



All Saints' CE (VA) Junior and Infant School
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Dear Parents / Carers

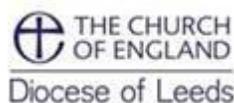
Thank you in advance of the time you will take in careful absorption of the information within this letter; your patience in awaiting my guidance for the reopening of our school for suggested year groups R, 1 and 6 is appreciated.

As you will be aware the Government has stated it may be possible to welcome back some pupils into school with a suggested date from the 1 June. My Senior Leadership Team and I, in consultation with our Governing Body, remain responsible for evaluating whether and how it might be safe to introduce our children back to school. This is subject to a significant series of risk assessments, based on the specific circumstances of each school and to date in considering all relevant information, we believe it will not possible for our school to bring back all the pupils recommended by the Government within the timescales you may be anticipating.

The guidance suggests that all children attending school, should have a teacher; be in groups of less than 15 with socially distanced spacing and that curriculum content and attendance will not be monitored throughout this time. School opening times and opening strategy are left at the discretion of the Head Teacher. Returning to school will not look like a 'normal' school day for your child (or for you), with varying start/finish times, without the availability of 'wrap around' childcare and with significantly different changes to normal functions. I anticipate that this will be a very different type of 'schooling' for your child/ren to that which we have become accustomed and have loved here at All Saints'.

As many of you know, closing the school to our children was heart-breaking for myself and my staff; we live for educating and nurturing children and in a 'normal world', we encourage all our children to attend school to achieve their potential every day; we LOVE teaching children but at this time I am absolutely not prepared to return to this in haste; I need to be able, in my own mind, to guarantee the safety of all our children and my staff, knowing that we have a watertight strategy with specific protocols and functional systems.

I continue to await further instruction from the Local Authority Health and Safety team, from the Government and from unions, to formalise our approach to the reopening of our school. It is therefore with great caution that we begin to consider the logistics for opening, along with a systematic procedure.



As more information is provided, I may be able to suggest for your child some start dates. Of course, as we are repeatedly informed by the Government, these will be provisional and subject to change, depending upon the 'science' and statistics. Indeed, it is important to note, that educational professionals receive critical and essential information at the same time as the public, usually via a Prime Minister's speech, often leaving us with very little time to plan and with understandable but unrealistic expectation from our stakeholders. Your patience is greatly appreciated.

Currently, despite our positivity and ambition to reopen school, the guidance has been contradictory and unclear with regard to the practicalities of reopening schools in a safe manner, along with whether 1st June is an appropriate timescale. From the parent survey also, you seem to echo these thoughts – with 75% of respondents (over 130 families have responded so far) saying they are 'concerned' about the phased reopening of schools with the guidance at present.

After reading the government's guidance about reopening, it becomes evident that schools are not required to follow the same safety rules being applied elsewhere in society because logistically we are unable to deliver many of these guidelines e.g. to maintain 2m social distancing. All employers have a duty to keep employees safe, including those in educational settings but all outside safety rules are disapplied in schools. This concerns me considerably when we have a duty of care to uphold.

Furthermore, both I and the Senior Leadership Team question if some of the practicalities directed at primary schools are providing the best for our children. Like many of your responses to the survey, if a year group is back in school, we would like to be actively teaching them in line with the National Curriculum (and supporting wellbeing where necessary). The Government guidance states that 'split classes' (based on a maximum of 15 children in a room) should see the same adult(s) for the remainder of the term. Instead, we believe each child should be taught by their class teacher some of the time, which parents overwhelmingly agreed with in our survey. Similarly, we question how different the classrooms would need to be to meet the guidance at present, which was also reported to us from the survey.

The Chief Medical Officer, Chris Whitty, acknowledged during a press conference last Monday there was a need to review safety in schools. This is now **URGENT**, given the announcement that we are aiming to open more widely in June. The long list of recommendations clearly suggests returning to school is a very difficult prospect.

We can only say that whatever our carefully considered plan does look like, the safety of our children and staff will be our overriding consideration. Morally, we have to get this right for the All Saints' community and that may involve some tough decisions, including not fully realising the government's ambition for all children to be in school or the currently identified year groups to be treated as a priority. To support our thinking, we will continue to survey in order to gain an idea of the number of parents who will send their children in to school: bearing in mind the restrictions that will be in place. Please continue to look out for these surveys via the School Jotter app, and please, please respond to enable us to get a full picture of your thoughts.

We know that this time is extremely worrying and as such, I will aim to write again as soon as we have more detail. We are very much missing your children, take care of them and yourselves. We hope that you and your loved ones are safe and well.

Best wishes,

L Watson

Lauren Watson
Head Teacher