



Dear Parents/Carers,

We hope you are all keeping well, are staying safe and making the best of the current situation. We apologise for writing to you at length but we feel you need to know a few facts before you make a decision on whether your child will return to school. This will be YOUR choice and there will be NO penalties for non-attendance. We need to be very clear with you that school will not be school as you know it.

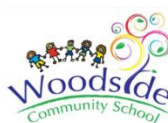
You will have heard the government's plans to begin a phased return to school of more pupils from 1st June. Given the level of planning, and changes to the school environment that need to be put in place in order to reduce the risk of infection to children, staff and you at home, we are not able to do this until the earliest date of **Tuesday 2nd June** and even then it will not be for all the chosen year groups at the same time.

Guidance or plans were not communicated to schools prior to the government's announcement on Sunday. Following this we have been receiving daily governmental guidance throughout this week. The guidance so far includes: splitting children up into small teaching groups (referred to as a 'bubble' – same adult and same children at all times), staggered starts/ends to the day to avoid congestion at the school gates and one adult only dropping off and collecting. We are being asked to clean surfaces continuously throughout the day, wear PPE for first aid and intimate care only and set out classrooms for social distancing, avoiding contact with children and between children.

As we are sure you can appreciate there is no such thing as social distancing in a school – **we can try but we certainly cannot guarantee it.** The reasons childhood illnesses spread in a school is because we are all in contact with each other. We can put two children in a class, at opposite ends of the room, and they will still get chicken pox because that is how it is in a school. We will always try to make things safer and hopefully reduce the risks but as soon as lots of children return the risk may well increase.

Who does this apply to?

The phased return applies to Reception, Y1 and Y6 only. If they all return at once we would have well in excess of 91 children in school and supported by a large number of staff. It is up to schools to decide what is safe and manageable and we are concerned that if all Reception, Y1, Y6, key worker children and vulnerable pupils return, it will make it difficult to keep everyone safe when trying to adhere to the social distancing of 2m.



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The Trust has taken the decision therefore to prioritise Y6 in the first instance as we know that the older children will be able to understand and comply with the new arrangements, far more successfully than our very youngest children.

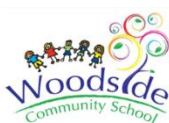
We are not able to take any siblings from other year groups unless they fall into the Reception, Y1 and Y6 year groups. We will communicate further with you over the coming weeks regarding admitting pupils from other year groups as the situation becomes clearer.

What will it look like?

Children will be sorted into what the government is calling 'bubbles' – meaning they will be with up to 10 other children and an adult. As far as possible, the class teacher or teaching assistant can only be in one 'bubble' and the 'bubbles' cannot mix at all. The school will decide on the 'bubbles'. Not all children will be with their class teacher or their friends and they will have to try to remain at least 2 metres from others at all times. This is necessary so that any outbreak of the virus can be tracked and traced and those people who have been in the affected 'bubble' can isolate and be tested.

The bubbles are small in order to achieve 2m social distancing. Therefore our classrooms can only accommodate between 6 and 11 pupils and one adult, meaning our whole school capacity is 171. With almost 100 children in R, 1 and 6, split into 'bubbles', we would need 10 + classes and adults if all 3 years came in together – which will be challenging.

Some furniture will have to be removed from classes, movement systems around the classroom and school need to be set up and systems for use of toilets and cleaning all worked out. Lunches will be eaten in 'bubbles' in the classrooms and will have to be either: a paid-for school grab bag, a free school meal grab bag or home packed lunch. There will be no hot meal provision. Children will need to bring in their own healthy snack for break times – they will not be allowed to have sweets or crisps. We will only use PPE for first aid and if we have a child with symptoms. Desks will be 2 metres apart and a walkway will be included – we have attached a picture so you can see what a class will look like. Children will have to remain at their desks and keep to their own equipment.



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Outside play/learning will also be socially distanced. Parents will not be allowed onto the playground and you will also need to adhere to 2m distance when dropping off/collecting your children.

The youngest children may find this very difficult. They won't have access to all the usual practical resources they normally would because they need to be kept clean to avoid infection. Young children learn by touching, doing, being with others and sharing – all of which will have to be limited as far as possible.

Next Step

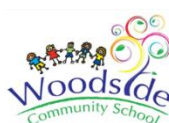
Before you make your final decision on whether you will be sending your child back to school we want you to be very clear about what school will look like. School will NOT be like normal.

We have sent out some exploratory surveys to gain an understanding of what you might choose to do. As soon as we have further information from the government and we have made a decision as to how we are going to roll out the phased return we will be sending out a booking form via parentmail for you to book your place. We hope that this will be early next week. Please respond as soon as possible as we need to know firm numbers before we can plan further. Pupils with medical conditions who are best supported at home should not be in school and any pupils that are at risk need to take advice from their doctors. We will try to make the experience as positive as possible and recognise that children will be anxious - the small groups will help with this. Should you decide that you wish for your child to stay at home, that is absolutely fine and we assure you that we understand and respect that. We will continue to provide home learning as we have been doing and checking in with you regularly. What we do ask is that if you decide that your child will return then they do so on a full time basis, as too many changes will make organisation very difficult.

Thank you for the time you have given to reading this – we appreciate that it is a difficult decision to decide what to do with your most precious of gifts – your children.

Rebecca Keen
Headteacher

Jeannette Mackinney
CEO



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