

Friday 20<sup>th</sup> March 2020

Dear Parents and Carers,

A lot has happened in the last 24 hours and this letter is intended to provide you with information for children who will be working from home next week as well as for those who we expect to see in school. It is quite a long letter, so please read to the very end.

Following the publication by the Government overnight of essential guidance for schools regarding school closure and a reduced service offer, we are now in a more informed position to establish which children are able to access childcare at Woodloes from next Monday.

These are unprecedented times with information changing daily and we are putting plans into place that provide the best interpretation of this to meet the needs of our community. **The key priority is however, to reduce the number of pupils who attend school and to create social distance between people whilst still making provision for the children of 'critical workers' and vulnerable pupils.**

There has been some confusion about who is a 'key worker' and the LA are also now referring to key employees as 'critical workers' to reflect the importance of their roles in the response to the Coronavirus. **To be clear if only one parent or carer is a critical worker then you are eligible to receive support from the school.** The LA have issued some guidance and principles that I would like to bring to your attention:

#### Key Workers

Parents whose work is critical to the COVID-19 response include those who work in health and social care and in other key sectors. A more detailed list is at the end of this letter.

**Many parents working in these sectors may be able to ensure their child is kept at home. And every child who can be safely cared for at home should be.**

Please, therefore, follow these key principles:

#### Principles

- If it is at all possible for children to be at home, then they should be.
- If a child needs specialist support, is vulnerable or has a parent who is a critical worker, then educational provision will be available for them.
- Parents should not rely for childcare upon those who are advised to be in the stringent social distancing category such as grandparents, friends, or family members with underlying conditions.
- Parents should also do everything they can to ensure children are not mixing socially in a way which can continue to spread the virus. They should observe the same social distancing principles as adults.

There is a clear expectation that as parents we should all play our part and if we can keep our children safely at home then we should. Woodloes will be partially open next week, with a reduced staff, to provide childcare and support for what is expected to be a significantly reduced number of pupils, limited to the children of workers in critical sectors and vulnerable children only.

#### Support for children working from home

Whilst the Government initiated partial school closure is in place, year group specific activities will be accessible via the school website ([www.woodloes.com](http://www.woodloes.com)). These can be accessed through the 'virtual classroom' tab and then your child's / children's specific year group (these pages will be available from 08.30am on Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> March). Each year group team will identify the expectations and ensure that daily, as well as longer term activities, are available. For example, a daily maths and English activity in addition to the ongoing learning of year group specific spellings or phonics. As reading and learning multiplication tables are an integral part of the curriculum in all year groups, it will be expected that children continue with these daily.

From next week, all communication with children working at home, will be via the virtual classroom year group page on the school website. We are currently developing additional strategies to enable communication between pupils, parents / carers and the class teacher should this become, as we anticipate, a more prolonged closure. We will send further information linked to this in due course.

#### What happens next

- We have asked you to consider whether you are a critical worker and to identify your employment sector. We requested this information by 1.00pm today so we can start to see how many children we might have next week and to consider how many staff we might need. **It will not be possible for us to call everyone who is eligible to confirm places today. For those of you who think you meet these criteria and need our support will see you in school and manage our response on Monday.**
- With the additional information available we would ask you to consider very carefully whether you need childcare from the school next week and when you might need it. For example, if you work at the hospital on Monday and Tuesday only, you would be expected to look after your child at home on Wednesday, Thursday and Friday. Pupil numbers are expected to fluctuate on a daily basis.
- We will ensure the children go home tonight with all of their belongings and everything they need to be able to work from home. Further instructions will be communicated via the website.
- With regard to school meals, we will be offering a normal lunchtime service for children attending school (possibly reduced options from Tuesday). We will continue to seek advice regarding Free School Meals access for children off-site, as this is still unclear.
- If your child attends school next week then we would encourage them to wear school uniform as usual.
- Any parent who sends their child to school next week should also provide the school with up to date emergency contact details should their child fall ill and need to be quickly sent home.
- For children who come to school on Monday please bring Saplings to the Saplings room as usual. KS1 pupils come to the small hall and KS2 come to the large hall, where you will be met by staff for registration before going to classrooms. Pupils will be dismissed from the usual collection points.

#### Finally

I really appreciate the very supportive, pragmatic approach that our Woodloes community has demonstrated over the last couple of weeks and we now move into the next phase of our response together. I hope we can all continue to take care of each other and be socially responsible so we can get on top of this extraordinary situation and get back to some sense of normality as quickly as possible.

I will provide regular updates for everyone as the situation evolves and wish you all the very best in the weeks to come. Please take care and stay well!

Yours sincerely,

Andrew Mitchell and the rest of the Woodloes Team.

(see critical sectors list on page below)

## Critical Sectors

### 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

This includes nursery and teaching staff, social workers and those specialist education professionals who must remain active during the COVID-19 response to deliver this approach.

### Key public services

This includes 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, and 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 COVID-19 response or delivering essential public services such as the payment of benefits, 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

This includes 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 COVID-19 pandemic), 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

This includes those who will keep the air, water, road and rail passenger and freight transport modes operating during the COVID-19 response, including those working on transport systems through which supply chains pass.

### Utilities, communication and financial services

This includes 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 COVID-19 response, as well as 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 and waste disposal sectors.