

Waterhouses CE Primary Academy

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Headteacher: Mr David Wood



7th January 2021

Dear Parents and Carers

It has been an incredibly hectic and fluid situation for us all these past few days. I want to again thank you for your understanding and support from home, and also thank the staff who have continued to work incredibly hard in very trying circumstances.

I wanted to firstly update you on the current school situation. As I write to you, we have almost half of the school population present and in class. As you will I am sure appreciate this is far in excess of the numbers of children that were attending during the initial lockdown period, where we had between 5 and 10% in attendance.

Some parents have enquired about this significant increase, so I wanted to do my best to clarify things around this particular point. Government guidance has always been that only 1 parent/carer needed to be classified as a Critical Worker. However, many of you decided to follow the government's request during the first lockdown and kept your children at home in order to help control the spread of the virus. Boris Johnson made that same request in his televised statement late on Monday evening and the government have brought back the mantra:

- Stay at home
- Protect the NHS
- Save Lives

I appreciate that for many families whose children remain at home, trying to balance childcare/home schooling and working commitments is incredibly challenging.

I want to assure you all that the staff are doing everything they can in order to provide the best possible learning experiences for all the children, both for those in the classroom and those learning at home.

I have a duty to keep our children and staff safe. However, with such large numbers of children still in attendance at school this means that there are Health and Safety implications in terms of adult to child ratios and ensuring that the staff in school have the breaks that they are both legally entitled to and need.

Every single one of us knows that the best place for all our children to be is in school. However, government have that control, and the stark reality is that the new variant of the virus has made it impossible for all children to remain in school. I, as I know we all do, hope that the huge surge in cases seen in other parts of the country does not manifest itself here, but we must continue to work together and support each other in doing all that we can to ensure that does not happen.

Forecast of potential snowfall

As many of you may know, heavy snowfall is forecast for tonight and tomorrow. If we are unable to open school tomorrow because of either a lack of staff owing to transport difficulties, or being unable to ensure a safe site, you will be informed as soon as possible. If this is the case, home learning will continue to be accessible for all children through the usual online channel.

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Home Learning Expectations

The home learning that is being set will mirror that which is taking place in school. This will help to ensure that when all children return to school, hopefully after February half term, we will be able to continue to deliver the remaining elements of the curriculum to each class. It is therefore vital that the children do their best to complete the work set by the teachers, uploading their work so that it can be assessed, and appropriate content planned for the lessons that follow. As before, if children and parents are having any difficulties, please communicate with the Class teacher through Class Dojo. Where learning is not being completed Class teachers will be following up with parents and children to ascertain the reasons why and provide help.

We as a school will do all that we possibly can to keep the current arrangements going, but if a positive case were to be confirmed, as previously stated, it would result in the closure of that bubble.

Please do all that you can in terms of following the **hands, face, space** message. If you are bringing your child in to school please continue to wear a face mask and limit your time on site to an absolute minimum, especially with the number of children still attending in person. We will continue to assess this situation and will notify you ahead of any changes we may feel that we need to make in terms of start and finish times for the different bubbles.

Stay safe.

Kind regards

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "D Wood".

David Wood
Headteacher