

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

Dear Parents and Carers,

### **Increasing the numbers of children from the 1<sup>st</sup> June**

On Sunday 10<sup>th</sup> May the Prime Minister announced that schools are to get ready to expand their provision from identified children and children of Critical Workers to include Reception, Y1 and Y6 from the 1<sup>st</sup> June. This expansion proposal was further increased in the latest guidance that was published this week to also include Nursery.

Within the guidance the government have identified an order of priority for provision: Identified children, Critical Worker children, Nursery, Reception, Y1 and finally Y6.

This ambition relies on many factors that must be considered carefully with a stringent risk assessment in place. First and foremost, our plans have to ensure the safety of our children, staff and families.

With safety as the leading factor we have measured the desks in Y1 upwards into 2m spaces, this significantly reduces the number of children we can take in school. Our capacity has dropped from 464 children to 170 children. We also have reduced staffing at this time. Safety also determines the nature of the school day, we shall stagger times of entry into school and exit from school, stagger breaktimes and lunchtimes, with a 30 minute earlier finish to the school day so that the whole school team can clean areas and resources ready for the following day.

Further detail will be coming out to parents over the next couple of weeks but the main aspects of the plan at this stage are:

- Google Classroom will continue, our staff will continue to plan learning across the curriculum on a weekly basis for children to undertake at home or in school. The paper packs will also continue.
- Places are prioritised for Critical Worker children and identified children. If you should require a place for your child from the 1<sup>st</sup> June then it is important that you complete the form on the website and email to [postbox@woodlands.walsall.sch.uk](mailto:postbox@woodlands.walsall.sch.uk) by 5:00 Monday 18<sup>th</sup> May. Please note: these children will not be with their normal classteacher, nor in their own learning rooms.  
(children who currently attend Critical Worker provision do not need to complete the form, their names are already included.)
- Dependent upon the spaces for children we have left, we shall allocate children into small groups (between 9 – 12) for Nursery, Reception, Y1 and Y6.
- Children will then be invited to attend school for a number of days on a rolling programme. This might be weekly, or it might be fortnightly, depending upon

space we have available. Again, some of these children will not be in their usual learning room and some of these children will not be with their usual teacher.

We are restricted by safety and DFE guidelines and expectations. I understand the difficulties this plan presents when parents are required to attend work, part time and sporadic attendance is not helpful. We also recognise that many families are required to return to work but don't have child care, particularly with the older generation still shielding. I am sorry and understand your plight but we have no capacity to support other families at this time.

Parents and children need to understand that school will be different. We will be encouraging social distancing for all ages but this will not be at all possible for young children and it will also be difficult for older children too, as they socialise and play. Therefore, parents need to understand that we shall not always be able to achieve social distancing for your child. Staff may wear masks and gloves, children may wear masks. This is not the plan Governors and I would have hoped for but it is the safest.

As a parent myself I understand your anxieties and your concerns about your child returning to school. Families, according to the criteria above, will be offered a place but if you choose to wait a while before your child comes back to Woodlands then there will be no further attendance actions taken. This is your choice.

At this stage we are still planning and the plan may change, indeed the unions are still discussing aspects with the government, but I wanted to provide you with an overview as soon as possible. Once we know the final number of Critical Worker children we shall be able to finalise the plan and risk assessment, then provide you with the detail.

**To help with our planning, we ask parents of children in N, YR, Y1 and Y6 to email [postbox@woodlands.walsall.sch.uk](mailto:postbox@woodlands.walsall.sch.uk) by 5:00pm on Monday 18<sup>th</sup> May to indicate if your child would like to attend school on specified days and times. Please list your child's name and year group in the email.**

**If you are a Critical Worker and should require a place for your child from the 1<sup>st</sup> June then we also ask that you complete the form on the website and email to [postbox@woodlands.walsall.sch.uk](mailto:postbox@woodlands.walsall.sch.uk) by 5:00pm on Monday 18<sup>th</sup> May.**

Many aspects of school will be different, but our smiles and care will not be different, your children will be warmly received.

Yours sincerely,

T G Newton

Head Teacher