

Friday 17th December 2021

Covid

Thankfully the number of tests that children and staff are doing has decreased this week and we seem to be in the clear for now. I'm sure I don't need to tell you about Omicron and the startling number of cases that we have had nationally. I think all schools are dreading the next few weeks and what sort of measures will be put in place in the New Year.

Do please check emails as we will try and inform you of any arrangements that we put in place. We will send children home next week with another box of Lateral Flow Tests.

Attendance and Punctuality

Children that managed 96% or more will be coming home with a certificate next week. Please ignore the texts yesterday about non-uniform. I'm sorry about misunderstanding. I will however try to explain about the system we have to use as it has added a lot to the frustration some parents feel - we feel it as well.

Anyone who has gone home with covid symptoms and is waiting for test results gets an X mark in the register. An X mark does not count as an absence. There is one child who got 100% attendance despite nine X marks.

Once a positive test is confirmed and someone stays off, the marks then change to I (which stands for Illness). This seems completely daft to us but that's the rules. This is the reason why a lot of 'covid absence' doesn't actually come up on the registers as an X.

As well as this, we have had a lot of sickness in the last few weeks and I am very aware that we have sent children home which I'm sure must frustrate parents.

I am very aware that there is a lot of luck involved with good attendance which is why we stopped celebrating 100% so much. Anyone can pick up a bug so we started celebrating anything from 96 and above. I'm also aware that some children have hospital appointments that can't be avoided. My own daughter missed many own-clothes days at her school for the same reason. We are however expected to encourage good attendance. Ofsted genuinely are not interested in 'covid excuses'. They have made this very clear when inspecting other local schools. As someone very astutely observed on Facebook last night, 'schools are between a rock and a hard place.'

Parents felt that their children would be 'singled out' if they were in uniform next week. I do understand the thinking here, however we have done this before and many other schools do it to try and offer an incentive. We won't be doing it again though.

Just as a final word on this...If we see something on Facebook that is either untrue or is unpleasant about the school then we will challenge or present our case. I think we do have the right to defend ourselves.

On a happier note, you may (or may not) recall that I offered a punctuality incentive at the start of this half term. (Newsletter 5/11/21). It said:

ANY CHILD WITH NO MORE THAN 2 LATE MARKS WILL WIN A £5 VOUCHER AT THE END OF TERM. We will let you know if your child has won. There are some who just missed out on 3...sorry!!

There are nearly 100 children who qualify. This is great but could be higher. I will do something similar in the new year so watch out for information. This has nothing to do with attendance. Even if attendance is really low, you can still win a punctuality prize.

Church

All children are walking to the church on Monday for 10am. Sadly it is just for children so that we can spread out. Any children that need assistance will be catered for.

Last Day

On Tuesday, if parents want to pick children up early then that is fine (after 1pm). It is entirely up to you, school will be open until 3pm. Children will need to be picked up by a responsible adult though if it is before 3pm. Siblings must be over 16.

Safeguarding

Once again, I would like to remind all parents that we make no apologies for safeguarding children. We are here for the children, not the parents. Sometimes we have to make difficult decisions and have difficult conversations. If we feel that children are unsafe, particularly in the run-up to a holiday then we will do what we need to do to safeguard them. No-one wants another Daniel Pelka, Baby P or Arthur Labinjo-Hughes so please try to understand our side of the situation when we make referrals.

If you have any issues over the holidays then you can message on the school mobile. (see below)

Updates and info are easily viewable at

<https://www.woodsideprimary.co.uk/>

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Thank you and have a lovely weekend ☺