

Letter to parents from the Headteacher ♦ July 2020



End of year update in times of Coronavirus

Dear Woolmore Families,

Looking back

This really has been the most extraordinary of times. At the beginning of 2020 I don't think that any of us had ever stopped to consider what life might be like during a global pandemic. And then in March, it happened. Lockdown. Fear, uncertainty, staying home, all our usual routines gone along with visiting family, friends, places of worship and, of course, school.

There have been sad times, loved ones have passed and yet, somehow, we have kept going. It has been a challenge, often it's been a struggle. There has been no script for how to run a school in times of Coronavirus. At Woolmore we knew that we had to hold on strong to our values. We knew we needed to be cautious, to keep safe, to listen, learn and not rush in. We knew that we wanted to do as much as we could to support families and to help our pupils to learn at home. We wanted to communicate with you regularly, about learning of course, but also about how you are and how we could try and help.

And then, in June, as schools began to open further, we decided to invite all our pupils back to school for at least one day to meet their teacher and friends so that there could be some kind of memory of this year beyond the closure in March. It has been a journey.

The main message I want to say is thank you!

Thank you to the wonderful Woolmore pupils who must have wondered what on earth was happening when school suddenly stopped (for most of them) in March. Thank you for your learning, your patience, your pictures on twitter, your phone conversations, your blogs on Purple Mash and for being the fantastic children that you all are.

Thank you to our amazing parents for being so brilliant at getting on board with the home learning and really encouraging and supporting your children to continue their learning. A scroll through Twitter shows you many exciting things that happened including brilliant reading, science experiments, walks, new pets and baby chicks.

Thank you to our wonderful teachers who at very short notice found the best ways to work with the children from home creating learning packs, calling children, setting up remote learning through Purple mash, Rock Stars, My-On and AR and always having the children at the heart of everything they do.

Thank you to the teams of staff who worked with the children who have been in school every day supporting each of them to do their best and also enable key workers to be at work during the pandemic.

Thank you to the office and family support team who have worked relentlessly to keep families safe and ensure that free school meal vouchers were ordered and delivered, food was gathered and distributed every week during lockdown - sometimes using the Woolmore Deliveroo!

Thank you to our premises and cleaning team who have been relocating resources and equipment and keeping the school open, safe and very clean.

Thank you to our teaching assistants who have supported children and families in school, on the phone and in the community.

Thank you to our sports coaches, kitchen staff and counsellors for helping keep our children healthy, mentally and physically.

Thank you to the School Leadership Team who have been planning, supporting and ensuring the highest level of safety and learning for everyone. During lockdown we would meet several times a week to make sense of the government guidance and implement our safety and learning plans.

Thank you to our Governing body who have been there to offer support throughout.

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Thank you everyone who helped us supply food to families: the government supplied the food vouchers for those eligible and the school has spent more than £40,000 on additional vouchers and weekly food parcels for many of our families. We chose to do this because if you don't have enough food to eat, not a lot else matters. I also want to thank the charity Magic Breakfast, Tower Hamlets Community Hub and Manorfield School who have provided us with additional food for families every week.

Together we have made a positive difference to leading and managing our school, our children's education and wellbeing during Covid. What an amazing team we have.

Good luck and farewell

To Year 6 who started the year full of the expectation of SATs, school journey and a Leavers' Show – and all the rest. Thank you to all of you (and your parents) for continuing to do your best learning at home. It has been a pleasure to have many of you back in school this half term. We wish you all lots of luck for your new start in secondary school. You will meet new people, make new friends and learn so many new things. We believe in you and we know that each of you can really make a difference in the world. Please keep in touch and let us know how things are going.

Nancy and Laura – currently teaching in Y1 and Y6. Nancy and Laura joined us in the old school and are now ready to take their skills and expertise to new schools. I want to thank them for all their hard work and dedication to teaching many children at Woolmore. They have both been terrific members of our Woolmore Team and highly respected by their colleagues, children and parents. Good luck Nancy and Laura!

September Return Plans

Although there is still uncertainty for September, we have a risk assessment and plan as legally required by the government and supported by Tower Hamlets. This plan that means the children can come back safely, pending any changes that may or may not happen.

There will be some changes:

Bubbles Our children will be in year group bubbles learning, eating and being in the playground together. For the moment we won't be able to gather in the hall for singing or assemblies.

Lunchtimes We are going to shorten the lunchbreak and the school day so that we can ensure all children are able to eat in the middle of the day either in their classroom or the hall. Finishing the day at 3.15pm also means that teachers can manage their planning/have meetings and try to get home before the rush hour.

Handwashing We will be regularly washing hands and ensuring that all our behaviours (children and adults) are in line with the risk assessment and guidelines.

And lots of it will be like the old Woolmore:

Learning We will be very excited to see you and we can't wait to start our learning together. We will be working on a project called 'Healthy Me' with learning across the curriculum. We will be getting back to more maths (I am looking forward to awarding some HTTA goody bags soon) and lots of exercise outside. We are also committed to educating ourselves and our pupils about diversity and racism in the vital follow-up to Black Lives Matter. We have a brilliant selection of new books and all staff have been gifted a book to help us all learn.

School life We will have fun and really enjoying getting back to a 'new-look' school life.

Returning in September – different days to start with

In order for the whole school to return safely we will have a phased start and slightly different start and finish times. It goes like this:

Date	Time	Who is in school
Wednesday 2 September	Arrive: 8.50-9.00am Pick-up: 3.00pm	Y1, Y3 and Y5 classes only

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Thursday 3 September	Arrive: 9.00-9.10am Pick-up: 3.15pm	Rec, Y2, Y4 and Y6 classes only
Friday 4 September	Times as above please	All children (except Nursery)

Please check the website for our term dates for 2020/21 and other useful information including our Risk Assessment Plan, holiday learning, Tower Hamlets updates and lots of wellbeing ideas. Please also continue to enjoy the wonderful offerings on our twitter feed – thanks to all of you it is a delight!

And finally, please enjoy reading your child's Annual Report, have a restful holiday, stay safe and we will see you in September.

Tracy Argent
Headteacher