



WOODLANDS PRIMARY SCHOOL

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

Dear Parents and Carers,

What a week – there is a lot to share but before I do, I want to thank you for working so supportively with your children in their endeavours to get to grips with remote learning en masse! As a parent myself, I can appreciate the complexities around this, and the increased stress levels, so your support has not gone unnoticed!

Overwhelmingly, you have been positive and understanding – for which I am personally grateful, as your comments have been shared with a somewhat shell-shocked staff body and alongside my words, has helped me to lift morale.

On a professional level, not having to deal with too many complaints has meant that I was able to focus with our senior leadership team on many operational and essential things such as free school meal provision, enhanced learning offers, ensuring that vulnerable children and the children of our front line workers who have no other option than to be in school are as safe as we can possibly make them, the builders are sorted out as this affects our future (long after Covid has become a hideous memory) etc. etc. so thank you for that, also.

For those who have had issues/complaints, I am hopeful that the things listed below will take into account not just the individual conversations/email exchanges that we have had, but also those who may think similarly, but who have not contacted us. It may well be easier to bullet some information, so I will try!

- Remote learning:

When we closed Year 2, I think it was much easier to manage because all children were home and the teacher was doing all teaching remotely as they were isolating, too. We learned a lot from this and shared that learning with not just our entire staff just in case it happened again, but also many other schools, and I know that lots of people benefitted from this. Our/your pain facilitated the gain of lots of other people.

The current restrictions mean that to protect children by retaining small year group bubbles, which in turn facilitates focused blended and simultaneous teaching and learning for those with no other option than to be in school and those learning from home, it has been tricky. However, now we have been operating in this way for a couple of days, we have already learned a lot and been discussing how the next few weeks will look.

We discussed the feedback from a handful parents about wanting the work posted online the night before and, whilst the simple answer is no, for a number of reasons that I won't bore you with (including making the learning meaningful for the next day based on feedback and understanding from the day's learning etc.), we have come up with a compromise. Parents will have a weekly timetable (sample attached) with just the subject headings – this timetable will show subject areas and will pre-empt any gathering of resources and should make life easier for preparation.



WOODLANDS PRIMARY SCHOOL

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

Please work in the best way possible for you. Do not lose sleep or increase your own stress levels trying to manage the home learning around your working from home commitments – we understand and are pragmatic. Just do what you can.

To support you the lovely Miss Holgate had designed a guide for how to use Google classrooms (attached).

- Registers:

I know that some of you have objected to completing these, as they are not convenient, for which I can only apologise.

We must, however, complete these as a legal requirement and this information will be collected daily by the government and Local Authority, so I would really appreciate your co-operation with completing this. If you do not complete the register for your child, twice a day, then in the same way that we would follow up if your child was not attending when school was open in normal, we will have to call you, as part of our 'first day absence' procedures and as outlined in our remote learning policy, and published on our website last term.

We will be completing the registers for home learning and those in school in real time and submitting them – a logistical nightmare but nevertheless something we must overcome, with your help and support.

- Changes to the start and end of the day:

Now that the majority of our children are working at home, whilst we are operating under the lockdown restrictions and to make it easier for everyone, we will be going back to the whole school (those in and remote learning) starting and ending the school day at the same time.

LEARNING time will be 9am-3pm FOR EVERYONE.

In order to facilitate the above, and accommodate social distancing and bubble protection, children can begin to arrive at school (if they are attending) at 8:45am. We will make sure they are all in class by 9am for the register. Children can be collected between 3pm and 3:15pm. We will make sure that they are all released in year group bubbles, starting with Y6 on the junior side as we have become accustomed to. The infant side will start with Early Years as we have become accustomed to.

As we have now resolved the access issues for the builders (because Covid was not enough for us to try to manage) we will welcome and release the JUNIOR CHILDREN via the MAIN ENTRANCE for the foreseeable future.

Infants will not change and will enter and leave as they have been accustomed to.



WOODLANDS PRIMARY SCHOOL

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

- Absences:

In the same way that you would contact school if your child is sick, or is tested for Covid etc. we need you to carry this on. Thus, if your child is sick, please send an email or leave a voicemail to tell us they will not be in – this means we won't pester you if they don't register. Again, I can only apologise for this, it is a legal requirement and we will need to record this. If they must isolate due to contact for Covid, let us know. If they test positive for Covid, let us know.

- Feedback on Work:

We have a range of staff who will be supporting the teachers who are leading the online learning. They will be on a rota and this means that you will see lots of different people commenting on the google classroom work, and different people manning the 'chat' and answering queries and concerns. This means that the person teaching can do the teaching, and those supporting can actively iron out any issues and help the teacher with follow up and lesson preparation for the next day. It also means that those staff shielding can still feel like they are a part of the school day.

- Vulnerable and critical worker places:

As we said earlier this week, we are now working at a safe and manageable capacity in school in terms of vulnerable pupils and those children of critical workers with no alternatives. I thank you all for helping keep those children, and staff who are in school, as safe as they can be, by making your own arrangements for home learning. I know that this presents itself with its own issues and I know that this is not easy. The government guidance and lack of clarity and conflicting expectations is something that I have both written to our MP about, and is also echoed by every school leader the land over. Nevertheless, we work in a consistent and transparent way and have carefully worked with every person in our building to both raise and balance awareness of risk, mitigate that risk, highlight both personal and collective social responsibility, and work on an acute needs basis.

We currently have no places available in school, although this picture may change as the weeks progress and the circumstances of individuals change, so this is a movable feast as they say.

I know that some of you have compared us favourably for our approach compared to other schools, and one or two, unfavourably. What I always say is that comparing schools and their provision is pointless as each school has different constraints and opportunities and we do all we can to exploit our opportunities to support and minimise the impact of our constraints. There are always aspects to our decisions that publically we are not able to share, but they are always based on a team unpicking every element and working ethically and with integrity.

- Complaining to Ofsted:

Woodlands Primary School
Eddisbury Road
Whitby
Ellesmere Port
Cheshire
CH66 2JT



Email: admin@woodlands.cheshire.sch.uk
Website: www.woodlands.cheshire.sch.uk

Tel: 0151 338 2260

WOODLANDS PRIMARY SCHOOL

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

Appallingly yesterday, again something I and my governors have raised with our MP, rather than thank schools for working so quickly to establish remote learning, keep everyone safe and support the national lock down, Gavin Williamson suggested that parents dissatisfied with the remote provision of their school complain to Ofsted.

In the first instance, this demonstrates a breath-taking hostility and lack of understanding from the School's Minister, but also complete ignorance about the policies his government put into place with regard to complaints. If you are unhappy with our provision, in the first instance you should complain to me, if this does not resolve the issue, then to the governors, and finally, to Ofsted. Ofsted always make a note about whether the complainant has contacted the school in the first instance, and then, via the LA, contact the school with any complaint and the school provide evidence about what they have done to both LA and Ofsted.

I would argue that perhaps a more useful thing to occupy the time of parents right now would be to rest, regroup and de-stress after a day of home learning or a day working in a critical role, which both have their anxieties, than complaining to Ofsted about any school who have all been woefully supported and guided, or indeed, complain to their local MP about the shoddy way the government have supported schools and pupils of all ages and all phases throughout this pandemic response, but I cannot dictate what others think or do.

Dr Victoria Carr