



# Willow Brook News

August 27<sup>th</sup> 2020

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Dear Willow Brook families,

With the end to the summer break fast approaching, I wanted to contact you all to touch base and to update you on our plans for the up and coming start of the school year. Firstly, I hope that you have had a good summer and that you are safe and well. I also hope that you have had a chance to enjoy some family time over the past few weeks and feel ready for an important start to the term.

I know that the frustrations of the past academic year, coupled to on-going anxieties of the covid19 situation will make this September both unusual and far from ideal. Whilst there will be a raft of information, new systems to get used to and an unprecedented list of 'do's and don'ts'. I also have faith that your children will settle quickly and will thrive in some social 'normality'. We aim to provide plenty of reassurance and routine.

Teachers have worked together in school last week and this, to make sure the building is ready. Classrooms have been thoroughly cleaned and prepared. Staff are briefed, planned and eager to meet their new children. We now have two formal administration days to finalise all that we need to achieve before welcoming all year groups back.

We aim to have a steady but ambitious start. Our first three weeks will see teachers assessing and revising as well as providing a period of gentle readjustment and routine. Intertwined in this, we will be launching new history-based topics and new learning resources as well as making sure that we understand where intervention and additional support is needed. If we work together with ambition, I am sure that a great deal can (and will!) be achieved.

It's important that I take this opportunity to focus once again on the details that will underpin a safe return to school next week. I apologise for repeating the same information as in my July newsletter, but I think that it is important to be as thorough as possible. At the end of term, I outlined details about how children will minimise contact and maintain distance as far as is practical and sensible by staying in separate class groups (or bubbles). How children are seated, how they move around the building and how staff interact and teach have all been considered and risk assessed.

Hygiene continues to be key. Handwashing, cleaning throughout the day and the 'Catch it, Bin it, Kill it' strategy will all be central to our practice. We will also provide children with their own personal resources (pencil cases will **NOT** be needed) and equipment necessary for teaching and learning (stationery and reading books) will be carefully 'laundered' or 'quarantined' between use.

As you have been informed, children need to arrive at and leave school in slightly staggered time slots. With 195 children now entering the playground, we will be asking that one adult brings their child to the playground where they will hand them over to the class teacher. We will be asking our

key stage 2 children to line up with independence to maintain as much distancing as possible. Social distancing will apply on our premises for adults as in any other public place and parents will be asked to follow our one-way system to leave the premises promptly. Whatever your personal opinions and approach, we ask that you work with us. We are also politely asking that during this period, dogs are not brought onto the site.

Current guidelines ask that children of primary age do not wear face coverings in school. Incorrect use means that young children potentially increases the risk of transmitting the virus. So that communication is not hindered during teaching, adults will not wear face masks, but we will continue to respond to government advice. We have now purchased a gentler anti-bacterial soap that is (having tested it over the summer!) kinder to hands.

Probably the most important point to impress upon you as you get ready for next week is that space in the classrooms will be extremely tight. Children should bring the minimum when it comes to personal items. Other than a school reading bag to take books home and a lunch box (if required), children will only need a water bottle. A small bag containing a simple PE kit of trainers and shorts/jogging bottoms may be hung in the cloakroom. This bag should be left in school and not taken home at weekends. Rucksacks should be avoided – any additional property will need to be kept in the classroom and there simply isn't room. Other personal items should not be brought from home. We will not be able to pool lost property as we usually do, so please make sure that ALL items of clothing are named so that they can be returned to you if they go astray.

The Government guidance for parents on all matters relating to the full opening of schools has been updated since my last letter. It's worth a read. You'll find it here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/what-parents-and-carers-need-to-know-about-early-years-providers-schools-and-colleges-during-the-coronavirus-covid-19-outbreak/what-parents-and-carers-need-to-know-about-early-years-providers-schools-and-colleges-in-the-autumn-term>

On a totally unrelated matter, this may be the perfect time to remind you that, like most schools, Willow Brook has a healthy eating policy. Break time snacks should not include crisps, chocolate, cake, or foods that are clearly sugar heavy. You are free to decide what you include in your child's packed lunch, but children will be challenged by staff if they slip a Kit Kat out of their lunchbox at playtime! Young children were also bringing increasing larger plastic tubs of food for their mid-morning snacks. To cut down on objects that need to be brought from home (as well as to cut down on the number of tubs that end up in lost property) please consider a piece of fruit that doesn't require extensive use of Tupperware! For the sake of pupils who have allergies, children should not bring nuts into school. Our daily delivery of fruit for our key stage 1 children will resume in September so there is always a constant supply of healthy snacks to hand.

I realise that there is a great deal to think about ready for next week and that we will continue to adapt and learn from our first few days together. I hope that your children are looking forward to coming back to school and, with our care and encouragement, will quickly grow in confidence. The first day will see so many mixed feelings (from adults and children alike!) – that's perfectly understandable – but I hope that you will share our optimism and that you will support all that the community will work together to achieve. Being positive in front of your children will make a huge difference should they be anxious. Listening to their concerns and offering encouraging responses will help, as will good sleep and a return to school routine.

Many of your questions may be automatically be answered after day 1, but If you have any worries that I can help you with before next Thursday, please get in touch. I will do my very best to help.

With my best wishes to you all,

Louise Ballard

## Walking to School

Willow Brook is a busy road. During staggered arrival and departure times it will be busier than usual.

### For the safety of our children:



**Please** walk to school if you live near enough to do so



If you live too far to walk, **please** park your car **away** from Willow Brook and walk the final 5 minutes



If you need to drive on Willow Brook **do not** stop on the yellow zig zags OR AT THE BUS STOP. You will cause congestion and limit the vision of pedestrians.

Pedestrians should cross the road between the two marked bollards.



Vision is limited at the bottom of the school drive and the junction at the top of the Fair Way makes it more difficult.

**Do not** cross between our cones.

