in touch.

Take care, stay safe.

Yours sincerely,



Oliver Wilson
Head Teacher
Woodhouse Primary Academy

Additional help for parents:

Here is some supportive advice for parents at this time, from Beacon School Support:

In a post-lockdown world, school won't look anything like normal. Here's what children can expect:

- Social distancing
- Different start and finish times
- Areas out of bounds
- Being taught by a different teacher

These can all be causes of anxiety and worry for children of any age. So what can we do to help them return to school successfully? Here are some ideas to use that will help your children feel ready to go back to school:

1. Explain that there will be new routines and rules

It's important our children don't go into school expecting everything to look like normal - only to get a huge shock when they walk through the gates.

Explain things will look different - but tell your child not to worry, because the teachers have been thinking about how to make the school safe and will help them get used to the new layouts and routines.

It can also be reassuring to talk about the things that haven't changed. For instance:

- They'll see some of the same adults around school
- They'll be wearing the same uniform
- You'll be taking the same route to school



- And remember to tell them who will drop them off and who will pick them up. Even if this seems obvious to us as adults, it helps give children reassurance and a sense of security.

2. Talk about worries or fears

In the run-up to returning, make time for little conversations about how they're feeling about going back to school. Be careful how you do this - the aim is to see if they do have concerns, not to plant new ones! If your child does have worries, acknowledge their concerns first before offering reassurance.

For example: It's normal to feel worried about the virus, but here's what you can do to stay safe in school. I bet other children will feel worried about having a new teacher, too. That's why they will spend lots of time explaining how everything will work.

A good way of turning a negative into a positive is using the phrase, "At least..." As in:

- I know we can't spend time together today, but at least we can have some time straight after school
- I know you're in a different class from your best friend, but at least the teachers are going to make sure everyone makes new friends

Don't be surprised if children want to talk about the same issue a number of times. Children often need to (repeatedly!) revisit an idea with an adult to get reassurance nothing has changed.

3. Convey calm

It's natural for all parents to have some level of anxiety about returning their child to school. But however you feel on the inside, it's important to convey calm to your child. Children pick up on lots of little clues about how their parents are feeling - and they use this information to inform how they should be feeling. If we look worried, they pick up on this and start worrying too!

So, if you do have concerns, it's time to be an actor. However you feel on the inside, aim to convey calm on the outside. To do this, we need to think about:

- What we say (and what they overhear)
- Our tone of voice
- Our body language

4. Routines for sleep

In most families, routines around kids' sleep have become more... flexible! Bedtimes have drifted until later in the evening... and kids are getting up later in the morning as a result. To move immediately from these routines to 'normal running' and getting into school for the appropriate time could be jarring. You could start moving your child's bedtime back towards normality now. Do this gradually, before they get back to school, because if we leave it to the last minute, it's likely our children won't have time to adjust, and won't be able to get to sleep at the earlier time. Then your child won't only have to cope with going back to school on the first day back - they'll be managing exhaustion too.

5. Be kind to yourself

Everyone has been through an emotional rollercoaster over the last few months - that includes you and your child. And if you've felt overwhelmed or worried about sending your child back to school, that's okay. It's entirely normal. So be kind to yourself.

Make sure you:

- Build in time for activities you find de-stressing
- Get some exercise (even if that's just walking)
- Take some time alone, if you need it

All of these activities will help make sure you're in an emotionally strong place - so you can support your child with their emotions too.

Key takeaways

Lockdown was a massive change for all of us - including our children. Now they might be going back to school, we need to help them prepare for another big change.

So:



- Talk through what school will be like - and what will happen during the day - so your child knows what to expect
- Make time to talk about any worries they may have
- Let them see you looking calm and in control (even if you feel differently on the inside)
- Ease them back towards normal bedtimes (so they're not exhausted on their first day back)
- Take care of yourself (so you can take care of your child)

A parent suggested that a map might be helpful when trying to understand the layout of school for drop-off and pick-up:

