

Willow Brook Contact

June 1st 2020

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Dear Willow Brook families,

June 1st will be forever etched in my mind! After 10 weeks in a relatively quiet building, to have our Year 6 back with us today was worth all the hard work. It was our first tentative step in what will be a long, measured journey and we will walk forward each day with care and with the wellbeing of all those who share our community as our prime motivator.

For those of you who continue to look after your children at home, I can only echo the words of our Chair of Governors last night and salute you. Your resolve has supported the school's work and your encouraging emails and calls have been a constant source of strength to me. The Willow Brook staff, too, have been a team in the truest sense and have continue to uphold each other as well as their own workload. Their own lives have stood alongside their keyworker role and they have coped with the logistics and loses of family and have today stood by my side with such positivity. I consider myself a lucky headteacher!

Your Questions

Many parents have asked whether plans are in place for bringing more year groups back into school. The short answer is 'no'. Whilst the Government suggested this could be a possibility a month before the end of term, I personally cannot see how this is feasible in our space whilst social distancing is still in force. As with this first phase, we will continue to monitor the advice and how we can safely respond within it.

The second question I have been asked concerns those children in Year 1, Year 6 and Reception who have elected to keep their children at home. I know that some of you considered June 1st too early to send your children back into the school environment – and I respect your decision. Some have suggested that you may decide when you feel it is safe to return - again, I will support your child being in school. These first two days in school will mostly consist of educating our young people to cope with a new routine and understand the restrictions and safety of 'bubble life'. I am sure you will appreciate that if children came back into an established group, they would need this induction too. This would simply not be manageable at random intervals. So, if you wish your child to return to the setting, I am asking that you notify the school and give us 3 or more working days' notice. Children may only join a bubble on a Monday unless there are exceptional circumstances. This means that you **MUST** notify the school on Wednesday morning if you intent to send your child to school on the following Monday. It is then a reasonable length of time for staff to adapt their plans and prepare your child's space and resources.

I realise that your inbox has been filled with emails from me over the past couple of days! I thank you for reading every detail and preparing your children well for this momentous Monday morning! I will, therefore, keep this newsletter short and to the point.

As always, I wish you a very happy and healthy week. If you are with your children at home, enjoy their company and the brilliance of how a young mind learns! Keep sending us pictures of all that you achieve together – the Bench of Glory is yours! If you are back at work and your child is in school, keep us informed of any changes in their/your health and enjoy hearing about their days.

With my sincere best wishes to you all,

Louise Ballard