



Middleton St Mary's CE (VC) Primary School

Moor Flatts Road, Middleton, Leeds. LS10 3SW

THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND
Diocese of Leeds

Headteacher: Mrs Naomi Wood

Deputy Headteachers: Mrs Suzanne Aston and Mrs Suzanne Marston



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18 May 2020

Dear Parents and Carers,

Following on from my previous communication last Monday, I am writing to provide you with some additional information after receiving further government guidance and Risk Assessments from Leeds City Council.

I can confirm that the date we are aiming to begin phasing children back to school is Monday 1st June. **School will now be closed next week for May half term to ALL pupils including Key Worker children (Monday 25th – Friday 29th May).** Please note that Edenred food vouchers WILL NOT be allocated by the government for this week as it is a school holiday and children do not usually receive FSM during school holidays. As directed, from Monday 1st June, school will only be open to Key Worker children **and** children in Nursery, Reception, Year 1 and Year 6. This may then move to opening school to all other year groups for the start of July. Please be aware that these dates are subject to government review and Middleton St Mary's risk assessments and so may change. We need to ensure the safety and well-being of staff as well as our children and our community and as our number one priority and must insist that our guidelines are followed.

Last week, we sent out a very quick survey through Survey Monkey via email to our current Nursery, Reception and Year 1 parents only, to gauge how many parents of these 145 children would want their children back in school on 1st June. We did not send this to Year 6 parents initially as we would have struggled to accommodate 205 children safely in our school. The updated guidelines now state that 15 children can be in a classroom. As you know, our KS2 classrooms are very small. We feel that 15 is an unsafe number at Middleton St Mary's so we have planned for a maximum of 10 children in the KS2 classes at this point in time and 15 children in the EYFS and KS1 classrooms. From the survey to these parents, many have said **no** they will not return their child to school on 1st June or are unsure due to the safety of their child and staff. The government have stated that school staff do not require PPE and that children cannot be expected to remain 2m apart in schools. Today, we have sent the same survey out to our Year 6 parents to gauge their response. Year 6 parents need to understand that the 59 pupils will be taught across 6 classrooms in groups of 10, they will not necessarily be with their friends and will not be able to socialise through the school day – they will be in the same room all day apart from at lunchtime which will be staggered. Children will not necessarily be taught by their current class teacher. Start times and end of day times will be staggered and even shortened. There will be no breakfast club. Edenred vouchers will of course stop for the families attending, instead FSM children will receive a hot dinner/other children can pay for their lunch as usual. Children will enter and exit through designated doors, not their usual classroom door. Children and parents must arrive on time during their allocated slot or they will be turned away. As the weeks pass this survey will be sent to parents in other year groups.

As a result of the further guidance, survey responses and initial discussions, it may mean we have to consider part time opening to ensure guidelines and group sizes can be met. A summary of the main factors / requirements that schools have been asked to work to include:

- Children must be kept within groups no bigger than 15. These groups should be separated from other groups within school and will be taught in the same room each day.



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- Groups should be led by teachers but dependent on the number of groups these might be led by a teaching assistant. These groups will last for the remainder of the year.
- Schools will be able to select the lessons and activities that will be delivered – this will differ from the normal curriculum offer. Non-essential items may be removed from classrooms.
- If some groups of pupils attend for the full day, lunchtimes arrangements will alter significantly. If we open part time for pupils there will be no lunchtime period.
- The playground will be zoned so that groups of children can play away from other groups.
- Social distancing will be a key feature of measures throughout school however this will not be the recommended 2 metres. The fact remains that primary aged children find it almost impossible to stay socially distant – the Government have said that they acknowledge this.
- Shielding children should not attend school. If a child or a member of staff lives with someone who is clinically extremely vulnerable (those with an NHS letter) then they should not be in school.
- Specific arrangements will be made for the drop off and collection of pupils which will include staggered times.
- If anyone has a cough or high temperature they must not attend school. If these are identified in school the individual would be sent home. They will need to self-isolate for 7 days or until a negative test outcome is received. If any child or staff member tests positive for Covid-19 then the whole group (staff and children) must be sent home and self-isolate for 14 days. If other cases are also confirmed at school, Public Health England will advise on the next steps and possible school closure.

There is a great deal to work through and a significant amount of planning will have to take place. The main issues schools are facing when trying to plan are the variable factors which include: the number of children who might be in attendance, staffing, group sizes, part time or full-time arrangements and key workers who need children to attend school and many more. Dropping of and collecting is going to be difficult also. The latest guidance is that one parent can only drop off without other children. We know this will cause many issues for our families where one child in in the allocated year group and another is not.

Clearly, Middleton St Mary's will have to operate very differently to how we are all used to and some children may struggle with the approach that we have to take. I really want to support you in any decision you have to make, which may include your decision to keep your child at home should you wish. The following information may assist you:

- There will be no penalty at this point in time for parents who choose not to send their children to school and work will continue to be provided for home learning.
- We believe that the best place for children is to be in school, but **ONLY** if we can ensure their safety and that of our staff.
- We are going to work through and update daily the risk assessment to minimise the spread of the infection.
- We cannot guarantee that children will be able to socially distance themselves, particularly the younger children, which has been acknowledged by the government too.





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Arrangements for key worker children will remain the same. Please note that we continue to be open for our essential frontline workers, but we are not open to children of parents who have been instructed to return to work and parents in this situation should speak with their employers if this becomes a difficulty.

Please be assured that we will not be opening our school to more children until we know that our children and staff are properly risk assessed and the right levels of protection are put in place.

I would really appreciate your patience and understanding as we work through this phased reopening process, we will only open school in a way that is safe to do so. As previously mentioned this may mean a part-time provision. I must emphasise that this is a fast-moving situation and things are changing by the day.

We are all missing the children and we look forward to welcoming everyone back to school when it is safe to do so. Please stay safe and I would like to thank you all for your continued support.

Thinking of you all in our prayers. Take care and stay safe.

Mrs N Wood, Headteacher.

