



Newsletter

4th September, 2020

office@stjamesvaschool.co.uk
head@stjamesvaschool.co.uk

Hello everyone! I hope you have all had a lovely summer break, and are looking forward to our return to school, we certainly are!

I write today to confirm our arrangements for children's return to school on Monday—not much has changed from the information I sent to you in July, but it's always good to have final confirmation. All our plans are subject to constant reviewing, especially in the early weeks of term, and are, as always, subject to any changes to DfE or LA guidance and advice.

There is a lot of information here, which reflects the complexity of the logistics involved in keeping our school as safe as possible, and the seriousness with which we have considered the Government guidance. Please take time this weekend to read and digest.

The Government are confident that, where schools and parents work together to follow the guidance, schools are safe for children. However, it is vital that you work with us to follow the controls we have put into place. This means you must do the following:

- Ensure that if your child or yourself show any symptoms of Coronavirus that you stay away from school
- Help us by reminding your children about hygiene matters—hand washing and the 'catch it, bin it, kill it' approach (we'll also be reinforcing this in school)
- Observe the timings as set out in the document - 'Arrangements for September 2020'
- Drop off and collect your child promptly—we can not function safely and effectively if (some) parents are continually late in bringing children to school or are late collecting them at the end of the day—we will have to become much more strict about this
- When on school site, you must maintain social distancing and you must leave promptly - I know many of you like to catch up with staff and friends, but sadly we can't do this (yet). Please observe the one way system in place and do not double back on yourself. If you need to go back for something, you will need to exit the school and walk back round to the entry point.
- Ensure we have your up-to-date contact details, and details of someone who would be able to collect your child quickly if they develop Coronavirus symptoms.
- Keep us up-to-date if your child needs to self isolate, develops symptoms or if anyone in your household receives a positive Coronavirus test
- Ensure that your child only brings essential school equipment to school—this means, very sadly, children will be unable to bring things into school to share with us (medals, certificates etc), however, you can send us photos of any awards/exciting news and we can share them that way. No toys, Pokemon cards, notebooks, etc (sorry!)
- No parents should enter the school unless a pre-arranged appointment has been agreed. Ensure all contact with teachers is made via the phone or via the office email. Please be aware that the class email addresses are not currently monitored.

Face masks will not be worn in school, as per Government and Public Health advice, and we will not routinely carry out temperature checks. Of course, you may wear face masks while on school site and children may wear them on their journey to school, if that is your wish.

We are aware that many of you would like to be able to bring your child all the way to their class on their first day back, and we agree that this is important as part of our return to school and to also allay anxieties that we all will be facing. On Monday, 7th September, to facilitate this, we will open the gates from 8.30—you and your children can arrive at any time between **8.30 and 9.00 on Monday**. You can bring children into school and deliver them to their classroom doors, give children a cuddle and kiss and wave goodbye; unfortunately, you will not be able to enter the cloakroom areas with children, but don't worry staff will make sure children know where to put their belongings. We ask that only one parent accompanies each child, that where possible, you leave younger/older siblings at home, that you pay particular attention to maintain good social distancing, ensure that you do not block pathways/doorways for others, and that you leave the school site as quickly as possible. I will make sure I am at the vehicle gate and will monitor numbers coming on site—I may ask you to wait if we need to slow the flow. Staff will be present around the site to guide you and support you. We can only do this on Monday, however, because of the numbers of staff needed to keep things safe and orderly. On Tuesday, we will revert to the planned 'kiss and go' at the vehicle gate.

We think our arrangements will work, but will obviously keep a close eye on things and make changes when necessary. Please bear with us in the first few days.

Of course the most important thing you can do is talk positively to your child about coming back to school, and remind them that above everything else, as always, the most important thing to all the staff here is that children are safe, and we will do everything we can to make sure they are safe and happy at school. I know that some of you may be worried about the return to school and that by sending your child back, you are showing us a great deal of trust. We don't take this for granted—I remind you of our Rainbow promise, that we will love and care for your children as best we can—their safety, happiness, confidence at school is incredibly important and we will all be working hard to make sure they have a great return to school. Equally important is that we keep you and staff safe and well.

You were brilliant in the summer term, so supportive, sensible and helpful, and because of that we were able to welcome most of our children back to school before the summer break, and none of our children reported any symptoms of COVID. I'm certain that's because of the calm, sensible approach we all took and the fantastic support you all gave us. However, we must not become complacent and must stay alert—your support will be vital in the coming weeks and months.

Have a lovely weekend, we can't wait to see you all again!

Maria & all of us at St James'