



22 May 2020

Dear parents/carers,

Your Child, Your Choice

I am writing to you to update you with information that may help in your decision-making about whether or not your child will return to school when able to do so.

Firstly though, on the day after many of us have stood on our doorsteps to clap for NHS staff and carers, I wanted to say that although home-schooling can have its challenges just being at home with your child and keeping them safe has made a tremendous difference to our country in this fight against COVID-19. We recognise and appreciate YOUR efforts in supporting your child's learning and wellbeing. Staff have been telling me about how you have helped your child to access the class pages on the website, watched Youtube videos, accessed Seesaw where it is being used, used Lexia and tuned into the bedtime stories on Facebook. You have also been e-mailing your child's teacher and posting your activities onto the school Facebook page. We continue to encourage you to seek balance in all this. There will be days when your child does not want to work. And perhaps days when you will find it hard to support your child. And other days when your working from home has to be the priority and so your child has to be more independent in what they do. You need to know that it is OK to take a break for an hour, even for a day, or however long is necessary and just enjoy doing something else. Just as at school, if learning becomes difficult we would adapt and adjust the curriculum and timetable, you absolutely are the best judge of whether that is needed at home.

You will be aware, that the school are in the midst of making plans, risk assessments and the necessary arrangements for the further reopening of the school as and when it is safe to do so. Obviously, the safety of our children, staff and our families are our main priority. We are consulting with you as families, as well as following the government guidance, and we are working with governors, the Local Authority, Public Health England, local schools and unions in order for this to happen.

We hope and pray that the Covid-19 crisis will soon be over and that life can return to the way it was before the 20 March school shutdown. However, we still need to take precautions at this time and that is why we have had to make some changes to how we set up our school, our classrooms and the way we do things. This will also impact on you and your child from the moment you arrive at school in the morning.



School may well look a little different, but we want to give you the confidence to know that, as well as safety from the virus, we will do everything we can to make sure that our children's mental health and wellbeing are central in our approach. Prior to your child re-starting school we will post a video on our social media channels and website of what the class space will look like, as it may not be the familiar environment children left on 20 March. We also plan to write to all children today and would be grateful if you could share that letter with them.

Some of the key changes you and your child will notice:

- A staggered start and end to the school day to avoid congestion
- One parent to bring child to school (avoiding public transport if possible)
- One parent allowed onto the school site
- Children to enter the school building by a designated door and to exit this door at home-time
- Parents not permitted within building unless by prior appointment
- Children to wash hands immediately on entering the building and several times throughout the day
- Children to be taught in class "bubbles" of no more than 15, but often less than 10.
- Other than for children of Key Workers, children will be taught in the same year group bubble
- Children not to bring equipment from home, apart from packed lunch if required
- Children to be given personal resource kit in Ziploc folder (pens,pencils,ruler,etc)
- Children to wear clean clothes each day, preferably but not essential this to be uniform (school sweatshirt/polo shirt)
- Children to be taught in the same class bubble space each day
- Children to be given their own desk and seat within their bubble.
- Children to remain within their class bubble at all times through the day, including when eating together and playing together.
- Bubbles will be kept apart to reduce risk of transmission by staggered breaks and lunchtimes
- Whole school gatherings (assemblies) to be suspended
- Indoor PE lessons to be suspended (sports hall redesigned as teaching space)
- Increased use to be made of outdoor learning opportunities
- Staff to be allocated to each bubble. This may not be your child's normal member of staff.

Prior to children returning to school we send you a new home/school agreement setting out the key aspects of the new way of working which we would ask you to share with your child, sign and return it to school when your child comes back.

As you know, we have remained open throughout the crisis to the children of key workers, which allowed them to continue to carry out their jobs in order for our country to continue to function in the fight against COVID-19. Our special thanks and admiration go out to all these workers in this very difficult time and I would like to extend my thanks to our staff who have looked after these children in school.

Following the survey information gathered from parents last week, initial indications show that 69% of families currently do not want to send their children back to school straight away. As confidence grows that number may reduce. Saying “no” at the point of the survey does not mean that your child will be unable to return to school. Your view may change as the national infection picture changes and as you become aware of precautions the school are taking. Many parents expressed doubts about whether it may be too early for children to return to school. I want to make it clear that this will be your choice. There will be nobody asking why you are not sending your child and there will be no penalties for non-attendance.

The survey also shows that the numbers of potential requests for places for children of key workers may increase. As a consequence, we will need to work on a phased, priority basis in order to make this transition. Enabling the children of key workers to return will be our first priority, before children in other year groups.

On Monday 1 June school will be closed to all children as we have a planned INSET day, in order to deliver whole-staff training on new guidance, risk assessments and procedures we will have in place during the COVID-10 situation.

Provided that the government review of progress against the 5 key tests is met and that the governing body is satisfied that it is safe to do so, school will reopen on Tuesday 2 June for children of key workers as our first phase priority. The criteria for Key Worker status has not changed since 20 March and you can check eligibility here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-maintaining-educational-provision/guidance-for-schools-colleges-and-local-authorities-on-maintaining-educational-provision>

If you are a Key Worker and your child requires a place at school during the first week back, can you please complete the Survey Monkey questionnaire here:

<https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/QLS77YX>

We will be in touch with you to confirm their allocated place. If you have not yet used the school childcare since March 20 we require proof that you are in a Key Worker category (letter from employer/work ID).

Sadly, this means that some children who wish to return to school may not have the opportunity to do so as quickly as they had hoped. Prior to other year groups returning we will survey parents to determine spaces and staffing levels required to assist with planning.

Home schooling will continue after half-term and information is available on your child’s class page of our website and is updated weekly. Please make sure that you have a well-deserved break next week and look after each other - no work will be set for the holidays!

We will share more details with you as soon as it is possible to do so. The planning, risk assessments, meetings and navigating the ever-changing guidance has not made it easy to reopen the school for more children. I hope you can understand this situation. Thank you in advance for your understanding and patience during this very difficult time.

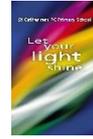
Best wishes



Headteacher



St Catherine's RC Primary



Dear Children

I am writing to you today as it has been a long time since we were last all at school together. Firstly I hope that you are safe and well. I know that all our school staff are missing you and I'm sure that you are missing seeing your friends.

I have been hearing from all our teachers that you have been doing well with the home learning. I would like to ask you to keep that going after the half-term break next week and to try your best. Learning can take lots of different forms and maybe during this time off you have learnt new things like baking, gardening, sewing. Maybe you've become better at art or making things. I've seen lots of lovely rainbows, some even made in Lego. Keep on reading if you can because reading opens up a whole new world beyond our own home. And try to do some exercise every day-we all feel better when we are active.

Today I am writing to you to explain that it might be some while yet before we are all back together. We hope that after half-term we will be able to bring some more children back. But we need to do this slowly so that we make sure that this is done safely for you and for others. This may take some time, so please be patient, especially if your brother's or sister's class is able to come back before yours. I have written to your parents today to share some information about our plans. Once school opens for your year group your parents will decide whether or not they would like you to come back to school. Please respect that this is a very difficult decision for your parents to make and we know that there are lots of things to think about before your parents decide.

Before you come back we will send a video of your class space. We have had to make some changes and plan for smaller groups. That means your whole class won't be together in your classroom. So, each group that comes back will be in what we are calling a "bubble". That bubble will stay together at all times during the day; working, eating and playing together. For a while children will only be able to play with friends in their bubble. As you haven't seen your friends for a long time I am hope that will be OK

Take care, children. Stay safe and keep on letting you light shine. I am very proud of everything you are doing.

Best wishes

Mr Ewing