



# The Woodlands Academy

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Headteacher: Mrs M Hockham

20<sup>th</sup> March 2020

Dear Parents/Carers

I am writing to you to update on our current position, as a special school, following the announcements this week and the coronavirus outbreak.

As you will be aware at the beginning of the week the Government announced that all schools would close as of Friday 20<sup>th</sup> March 2020 except for those children of key workers, vulnerable children and children with EHC plans. The list of key worker roles was published today and is available using the link below:  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-maintaining-educational-provision/guidance-for-schools-colleges-and-local-authorities-on-maintaining-educational-provision>

Given the complex nature of many of our young people and their associated vulnerabilities, we have also been waiting on clarification relating to school provision for children with EHC plans, which we have also received today. Information for parents and carers about the closure of schools and other educational settings following the outbreak of coronavirus can be found using the link below: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/closure-of-educational-settings-information-for-parents-and-carers/closure-of-educational-settings-information-for-parents-and-carers>

The key messages provided by the Government and Local Authority, which we are following are:

- If it is at all possible for children to be at home, then they should be.
- If a child needs specialist support, is vulnerable or has a parent who is a critical key worker, then educational provision will be available for them. But, there is no requirement for parents to take up the offer of a school place

Therefore on Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> March, school will be open to those students who we have identified and agreed through discussions with parents, need to be in school. All other students will remain at home for the foreseeable future.

It is my intention to review this situation regularly and will contact you again on Monday 20<sup>th</sup> April 2020 with an update moving forward. There has to remain an element of flexibility to support students and their families as well as school during these unprecedented times and we appreciate that things can change daily. Please contact me to discuss any changes in your circumstances that could impact on your child attending or needing to attend school so that I am able to look at staffing levels and plan appropriately to ensure we can support effectively.



During this period, school will continue to monitor staffing levels on a daily basis to ensure that our students safety remains our priority and we will contact parents directly if there is a need to close groups or close the school altogether.

Many of you have asked what we are doing to protect and support students and staff:

As we have been doing if a student is taken unwell (coughing / high temperature) while in school we will keep them separate from the rest of the students and contact family to come and collect them immediately. We are continuing to maintain our very high levels of hygiene and cleanliness and taking extra precautions eg. extra cleaning of handles / hard surfaces etc. We have received our cleaning/hygiene resources and are sufficiently stocked up to ensure this remains the case over coming weeks. All staff have received additional guidance about careful and regular handwashing and hygiene regime. If a member of staff has any symptoms or had any possible contact with people who may have / be considered to have the virus, those staff are told to remain at home and self- isolate.

What next?

My team and I spent yesterday speaking to the Local Authority, coordinating local plans to ensure provision is still made available locally for these key groups. It is clear that everyone is working flat out to find pragmatic solutions and collaborate.

What happens if the school has to close?

We will only close school altogether if we are either officially advised to do so or we don't have enough staff to run the school safely. There may be a case for closing individual class groups if there are insufficient staff available.

In either case, we will:

- update via Twitter
- Parents, staff and transport will receive a text message via Parentmail
- Letters/phone calls between school and home will be made where appropriate

There are currently no plans to completely close school at present. If you have any questions please contact us via one of the email addresses shown below. These will be monitored regularly and responses provided. Email address for Parents enquiries: [parentcontact@woodlands.n-yorks.sch.uk](mailto:parentcontact@woodlands.n-yorks.sch.uk) Email address for student enquiries: [studentcontact@woodlands.n-yorks.sch.uk](mailto:studentcontact@woodlands.n-yorks.sch.uk)

It is a tricky time and we know you will all be concerned about the impact this might have on your child, your family and our community. It is important we keep each other safe and talk about these events to help with any anxiety.

Thank you for your continued support

Kind regards

Michelle Hockham