

WOODLANDS PRIMARY SCHOOL

HEADTEACHER'S BLOG – 25/09/20

Bonjour! If you happened to download the NHS app yesterday and it showed you that our postcode is RED and a HIGH RISK area, let me try to cheer you up a teeny bit! Today is European Day of Languages and Miss Gittins (one third of our resident linguist team, the other 2/3 being Mrs Lyons and Mrs Winder!), was delighted that so many activities took place! Mademoiselle G thought it would be nice for our juniors to learn some new and exciting languages and our theme this year was 'Everyone smiles in the same language'.

If this were a normal year, she would have invited children to do some cooking and organise a whole school hall event...as we couldn't do that, class teachers all did a 20-30 min activity with their classes, with each year group working on a different focus country! I hope you checked out your class Twitter feed to see what they were up to! I believe it involved a self-portrait, smiling in a Polaroid template, and writing the positive greeting underneath in the country's language.... I didn't participate as I didn't want to frighten anyone on a Polaroid, but I would have picked Kiswahili and said 'Jambo!'

I am quite excited by a few little things, weird I know given the times we live in, BUT, in the next week or two we will be letting you know about school photos (which we still want to happen, Covid-19 notwithstanding!). Tempest have been working hard and have planned a new contactless service, designed to help us to be Covid -19 secure. This means no more handing out proofs or collecting order forms and cash from you all. It will be done digitally, so orders will be made by you and sent to you! I have completed the GDPR paperwork and once that goes through, with questions like, "How long do you retain parent and student data for?" (The answer is, you are completely in control of this. Just log into the portal once you have the details, and delete it whenever you want!) "How secure is the portal?" (Again, the answer is straightforward, the cloud based portal is built to industry standard security specifications and uses the latest security technologies). "Where is the data held?" (The main servers are in the UK and backed up on servers in the EU). You will still get those annual milestone school photos, just in a different way this year!

On a similar note, as I said yesterday, we will be properly launching our online portal, Google Classrooms, so do please login to this over the weekend and don't forget to let your child's teacher know you have either had no problems or what the problems are if you have run up against any. The site you need to go to is:

classroom.google.com

The government updated a couple of key documents that we have added into our policies, and for your reference I will let you know what they refer to. Safeguarding is updated each year in August to reflect national trends and to tighten the protocols that we work on in this area. In view of online learning expectations it is imperative we share this with you. We have an exceptional pastoral and safeguarding team, and they shared the updates with staff, as they do each year, on the first INSET day back in September. For your information the full document is here

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/912592/Keeping_children_safe_in_education_Sep_2020.pdf) but the summary of the changes will come in an email to you separately.

The other one we need to share is Behaviour.

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/899384/Checklist_for_school_leaders_on_behaviour_and_attendance.pdf

"Review existing behaviour and attendance policies, systems and practices." We have done this in the last 3 weeks and the new policy is with the governors and will be ratified in the next couple of weeks at our first FGB meeting before it heads to the website.

“For behaviour:

Set clear, reasonable and proportionate standards of behaviour.

Make things as simple as possible so that the plans can be remembered and understood easily by everyone.

Plan new routines, habits and systems, including:

- expectations for arriving at and leaving school (including behaviour on public transport)
- hygiene practices
- lunch and break time routines
- any transitions between lessons
- staff supervision of movement during social times
- safe use of school spaces and equipment
- consider restrictions on movement within school and new hygiene rules”

We have been doing all of this, I think you will agree we have been really trying with the expectations for arriving and leaving school, as hard as this is to police, hygiene, safe use of school space and restrictions on movement within school!

We know that some children, sometimes those with additional needs, or who are perhaps struggling with transition back to school, or into a new school, may have struggled with behaviour expectations and we are working with the parents, the children and the teachers to address the individual aspects of this. We thank you for your patience as we do, and ask that you try not to discuss the children in our school in WhatsApp groups, if you have concerns, talk directly to us, otherwise it can be a very unhealthy and unpleasant way of venting your frustrations when you consider that children with needs don't always look different to those without, and not one of us has any idea what is happening in another person's life – I would just ask you to be kind, where you can, and reach out to us with your concerns so that we can reassure you.

One of our parents has shared some suggestions about Halloween, and the PTA and I have been thinking about Christmas ... remain calm however, I won't start getting Christmassy JUST yet, even though I LOVE that time of year...!

The Halloween suggestion is that you paint/draw etc a pumpkin (attached is the template suggested) and pop into your window so that you can accompany your child and search for them, a 'pumpkin hunt'! No need to stick to one night if you pop them up for half term, and for every one you find, you can pop a sweetie into your child's bag 😊 a socially distanced way of enjoying the idea of Halloween if you celebrate this festival!

Thank you so much to all the parents who came to school today in a mask!

I was surprised at just how many of you did, given the rule isn't in effect until Monday technically, but in the spirit of getting organised and getting into good habits, it was great to see! I know there is neither rhyme nor reason to some of the guidance, I really do, I chatted to one mum who was waiting this morning who, like me, wondered if it was so important, why wait an extra 3 days? My answer is, who knows! But I am glad that between us we will do all we can to keep our children, parents, staff and community as safe as we can, especially given the numbers of children in neighbouring schools who are isolating at home due to confirmed cases in their schools!

Hopefully when I reassured the handful of you that it wasn't a problem if you didn't have your mask today, and that we were just getting organised and into a routine, you were happy and didn't feel chastised. I myself walk from the car (where my masks are actually around the gear stick) to the shops, and then remember I need a mask and have to about turn and fetch one... I nearly forgot mine this morning, truth be told, and my high vis jacket (which means I can be seen a mile away), but luckily my team keep me on the straight and narrow and when my mind is full of other things, remind me! Between us we will all

remind one another I am sure, and all do our bit. It is a depressing concept to think, as the PM's message said on Tuesday, that this is it until March next year minimum... we plod on!

In readiness for if we do get a positive test, I have prepared the template letter, and the template data return for the LA... I am every hopeful not to need it! We do all have to challenge parents bringing older children into school, or families trying to come in with more than one adult, we hate it, but we have to – so I am sorry!

I also chatted to a mum this morning who made my week and said she thought we were doing a fabulous job, I told the staff, who are so tired and working so hard, they really appreciated the 'big up'!

Finally, thanks, finally, to our lovely PTA for cleaning the 'No Parking' signs outside school (I will pretend you didn't stand on the wall #healthandsafety, in the same way I don't want you to say anything about the newly trimmed back hedges that I took to with no PPE, I think the results are what we shall focus on!!) they look very shiny and cannot be missed now, and also to Mrs Blundell, for tooting at me as I trotted to school this morning under a heavy weighted vest, red faced and sweating! Made me smile to see you waving, makes me smile to see so many of you each day on the gates, your happy children, and when you write in to tell us we are doing a good job, or simply thank us when you see us – means a lot!

Enjoy your weekend everyone, whatever you do!

Victoria Carr.