



25/05/2020

Dear Parents / Carers and Children,

The Prime Minister last night confirmed that the intended plan to reopen schools to certain year groups of children is to go ahead. We thank you for your response to let us know your intention whether to send your child back to school or to continue home schooling. I have been inundated with enquiries and will not be able to respond to them all individually so I hope the information in this letter will clarify things for you to help you with your concerns.

We have been working hard to prepare the school ready for reopening but following risk assessment we will not be opening to the select year groups of Nursery, Reception, Year 1 and Year 6 along with key worker children until **Monday 8<sup>th</sup> June**. This is for a number of reasons: it gives us more time to prepare the building to make it more conducive to working with smaller groups of children, it means we can be sure to have all the protective and cleaning equipment necessary, it means we can get protocols tighter for the working practice in school and importantly gives us another week for the infection rate to drop even further and relieve some of the anxiety around the reopening of schools before other areas of public life.

Over the coming weeks you will receive the outline of which class your child will be attending. The groups will be chosen by the present class teachers using their knowledge of the children. Once in a group there will be no possibility of moving as the groups must not mix at any time. The numbers we have from your response indicate that we will be able to keep these group numbers smaller than the suggested 15 per group and nearer 10. This gives us greater confidence in our ability to social distance children when possible; Department for Education guidelines does however acknowledge that this may not always be possible particularly with the younger children.

In school we have to redesign the class structure and staff structure. We are having some small scale building work done to make the school safer to work in small groups. We have to redesign how we timetable the day with staggered entry and exit times, break times and lunch times. We have to create segregated play zones outside the class and increase the daily cleaning regime during the day and after school has finished. Classrooms have had to be altered to remove unnecessary items to maximise space and furniture has been rearranged.



The curriculum has also had to be adapted and creating parity between what is taught at school and what can be delivered at home is a priority. We will of course give priority to Maths and English but topic work will also continue. Guidelines highlight the importance of using outdoor spaces when possible and in that respect we are truly blessed here at St. Mary's and we will make the most of our beautiful grounds.

This has been a particularly difficult situation with so many conflicting messages. Different nations within the UK are not in agreement on how to proceed, there is conflicting guidance from the Department for Education and the Teaching Unions and the advice from the British Medical Association differs from that of Public Health England. This leaves the burden of responsibility on individual Headteachers and Governing bodies. For this reason different local authorities and different schools will have very different responses. Some will be open from the 1<sup>st</sup> June some later and others not at all. Each school has had to make their decision with the knowledge of their own situation and no decisions are taken lightly. I hope this makes things clearer as we enter this new phase of school and further information about reopening will follow.

God bless and stay well,

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M Clephane', written in a cursive style.

Mr M Clephane, Headteacher