



Our Lady Catholic Primary School

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Dear Parents and Carers,

I know that so many of you are waiting to hear our plans on what school life may look like after half term - if the government decides that it is safe for some year groups to attend. As you may be aware, the DfE has published extensive guidance on the strategy for re-opening schools as early as 1st June for children in Nursery, Reception, Year 1 and Year 6. The guidance stipulates that school leaders need to be mindful of exercising effective infection protection and control, and should consider those who are shielding, extremely clinically vulnerable or moderate clinically vulnerable. The guidance is very clear that shielding or clinically vulnerable children are not expected to attend nursery or school and additionally, shielding or clinically vulnerable adults (including members of staff) are advised not to work outside of the home.

Now that the school's leadership team and governors have had the chance to understand the guidance that has been set out, we can now communicate with you regarding our plan to move forwards in re-opening our school safely.

Throughout this week, schools have received further guidance on planning for re-opening. These measures include:

- If a child has a temperature/cough/is feeling unwell, they will be required to be collected immediately and, if an adult becomes unwell, they will leave school immediately. Both children and adults will be required to self-isolate for 14 days, or until tested negative;
- Adults are not required to use PPE in school unless administering first aid or intimate care.
- Class sizes of no more than 15 children in a room at any time – preferably taught by a qualified teacher but in the absence of teachers, taught by a teaching assistant (TA) under the direction of a teacher. You should be aware that this means that some groups of children will not necessarily be taught by their normal class teacher until the end of term;
- Groups of children must NOT mix together or come into contact with each other, and children within a group must remain 2m apart if they can. Class capacities will be determined by applying the 2m social distancing rule as far as possible. Children and staff will spend their time (in class and at break times) in their 'small group bubble' and will not be able to mix with other bubbles. Realistically, we know that this will not happen at all times, which is also recognised in the government guidelines, but we have put procedures in place to ensure it does as much as possible.

- Reducing movement around the school grounds – each group will be taught in the same room consistently during their time in school.
- Staggering break and lunchtimes and zoning the outdoor areas so groups are not mixing together/moving around the school at the same time. Toilet areas will need to be managed carefully;
- As we aim to maintain children's wellbeing and happiness, as well as keeping them safe, we will adapt the timetable and curriculum to include more outdoor learning, extra playtime, handwashing and Personal, Social, Health Education (PSHE) lessons.
- Toys and equipment should not be used by other groups and must be cleaned between groups using them (eg.in the case of Nursery and Reception children). This will lead to a reduced amount of equipment in school for use including toys that are used for educational purposes in the Early Years;
- Unnecessary items – furnishings will be removed from classrooms and stored elsewhere in school. There will be no soft toys, resources or furnishings in classes;
- Staggering the start and end time of the day to ensure groups do not congregate and reduce the need for adults to enter the school grounds – therefore timings of the school day will differ for each group of children so that they can arrive/be collected at different times. There will be strict protocols which parents will be required to adhere to at the beginning and end of the day and adult to adult contact will need to be minimal. Only 1 parent/carer should escort their child to school – **this is so important**. All pupils will be welcomed by a member of staff at the playground gates and brought directly into the classrooms in the morning. Parents of different families will not be able to collect each other's children. Additional siblings **MUST NOT** be brought onto school site unless strapped into a buggy or push chair.
- No visitors into the school will be allowed, including parents (only deliveries).
- Communication between parents and the school office will initially have to be via email/telephone.
- Strict cleaning protocols will be adhered to throughout the day, including all staff and children washing their hands thoroughly with soap and water on arrival and before leaving the school grounds every day. Additional hand cleaning with hand sanitisers will be provided in all classrooms and used regularly throughout the day. Bins in classrooms, toilets and on the playground will be emptied regularly throughout the day;
- Classroom doors will be propped open and windows opened to ensure rooms remain well ventilated;
- Outdoor apparatus will not be used by any group as this cannot be cleaned thoroughly between group use. Equally this may extend to other equipment at these times due to the need for cleaning and adults available to do this;
- Children will not be required to bring anything to school from home other than a coat, packed lunch (if required) and a water bottle. They will also not be permitted to bring anything home other than these items to avoid cross-contamination. We will not allow PE kits to be brought into school;
- Children will be allocated their own stationery pack to keep at school;
- Lunches will be staggered. As the school is not able to accommodate more than 26 pupils at a safe distance in the dining room, a hot or cold packed lunch option will be provided to the children each day and lunch will be eaten on the school field in small groups;
- There will be numerous risk assessments carried out prior to school re-opening which will be reviewed daily if school does indeed re-open.

The is not an exhaustive list - but hopefully this should give you some indication of how the school will need to operate as part of the government's Covid-19 recovery strategy, so that you can make an informed decision about whether or not you wish your child to return to school this term.

If it is agreed that if it is safe for children in Nursery, Reception Year 1 and Year 6 to return (we will be informed by the government by 28th May), we will introduce a **PHASED** and **STAGGERED** return from 2nd June. **Siblings of children in other year groups will not be allowed to return as per government guidance. UNFORTUNATELY THIS IS NOT NEGOTIABLE.** Key worker children will continue to be prioritised as per recommendations, as will vulnerable children, following conversations with families.

- Year 6 children will return on Tuesday 2nd June;
- Reception children will return on Wednesday 3rd June;
- Year 1 children will return on Monday 8th June;
- Nursery children will return on Monday 15th June.

The 1st June will be closed to **ALL** children (including key worker children) as staff implement the final stages of our comprehensive plan to make the school as safe as possible for the children and adults to return. It will also allow us to deliver essential staff training.

In addition to this, the school will be closed for children **EVERY FRIDAY** (with the exception of the key worker children) in order for the school to receive a weekly deep clean. This is an essential aspect of our action plan. Home-learning will be provided in the same format as it is currently.

Please also bear in mind that it will not be possible to run two different teaching curriculums for those in school and those at home and, so the home-learning method (which has so far been highly effective and successful in maintaining the children's learning and progress) will continue for all children. When the children are in school from Monday to Thursday, they will complete the same work as their home-learning peers under the supervision of a teacher or teaching assistant - with social distancing rules being adhered to, to the very best of our ability. In addition, we will, of course, have a strong focus on supporting the children's wellbeing and mental health as they make the transition from home to school.

I would ask you to please consider whether you wish your child to return to school this academic year, knowing all the information that I have been able to share and having given yourselves time to reflect. The government has been clear in its guidance to parents that, whilst encouraging children and young people in the eligible year groups and priority groups to attend school, unless they are self-isolating or there are other reasons for absence (such as shielding due to health conditions), **parents will not be fined for non-attendance at this time.** You are simply being asked to notify the school so that we are aware of your decision this term.

In order to enable those children eligible to return safely to school after half term, we have to make sure that there are stringent risk assessments, in-depth checks and additional cleaning measures in place so that the school environment remains a safe a place as possible for all children, staff and their families (whom they are going home to). **Safety, not education, still remains the priority at this time.**

Returning to school in June is going to require staff and parents to work together. I would ask you to be understanding of the school constraints, to be flexible and to understand why we are taking the precautions and stringent measures that have been outlined above. My priority is for all staff, children and their families to stay well and stay safe. If this means you choose not to return your child for the last few weeks of school, then I will respect this decision and I will guarantee we will continue to provide excellent home-learning opportunities for your child at home. If you wish your child to return to school for four days a week, then I will do my utmost to make sure they are kept safe and are well-cared for whilst in school and that they enjoy their time in school as much as possible.

I would love nothing more than to be able to open the doors of Our Lady Catholic Primary school to all children once again and welcome all our families back into our school community. However, the scientific evidence is still not strong enough to enable the government to safely re-open schools fully. This means our school, as we know it, is going to drastically change for this half term at least and possibly for the foreseeable future. Therefore, it is imperative that staff, parents and children fully understand the changes that will be implemented and the role they will have in adhering to these much stricter rules in order to keep everyone attending school, and our families, as safe as possible.

If you have any further questions then please do not hesitate to email me and I will do my best to answer them. Obviously these plans will be subject to constant review. Over the next week, I will be sharing further specific details with you regarding how the school day itself will look for the classes who will be returning.

As ever, your support in these unprecedented and challenging times is greatly appreciated.

Kind regards,

Richard Curry
Headteacher