



# Woodstone Community Primary School

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*Growing together, Learning forever*

10th January 2021

Dear Parent/Carers,

Firstly, thank you for your support over the past few days. There have been a lovely amount of positive comments about our remote learning provision and the quality of work submitted has also been extremely pleasing to see. I know parents/carers have really supported their children with this, so a big thank you from all the staff at Woodstone. However, I now need your help and support with another matter as we all begin to come to terms with a changing situation nationally and the reason why schools were actually shut to most children last Monday evening.

As I'm sure you appreciate it has been a difficult job over the last week to consider the safe running of the school both within the building and with our 'remote' provision. Whilst I would like to say a massive thank you to those parents who have supported us through this difficult time and at great inconvenience to themselves, I am having to send this letter as a response to the key worker/critical worker bookings which have now risen to very worrying levels. We ALL need to act now if we are to

- 1) Keep your children as safe as possible
- 2) Protect your families and those in our community
- 3) All play our part in reducing the transmission rates to ensure we are protecting the NHS

You will have no doubt seen a couple of things on the news over the weekend. Firstly, the levels of infection and therefore, sadly deaths are NOT going down. The reason for this current 'lockdown' is to try and address this huge rise so we MUST as a community play our part. Secondly, you will have also seen that across the country the number of key workers in schools is far too high. If we really are the 'vectors of transmission' (as stated by our Prime Minister) then we must ALL do something about this now, no matter how inconvenient. We must all support the spirit of the reasons behind this lockdown and do something about these worrying trends.

For this reason, Public Health Leicester together with Children's Services, leads for Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland as well as leaders in colleges and universities across the County provided schools, late on Friday evening, with advice on how we should prioritise key workers/critical workers should numbers continue to rise.

We are, therefore, attempting to reduce the risk of there being too many requests for places by following this Local Authority guidance:

Firstly, wherever possible, you should now have TWO parents/carers who are critical workers (except, obviously, in the case of single parent families) – looking at our current list there are many families who have a parent who is working at home, who is not a critical worker, but are still sending children into school.

Secondly, we are looking at critical local authority and public service workers, who cannot perform their tasks from home without their children attending school



Front line health and social care workers will also be prioritised, as will officers and staff from the police and fire service.

School and Early Years staff will also be prioritised but only those who are going IN to their school/early years setting.

I would ask you to consider your booking in light of these criteria but also expect a place to be rejected if numbers do not fall in the next couple of days if adequate proof of your role is not provided. We have worked very hard to put in place a system of home learning which is effective, but I don't have the numbers of staff (or the space) available to keep up this type of provision AND provide child care/learning should the current number of key worker children continue to rise.

Remember, we are only asking for your support with this in an attempt to keep your children and families safe, as well as our staff. Nobody wants the children to be at home but it will go on for a longer period of time while ever schools are still having 30. 40 or 50% of children still in school.

So, in conclusion I am asking you to REALLY consider whether you HAVE to send your child into school. Please look at all your alternatives, and don't stop looking for alternatives until ALL avenues have been exhausted. I know many families are trying to juggle home learning with work commitments, but I also know, that there are some who are not because it is inconvenient or difficult to work whilst children are around. We appreciate it IS inconvenient and difficult but we do all need to play our part wherever possible.

Data to support us all playing a part and to reinforce the message in this letter is as follows ( as of 9th January 2021)

People tested positive in North West Leicestershire in last 7 days is 373 (up by 53 on the previous week)

Deaths within 28 days of a positive test in NWL is 19 (up 6 on the previous week)

Patients admitted to hospitals in Leicester in last 7 days is 211 (up 31 on the previous week)

I appreciate everyone's circumstances are different but I plead with you to reconsider your booking in light of this letter and in light of the national and local picture. Let's all play our part in keeping each other safe and let's as a result get back to 'normal' as soon as possible. We must try to keep transmission down, support our most vulnerable children, enable critical services to continue to be delivered and enable the continued delivery of high-quality remote learning.

Finally, thank you to those parents who HAVE considered ALL options. Fortunately, that is the vast majority here at Woodstone. We have always been blessed to have such supportive parents/carers and I know you will do your very best to play your part in helping to keep ALL children and staff safe. I also know we have essential key workers who may be in health, education, the police, social services etc as well as vulnerable children who definitely need our support and provision. We do not want to jeopardise their places when there are other parents who do have an alternative.

Thank you for your support.

Yours sincerely,

P. Mullins  
Headteacher

