

Sunday 3rd January 2021

Dear Parents and Carers,

Woodlands will be closed to the majority of children from Tuesday 5th January to Friday 15th January

Woodlands will be open for critical worker children and vulnerable children during these two weeks

As you may have seen in the news headlines there has been much discussion by political leaders as to whether it is safe for schools to open next week. Unions have called for members to not undertake face to face teaching with full classes. Teaching Unions have told staff it is unsafe to return to work and called for remote learning.

This has been an impossible situation, for everyone involved. There has been great consideration given to all factors in arriving at this decision.

Therefore, Woodlands will be following this advice and so will be closed to the majority of children for the next two weeks.

Depending upon national guidance, we aim to open to all children as usual on Monday 18th January 2021.

Children of Critical Workers

We will continue to be open for critical worker children who have no alternative childcare. The government definition of critical worker is listed at the end of this letter, please refer to this information before applying for a place.

Please email postbox@woodlands.walsall.sch.uk as soon as possible with the subject heading: Critical Worker. Please include your child/ren's name, their class/es, your occupation and employer.

We would expect that critical worker children will attend daily during the two weeks.

Remote Learning Provision

From Tuesday 5th January there will be learning for your child on Google Classroom. Your teachers will be available at different points through the year group email for support in learning, when they are not covering critical worker provision.

- nursery@woodlands.walsall.sch.uk
- reception@woodlands.walsall.sch.uk
- year1@woodlands.walsall.sch.uk
- year2@woodlands.walsall.sch.uk
- year3@woodlands.walsall.sch.uk
- year4@woodlands.walsall.sch.uk
- year5@woodlands.walsall.sch.uk
- year6@woodlands.walsall.sch.uk

Free School Meals

If your child is entitled to a free school meal then you will be able to collect a packed lunch from the foyer on a daily basis from 10:30. Please email postbox with your child's name and year group if you should require this.

I completely understand the difficulties this poses for our working parents and can only apologise for the short notice. These times are incredibly challenging for everyone involved.

Yours sincerely

T G Newton

Headteacher

Request for critical worker provision from January 2021

Please ensure you have read the below Government Guidance before completing your request for continued school provision.

Guidance: Critical workers who can access schools or educational settings

Updated December 2020

Critical workers

Parents whose work is critical to the coronavirus (COVID-19) and EU transition response include those who work in health and social care and in other key sectors outlined in the following sections.

Health and social care

This includes, but is not limited to, doctors, nurses, midwives, paramedics, social workers, care workers, and other frontline health and social care staff including volunteers; the support and specialist staff required to maintain the UK's health and social care sector; those working as part of the health and social care supply chain, including producers and distributors of medicines and medical and personal protective equipment.

Education and childcare

- childcare
- support and teaching staff
- social workers
- specialist education professionals who must remain active during the coronavirus (COVID-19) response to deliver this approach

Key public services

- those essential to the running of the justice system
- religious staff
- charities and workers delivering key frontline services
- those responsible for the management of the deceased
- journalists and broadcasters who are providing public service broadcasting

Local and national government

This only includes those administrative occupations essential to the effective delivery of:

- the coronavirus (COVID-19) response, and the delivery of and response to EU transition
- essential public services, such as the payment of benefits and the certification or checking of goods for import and export (including animal products, animals, plants and food), including in government agencies and arms length bodies

Food and other necessary goods

This includes those involved in food:

- production
- processing
- distribution
- sale and delivery
- as well as those essential to the provision of other key goods (for example hygienic and veterinary medicines)

Public safety and national security

- police and support staff
- Ministry of Defence civilians
- contractor and armed forces personnel (those critical to the delivery of key defence and national security outputs and essential to the response to the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak and EU transition)
- fire and rescue service employees (including support staff)
- National Crime Agency staff
- those maintaining border security, prison and probation staff and other national security roles, including those overseas

Transport and border

This includes those who will keep the air, water, road and rail passenger and freight transport modes operating during the coronavirus (COVID-19) response and EU transition, including those working on transport systems through which supply chains pass and those constructing or supporting the operation of critical transport and border infrastructure through which supply chains pass.

Utilities, communication and financial services

- staff needed for essential financial services provision (including but not limited to workers in banks, building societies and financial market infrastructure)
- the oil, gas, electricity and water sectors (including sewerage)
- information technology and data infrastructure sector and primary industry supplies to continue during the coronavirus (COVID-19) response
- key staff working in the civil nuclear, chemicals, telecommunications (including but not limited to network operations, field engineering, call centre staff, IT and data infrastructure, 999 and 111 critical services)
- postal services and delivery
- payments providers
- waste disposal sectors