

19 May 2020

Dear Parents and Carers

The Reopening of Schools

I hope that you and your families are well. As you will be aware, the Government has announced plans to reopen Primary schools for pupils in Early Years, Year 1 and Year 6 from Monday 1 June. In addition, they have outlined plans for Secondary school pupils in Years 10 and 12 to have some form of face-to-face contact with their teachers before the end of term. It is the stated intention of the Government (at the time of writing) that all Primary school pupils will return to school before the end of term in July.

After this letter, you will find information relating particularly to your child's school setting, including any specific practical instructions about their return. In addition to that, I wanted to let you know that we have developed a detailed Risk Assessment and set of protocols for our schools to use. These documents have been driven by guidance issued from the Department for Education, Public Health England and the scientific evidence used by both organisations. We have developed the documents in partnership with the Headteachers of our 21 schools across Leicester and Leicestershire, and we are confident that our processes will meet the Government's expectations around safety in our schools; I want to state categorically that the safety of our young people and our staff is always the highest priority we have, and this is important to emphasise now more than ever. Whilst, mercifully, this horrible virus has *directly* touched the lives of only a very small proportion of people within our city, our county and our country, the anxieties and all of the associated pressures have touched each and every one of us in different ways. Starting to welcome our young people back into the (relative) normality of school life will, please God, represent key steps in reducing the anxieties in many of their young lives.

I would like to take this opportunity both to pay tribute to the staff across our Trust schools for the way in which they have adapted to these challenging circumstances in providing educational resources, learning opportunities and support for our young people, and to the nearly 2,000 of you who responded to the online questionnaire about home learning; this helped to shape our work considerably.

I appreciate that we are entering a period of rapid change and complexity. I assure you that staff across the Trust central team and within all of our schools will be working with vigilance and dedication to provide the very best we can for our young people, and to ensure that **all** safety measures outlined by the Government are adhered to. Should you have any questions that are specific to your child please, as ever, contact your school.

God bless



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20th May 2020

Dear Parents and Carers,

We hope you are all well. We are missing the school community and are grateful for all your hard work and messages on the home-work email account. The lockdown and school closure has demonstrated that education is fundamentally human and needs 'face to face' interaction.

At the current time of writing, St Mary's is planning to open on June the 1st for the key worker and vulnerable children, the Foundation Class, Year One and Year Six, following the Government and St Thomas Aquinas Academy advice. Parents from these classes have been notified by phone. As stated on the previous letter, detailed risk assessments are being followed stringently. In order to maintain social distancing and safety measures, there will need to be a 'new normal' with different arrangements and ways of teaching and supervising organised. We ask for your patience and support in this and will do our utmost to place the children's well-being and mental health at the centre of all we do. The arrangements will be reviewed on a day to day basis to ensure best practice.

These organisational measures are in place for a 1st of June phased re-opening:

The key worker and vulnerable children will continue to be taught in the hall with the teachers who do not have their year groups in. The other classes will be split in half, with class sizes of no bigger than 15 spread into two classrooms with a teacher and teaching assistant. The class teacher will plan for both groups, so there is consistency in teaching. Class teachers have organised the groups taking into account friendships and educational needs. Year One and Year 6 will be seated singly at tables with tables distanced two metres apart. The Foundation Class will have a limited amount of children grouped around a table, but will have an element of free flow and play within their groups only- please advise children that due to social distancing they will not be able to play with all the children in their class and that some of their previous equipment will not be in action, due to difficulty in cleaning it frequently.

Opening and end of day times will be staggered as below, as will playtimes and lunchtimes to enable children to play and eat in their allocated groups and play safely on the different playgrounds. Playgrounds will be zoned.

Key worker and Vulnerable children: as previously, **enter and exit through the front entrance** only: 8.40 – 8.50 start time : 3.15p.m finish; unless their class has been allowed to return- then they use the entrances and exits below.

Year 6 : Use of the year 6 and 5 classroom and Junior area, with Mrs Abell, Mrs Davis, Mrs D'arcy and Mrs Wilson. **Opening time: 8.40a.m -8.50a.m: End of day – 3.15p.m.** Enter and collected from **the Junior school gate only**.

Year One: Use of the Year One and Year Two classroom, with Mrs Petty, Mrs Hill, Miss Wood, Mrs Adamek, and Mrs Moore. **Opening time: 9a.m -9.20a.m: End of the day 3p.m- 3.15p.m.** Enter and collection from the **Front School office Entrance only**.

Foundation Class: Use of the Foundation Class, Foundation playground and the Learning lounge with Mrs Richardson, Miss Hargrove, Mrs Chiavetta, Mrs Buccheri, Mrs Heald/ Mrs Guyatt. Opening time 9a.m -9.20a.m, End of day times: 2.40 p.m – 3p.m. **Enter and collected from the Infant entrance gate on Hastings Street only.**

Movement: All groups of children will have one entrance/exit door with one group using one bathroom area and sinks. There will be no movement around the school or mass gatherings. Children will wash hands on entering school and before leaving. They will have regular, scheduled times to wash hands, with soap and water, with paper towels and lidded bins provided. Please do not bring hand sanitisers into school as we cannot be certain that it follows school regulations.

Due to the new health and safety rules: parents will not be allowed onto the school playground for the time being. Children will be entering one at a time through the gates to enable no more than two in the cloakrooms and be given to you at the gate or if the front entrance at the door. We strongly advise that you do not come early, as you will have to follow social distancing rules outside the gates. Only essential visitors will be allowed into the school. If you have any queries please contact the school on the office email and telephone number, unless it is an emergency.

Please also note that due to the current risk measures, there will be no before or after school clubs for the first three weeks. The school cannot accept children outside of the times mentioned above.

The School Kitchen staff will be able to provide hot meals, following additional health and safety rules at lunchtime. It would be helpful for the school if you would let us know, as soon as possible, if your child requires a hot meal and if not on a universal or free school meal, the usual process through Parent pay applies. A midday supervisor will be allocated to each of the groups of 15 children, with children eating packed lunches in their allocated spaces above.

As we are in the Summer term, children can wear their Summer uniform. We are advising parents to wash uniform as frequently as possible and that children wash on their return to home. We know this may cause difficulties, so there can be a mix of the Winter and Summer uniform and the school can be called if any further adjustments need to be made.

Children can bring in work they have been completed at home to be celebrated in class. However for the first two weeks, children can only bring in their packed lunch box (hot dinner children do not need to do this.) and a water bottle. Every child must bring in a water bottle, as children will not be allowed to use the water fountains. Children will not be allowed to bring bags or book bags in until further notification, due to limited use of the cloakrooms. Reading of school books will be completed in school, until a safe way of enabling reading books to go home can be sought. Please do not bring in PE kits for the time-being as well or any other items, such as pencil cases or footballs. Individual stationary items will be supplied for children in packs to limit the sharing of items.

Due to the Reception, Year One and Year Six class teachers planning and teaching the children attending school, online daily work on class pages will only be set for Years Two, Three, Four and Five, from the 1st of June, until they can return to school. For those children not attending in the other classes, links on the home page to sites such as BBC bite-size will be recommended. Unfortunately due to space, staffing and social distancing rules, we cannot take siblings of children who will be attending Reception, Year One and Year Six on June the 1st. The key worker criteria list set by the Government remains unchanged.

The school has a rigorous risk assessment plan with increased cleaning throughout the day. Staff have been provided with PPE equipment when administering first aid. The Risk

Assessment has observed advice from Public Health England and government guidelines. It will be reviewed within the first two weeks.

We thank you for your kind understanding and support in this difficult time. Please contact the school, if you have any queries, as we are happy to help and look forward to seeing the children return. We will of course notify you of any changes, should the Government decisions alter. After the initial return of these year groups, we will have to wait for further Government and scientific advice on the return of the other classes.

Thanking you
Miss Jordan and all the Staff at St Mary's school.