

St. Joseph's Catholic Primary School

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Headteacher: Mrs D McLeary

14th May 2020

Dear Parents and Carers,

As you are aware, schools received advice from the government on Monday 11th May regarding how schools should prepare for a possible wider opening from 1st June. Governors and Leaders are now in the process of planning this phased return for certain groups of pupils.

Initially schools have been asked to open for pupils in Pre School, Reception, Year 1 and Year 6, with the possibility of opening for other pupils before the summer. Children of key workers **who are not** in Pre School, Reception, Year 1 or Year 6 along with vulnerable pupils will all still be able to attend school. Parents of these children are asked to continue to inform us weekly of your requirements. The opening will only go ahead if the government considers it safe.

There are many practical arrangements to be considered that concern the safety of our children, staff and parents. These include staffing and pupil numbers, classrooms available, outdoor spaces, break times, length of school day and many other aspects. Arrangements for home learning may also need to be adapted due to the number of staff required in school.

In line with government advice, classes will be much smaller with no more than 15 pupils. These pupils will remain together as a group and social distancing will be encouraged although it has been acknowledged that our very youngest pupils will not always be able to remain 2 metres from adults or each other. In order to accommodate these smaller class sizes, children may be in different classrooms and may have a different teacher. In addition, we will have a staggered start and end to the day to ensure social distancing for parents, along with a one-way system around school. Good hygiene practices and additional cleaning will also be put in place to ensure everyone is kept as safe as possible.

We look forward to welcoming these pupils back into school on Monday 1st June and whilst we expect the vast majority to attend, we also know that some parents will remain anxious about this potential return. It is also totally understood that parents will have differing points of view about what is the best course of action at this difficult time. This is a decision that parents will need to make themselves as every family will have their own unique circumstances. Government guidance for parents is attached to this letter. Can I reassure you that the government has given assurances that parents will not be fined for child/children's non-attendance at school during this time.

‘Growing with Jesus’

It would be most helpful if parents who have a child/children in **Pre School, Reception, Year 1 and/or Year 6 only** could indicate their initial response regarding sending your child/children into school, so we can gain a rough idea of numbers to support with plans for staffing and accommodation. If you **do not** intend to send your child back to school on 1st June, please send an email to the school office by **Monday 18th May**, simply stating the name of your child, their year group and that you will not be bringing them to school at this time. If we do not receive an email from you, we will assume that your child will be returning to school on 1st June.

Please note that school will remain closed for pupils in Year 2, Year 3, Year 4 and Year 5, even if they have a sibling in one of the returning year groups.

I will write to you again before 1st June to explain further how this phased opening will take place at St Joseph's and what will be needed from children, parents and staff in order to keep everyone safe.

I look forward to welcoming our children back into school in the very near future and once again thank you for your on-going support at this difficult time.

Yours sincerely,

D McLeary

Mrs Dee McLeary
Headteacher

Government guidance for parents and carers

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/closure-of-educational-settings-information-for-parents-and-carers/reopening-schools-and-other-educational-settings-from-1-june>