

WILLOW TREE ACADEMY



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Visit us at: www.willowtreeacademy.org

Mr A. Trueman – Chair of Trustees Mrs J.K. Fearnley – Chief Executive Officer

11th January 2021

Dear Parents/Carers,

I hope you and your family are safe and well? You are receiving this letter as you have a child who attends our school in either our 2 year old provision or Nursery (F1).

As you will know, on the 5th January, the government announced a third National Lockdown but has said that nurseries should remain open.

I have carried out risk assessments, looked at the accelerating picture in Rotherham and discussed this with our Heads of School and our EYFS Leaders. I have also considered that we are to receive tighter restrictions from the government shortly, which may include closing nurseries again. I would not want to bring children back only to have to close again next week, as this would cause more confusion for you and your children.

With all this in mind, I have come to the decision that it is in the best interests of our children, families and staff to remain closed and have informed the Trust Board today, that we cannot safely reopen Willow Tree schools to our 2 year olds and Nursery children at this present time.

I know that this will be a disappointment for some of you, following our seeking your expression of interest, it is clear that many of you do wish your child to return to school. We can share with you though, that many parents are unhappy about returning their children at this point; this is because of the changing local and national picture. As previously, we had thought to rota the children in shorter morning or afternoon sessions, however, we have considered carefully how we could best do this and use the space and staffing to achieve social distancing within small groups; it quickly became obvious that;

- We cannot expect small children to socially distance even in small groups of 1:6
- We cannot control the transmission of the Covid 19 virus through contact of body fluids ie saliva on hands and resources
- We cannot control the amount of times that staff and children interact for safety and care ie hand-holding/following instructions/comfort

- We do not have the space to create small groups with our large numbers and any rota would mean children only accessed school rarely
- We could not clean twice daily every piece of equipment and furniture
- Intimate care ie changing nappies, would put staff and children at further risk
- We could not expect that children so young would understand they couldn't share toys and resources

I hope this letter enables you to understand why, at this time, we cannot endorse our very youngest children coming to school, but it is important that you know we will always do our utmost to keep your child and our staff safe and well. By opening our nursery I would be unable to guarantee this at the present time. This decision will be reviewed on a weekly basis, throughout the National Lockdown.

We are looking forward to seeing your child back in school very soon and would like to say thank you in anticipation of your support over the coming weeks. I know the new National Lockdown is so hard for everyone but it is our intention to continue to serve our families and community in the best way we can. We will continue to offer Home Learning and we will be sending home resources to support this. Our team will continue to be there for support and advice too. Please do not hesitate to contact us should you have any questions and we ask that you support us by telling us **immediately** if anyone in your household has symptoms of Covid 19. We can beat this together!

Kind regards

Mrs Jane Fearnley
CEO/Executive Head Teacher

Mrs Joanne Cook
Head of School