



## WOODLANDS PRIMARY SCHOOL

Headteacher: Dr Victoria Carr, BA Hons QTS, MA, NPQH, MA, EdD.

14<sup>th</sup> July 2020

Dear Parents and Carers,

As you now all know, the government published its guidance for schools opening fully on July 2<sup>nd</sup>. The guidance is a huge document, and full of complications, but there are aspects of it that I am expected to share with you, and ask you to engage with us over.

Below I have attempted to simplify the sections of the guidance that apply to us, quoted sections are in quotation marks, and I have put in red any aspects where you would be asked to contact us immediately or where I need to alert you to something specific. Hopefully I have succeeded and it will be self-explanatory, but if you are confused in any way, please contact us prior to September in order that we can iron out any issues in advance of us all coming back.

### 1. Health and Safety Law

“Schools must comply with health and safety law, which requires them to assess risks and put in place proportionate control measures. Schools should thoroughly review their health and safety risk assessments and draw up plans for the autumn term that address the risks identified using the system of controls set out below. These are an adapted form of the system of protective measures that will be familiar from the summer term. Essential measures include:

- a requirement that people who are ill stay at home
- robust hand and respiratory hygiene
- enhanced cleaning arrangements
- active engagement with NHS Test and Trace
- formal consideration of how to reduce contacts and maximise distancing between those in school wherever possible and minimise potential for contamination so far as is reasonably practicable

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How contacts are reduced will depend on the school’s circumstances and will (as much as possible) include:

- grouping children together
- avoiding contact between groups
- arranging classrooms with forward facing desks
- staff maintaining distance from pupils and other staff as much as possible.”

You will see from our updated risk assessment (to be found on the website here: ) that we have planned for each of the above. We will need your support to action many of the plans we will need to keep or put in place.



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### 2. System of Controls

“This is the set of actions schools must take. They are grouped into ‘prevention’ and ‘response to any infection’ and are outlined in more detail in the sections below.

#### Prevention:

- 1) minimise contact with individuals who are unwell by ensuring that those who have coronavirus (COVID-19) symptoms, or who have someone in their household who does, do not attend school
- 2) clean hands thoroughly more often than usual
- 3) ensure good respiratory hygiene by promoting the ‘catch it, bin it, kill it’ approach
- 4) introduce enhanced cleaning, including cleaning frequently touched surfaces often, using standard products such as detergents and bleach
- 5) minimise contact between individuals and maintain social distancing wherever possible
- 6) where necessary, wear appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE)

Numbers 1 to 4 must be in place in all schools, all the time.

Number 5 must be properly considered and schools must put in place measures that suit their particular circumstances.

Number 6 applies in specific circumstances.

#### Response to any infection:

- 7) engage with the NHS Test and Trace process
- 8) manage confirmed cases of coronavirus (COVID-19) amongst the school community
- 9) contain any outbreak by following local health protection team advice

Numbers 7 to 9 must be followed in every case where they are relevant”.

You will see that school is meant to engage with the NHS Test and Trace process. By extension this implies that parents may also be expected to do so in the unfortunate circumstance when one of our school contracts the virus and we need to try to contain it. This may require us keeping information about our staff and the children that they work with where we would not usually do so.

3. “Minimise contact with individuals who are unwell by ensuring that those who have coronavirus (COVID-19) symptoms, or who have someone in their household who does, do not attend school.”
4. “Ensuring that pupils, staff and other adults do not come into the school if they have **coronavirus (COVID-19) symptoms**, or have tested positive in the last 7 days, and ensuring anyone developing those symptoms during the school day is sent home, are essential actions to reduce the risk in schools and further drive down transmission of coronavirus (COVID-19). All schools must follow this process and ensure all staff are aware of it.”

Naturally it is also crucial that not just staff and adults are aware, but also you, as parents.

5. “If anyone in the school becomes unwell with a new, continuous cough or a high temperature, or has a loss of, or change in, their normal sense of taste or smell (anosmia), they must be sent home and advised to follow **‘stay at home: guidance for households with possible or confirmed**



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coronavirus (COVID-19) infection', which sets out that they must self-isolate for at least 7 days and should arrange to have a test to see if they have coronavirus (COVID-19). Other members of their household (including any siblings) should self-isolate for 14 days from when the symptomatic person first had symptoms."

6. "If a child is awaiting collection, they should be moved, if possible, to a room where they can be isolated behind a closed door, depending on the age and needs of the child, with appropriate adult supervision if required. Ideally, a window should be opened for ventilation. If it is not possible to isolate them, move them to an area which is at least 2 metres away from other people."

In our school, both sites, the ICT suite has been designated as the room where anyone displaying symptoms will be 'isolated' whilst being supervised. You must understand the imperative is that if you are called in this instance, it is an expectation that you would come to collect your child immediately, to prevent transmission to another child or an adult in school. It is therefore vital that we can contact you on telephone numbers that work. Now more than ever it is essential that you ensure that school has the emergency contact details for you that are correct at all times.

7. "Public Health England does not (based on current evidence) recommend the use of face coverings in schools. This evidence will be kept under review. They are not required in schools as pupils and staff are mixing in consistent groups, and because misuse may inadvertently increase the risk of transmission. There may also be negative effects on communication and thus education."
8. "Minimise contact between individuals and maintain social distancing wherever possible...Minimising contacts and mixing between people reduces transmission of coronavirus (COVID-19). This is important in all contexts, and schools must consider how to implement this. Schools must do everything possible to minimise contacts and mixing while delivering a broad and balanced curriculum."

Our detailed risk assessments allow for the above.

9. "The overarching principle to apply is reducing the number of contacts between children and staff. This can be achieved through keeping groups separate (in 'bubbles') and through maintaining distance between individuals. These are not alternative options and both measures will help, but the balance between them will change depending on:

- children's ability to distance
- the lay out of the school
- the feasibility of keeping distinct groups separate while offering a broad curriculum (especially at secondary)

It is likely that for younger children the emphasis will be on separating groups, and for older children it will be on distancing. For children old enough, they should also be supported to maintain distance and not



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touch staff where possible...Maintaining distinct groups or 'bubbles' that do not mix makes it quicker and easier in the event of a positive case to identify those who may need to self-isolate, and keep that number as small as possible."

We will have 7 'bubbles' in school from September to facilitate this. The class groupings we have already shared with you accommodate this and ensure that we can still teach the range of subjects that we wish to teach given the size of our school and the building. Those bubbles will be shared separately so that they are not lost in this document. See below for further guidance on bubble sizes.

10. "Schools should assess their circumstances and if class-sized groups are not compatible with offering a full range of subjects or managing the practical logistics within and around school, they can look to implement year group sized 'bubbles'. Whatever the size of the group, they should be kept apart from other groups where possible and older children should be encouraged to keep their distance within groups. Schools with the capability to do it should take steps to limit interaction, sharing of rooms and social spaces between groups as much as possible. When using larger groups the other measures from the system of controls become even more important, to minimise transmission risks and to minimise the numbers of pupils and staff who may need to self-isolate."
11. "Maintaining a distance between people whilst inside and reducing the amount of time they are in face to face to contact lowers the risk of transmission...Ideally, adults should maintain 2 metre distance from each other, and from children. We know that this is not always possible, particularly when working with younger children, but if adults can do this when circumstances allow that will help. In particular, they should avoid close face to face contact and minimise time spent within 1 metre of anyone. Similarly, it will not be possible when working with many pupils who have complex needs or who need close contact care. These pupils' educational and care support should be provided as normal."
12. "For children old enough, they should also be supported to maintain distance and not touch staff and their peers where possible. This will not be possible for the youngest children and some children with complex needs and it is not feasible in some schools where space does not allow. Schools doing this where they can, and even doing this some of the time, will help."
13. "Schools should make small adaptations to the classroom to support distancing where possible. That should include seating pupils side by side and facing forwards, rather than face to face or side on, and might include moving unnecessary furniture out of classrooms to make more space."
14. "Groups should be kept apart, meaning that schools should avoid large gatherings such as assemblies or collective worship with more than one group."

We do not plan to have school assembly in the same format as we have in the past as a result of 14.



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15. "When timetabling, groups should be kept apart and movement around the school site kept to a minimum. While passing briefly in the corridor or playground is low risk, schools should avoid creating busy corridors, entrances and exits. Schools should also consider staggered break times and lunch times.. schools should consider staggered starts or adjusting start and finish times to keep groups apart as they arrive and leave school. Staggered start and finish times should not reduce the amount of overall teaching time."

We plan to stagger starts and ends of the day, breaks and lunchtimes. These will be shared with you along with bubble information, separately from this document.

16. "Classroom based resources, such as books and games, can be used and shared within the bubble; these should be cleaned regularly, along with all frequently touched surfaces. Resources that are shared between classes or bubbles, such as sports, art and science equipment should be cleaned frequently and meticulously and always between bubbles, or rotated to allow them to be left unused and out of reach for a period of 48 hours (72 hours for plastics) between use by different bubbles."

This has implications for reading books and phonics, a separate letter will be sent to you regarding this and how we plan to implement our home reading scheme safely.

17. "It is still recommended that pupils limit the amount of equipment they bring into school each day, to essentials .."

We have been operating on this basis during lockdown for key workers and the vulnerable and also for Y6/1 and R children. This will continue.

18. "Schools must ensure they understand the NHS Test and Trace process and how to contact their local [Public Health England health protection team](#). Schools must ensure that staff members and parents/carers understand that they will need to be ready and willing to:

- [book a test](#) if they are displaying symptoms. Staff and pupils must not come into the school if they have symptoms, and must be sent home to self-isolate if they develop them in school. All children can be tested, including children under 5, but children aged 11 and under will need to be helped by their parents/carers if using a home testing kit
- provide details of anyone they have been in close contact with if they were to test positive for coronavirus (COVID-19) or if asked by NHS Test and Trace
- [self-isolate](#) if they have been in close contact with someone who develops coronavirus (COVID-19) symptoms or someone who tests positive for coronavirus (COVID-19).

Anyone who displays symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19) can and should get a test. Tests can be booked online through the [NHS testing and tracing for coronavirus website](#), or ordered by telephone via [NHS 119](#) for those without access to the internet. Essential workers, which includes anyone involved in education or childcare, have priority access to testing.



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The government will ensure that it is as easy as possible to get a test through a wide range of routes that are locally accessible, fast and convenient. We will release more details on new testing avenues as and when they become available and will work with schools so they understand what the quickest and easiest way is to get a test. By the autumn term, all schools will be provided with a small number of home testing kits that they can give directly to parents/carers collecting a child who has developed symptoms at school, or staff who have developed symptoms at school, where they think providing one will significantly increase the likelihood of them getting tested. Advice will be provided alongside these kits.

Schools should ask parents and staff to inform them immediately of the results of a test:

- if someone tests negative, if they feel well and no longer have symptoms similar to coronavirus (COVID-19), they can stop self-isolating. They could still have another virus, such as a cold or flu – in which case it is still best to avoid contact with other people until they are better. Other members of their household can stop self-isolating.
- if someone tests positive, they should follow the '[stay at home: guidance for households with possible or confirmed coronavirus \(COVID-19\) infection](#)' and must continue to self-isolate for at least 7 days from the onset of their symptoms and then return to school only if they do not have symptoms other than cough or loss of sense of smell/taste. This is because a cough or anosmia can last for several weeks once the infection has gone. The 7-day period starts from the day when they first became ill. If they still have a high temperature, they should keep self-isolating until their temperature returns to normal. Other members of their household should continue self-isolating for the full 14 days.

We recommend schools keep a record of pupils and staff in each group, and any close contact that takes places between children and staff in different groups (see [section 5 of system of control](#) for more on grouping pupils). This should be a proportionate recording process. Schools do not need to ask pupils to record everyone they have spent time with each day or ask staff to keep definitive records in a way that is overly burdensome...Schools must not share the names or details of people with coronavirus (COVID-19) unless essential to protect others.

Household members of those contacts who are sent home do not need to self-isolate themselves unless the child, young person or staff member who is self-isolating subsequently develops symptoms. If someone in a class or group that has been asked to self-isolate develops symptoms themselves within their 14-day isolation period they should follow '[stay at home: guidance for households with possible or confirmed coronavirus \(COVID-19\) infection](#)'. They should get a test, and:

- if the test delivers a negative result, they must remain in isolation for the remainder of the 14-day isolation period. This is because they could still develop the coronavirus (COVID-19) within the remaining days.
- if the test result is positive, they should inform their setting immediately, and must isolate for at least 7 days from the onset of their symptoms (which could mean the self-isolation ends before or after the original 14-day isolation period). Their household should self-isolate for at least 14 days from when the



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symptomatic person first had symptoms, following [‘stay at home: guidance for households with possible or confirmed coronavirus \(COVID-19\) infection’](#)

Schools should not request evidence of negative test results or other medical evidence before admitting children or welcoming them back after a period of self-isolation.”

As you can see, the implications and ramifications of 18 are quite significant and involve you being willing and prepared to tell us if you or any member of your household has symptoms, self-isolate, source and take a test, inform us of the results etc. How prepared you are to adhere to this section will be a measure of how well we deal with any outbreak and contain it so that it has minimal impact on our school, community, and lives. Please help us to keep our staff, pupils, community and one another safe by following this rigorously.

19. “If schools have two or more confirmed cases within 14 days, or an overall rise in sickness absence where coronavirus (COVID-19) is suspected, they may have an outbreak, and must continue to work with their local health protection team who will be able to advise if additional action is required.”
20. “In some cases, health protection teams may recommend that a larger number of other pupils self-isolate at home as a precautionary measure – perhaps the whole site or year group. If schools are implementing controls from this list, addressing the risks they have identified and therefore reducing transmission risks, whole school closure based on cases within the school will not generally be necessary, and should not be considered except on the advice of health protection teams.”
21. “In consultation with the local Director of Public Health, where an outbreak in a school is confirmed, a mobile testing unit may be dispatched to test others who may have been in contact with the person who has tested positive. Testing will first focus on the person’s class, followed by their year group, then the whole school if necessary, in line with routine public health outbreak control practice.”

Obviously this could involve school closure at worst. We will be working on contingency plans in September for this eventuality. This will not be a decision made by school, or the LA, but Public Health England representatives and may also prevent Key Worker children coming to school if full closure is recommended.

22. “School attendance will therefore be mandatory again from the beginning of the autumn term. This means from that point, the usual rules on school attendance will apply, including:

parents’ duty to secure that their child attends regularly at school where the child is a registered pupil at school and they are of compulsory school age;





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schools' responsibilities to record attendance and follow up absence

the availability to issue sanctions, including fixed penalty notices in line with local authorities' codes of conduct

The implication of this is that the government expect any and all children to attend school. Failure to do so will mean we are possibly expected to fine parents.

23. "We are asking schools and local authorities to:

communicate clear and consistent expectations around school attendance to families (and any other professionals who work with the family where appropriate) throughout the summer ahead of the new school year."

I have attempted to do this via this letter. If you have ANY concerns about your health or that of your child, in terms of shielding or vulnerability to Covid-19, PLEASE CONTACT US ASAP.

24. "kitchens will be fully open from the start of the autumn term and normal legal requirements will apply about provision of food to all pupils who want it, including for those eligible for benefits-related free school meals or universal infant free school meals."

If your child will have the choice of a hot or cold school meal should they want one as with normal school running. As per our Risk Assessment, however, the meal will be eaten in the classroom, rather than the hall. No snacks will be provided by school until further notice. Your child may bring a healthy snack with them and more information about this will be on your specific year group letter.

25. School uniform will be expected when school resumes in September.

26. "Schools should consider how to communicate this to parents and remind them about the process that has been agreed for drop off and collection, including that gathering at the school gates and otherwise coming onto the site without an appointment is not allowed."

We have worked on an extensive and detailed method to bring our substantial number of children into school safely, and to allow them and you to leave school safely. This will be communicated separately but will mean great changes to the start and end of the school day – especially for the junior site. In brief, we have devised a way for the junior children to enter the main school gate unaccompanied and be directed by staff in the yard into their open classrooms in September EXCEPT FOR THE FIRST WEEK FOR YEAR 3 PUPILS, who will be allowed to enter school with a parent and be dropped to their new classroom, before the parent making use of the one-way system around school). The infants will receive separate instructions about how we manage this.

Please try not to make medical appointments during the day to minimise the times you attend the office and your child needs to leave their classroom.



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I realise that I have given you a great deal of information, a snap shot of the information contained within the guidance. I hope I have covered the majority of your concerns and queries. If, after reading this document, and following the information we will continue to send you in more 'bitesized' pieces in the coming few days, you still have questions, please do not hesitate to email us and ask.

My kindest regards, as ever,

Victoria