



Willerby Carr Lane Primary School

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6/11/2020

Dear Parents/ Carers

Review of the Impact of Coronavirus

As you are aware, we had a positive case in our Year 2 bubble just before half term and the whole bubble had to self-isolate for 2 weeks. Given the increasing number of cases in the wider community and country, it was presumably only a matter of time before this happened.

On the downside, it couldn't have occurred at a more inconvenient time – a Friday afternoon immediately prior to half-term. I am acutely aware of how many people had their individual half-term plans cancelled and how much impact this has had on families. Of course, many of our own staff who had also been looking forward to a break, were also caught up in this.

On the plus side, we are yet to hear of any child or adult within school who picked up a covid infection from this positive case. This provides reassurance that our systems of infection control are working to reduce the risk of transmission within school.

On any one day, we currently have approximately 12 children (not counting the Year 2 bubble), self-isolating. These self-isolations are due to children having symptoms such as a high temperature or because they were 'track & traced' as a close contact with someone who tested positive outside of school. Attendance overall continues to be good - our school attendance rate is 96% which compares to 97% in pre-covid times.

We are being impacted by the number of staff who are having to self-isolate for the same reasons. These staff can include teachers, teaching assistants, lunchtime staff, office staff, kitchen staff, caretaker and cleaners. Additionally, some staff may be absent due to non-covid related illnesses. As you can imagine, this is presenting great operational challenges each day. These challenges are exacerbated due to the much higher staffing levels required for us to run safely as a bubble operation.

This week we started up hot dinners on a rota system. This has taken an enormous amount of planning to ensure we have sufficient staff to allow us to set up, disinfect and supervise the various staggered lunch-times, whilst also being able to clean up in time for a year group bubble who may have PE in the hall with an early staggered start. We are all working hard to maintain this hot dinner offer, but if staff levels drop too low, then we may have to put it on hold temporarily. Let's hope not. Many thanks to our business manager and the lunch-time staff for making this work.

Many thanks to our parents for continuing to work so positively with us through these times. It is really appreciated how supportive you have all been in switching to covid-secure communication channels such as email, telephone, Class Dojo, Google Classroom for homework and the new online parents' evening system. Thank you.

Review of Remote Learning

Year 2 returned today having been in self-isolation for half term and this week. This was therefore the first test of our '*Tier 2: Year group bubble, sent home for 2 weeks*' continuity plan.

With the entire year group staff having to self-isolate as well, we were able to switch to fully supported online learning via Google Classrooms:

- Teachers held online face-to-face Google Meetings with the class each day
- Teachers were able to record Powerpoint lesson presentations with voice-overs which children were then able to watch at a convenient time during the day
- Work was allocated and responded to
- Teaching Assistants were able to regularly ring parents/ children and provide extra support and, very importantly, emotional 1:1 contact that is so necessary for mental health.

We are reviewing any lessons we learned as a staff (including that Google Classroom can be accessed from online gaming machines such as an x-box!), but the overwhelming response we got from staff and parents, was that it was a great success. Rather than simply posting generic photocopyable 'holding activities' on a website with little or no real educational value, we were able to continue to teach the curriculum as planned. This meant that when children returned to school they had not slipped further behind and that their learning could carry on pretty much as planned. This is crucial, given the 6-month interruption to learning that we have already endured. It is also vital given that there is every possibility that a year group will have to endure repeated periods of self-isolation if we are unlucky.

Clarifying expectations

I do need to make it clear that the offer of remote learning support that we can make for children in Tier 2 (i.e. the staff and children are all working from home), is very different to the offer we can make when an individual child is in Tier 1 (i.e. a child is self-isolating at home, but the rest of the class and teacher are in school).

Clearly, my teachers cannot split themselves in two. They are working extra hard to prepare resources and put them online for individual self-isolating children, on top of the normal school day, but they simply cannot be there to support them online or respond to requests for help with work. I would ask that parents do not send messages to teachers who are teaching a class in school, asking them to support their individual child at home – it's just not possible. Teachers already work very long hours; they have been very positive about going even further to support children during this emergency, but we need to allow them some down time in the evening or they will burn out. They too have families and are living through the personal stresses that covid brings. I realise it is not perfect, but we can only do so much with the resource we have. What we have done is to allocate members of our intervention team to ring individual children who are self-isolating to support them emotionally and, where possible, practically.

Similarly, we are not offering online education to children who are off school due to non-covid illness. This is not something any schools have done in the past and not something we have the capacity to do going forward.

Many thanks for your great support. I couldn't ask for a better team of staff, children or parents. Have a good weekend, best wishes for lockdown 2 and stay safe.

Yours faithfully



Mr Sean Smith
Headteacher