



St John Vianney Catholic Primary School

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Headteacher: Mr S McNicholas

19th May 2020

Dear Parents and Carers,

Further to the announcement from the government about their ambition to start wider opening of schools from June, I am writing to give you an update regarding the school's position and preparations in response.

As I referenced in my communications last week, and as I have promised all along, I will always prioritise the safety of the children, the staff and their wider families in any pupil return.

I share the collective ambition to allow children to return to school, but will not compromise the basic right to safety and assurance for all in the process.

You will appreciate that, seven working days after the announcement, we are still working through the mountain of guidance, risk assessment, procedural changes and physical re-organisation of the school. In parallel, we are aware of the very public debate that is rumbling on in the background: is it safe? Is it not safe?

As such, I cannot give you any absolutes at this point; sadly, that is simply not possible at this time. I can, however, outline the plan to which we are aspiring – a plan that is subject to governor approval, Local Authority approval, staffing and parent confidence. The governing body are meeting this week to discuss, and I can give you an update after that.

I will be proposing that we:

- Work to create procedures and structures that go as far as possible to create safe working practices for children and staff, implementing the best social distancing that can be achieved in this environment
- Work to understand as many of the risks that exist, and to put procedures in place to mitigate as best we can.
- Canvass parents of selected Year groups to see if they will be sending their children back.
- Plan to train staff, to include them in the risk assessment and creation of safe working procedures, to build confidence that the school can operate in this way.

When all of this has been completed to the satisfaction of the school, the governors and Local Authority, we hope to **welcome back those children of Year 6 that want to return on Monday 8th June.**

We start with Year 6 because they are able to understand the new rules and procedures that underpin safe reopening of schools at this moment in time. This will build their confidence, the confidence of the parents and that, most importantly, of the staff.

At this point, we cannot commit to details regarding the reopening for the other groups mentioned in the government's announcement (Nursery, Reception and Year 1). The concerns about the collective safety of children and staff in an environment where distancing is just not possible have not been addressed at this time of writing.

Everything we can be, with Christ in our hearts...

That said, we DO commit to keep this under constant review, from now to the end of the Summer Term, we will review how Year 6 are adapting, what the unions and the government conclude about staff safety and what the experience of wider society and schools across the country are concluding.

We will do this on a daily basis and, when the time and conditions are right, and only when, we will go through the above process for additional year groups, one at a time, building our community back up again in a safe and measured manner.

I understand that this will be both a relief to some parents and a frustration to others. As never before in this position, I concede that I will not be able to meet everyone's expectations or needs. But, I will be able to assure you that I have done everything I can to make sure that your children and your families, and the staff that are dedicated to their wellbeing and education, are protected.

I ask for your understanding and support at this time. Our community is everything.

Yours sincerely

Mr. McNicholas (Headteacher)

"In our school children, staff, parents and carers, governors and parish will work together to create a caring, learning environment with Our Lord as the focal point in which each child is valued as an individual, nurtured and encouraged to fulfil his/her potential."