



St Mary's Catholic Primary School



Tuesday 25th August 2020

Dear Parents/ Guardian

I hope that everyone has had a lovely summer in spite of everything and that you are looking forward to the children returning as much as the staff and I are looking forward to welcoming them back. There is no way that any form of remote learning can match the buzz of pupils working and discussing in a classroom.

As we are now in a position to reopen the Governing Body, staff and I have been carefully assessing ways to mitigate any risk from Covid 19 as well as other seasonal ailments. I wanted to share with you some of the ways in which we will be responding to the ongoing pandemic to reassure those who will be understandably worried at their children returning to school. Firstly teachers will be keeping their classrooms as well ventilated as possible depending on the weather conditions. Also that we will be ensuring that shared resources such as I Pads are always wiped down after use ready for the next user. Although visors will not be worn by staff when teaching from the front of the classroom they will be worn when working near children or other adults. Although face masks have been much in the news recently no pupils are expected to wear face masks in school.

We have also reviewed our Marking Policy to prevent cross contamination between books whilst still allowing developmental feedback to pupils verbally and using digital copies of their work. Please bear in mind too that teachers will not be able to offer face to face meetings at this point- but will be available through phone calls or Teams meetings.

When in class all pupils will sit in pairs facing forward. Children will remain in this 'micro-bubble' as far as possible and resources- glue, pencils, scissors etc- will be shared only within the pair. Similarly pupils will be cared for by the same staff daily as far as possible.

Another change is that no Reading books will be sent home for the moment but a selection will be set by staff from the Oxford Owls online selection. Unfortunately the school library will also remain out of use for the moment so that books aren't passing between home and school.

When in school access to the toilets will be monitored to prevent any chance of congestion. Playtimes and lunchtimes will be staggered by class group as will arrival and departure times. Initially at least there will be no whole school activities and assemblies will be shared through Teams. The Hall will not be used for lunches either and initially pupils will be eating a packed lunch- either from home or the school canteen- in their classroom supervised by their teachers. PE kit should be worn on PE days to avoid the necessity of changing. Uniform should be removed and washed as soon as pupils arrive home to reduce the chance of any virus being brought home. Although water fountains are not in use we will provide a school water bottle that can stay in school where it will be washed and refilled by staff.

In order to keep the community of St Mary's safe we also need parents to do their utmost to assist. Current research shows far less risk to the children than to adults whether parents, grandparents or staff! Please could all parents follow the one way system we have used since June and enter via the playground gates and leave through the small red gate on the right as you enter the playground before exiting via the gate usually used to access the school office. Arriving punctually is critical to keep the entry and exit systems flowing and to avoid congestion around school. Groups of adults could potentially spread Covid 19 so please stick to your collection zone and maintain social distancing. Also after dropping off/ collecting parents should leave school premises to ensure that other parents can collect/ drop off safely. If you are unsure just ask one of the school staff who will be out on the playground for the first few weeks.

If your child shows any symptoms of COVID19 i.e. a new and persistent cough and/or high temperature, and or loss of taste or smell, they must be kept at home and Government guidelines followed. Should this be the case please inform the school office.

If any pupil shows signs of COVID19 symptoms in school, parents will be contacted for them to be collected immediately.

The current COVID19 situation in the UK remains dynamic with government guidance and best practice being updated on a regular basis. Our plans outlined in this email may need to change in line with updates to guidance as we go through the term.

I realise this remains an unsettling time for pupils and families. Please be assured staff at St Mary's will be working to enable all pupils to have a positive, productive school year.

I would be grateful if could you discuss this letter with your children and stress the need for frequent careful- not a quick dibble- hand washing.

I look forward to seeing everyone next Wednesday- Monday is a Bank Holiday and Tuesday is a training day

Best wishes

Mr Shingler