



Willerby Carr Lane Primary School

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Dear Parents/ Carers

Wider re-opening of school

The Governors met last night and approved a re-opening of school to all Year 1 children next Monday, 15th June. This follows on from our successful 'bubble' operation with key workers and EYFS pupils this week

All Year 1 children will be emailed later today with instructions on how to start school, which bubble they are in and what time their bubble will start and end. **It is vitally important that you help us, by carefully reading and following the instructions, and arrive at school at the correct entrance and the correct time for your bubble for drop off and pick up.** It is the only way we can safely manage the collection and handover of children.

I would urge all parents who have been invited back (which will now include key workers, EYFS and Year 1) to attend full-time rather than part-time. I understand that many parents are anxious about sending children back into school and have been waiting to see how it goes before deciding. I can say that it has gone extremely smoothly this week – thanks to good preparation, organisation and teamwork as well as parents doing a great job of carefully following all the guidance we have issued. Hopefully, the pictures we have tweeted and the accounts that you will no doubt have heard, provide reassurance.

However, for those who have taken up the offer and returned, I would urge you to be in full-time. If you are confident enough to send them in for 1 day, then I would ask that you please send them full-time. We are providing education rather than child care, but it makes it really difficult for the children themselves, who miss days, to keep up when they get back.

We are keeping Google Classrooms running for children in Years 2 to 6 as they have been to date. For children in EYFS and Year 1, we plan to continue to use Google Classrooms to schedule work. We will be putting work online similar to the work that EYFS and Year 1 children will be doing in school. However, we do not have the staff capacity to run real classes in school and also mark and respond to online classrooms for these 2 year groups.

We fully understand how disappointing and upsetting it is for those of you not being invited back in. It is also frustrating for us, not to be able to invite more children back in. And it is even more frustrating to listen to ill-informed politicians and others in the media suggesting that schools could open to more. These media commentators are presumably causing you to question why we can only open to Key Workers, EYFS and Year 1? I want to explain why this is not possible. There is some really very basic maths that stops us from doing this:

- We are a school of 14 classes of 30 children = 420 pupils
- We have 14 teachers and 14 physical classrooms
- We are only allowed 15 children in a class so we can obviously only accommodate, and staff, half of our pupils (210 in total)
- To split each class in half and have them all in, would require 28 teachers and 28 classrooms (neither of which we have nor hope to have)
- We could have all school pupils back on a rota system – with say half in one week and half the next, or a 2 days/ 3days split – but the government have told us we are not allowed to do that.
- We could have more than 15 in a class, but the government say that we can't do this.

We have 136 Key Workers, which we have to open to. This only leaves enough space for 74 more children. With 46 of the Key Workers being in EYFS and Year 1, we have just enough capacity to open to EYFS and Year 1. Every bubble place has been allocated. Opening to our 60 Year 1 children on Monday, will require 4 physical classrooms, 4 teachers and numerous first aid trained TAs and lunch time staff (who also need, wherever possible, to be allocated to bubbles). From next Monday we will have opened to half of our 420 pupils.

To open even as far as we have, has been extremely challenging in terms of space and staffing (let alone logistics and health and safety). Physically, some EYFS rooms are not big enough to accommodate 15 pupils behind desks, socially distanced (this is not how they are normally organised as you will have seen from our photos). EYFS have therefore had to make use of other spaces in school and so we actually have 15 bubbles rather than 14. In terms of staff, 5 teachers out of 14 are working from home due to underlying health vulnerabilities. This is a massive proportion of our teaching staff (36%). Whilst they are able to run Google Classrooms, it leaves us a major problem of who is going to teach the 5 bubbles back at school. To make this possible, I have employed 3 new teachers and also asked a Higher Level Teaching Assistant and Nursery Nurse to take responsibility for bubbles.

As you can see, no matter what glib statements are made by politicians and commentators, on all sides, we have neither the space nor the staffing to open to any other year groups under the current regulations. This is not our choice. This will only change when the government changes its guidance and either allows more than 15 in a class or allows us to invite all children back on a rota, with no priority for key workers or certain year groups.

Each school has their own individual set of circumstances, often with wide variations in their physical space, staff with vulnerabilities, and proportion of key workers in their school population. This is reflected in the varying offers that are being made across the Anlaby/ Willerby/ Kirk Ella area: from one school which is able to invite all EYFS, Y1 and Y6 back; to another, only able to invite key workers, EYFS and Year 6 back for two days per week; to another which can only invite key workers back. What is similar across all East Riding schools, is that everyone is doing their best in their individual circumstances.

We, along with you, hope that infection rates keep dropping to the point where it allows the government to change the social distancing rules or, failing that, that we are given more flexibility to run the school on a rota basis and share our capacity more equitably across our whole school. Without these changes I can only apologise for not being able to invite other children back.

In the meantime, I look forward to welcoming our Year 1's back next week.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Sean Smith', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Mr Sean Smith
Headteacher