

Willow Brook Contact

June 29th 2020

head@willowbrook.notts.sch.uk



Dear Willow Brook families,

With only 4 weeks to go until we take a breather for a couple of weeks, the summer term continues to be a challenge like no other! Bubbles working in the school building continue to have a limited and somewhat stark day in comparison to the usual weeks in July, whilst others continue to wait in frustration as lockdown remains.

Your patience and positivity in both scenarios continues to be both supportive and understanding – even in times of expressing your individual anxieties and concerns – and for that we are grateful.

As you know, the government report that their goal is to make sure that all pupils return to classes in September. Their plans to make this a safe reality are yet to be released to schools and will undoubtedly be under great scrutiny. It is highly likely that the current 'bubble' system will continue with increased numbers, allowing a class of 30 to function with their teacher. This is, by no means, an easy outcome, but one that I hope will see every child finding their feet again with their learning and social development back in the building. The staff and governors at Willow Brook will be determined to move forward and work hard to nurture our children's wellbeing as they reacclimatise in whatever 'new' routines are possible.

The term has seen different schools approaching the reopening process in different ways. To date, some have only been able to accommodate key worker children, whilst others have taken in only one year group. Some larger schools have worked on a 'week on week off' system to simply accommodate their three year groups, whilst others with bigger premises have invited new groups for part time visits and alternate them with different bubbles. Willow Brook took the decision to open earlier than most on June 1st and we are *just* able to accommodate 7 bubbles with the adults and space that we have. Having job share roles and vulnerable members of staff has added some limitations. We would, however, like very much to make sure that children from other years have at least two visits to school over the last 3 weeks. The plan relies on good weather, a full complement of staff and your understanding, but I hope that it just might help the children to start that 'finding their feet' process. I understand fully that some families continue to choose to home-educate their children and do not feel comfortable to send them back into a public environment just yet – that is perfectly OK, and we continue to support your decision.

Out and about in the village

First of all, we would like to invite you for a walk! We have heard from some families who do not live in Keyworth that they miss a familiar face and don't have the outdoor contact that children in the village enjoy if they wander out with family into the locality. On Thursday night, the Willow Brook staff will be out and about in Keyworth between 3.40pm and 5pm. In a responsibly distant way, we'd like to get some exercise and will be heading out on our own in different directions and will keep on moving! We are encouraging you to get outside and enjoy some family exercise (whatever the weather!) and, in a Pokémon Go sort of way, you might spot a teacher with a pushchair; a TA with a dog; an office manager who never stops smiling and a head and a deputy head teacher who apparently look 'tired'! There is no intention to encourage you to stop for long conversations or gather - we will keep moving, but a friendly face, a simple 'hello' and a walk might cheer us all up in the middle of a grey week!

Sports afternoon

Next week we would like to offer those who are **not currently attending school** in any way, a chance to enjoy an afternoon of outdoor sporting activity akin to our normal Sports Day. (Pupils currently registered with the keyworker group will have their own event as we work within the parameters of children not being able to interact with other bubbles during the week.)

Whilst the whole class can attend, the children will be divided into groups of 15 or less and will have their own section of the field. The two play zones have been cunningly divided with two independent racetracks in between. The bubbles will be overseen by the class teacher and a second adult, together with Miss Phillips. With hand washing upon arriving, appropriate distancing and the great outdoors, we have created an environment that is as safe as we can make it. Here's the plan...

Week beginning 6 th July - Sport Afternoons		
	am	pm
Monday 6 th	Year R	Year 5 with Miss Harris and Mr Jones To arrive at 1.15 and leave at 2.45pm
Tuesday 7 th	Year 6	Year 2 with Mr Jones and Mrs Ballard To arrive at 1.15 and leave at 2.45pm
Wednesday 8 th	Year 1	Year 3 with Miss Brearey and Mr Jones To arrive at 1.15 and leave at 2.45pm
Thursday 9 th	Keyworker group	Year 4 with Mrs Mullen and Mrs Ballard To arrive at 1.15 and leave at 2.45pm
Friday 10 th	Reserve morning Should one of our sessions be cancelled due to poor weather or staff absence, we will use a Friday session to make amends.	

Again, it is important that children arrive on time with one adult. Your child will be handed over to the supervising member of staff in the playground. Adults will then follow our one-way system to leave the premises. Similarly, one parent should collect their child at 2.45pm, waiting in the front playground where they will be returned to you. We ask that you continue to respect social distancing whilst you wait and as you leave the school grounds. It will all be signposted and clear.

An afternoon in school

We are putting the finishing touches to a similar series of afternoon sessions during the final two weeks of term, where children currently not in school can spend time inside (hopefully) with your September teacher and your bubble of 15 friends. I'm just waiting for one more reply from one of our new members of staff before I can publish the details ... but if I can make it happen, it will!

Year 6 and the end of term

For the remaining weeks of this term there is a great deal to be done! We aim to ensure that Year 6 leave their primary school life with as much of the usual tradition that is possible to achieve. They will start work on their Leavers' Assembly this week and have a DARE graduation to prepare. Both will be shared with you via video.

In organising all of this, I have tried to recognise our responsibility in complying with what is required of us and add what we can safely and practically do to help classes access time in school. I wish it could be more. We do it all with our best intentions and, once again, I thank you for being so understanding.

With my sincere best wishes to you all,

Louise Ballard