



WOOLGROVE SCHOOL

Special Needs Academy

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Headteacher: **Mrs Lisa Hall**



14th May 2020

Dear Parents/Carers,

Future plans from 1st June

I hope you are all keeping well. I am writing to you following on from my letter on Monday after the Prime Minister's speech on Sunday 10th May.

As I am sure you can imagine we have been following the national guidance for schools very closely in relation to what that means for us here at Woolgrove. I felt it important to outline some of the key areas that we as a school are currently considering before we make any firm decisions about taking more children back into school. Since Sunday's announcement more information has come out from the government about their plans for schools and what was not made clear at the time was the position of special schools. The latest information is that:

"Special schools will work towards a phased return of more children and young people without a focus on specific year groups."

What this means is that, unlike mainstream schools, **we are not required to focus initially on children in just Reception, Year 1 and Year 6.**

However a key factor that we have to consider is the size of our school building, especially the classrooms. Woolgrove School has 125 pupils and was built over 40 years ago having been extended several times during this time. Some of our classrooms are very small in size and with the Covid19 situation we have to risk assess every part of the school to decide whether it is safe to use for both our pupils and staff. At present we consider that half of our 12 classrooms are too small to be used so that is going to have a significant impact on the number of children and staff we can safely accommodate at one time. We plan to continue to take the group of children who have been attending school throughout this period and are looking at adding in small groups from classes for a few days at a time on a rota basis. This means that if your child is in school on a rota they may not be in their usual classroom but we will try, where possible, to put them with some of their usual class team staff.

Other factors we have to take into account are: social distancing (keeping a 2 metre distance between people); less pupils in the classrooms that we *can* use (maximum 4 to 5 per classroom); staggered lunches; higher levels of cleaning, including children leaving at 2.30pm to give staff time to thoroughly clean all the class equipment daily, and the use of Protective Personal Equipment (PPE) for staff. I feel that I must be honest and tell you that social distancing at Woolgrove is simply impossible to achieve due to the nature of the children and the high staff to pupil ratio. That is why we will only be able to accommodate a small number of pupils in school at one time, spreading them across the school and mainly outside. We are fortunate to have lovely spacious grounds and that is where the children in school will be spending most of their time over the next few weeks.

As the majority of children will not be in school for the rest of this term we will continue with home learning but after half term the class teachers will be personalising it even more to the

particular needs of your child. We have set up class email addresses for this purpose so you can liaise directly with your class team. There will be more information about this to follow next week.

More than anything I want all the Woolgrove School community back together. However realistically I feel you should know that there is no chance of this happening before September at the earliest. We also have to be guided by what is happening across the country as the lockdown is eased and things will obviously change should there be a second spike. National guidance is changing on a daily basis. The whole situation is full of unknowns and uncertainties which makes any medium, or even short term, planning incredibly difficult.

Over the next couple of days you will receive a google form with some questions to answer which will help us make decisions about children and staffing after half term. In order to plan ahead we need to know if you are a key worker and what your role is. We also need to know if your child, or someone in your household, is clinically vulnerable and has received a shielding letter. Please note that any child who is in a high risk category, has a serious medical condition or lives with someone who is vulnerable and at high risk must not come back to school at present. This would put them or you at risk and I absolutely do not want that. I am sure you will agree that this is the only sensible and safe option. Likewise we have staff who fall into this category and they will also not be returning to school at present.

Please be honest with us in your views. We are not going to be pressuring anyone to send their children to school, since you know your children and personal situation best. Please be reassured that if your child doesn't attend school this term it will in no way affect their attendance record. However, we are hoping that most children will spend a little time in school before next term which will hopefully make returning here next year a little easier for them.

If your child is in Year 6 our aim is that they get the chance to come back to Woolgrove for a few days at the very end of term to say goodbye. We are currently in the process of liaising with the secondary schools about transition but I am sure you can appreciate transition for all children, whether it be moving to a new class or moving onto a new school, is going to be very different this year. We also have 22 new children joining us in September so are thinking of how we can make arrangements for them too. Further information about classes for September will come out in the next few weeks.

Thank you again for your support. This is a stressful and uncertain time for us all and we are trying to do everything that we can to make the right decisions to keep all of our Woolgrove School community safe and well.

Kind regards.



Lisa Hall
Head Teacher