

Saint Mary's Catholic Primary School



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RE: Whole School Update on possible opening to more children from 1st June

20th May 2020

Dear Parents and Carers,

I am writing to update you on our planning for a phased and gradual return to school for some children in certain year groups. Parents of children in EYFS, Year 1 and Year 6 have been completing an online form here: www.bit.ly/SMINR16 if you are a parent of children in these year groups and as yet have not had the opportunity to complete the survey, please give it a go as this information is vital in helping plan for a return.

The safety, health and wellbeing of everyone in the school is, of course my highest priority. I am planning how to put into place the measures needed so that the school can be run safely, hygienically and with appropriate procedures in place and I am also completing the Local Authority's risk assessment to support this outcome.

The Government has stressed that all re-opening plans will depend on infection rates decreasing and other factors and it won't make its final decision on whether schools can definitely reopen until May 28th. This uncertainty makes the planning even more difficult, but I will continue to develop our plans to welcome some children back into school – we really miss seeing them! We know they miss school and we want them back, but only when it is safe to do so.

The Government guidance says that the maximum number of children that can be in a room when school reopens is 15. I will therefore need to manage the number of pupils and staff that your children play and learn with whilst in school. There's also the expectation that, for each group of 15, they have a familiar adult - a teacher or teaching assistant.

If your child has specific health vulnerabilities, they should not come to school. If your household has someone who is extremely vulnerable (i.e. who has received a NHS letter saying they must shield for 12 weeks), please use the NHS/government guidance to decide whether your child should return to school in June. It would be

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helpful for you to let us know if you fall into this category; and whether, if you are returning to work, you would like your child to attend the Childcare Club.

How we will manage your bubbles (the groups of no more than 15 children) is not known at this stage because to ensure we have no more than 15 children in one room, children in Nursery, Reception, Y1 and Y6 could be spread out across the school – utilising more of the available classrooms and more teachers too. As part of the ongoing work in preparation of if/when schools re-open we are continuing to look at every way possible to ensure that the children of St Mary's whether they're at school or choose to remain at home receive the best support we as a school can possibly give them. We will of course keep you updated once things become clearer.

Whenever we re-open, it will be important to avoid large numbers of children and parents gathering at the beginning and end of the school day. This will mean we will have to stagger the times that groups arrive and leave, making some changes to the school day and the school week. Government guidance says that parents should not come past the school gates. I need to look into how our younger children will be able to safely make their way to classes – bearing in mind that some of them will most probably not be in their usual more familiar rooms.

To stress again - in order to put the appropriate measures needed in place, I need to know how many children are going to come to school should we reopen from 1st June. I urge all parents of children in nursery, reception, Year 1 and Year 6 to complete the online survey by this Friday. Once we know how many children to expect, we can then work out our staffing and when each group can return during the summer term. It's important that I let you know that the guidance from Government and from the Council is that schools plan as though all children in those year groups will return. This could mean starting with much smaller groups to begin with.

If your child is already attending our Childcare Club for key worker and vulnerable children, they can continue to do so for the time being. The Club will be open over half term and a new sign up form for the next 3 weeks will go onto our website at the end of this week. If you are a keyworker returning to work check that you are on the Government's Key Worker list 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 have any questions please email the office. Our Childcare Club hours may have to change once more children in other year groups return.

I will write to you again when I am able to share specific arrangements and plans for each year group. Please do bear with us, I know that many of you will already have lots of questions, but I would ask for your patience and understanding as I continue to organise the safe return to school. I value your opinions and will continue to seek your views – please email them to reply@smi.hounslow.sch.uk with 'Return to school' in the subject line.

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In the meantime, please do continue to encourage your child with their home learning and mention any issues to the class teacher when they call.

We all hope that you and your families are well and safe at this time and I will be in touch again soon.

St Mary: Pray for us!

Thank you for your continued support.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Jarley Marshall". The signature is written in a dark ink and is positioned to the right of the "Yours sincerely" text.

Head Teacher

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