

# WOODHOUSE GROVE SCHOOL

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1<sup>st</sup> June 2020

Dear Parents

My purpose for writing is to provide you with a further update following my correspondence concerning the wider opening of schools prior to the half term break.

Following a Governors' Action Committee meeting on Friday 29 May, and confirmation from Government that the national five tests are being met, I can confirm that we will be welcoming our Nursery, Reception, Year 1 and Year 6 children back to Brontë House on a phased basis from tomorrow. Mrs Chatterton and her team have worked incredibly hard, under very tight time constraints, to complete risk assessments and meet Government and wider public health guidance to enable this development.

As the Secretary of State asserted over the weekend, this is the start of a phased and cautious wider opening of schools and we need to proceed with great vigilance. The return of greater numbers of Brontë children in specific year groups will be monitored closely, as we start to consider the options for Year 10 and Year 12 students to have some element of "face-to-face" contact with teachers to "supplement" their ongoing remote learning, at the very earliest from 15 June. I can fully appreciate that there may be mixed emotions for parents with children in other year groups. As ever, we will continue to do our very best for all of our students, whether they are learning remotely, or have the chance to spend some time back in a physical classroom.

There are still outstanding questions, especially around secondary quotas and rotas, and the public health implications for senior schools, where community transmission is a much bigger issue because of the independence of Year 10 and Year 12 students in travelling to and from school. However, I am aware that a number of local maintained secondary schools have written to parents outlining their specific plans, some of whom jumped the gun and set out a timetable to commence from 01 June.

Many maintained schools are considering offering physical face-to-face support only to specific pupils or groups of pupils, with others continuing to be supported remotely. Targeted groups include: disadvantaged pupils, or those with additional needs; those pupils who have struggled to engage with remote learning; and those pupils for whom previous assessments indicate are most in need of support to address gaps in their learning.

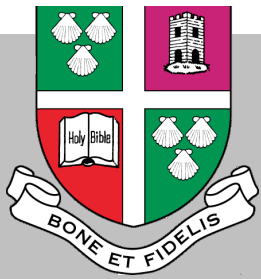
It is important to point out that remote learning in many of our local maintained schools has been very patchy and that whilst work has been set, not all of it has been assessed, and, in many cases, students have received very little feedback on the quality of their work, or the progress they are making. It is a very stark fact that, over the last ten weeks, many children attending maintained state schools have gone missing in education. This is not the case at the Grove.

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*I am Grovian.*



Woodhouse Grove School is part of the Methodist Independent Schools Trust.  
Registered Office: Methodist Church House, 25 Marylebone Road, London, NW15JR.  
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Any physical return of senior school students will need, as best as possible, to be kept to small groups, with as little interaction with other groups and staff as possible. As previously recorded, we will need to be very mindful of community transmission. In the coming days, the school's Senior Leadership Team will be considering options of how to best provide some face-to-face support for students in Year 10 and Year 12, while remote learning continues to be the predominant form of education for these and other year groups. These options will be put before the Governors' Education Committee on 08 June. The Governors' Action Committee will then consider the agreed proposals on 10 June and, I am sure, will wish to scrutinize the plans and assess the risks and receive the necessary reassurance that any proposals are manageable, practical and with the safety of our pupils and staff being of the utmost importance.

With the advent of greater numbers on the Brontë House site from tomorrow and the potential return for some Year 10 and Year 12 students, I very much hope and trust that parents will work with us, cooperate with all the necessary protocols and also continue to follow national public health guidance in order to safeguard the health, safety and welfare of our whole school community.

I am very mindful that over the last few days there has been considerable media comment regarding the approach being taken by some teaching unions in relation to the Government's plan for the wider opening of schools. For example, over the weekend, the National Education Union, the biggest teaching union, called on the Prime Minister to "step back from the brink" and delay the opening of primary schools to more pupils, after four Government scientific advisors warned that it is too soon to ease the lockdown. As parents, you need to know that my colleagues and I are desperately keen to get our young people back into school. However, we can only do this when it is safe to do so, and, as I am sure you will appreciate, this remains a very dynamic situation and nobody knows for certain what the wider impact of the lighter lockdown rules will be.

In this new world of socially separated 'bubbles', small class sizes, staggered starts and departures, and distanced desks, we will be doing all we can to make any return to school a positive experience for all those involved. However, I am saddened to assert that it will be some time before we return to business as normal.

Further updates will follow in due course. In the meantime, thank you in advance for your continued support.

Yours sincerely

**James Lockwood MA**  
**Headmaster**

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