



## Westerton Primary Academy

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15<sup>th</sup> September 2020

Dear Parents, Carers and Colleagues

### COVID 19 update

Phase Two of our Re-opening Plan has had a positive start to this week. We do thank all parents, children and colleagues for helping us to operate the staggered opening and closing times as efficiently as possible. This is certainly not easy with an intake of 90 children per year group and there is no doubt we are continuing to refine our procedures through trial and error. As queries surface, we will continue to address them to maximise safety and efficiency.

Please do understand that, even though schools are staying open at present, the COVID concerns are still very prevalent and we do all need to do everything we can to keep safe whilst supporting our children to return without spiking any anxieties. At present many colleagues are not choosing to wear masks because, at primary level and with very young children, the reassurance of visible facial features and expressions is crucial. Likewise clear communication of the spoken word, letter and word formation are essential for effective learning. Face coverings are still a personal choice in the school environment and staff are exercising that choice accordingly, in line with government guidance and their individual needs. Like everything, it is a question of balance.

Due to the sheer numbers of children in each year group, we did feel the **collection time** on the **Westerton Road** gate for our younger children would be safer for handover within the perimeter fence, on the playground. This is to avoid the more dangerous congestion of parents on the narrower pavement area so **close to the road**. It is also to allow for **greater social distancing** between parents collecting at the end of the school day. However, it has been brought to our attention that some adults collecting are still feeling extremely anxious and vulnerable due to the **too close proximity** of others. Please understand school **staff simply cannot physically police** the social distance between all parents but we do ask that everyone observe the need to **keep two metres apart** as the class lines are prepared by our Class Teachers for handover. We also ask that just **one adult drops and collects** each child then **leaves the area promptly**. Please help us by **not congregating** at the school gates for group discussions.

The procedures for late drop off and collection have worked well so far though, of course, we hope the necessity for them will lessen. The **main entrance cannot be accessed** for toileting convenience or to drop off forgotten items. This is for safety reasons, hence the need for children to bring necessary items such as water bottles with them on entry. If children and/or parents forget these, please do be assured that fresh water and hygienic receptacles are available in the classrooms. Therefore return visits by parents do need to be avoided and are discouraged as they compromise the procedures in place. We ask that **essential medication only** (for example asthma inhalers and epipens) is handed by the child to their Class Teacher for safe-keeping. We also request that parents please ensure the associated form for medication is completed electronically and submitted to the office.

With so much for us all to consider we do feel our attendance figures of **98.1% last week** and **98.77% so far this week** are very positive being well above the academy target of 97%. Our Westerton Kids' Club is also very well-attended and the excellent WKC team have managed to dovetail their dropping and collecting with the staggered times. They would like to pass their thanks on to parents for observing the current restrictions so vigilantly.

The academy minibuses are not being used at the moment due to the restrictions. This means the transport for the **Kaleidoscope Out of School Club (KOOSC)** can use our **minibus parking area** on the car park next to the Hesketh Lane gate. We ask that **parents please avoid parking** in this area as this will help our KOOSC colleagues to ensure that the children from multiple drops can also arrive and be collected on time. We are also grateful to our rather brilliant local Childminders who are working hard to get all our children of different age groups to the correct gates on time. Well done colleagues, we know this is not easy and we do salute you!

Thank you so much to everyone again for your commitment and understanding in making this week manageable. The pleasant weather at the moment is certainly a help so long may it continue!

Yours sincerely

Stephanie Makin  
Principal and the Westerton Team