

# Woodlands Primary and Early Years

## August Newsletter 14<sup>th</sup> August 2020

Dear Parent/Carer

It has been lovely to welcome the children back to school and Early Years. I am aware that many families have been worried about the return and I wanted to assure you that we are doing everything we can to ensure the safety of all. The Senior Management Team have been out at the gates trying to answer any questions and I have listed some of them below for those of you who are unable to be at the gate.

Well done to all the children for following all our new safety rules.

### Q & A

#### **Why are all schools in North Ayrshire not doing the same thing?**

Not all schools are the same. What happens in schools depends on the situations of each school. We have to take into account the number of sinks, toilets, staff to monitor, doors into schools, gates into schools, size of playground, size of classrooms, corridors, heating and ventilation systems etc. We also have to take into consideration any medical needs of pupils and staff to ensure their safety.

#### **Why are we not allowing school bags?**

It was a cluster decision that we would not allow school bags at the moment. A number of other primary schools in North Ayrshire have made the same decision. While NAC have said they are happy for this to happen it depends on the circumstances of individual schools if this is feasible. Children are keeping their coats and pack lunches in the class at the moment as we aren't using cloakrooms. If we add school bags to this mix it we could end up with a serious tripping hazard as staff have to have a teaching area at the front of the class of 2 metres which has impacted on the space for children's desks.

#### **Can my child bring in spare clothes?**

Yes. Your child can bring spare clothes if they need them. This bag of clothes can be kept in the school in a designated area until they are needed.

We have a good supply of clean, bagged spare clothes which the children can have thanks to the Parent Council. If you would like a spare sweatshirt or trousers etc. Just let us know and we can arrange for you to get these.

#### **Why can we not drop off children 5 minutes early and have them wait in the playground?**

We have carefully set times to ensure that all children are coming in and can wash their hands as quickly and as safely as possible. We also have to ensure children are remaining in

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their bubbles and we cannot do this if they are in the playground mixing. We do not have enough staff to stand at gates, monitor playgrounds and monitor handwashing.

I appreciate that this is not convenient for everyone however we have risk assessments we have to adhere to and this is the only way we can safely bring children into school at the moment.

## **Why are you not getting the children in quicker in the morning?**

When the children come in we have to get them to wash their hands before they move on to their classes. We have a very limited number of sinks and it can take up to 20 minutes for a class to wash their hands. As a result we have to stagger entry to the school. We have almost 400 pupils in the school and this is not an easy task.

Children should stay in their bubbles and therefore we have separated them in the playground. We cannot guarantee these bubbles if we bring all the children into the grounds at once as we do not have enough staff to ensure they stay where they should be.

## **What can parents and carers do to help?**

Firstly, please be patient. All schools are finding this time challenging.

Please don't arrive at the school before the time allocated to you or if you do stay well back.

Please remember to drop off and go to free up space for other families arriving.

Please remember to social distance on the public pavements.

Use the Xpressions app so we can send you out up-to-date information quickly.

## **What will happen next?**

- We are constantly reviewing what is happening to make things smoother and we have made a few changes already.
- We will keep you informed of any changes as to what can come into e.g. school bag

We can only hope that the infection is under control and there isn't a second wave. I can assure you we are doing everything to protect our children.

Lesley Drever

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