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Mr M Ewing Headteacher

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Dear Parents and Carers,

As we approach the end of this academic year I am pleased to be writing to you of our plans for a full re-opening of school in September 2020.

Firstly can I thank each and every one of you for guiding your child and family through this difficult time. It has been lovely to hear of the great work that has gone on during the school shutdown. Our children have learnt many different things during the last 16 weeks, many of which will have provided them with lifelong memories. I know that some of you may be anxious about what your child has missed during the school closure. Please don't be. Research from places in the world where school closures happened for significant periods because of earthquakes or hurricanes show that children can and do quickly recover school time lost for learning. So, as we approach the summer break, please draw a breath, reflect back on your time together and celebrate what you have achieved together.

We are looking forward to welcoming ALL our children back to school in September. We must, however, make sure that this is done in such a way as to keep everyone safe and well, with appropriate measures in place in line with government guidance to prevent transmission of coronavirus. The measures put in place to maintain social distancing and good hygiene will help reduce the risk of transmission and it is **essential** that everyone follows these.

Staggered start and finish times to the school day

Children in different year groups will have different times to start and end the day. On Tuesday 8th September

	<u>Start</u>	<u>End</u>
Yr 5 and 6	8.50 am	3.20 pm
Yr 3 and 4	9.00 am	3.10 pm
Yr 1 and 2	9.10 am	3.00 pm
Early Years	9.15 am	3.00 pm

It is essential that families keep to these times in order to reduce congestion on the yard at the beginning and end of the school day. If a family has more than one child in school, the time for the earliest starter and earliest pick up will be the time you should use. At drop-off the sibling(s) will make their way to their own classroom where the staff will be ready for them and at home-time the sibling will make their way to the classroom for their younger sibling's pick-up time.



If you have children from Year 4 upwards please consider dropping your children off at school at their start time and then leaving. Parents/carers are asked not to wait on the yard (to see their child enter the school building), but to leave them in the care of staff who will be on duty on the yard to supervise children. We won't be ringing the bell or lining up in the yard. Parents should leave the school site in the morning and afternoons as soon as possible, without pausing for conversations in the yard. This will help to reduce the number of adults on site and help to reduce the risk of transmission for everyone in the school community.

Please do not arrive early to collect your child at the end of the day. Pupils will leave school directly from their classroom exits, with the exception of Year 5 who will leave via the Reception foyer entrances.

Breaktimes and Lunchtime will be staggered to ensure classes maintain 'social distance' from each other. This means that classes will use zoned areas in the yard and only children in Early Years and Key Stage 1 will be able to use the Hall at lunchtime where they will have a school lunch.

Key Stage 2 (Year 3 - 6) will have a packed lunch which will be eaten in their classroom. Children may bring their packed lunch in their lunch box. Children entitled to a Free School Meal will be provided with a school packed lunch unless parents tell us that they wish to provide their own.

Children will be given a reading book on a Monday which is to be returned to school on a Friday. Children are **not** to bring their book bag to school every day. We will provide each child from Y1-Y6 with a pencil case filled with the resources they will need for learning so there is no need to bring anything from home or to share resources at school. Homework will be given out on a Monday to be returned by Friday.

Children are asked to wear clean uniform each day. We do not expect families to buy extra uniform; instead, we would urge families to make use of the stock of good quality uniform which children have outgrown, that has been handed back to school. Please speak to your child's class teacher or the school office to access this uniform.

All staff are working very hard to ensure that your child is able to return to school safe and happy. We know that children may be anxious about returning to school, to being in their new class with new staff. Whilst it is natural to feel nervous we also want children to feel excited about coming back and seeing all their friends.

Some things in school may appear to be different but other things are just the same - the staff who are looking forward to seeing the children back in school, happy to see their 'old class' and no doubt wondering 'how they've grown!' as well as looking forward to getting to know their new class, (although they have already heard such a lot about them from their previous teacher!). Each class teacher has placed a Welcome video on your child's new class page; your child can watch that as many times as they like over summer.

The work we do in class will be a little different as we plan a curriculum to catch up on what has not been done in the previous year, whilst still moving forward in our new year. We will begin the new term with an "Arts Week" mixed with a variety of Personal and Social lessons which will help us to get the new year off to the best start.

As parents will not be able to speak with staff on the yard at the beginning or end of the day, parents can contact staff via Seesaw and staff can let parents know how the children have settled into their new class. Please ensure you are signed up to Seesaw in September- we'll share the details of how to do this with you early next term. Some classes have already trialled this and it has been an effective tool for communication during lockdown. If you wish to speak to the class teacher then this must be by pre-arranged appointment.

With Early Years we understand that arrangements for settling children in at the beginning of the year and start of each day need to be different. We will encourage parents to hand over children and leave as soon as possible. However, we will work with you to ensure that the start of the day is calm and welcoming for all children.

Parents are asked not to come into the school building but to contact the school office by email or telephone. If the query cannot be dealt with using email/telephone then an appointment must be made.

We expect these measures to be in place for a number of weeks. We will, however, keep everything under review to ensure we are following Government guidance and we will keep you updated as and when necessary. We are anticipating a further government announcement about education on 11 August.

It is vital that families notify school **immediately** if a child or member of their household displays any symptoms of coronavirus (high temperature, cough or loss of sense of smell/taste).

If a child displays symptoms at school then parents will be notified. Parents will be asked to request a test <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-getting-tested> or <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/testing-for-coronavirus/> or order by telephone via NHS 119. The child must self-isolate for 7 days. Other household members will need to isolate for 14 days from the day the symptoms first presented. If a negative test result is confirmed then the child may return to school.

If your child is not able to attend school, the school office **must** be informed as to the reason why. School must be contacted before 9.10 am where possible. We have the answering service to enable messages to be left. Please call 0191 2326803 and select option 1. Please ensure you speak slowly and clearly, stating your child's name, class and reason for absence.

Please ensure that the school office is notified of any changes of contact details. (email: admin@stcatherinesnewcastle.sch.uk or telephone 0191 2326803).

We will be re-starting Breakfast Club / After School Club childcare at the start of term and bookings can be made in the normal way through ParentPay. If you are a new user of this service please contact the school to register. For the first half-term we will not be running any after-school activities. This will be reviewed in early October.

Of all the important things that children go to school to learn, reading comes high up the list. Learning to read takes practice. Lots of practice. Please try to find time for two key activities: listening to your child read and reading to your child. Details of the 'summer reading challenge' are on our website with information on how to access free e-books. Remember - reading is the key to all learning! When your child returns to school, please return any home reading / library books that they have had over the last few months. I'm planning to do a bedtime story on the school Facebook page in the first week of September just before school returns so please do look out for that as I'll share with you any further updates.

We wish all our Year 6 children much happiness and success as they move on to their next school in September. I am sure all of the children leaving us will thrive and we wish them good luck as they embark on the next part of their learning journey. We are very proud of what you have become and look forward to hearing about how you are doing in the future. Thank you to all our families too, for whom Friday marks their last day with a family member at the school. Remember to keep a bit of St Catherine's forever in your heart-you will always be part of the "St Catherine's Family".

Thank you to all of our own school angels, the staff of St Catherine's, for their hard work and commitment to the children during the last few months. Thank you to all of the families and Governors for the kind words and support we have received during this term. It has been very much appreciated by all of the staff. We will say goodbye to Mrs Tabone properly in September, and welcome Mr Zobel who is new to Year 3.

We wish you a safe, healthy and happy summer break and look forward to welcoming everyone back to school at the start of the new school year - **Tuesday 8 September, 2020.**

With very best wishes,

God Bless

M Ewing
Headteacher