

Friday 12th June 2020

Dear Parents and Carers,

I hope you and your families are all staying well this week. There have been a number of government announcements that we have watched with eager anticipation. We don't receive any advance notice about any of the educational content and, like all of you, we listen intently and then spend the next few days trying to work out what it all actually means!

First of all, this is week 2 of the extended, partial -reopening of school. We have had 140 children in school this week from Saplings, Reception, Year 1 and Year 6 plus 3 groups of key worker pupils. It has been lovely to see some new faces joining the groups this week and I hope this is a measure of the growing confidence we feel that school can re-open safely for children and staff under the current arrangements.

The staggered start times and end times, one-way systems and carefully managed social distancing is working very well and everyone has followed these new procedures carefully and without exception. I would like to thank all our parents and children for their support with this as we are all very dependent on each other to ensure we maintain high levels of vigilance and stay safe.

The government confirmed this week that children in Year 2, 3, 4 and 5 will not be returning to school before the end of term after initially saying that they would. This will be a huge disappointment to many but the announcement did finally acknowledge what we all knew, that it would be impossible to have all our children return to school with 2M social distancing, half class sizes and exclusive bubble/group management in place.

However, the government then went on to say that some schools might be able to bring back some children from these year groups before the end of term if they have the capacity to do so. We have also been informed that further guidance about this will be available shortly, so we will consider this carefully and keep you updated.

There have been several further comments made this week that have led to huge media speculation about what schools might be required to do in the coming weeks and months. At the time of writing this update, our position is that we will continue to do our best to manage our current arrangements, sensibly and safely and we will wait to receive clear guidance before we consider making any changes to our plans.

As I mentioned last week, our thoughts are with our children and families in Year 2, 3, 4 and 5 and we are very keen to ensure that they all stay well and motivated to learn. To the children directly, I hope you are taking time to read every day, do your maths and project work and keep yourselves happy and healthy doing something you enjoy. We are really missing you at school and look forward to a time when you can come back safely!

A number of our staff are also unable to return to work at the moment so we have developed a great idea for everyone at home to get involved with called 'Wellbeing Wednesday' (details at the end of this update). We want to keep everyone involved and promote a sense of wellbeing so please look out for this and give it a go!



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I have heard people say that coming out of lockdown is harder than going into it in the first place and I think we are all getting a sense of that at the moment. For some, the lifting of restrictions will be too slow and for others this will feel hurried and rushed and it is understandable that people across our community and wider society will have differing perspectives. At Woodloes, we will continue to put safety and wellbeing first: we will follow the guidelines carefully and work with other partners locally to ensure we do our best to support our children, their families, our staff and the wider community.

Best wishes to you all and to your families – stay well!

Yours sincerely,

Andy Mitchell (Head Teacher)



Wellbeing Wednesday is coming to Woodloes Primary School



Join us on the school website from Wednesday 10th June, as we introduce to you a different superhero character each week. These 'Mental Health Heroes' will teach the children their amazing superpowers, to help improve their wellbeing and equip them with life-long skills.

Our Wellbeing Wednesday project is perfect for helping children to tackle issues such as low self-esteem, anxiety and anger through superhero characters such as Dr. Calm, Cyber Sense and Yoga Ninja. We want to help our children to understand the range of feelings they may be experiencing due to the current climate and how they can use their own 'superpowers' to deal with them.

Each week, there will be a focussed activity based around a new character, which will encourage the children to think about their thoughts, emotions and how they can approach situations with a different mindset. We will also include character cards for the children to collect and a mindfulness activity too.

We are looking for weekly 'Wellbeing Ambassadors' for our school

We would like to encourage all children to join in with this new and exciting project by sending in photographs of their work so that we can see what they have achieved. Each week, we will be selecting our 'Wellbeing Ambassadors' who will be rewarded with a certificate presented 'virtually' by a member of staff via a video presentation on the website. This will then be emailed home so that the ambassadors can display them and celebrate their success. All work should be emailed to the relevant year group email address – please note that chosen photographs will be displayed on the school website so children's faces should not be included.

We are really excited to bring this new initiative to our school and hope that it will provide a channel of support for our children's wellbeing and mental health in these challenging and uncertain times.