



Willow Brook News

September 18th 2020

head@willowbrook.notts.sch.uk

Dear Willow Brook families,

With the end of our second full week now in sight, the 'new normal' when it comes to school is slowly but surely falling into place. With some minor tweaks, you have negotiated the staggered starts and ends to the day with ease and children work and play in their bubbles full of their usual energy! They take so much in their strides and it is good to see classes back together and immersed in the busyness of learning.

We continue to go to great lengths and follow very strict guidance from the Department of Education so that our whole community is protected as much as it is in our powers to do so. Like you, I miss children from different year groups interacting. I miss being together for assemblies and shared lunches. I'm sad that our wonderful year 6 class aren't able to put their nurturing skills to good use and aren't scooping up the new reception children, as well as being proud of all of those jobs where they shine as role models around the school. BUT to keep our doors open in such a testing time and our workforce well and able to sustain our essential provision, we must recognise what is necessary. I can't tell you how hard the adults involved at school are working to juggle their usual responsibilities and roles alongside making the school day safe and efficient.

Thank yous!

A huge **thank you** to all of you who responded to our plea to minimise the number and size of the bags that were coming into school. It has made a massive difference to our space in classrooms and children are doing a much better job when it comes to organising themselves.

Thank you for your efficiency in dropping your children off and leaving the premises so quickly. It may sound harsh, but I think it has done Years 3 to 6 the power of good to be independent and line up without you by their sides!

Thank you for listening to my nagging at home time and getting into the habit of crossing Willow Brook at the safe point. Children are starting to do this themselves now – they will, of course, follow your example.

For all those who park away from Willow Brook and have a walk to the playground or have started to cycle to school, **THANK YOU!** The camera patrol from Nottinghamshire County Council will continue to operate in the area and monitor traffic on Willow Brook and it was interesting to see on the news yesterday that they are trialling the shutting of roads where some city schools are located to encourage distancing and promote road safety. I have had a couple of calls from residents who live at the top of Fairway who are a little disgruntled that their drives are often blocked and their gardens walked through. I said I would pass on their concerns and trust that we would respond with thought for our neighbours.

Where families have siblings with different drop off times, **thank you** if you have worked out a perfect system of managing the circuit! Schools around the country continue to struggle with parents not maintaining social distancing in the playground and arriving too early and gathering in groups. Now, more than ever, I'd continue to urge you not to be on the playground before your child's entry time. Unless you are negotiating multiple drop offs, there is simply no need. We will continue to aim get every class in promptly and would welcome your help in keeping people moving and safe at key times.

Testing and Cold Symptoms

With our return came the inevitable start of the cold virus season! In a very understandable response, many have sought Covid-19 testing and worry that symptoms are difficult to get to grips with. I don't need to tell you how testing is going...

The most straightforward information I have found this week on how to deal with recognising when you need to think about testing and understanding the onset of a cold virus, can be found by following this link – it is an essential read:

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/health-54145299>

Adults in school are also learning to respond to symptoms and may ask you to keep your child at home if we have any concerns. In a bid to minimise ANY illness amongst the children, we'd ask you to be considerate of others and recognise that a heavy cold is also miserable and a couple of days at home with Calpol will minimise the spread, speed a child's recovery and give you time to ascertain whether a Covid test is really necessary. Please be mindful of cold symptoms and follow the advice.

Planning ahead

We are keen that, now we are back on track, to guard your children's education a plan is in place should individuals or bubbles be required to have a period of isolation that extends to 14 days. The document agreed with staff outlining the principles of our action is attached with this email. This will be updated as we move forward, adapt and respond to specific incidents.

To summarise:

1. A teacher will continue to deliver daily lessons should a situation arise where their class could not be in school and they are well. Work would be communicated through email, the website and, once the system has been set up, Microsoft Teams. Work will be explained through teacher video where necessary and tasks delivered through prepared worksheets. As well as minimising the need for a child to be online unsupervised whilst you may be busy working, a video can also be viewed at your convenience. Online links that may help or extend lessons would be recommended. A teacher will provide feedback to individuals and endeavour to keep lines of communication open.
2. Should an individual have to isolate for a period of 14 days and is well, the work being covered in class will be relayed and communicated in a mutually agreed way between home and school. This could include videos, Microsoft Teams calls, delivery of work on paper or through email/telephone communication.

Reception Staff

Despite meticulous planning and lots of enthusiasm on her part, Miss Weston has been unable to work in school as planned this half term. Discovering that she was expecting her second baby before returning fully to the classroom after having her first, was followed by more surprises from the government who changed their policy on expectant mothers the week before term began.

I am, however, absolutely delighted to say that Mrs Cotton is returning to our reception classroom (a little earlier than planned!) and will be with us and sharing the best reception class I have ever had the pleasure to welcome into school with Mrs Sampson from 28th September. She has already been in to visit the children and I can only say that they are going to have two wonderful teachers!

Miss Johnston will also be visiting Year 2 over the next three weeks, ready for her return in October. Miss Scott has agreed to extend stay and continue to work with Miss Johnston until Christmas when she hopes to return to her work in Children's Mental Health and Wellbeing.

Midday staff

As our numbers in school continue to rise, we are looking to employ more staff to oversee our dinner times in school. The role would be 11.55am – 1.10pm daily and duties would include supervising outdoor play and overseeing the serving of lunches. If you, or anyone you know might be keen to take on this role, please get in touch with the Mrs Roper to ask for more details. We would be keen to talk to you.

Mrs Roper's contributions!

Mrs Roper is, as ever, doing a sterling job running the Willow Brook office. She is involved in supervising children's arrivals and staff breaks and works with me in the dining hall, as well as doing all the administration tasks, responding to emails, admissions, record keeping, first aid... not to mention running the school's budget. (She can also make a perfect cup of tea!) She is a very busy lady! Knowing that she is often out on the playground, her plea this week is a simple one. If you are making alternative arrangements for your child to be picked up from school or to go to WB's, please get in touch as early in the day as you can. Until the science allows us to clone her, relaying these messages to children 2 minutes before the bell can be tricky! She would also like to remind you that it is expected that dinners are paid for in advance so that the school budget isn't supporting the catering department. Mrs Roper is often quoted as saying that 'we run on the same system as McDonalds, where it is generally more acceptable to pay before you eat!' Her words, not mine...

Community

This week we managed to have our first shared Bench of Glory assembly. Each class broadcast live to me in the hall, and once we'd sorted the technical issues, it was fun! Once they are established, I hope to be able to share some assemblies with you. (Especially if your child is the one getting the glory!)

I was delighted to hear that our Friends of Willow Brook Committee met this week and are thinking and planning what they can do to continue their work and support the school community. If you are new to the school and would like to get involved, you'd be more than welcome. Talk to Mrs Roper in the office and she'll put you in touch. The Friends AGM will be held after half term.

I hope that you have made it to the bottom of this communication – well done if you have! In trying not to send paper copies out, I am relying on you to open your emails to get important messages home and share our news. I appreciate you taking the time to read and hope that you can now relax into the weekend!

Take very good care and stay safe,

Louise Ballard

DON'T STRUGGLE ALONE – THE COMMUNITY CAN HELP

Since the early days of the Coronavirus lockdown, we, at Keyworth Community Projects have been helping those within our community in a variety of ways. This has truly helped to bring our community together in a stronger and more cohesive way.

Now, with the end of furlough in sight, redundancies increasing, and local groups/bubble groups being asked to isolate we understand two key things. The future for some is scarily uncertain and that our being here with help and support is as important as ever before.

We have secured funds to help families financially with Co-op vouchers, to spend as you wish in store on food and household products. We can also provide information of organisations that will help you put more permanent plans in place, whether that be with applying for benefits or looking for new work.

Please get in touch, your details will not be passed on and any items will be delivered as discreetly as possible.

Just email us directly at keyworthcp@gmail.com or advise your school if we can help,

Kind regards,

Keyworth Community Projects