

What is Going On at Warstones!

5.1.22

A new year already!

This time last year we were hoping that 2021 was going to be a better year than 2020. yet we started with another lockdown as Covid cases rose and schools closed. This year, we again have the rise in cases but there is the new 'Plan B' approach from the government. Schools are not closing, nor are we sending children home to isolate if there is a case of Covid in their class. So in many ways, things seem more normal. However, we know they are not and that there are more Covid cases now than ever before. Our local area is currently well above the national average. Upper Penn has 2,637.6 cases per 100,000 and the national average is 1600.

The government is adamant that we take suitable measures and precautions, to ensure schools stay open. In Primary schools, this is difficult, with very little guidance from the DfE except social distancing and good ventilation. We have been allocated a few CO2 monitors, but not enough for every class and nothing we can do but open windows. We will try and keep the rooms well ventilated but this will mean classrooms are cold making it very unpleasant for children and staff to work in. Please do have children wear extra layers, put tracksuits over PE kits on days when they come to school in kit and all children should bring a coat to school.

The main issue we have in ensuring school stays open is keeping safe staffing levels, and we are already being stretched as staff are falling ill. You will have heard the recommendations from the Education Secretary that when this happens, classes should be merged or taught by non-teachers. It would be impossible for us to put classes together, our rooms are too small and it would put everyone at even greater risk. Nor is it fair to ask staff who are not teachers to take on that responsibility. We will always try and get supply teachers or cover classes with teachers in house if we can, however if there is no supply available, staff have prepared work on Purple Mash or work packs that can then be supervised in school by other support staff. Priority of use of IT devices will be given to the older children as they are still preparing for statutory tests. We will be doing our best to ensure we keep teaching and learning a priority for all children but if staffing levels fall, there may be times when classes are undertaking broader supervised activities rather than their normal lessons. Please bear with us as we do our best to ensure we stay open and all children are safe.

To keep staff safe and so disruption to a minimum, please can I remind you of the precautions we have in place:

- **Any adult** coming on site at the start and end of days should be **wearing a mask unless exempt**.
- Please limit the number of people walking round. Older siblings from high school should wait outside the school gates please. Please do follow the one way system and not double back unless you are the last year group through.
- Please **keep socially distanced from other families** as you walk around school or wait in the playground.
- Please can I stress that you do not try and pass messages to staff at the door or gate as I have asked them to keep back and just let children in. They are not being rude or ignoring you, they are trying to ensure that the flow of people walking around keeps moving and that they are maintaining a social distance from others. Any messages for staff should be written down and left in the tray at the door, e mailed to the relevant KS email account or a phone call to the office.
- **If your child is ill they must stay home until they have been well for 48 hours.** If it is because of a Covid symptom, the current understanding of this variant is that it is most contagious the two days prior to symptoms and the three days after they start. If your child is ill for a day, they may seem well again but if the illness has been a symptom of covid, they may still be contagious. As many parents do not want to put their child through a test when they are young it is even more important that children are well for those two days after illness to ensure any possible risk is negated. If it is a sickness/diarrhoea bug, the 48 hours applies as normal anyway.
- **Please send the confirmation text from the NHS of positive LFT tests**, not a picture of the test strip. This gives us a date and time for isolation records.

It is a difficult time for everyone and I ask for your patience and understanding as we do all we can to ensure school stays open and provide as normal an education as possible.

Some diary events—please check our new web page for more as we plan them!

10.1.22	Year 5 Ancient Egyptian Day	31.1.22	3EM Greek Experience day
11.1.22	Y6 Heights and Weights Check (those not yet measured)	1.2.22	3KW Greek Experience Day
17.1.22	Year 6 Q and A with House of Lords	8.2.22	Chef Idris Caldora working with Y5
21..1.22	Year 5 Q and A with House of Lords	Half Term 21-25.2.22	Return to school Mon 28.2.22

WALK TO SCHOOL CHALLENGE



You should have all received a letter sharing that our school has been chosen to be part of 'an exciting behaviour-change initiative to encourage more children and their families to walk to school. WOW-the walk to school challenge is delivered by Living Streets and its aim is to help as many children as possible to experience the benefits of walking. Children will self report in school how they get to school and if they travel sustainably at least once a week for a month, they are rewarded with a badge. We will start the challenge from 17th January. If you drive to school, why not try parking a little further away and avoid the congestion and walk that last part of the journey to school. Small steps can make a big difference!



'Be on time by 10 to 9!' We have a number of children who are now regularly late for school. Lessons do start straight away and so they are missing essential parts of their phonics or literacy sessions. Late marks also count towards attendance.

Good attendance is measured as 96% or above. We have a number of children who are well below this, even when taking COVID into consideration. If your child is frequently ill, or have frequent medical appointments in school time, we do need evidence for their absence and we may ask the School Nurse to speak with you to offer help. If we have concerns regarding why the child is off we do not have to authorise the absence, even if you let us know. The LA Education Welfare Officer regularly scrutinises our registers and recommends court action for families where attendance is poor.

If you are having problems with attendance, please do contact us to see if we can offer support before it becomes an issue for the EWO. We will be contacting families with poor attendance or punctuality by phone or e mail in the next few weeks in case you are not aware.

Staff changes : We are so sorry to be saying goodbye to Mrs Whorton from Nursery next week. She has worked here for 22 years and has had such a positive influence on so many children as they pass through her guiding hands. She is so loved, an inspirational, creative influence to all. We will miss her so much and thank her for all she has done for our children and for being such a wonderful colleague and friend to us all at Warstones.

Mrs Porter, our Senior Lunchtime Supervisor, left at Christmas which is a huge loss but she will still be coming in to work on the garden with the children. So 'Au revoir' not Goodbye!

Mrs Gill, Lunchtime supervisor, has also left to work in the BC/ASC at ST Michael's.

Miss Diamond has been poorly recently and we look forward to when she can return.

We have welcomed a number of new staff and will introduce them all to you in the next newsletter!

Health and Safety Reminders

Please do not let your child play on the KS2 gym equipment/climbing frame at the end of the day as it must be supervised by staff. It is not designed for EY/KS1 children so not safe for smaller children to use.

A number of children have received lovely large new watches over Christmas which has brought such pleasure but they could easily be damaged. Please be aware that we cannot be held responsible for any loss or damage that may occur at school.

Our staff have the right to be treated with dignity and respect at all times.

They should be able to do their jobs without being physically or verbally abused. Most people respect this and we thank you. We do want to work with you to resolve any concern and ask that you email the school to arrange a meeting so we discuss the issue calmly and to look for a mutual understanding and resolution.

Please do not speak to staff in anger on the phone or at the classroom door/office/gate or send aggressive e mails.



EY@warstonesprimary.co.uk KS1@warstonesprimary.co.uk KS2@warstonesprimary.co.uk

DRB@warstonesprimary.co.uk General enquiries: warstonesprimaryschool@wolverhampton.gov.uk

Have you seen our new webpage? www.warstonesprimary.uk —some pages are still being built but it is looking good!