

## **Important Information to All Parents Planned Partial Re-opening of Schools**

Dear Parents and Carers,

I am writing to you following the Government's announcement last week of 'their decision' for children in Reception, Year 1 and Year 6, to return to school from 1st June.

As you will be aware, school has been open for the children of key workers and vulnerable children since Monday 23rd March. We have managed this very successfully, however with a very small group of pupils. The current arrangements for those pupils will continue. The Government's proposals would require our school, in theory, to accept over 90 pupils. In light of all the issues around social distancing and hygiene this is quite simply not possible at present.

Maintaining the safety of your children, together with the safety of our staff, at all times is essential. We have looked carefully at the numbers of pupils we can accommodate in each room; this is a maximum of 10. The number of Staff available to support pupils has also been reduced, due to 'shielding' and childcare issues.

We are currently planning and trialling the new routines that need to be established both inside and outside the school building; however there is still much work to be done and we also need more safety equipment to arrive before we can extend our opening safely.

Please note: Your children will not be returning to the classrooms or possibly the staff they left in March. This again is simply not possible!

Many of you will have already made a decision that you do not want your child or children to return to school at present. Be very clear, this is your choice and there is no pressure for you to send your child. You will not get fined!

Alternatively, many of you are eagerly awaiting a decision that may enable you to send your child to school, and secure a return to work.

Having reviewed guidance and consulted on the school specific issues, we are presenting the following decisions and plan to you. We appreciate that at this point we are not able to meet all of your needs, I am also aware of the difficulties this may cause for families with more than one child, where one is in school and the other is not. At present we really value your continued patience.

### **Return to St. John's CofE Primary School - June 2020, Phase 1 Plan (Version 1)**

At the time of writing we are not opening for Reception or Year 6 children from 1<sup>st</sup> June. We also have no plans to open Nursery.

We are working on Year 1 returning on the 8<sup>th</sup> June. However, if school, local, regional or national circumstances change, then so will this decision\*.

Step 1: All parents with children in Reception, Year 1 and Year 6 to complete a simple 'Yes' 'No' survey about return to school. We would like you all to complete this as soon as possible today, or at the latest by close of school on 21<sup>st</sup> May. Your decision cannot be changed after this date as we will be using this information for all planning and risk assessment work.

Step 2: Arrangements made for pupils in Y1 to return to school. Further information will then be communicated directly to parents and carers of pupils in Y1 about the plans for their child and all other specific arrangements\*.

Step 3: Consider options for possible opening of Reception and Year 6. Only, after a review of demand, capacity to deliver sustained support, hygiene resources are in good supply, outcomes of monitoring and additional risk assessments are all complete.

\*Please note: At the time of writing there remain many unsolved arguments about the opening of school. There remains an on-going health risk to children and all adults working in school; the North East is one of the highest risk areas in the country, and there are significant concerns over the working practices in local factories.

If at anytime we feel that our plans are not working then we reserve the right to change these plans or withdraw this provision. We will endeavour to communicate this to you as quickly as possible.

### **Additional Information about Grouping and Organisation**

If you do want to send your child to school then I just want to let you know how very different it will be, following the guidance we have to follow from the Department of Education.

- Children will be in small groups of no more than ten children. Social distancing must continue in school.
- The children will remain in their group throughout the day, including playtimes and lunchtimes.
- There will be members of staff allocated to each group. This will mean that your child may not be in their usual class with their usual teacher and the full curriculum will not be taught.
- The group of staff and children are planned to be together all day, every day. Teachers will be following the Home-Learning plans that will continue to be provided for those parents who opt for their child/ren to remain at home.
- Children will be assigned a desk and equipment to use where they will sit throughout the day.
- Break and lunch times will also need to be staggered to ensure social distancing can be adhered to as much as possible.
- Clothing should be worn that can be washed each day. A water bottle is the only item that should be brought into school. All children in Y1 will be provided with food.
- Drop off and pick up times will be staggered with only one parent allowed to do this at designated entry and exit points.
- Parents will not be permitted to enter the building and Staff should not be approached at the beginning or end of the day to talk about any issue. Communication with Staff should be through email or telephone.

We know this is a really difficult time for everybody. School will look and feel very different in the coming half term. We want to assure you though, that the safety of our school community is always our prime concern.

Uncertainty remains as the government and teaching unions are continuing to discuss the re-opening of schools. The doctors union and some local authorities are also now advising schools not to open. Again, our plans could change very quickly as a result of this.

We will keep you informed and let you know of any decisions as soon as we can. We hope everyone is safe and well.

Our very best wishes to you all.

Mr Andrew Farnell (Head Teacher)  
Mrs Nicola Pallister (Deputy Headteacher)  
Mr Andrew Kay (Deputy Headteacher)  
Alison Tweddle (Chair of Governors)