

ST. MARY'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL NORTHAMPTON



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Dear Parents and Carers,

Planning for the full re-opening of school 3rd September 2020

We are getting very excited to be fully reopening St Mary's and following up from my letter on the 15th July, I am writing to give you more details regarding changes we have made to the normal school procedures. This is to ensure we operate as safely as possible for all.

Our priority is to manage a successful and happy return of the whole St Mary's community, getting the pupils back into school, re-establishing healthy routines and to offer as wide a range of opportunities as possible. This is a common goal I'm sure, for parents, pupils and staff alike.

As you can imagine, we have put considerable time and energy into our planning for the start of term, based on the Government's guidance which has been published (and updated many times) over the Summer.

The basic principles on minimising the spread of the disease remain unchanged. You will by now be very familiar with them:

1. Cleaning hands more often than usual;
2. Ensuring good respiratory hygiene;
3. Cleaning frequently touched surfaces;
4. Minimising contact

On the school website under the parent section you will find a reopening page. Here I will be adding information and our latest guidance before the start of term. For now, I want to bring to your attention key aspects of our planning, and measures that we will be taking. We will, of course, respond to any changes to the situation as it develops both nationally and locally. We will also keep all measures under continual review.

1. Minimising contact with individuals who are unwell

It is absolutely essential that no pupil, staff member or visitor comes into school if they are unwell, have any symptoms of COVID or have been in contact with anyone who has had COVID19. **This is the single most important factor in minimising the spreading of the disease.** Anyone disregarding this is putting the whole community at significant additional risk – hence we need all parents to monitor their children carefully and keep them at home when they display any symptoms including a raised temperature.

The main symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19) are:

- a high temperature – this means you feel hot to touch on your chest or back (you do not need to measure your temperature)
- a new, continuous cough – this means coughing a lot for more than an hour, or three or more coughing episodes in 24 hours (if you usually have a cough, it may be worse than usual)
- a loss or change to your sense of smell or taste – this means you've noticed you cannot smell or taste anything, or things smell or taste different to normal.

If your child demonstrates COVID symptoms, in addition to keeping them at home and letting the school know, you must book a test immediately by either calling **NHS helpline on 119** or by **the NHS website**.

If anyone in your household demonstrates COVID symptoms, you must also keep your child at home, let the school know and book a test immediately by either calling NHS helpline on 119 or by the NHS website. It is critical in the above circumstances that you keep the school informed and follow all government advice.

We know that parents and families will have lots of questions about the reopening of school in September. To help parents and families understand the actions we are taking, to help keep everyone safe and our expectations of everyone, the information attached summarises the main points in the risk assessment. We hope you find this information useful.

Finally...for now... Many thanks in advance for all your support. I hope this letter and guidance has given you some reassurance of the type of measures we are taking for the re-opening of the school for all pupils on 3rd September.

With Warmest wishes for the term ahead

Kind Regards

K. Yuen

Executive Headteacher



September 2020 Re-opening.

A summary of the arrangements for parents and families.

We know that parents and families will have lots of questions about the reopening of school in September. At St Mary's, our leaders have used the Government Guidance to develop an action plan and carry out a risk assessment. This will be made available on the school website, in the 'School Reopening' page, in the 'Parents' section.

To help parents and families understand the actions we are taking to help keep everyone safe and our expectations of everyone, the information below summarises the main points in the risk assessment. We hope you find this information useful:

When will the children start back at school?

- All Children in Reception, Years 1 to 6 will start back at school on Thursday 3rd September.
- The new children who are joining Reception will start school for a morning or afternoon session (which the details you have already been advised) . This is because we have arranged some short 'getting to know you' sessions for all the new reception children on Thursday 3rd and Friday 4th September. Most of the new children have never visited our school so we want them to feel happy and comfortable starting school in a place that is familiar to them.

Do they need to wear uniform?

- Yes, we always expect all children to wear full uniform. Which includes an official school logo cardigan or jumper, with grey skirt or trousers and black school shoes only, no black trainers.
- Children will need to bring their PE kit into school and this can be left on their peg in school.
- Children are permitted to bring a bag to school however, they are not allowed to bring unnecessary items from home. They must only bring a water bottle, packed lunch (if required) and any other necessary items. Please leave pencil cases at home as the school will provide all the necessary stationery. Please remember that all items MUST have your child's name clearly marked on them.

What happens if I need to use public transport to travel to school?

- If you use public transport to travel to and from school, all adults and children over the age of 11 must wear a face mask. Facemasks are not allowed to be worn by children in school.

How should we travel to school?

- We encourage all parents to walk or cycle to school to reduce congestion, help the local environment and improve the children's fitness. Our bicycle racks have been repositioned , staff will direct you to the new position further along by the carpark.

What measures are in place to reduce mass gatherings of parents and children at the start and end of school?

- To ensure that teaching time is not affected we will be splitting the school into 2 distinct groups with **Group 1 arriving at 8.45am** and **Group 2 arriving at 8.55am**.
- Children will be admitted through the gate at their specific time. To minimise contact we will only allow Reception parents to enter the school site at the start of the day. **Families with children in more than one year group should arrive together at the earliest time.**

Group 1 8.45am– Year 1, Year 2 Year 4 and Year 6

Group 2 8.55am–Year 3, Year 5 + Reception (from first full week) •

Controlled pick up time following a circular route

- The classes will be brought to the playground and lined up at the end of the day.
- One parent per family (younger siblings will also be admitted if necessary) will enter the site at 3.15pm and enter the playground through the car park gate.
- Children will be met by their parent and follow the one way route around the school to exit by the side gate near the school gardens.
- The reception children will be picked up as normal from their classroom and will need to follow the one way route too.
- Initially this will mean, that the pick up will take longer as we ensure children are safely passed to their parents.
- As usual if we require parental permission to dismiss year 6 children who are walking home alone. Please don't assume this can happen. Written notification is needed.

Please note- parents must not gather and should exit the school site as quickly as possible to minimise contact.

I use a childminder to drop-off and collect my child, what arrangements are in place for them?

- The childminder must drop-off and collect your child according to the family routes. It is the responsibility of parents to share the details with childminders and make sure they are clear about the arrangements.

Where will I drop-off or collect my child from? Are the drop-off and collection points in the same places?

- Children will go straight to their classroom when entering the school site.
- Reception parents can escort their child to the Reception entrance gate.
- All Year 1-6 children will be collected from the playground.

When waiting to collect children, parents and other adults must keep any other children close to them; they are not allowed to move away from the adult or use the Trim Trail/ play equipment.

- We look forward to offering a full selection of After School Clubs as soon as possible, details of clubs will be shared separately.

What hygiene measures are in place? What are you doing to keep the school clean?

- We have hygiene kits in each classroom, including cleaning products and equipment. Surfaces are cleaned regularly and all equipment is cleaned in between use.
- We have an extra cleaner on site each day to conduct a 'midday' clean as well as cleaners after school.
- We have removed lots of the equipment and items from the rooms to ensure surfaces are easily cleaned.
- Most soft furnishings have been removed from classrooms.
- Children are expected to wash their hands multiple times throughout the day; members of staff will be available to support and supervise handwashing where it is appropriate, and we have visual reminders in all the toilets and sink areas about good handwashing.
- We have plenty of tissues and remind children about good nasal hygiene.
- We have supplies of hand-gel throughout the school and children are expected to use this regularly (in addition to handwashing).

How will you make sure children are socially distant with each other?

- Children have been organised into class groups that will stay with each other for most of their time in school. You may have heard them being referred to as 'bubbles'. At St.Mary's, most classes have created the main 'bubble' but we may allow children to mix for very short periods of time e.g. for phonic sessions in Years ½ or a short 'catch-up' intervention with a Teaching Assistant, however strict social distancing would be in place.
- Year One and Year Two will mix into groups for their Read Write Inc sessions, the groupings will largely remain the same until half term. They will maintain social distancing within their areas.
- Playtimes will be staggered so that fewer children are outside the classrooms. Our playground will be split to create smaller areas for each class to play in. This way, the groups will not routinely mix with each other. Each group will have their supervising adult who will initiate games with the children.
- Children will not move around the site as much as they used to however, when they do, they will use social distancing markers that are on the floor throughout the whole site to help them.
- We recognise that social distancing with the younger children is a challenge so we will remind them regularly about it, but we cannot guarantee that it can be maintained with the younger children. The government guidance states that schools do not need to insist on social distancing with the younger children. We want our children to learn through play and interaction with others.

How will staff social distance?

- Staff will continue to maintain 1m+ social distancing wherever possible. Our staffroom will not be used for staff to congregate.
- We will not allow visitors or parents into the school building to maintain good social distancing, however we are still available to talk to parents either over the phone, email or online meetings such as Teams or Zoom.

What will the classrooms look like?

- The classrooms do look a bit sparser than they usually do, this is so that the surfaces are easily cleaned.

- In Years 1 to 6, the desks have been arranged into front facing rows.
- Teachers are planning learning activities that reduce the need for close face to face interaction.
- Adults will give feedback to the children at the adults' level rather than the adult moving to the child's level.
- In Reception and Year 1, we will allow a more 'free flow' approach to the provision so that the children can learn through play. In Year 1, the children will sit in front facing rows as part of their transition from Reception. They will be allowed to sit on the carpet in small groups but will be expected to distance themselves as much as possible.

What equipment will be available to the children? What will they need to bring from home?

- All children will be given their own equipment because they are not allowed to share equipment such as pens and pencils.
- Any equipment that does need to be shared will be cleaned thoroughly in between uses.
- Children will be expected to bring a named water bottle to school. This will stay on their desk to reduce movement around the classroom.
- Reading books will be sent home once per week. They will be cleaned after they have been returned and will only be permitted to go back onto bookshelves after 72 hours.
- Children must bring a pair of trainers to change into before PE lessons; these trainers can be kept in school but do not replace the school shoes.
- School PE Kit

Do the normal rules and expectations still apply?

Absolutely! We have very high expectations for behaviour and attitude at St. Mary's and we expect all children to meet our expectations. Some children may need additional support and guidance to meet the expectations and we have a team of staff who can provide this.

- It would be very useful for parents to begin to talk to their child about the school expectations and routines before the start of the Autumn Term particularly if the routine at home has not been maintained during the recent closure.
- If the bedtime routine has not been maintained, we strongly recommend parents begin to reestablish this important routine as soon as possible.

How will you make sure the children settle into their new class and teachers? How are you going to support their wellbeing after such a difficult time?

- The activities for the first two weeks of term will be planned to support the transition for everyone. We understand lots of our children will not have been in school for over five months, so the teachers are planning to take their time to make sure the children can settle in. The children will revisit our school mission, values and expectations.
- Every child will have a session with a familiar member of our teaching assistant team to share their experiences over lockdown or any concerns they may have about restarting school. We have devised a simple survey for the children to complete so that our teachers, leaders and wellbeing team can identify any children who may need some further support. By talking to all the children, and using the information shared with us by parents in the recent online survey, we can make sure children receive personalised support if they need it.
- All our teaching team will receive further training on the Teacher Training days in September about strategies to support wellbeing and our recovery curriculum.

How will you help the children to 'catch up'?

- Our priority is around wellbeing and health.
- When the children have settled in, their teachers will assess them all over the first few weeks and will plan support for anyone who needs additional help in Reading, Writing and Maths.
- All teachers and leaders have reviewed the curriculum and adjusted our plans so that it enables the children to repeat aspects they may need to, but also supports rapid progress.
- As we all know, reading is very important, so, by reading at least five times per week with your child they will keep up to speed.

What will happen at lunchtime?

- A revised menu is on offer and, from September, to include hot food. Food will be eaten in classrooms to avoid mixing between classes.
- Hot lunches will be served to the children and they will eat with the rest of the children in their group/ bubble. As normal, lunches will be booked and, for Key Stage 2 children, paid for through Gateway.
- Lunch will be served in the classrooms to children in Years 1 to 6. Children in Reception will eat their lunch in the Hall.
- Children can bring a packed lunch; parents must ensure the lunch box is cleaned thoroughly every day.
- We do encourage all children to have a school meal because they are fresh, well balanced with locally produced ingredients; they're very popular with the children because we have a varied menu of delicious food.
- Like morning playtime, each group/ class will have their own section on the playground and they will not be allowed to mix with other groups of children.

What happens if a child gets ill in my child's group?

- No child or adult showing signs of infection are allowed on the premises.
- Staff and pupils are required to have immediate tests if they show symptoms. If a child is sent home with symptoms, we expect parents arrange a test for the child.
- Thermometers will be used if any child or adult displays symptoms and their temperature will be recorded on a central Covid/ illness spreadsheet by our admin team.
- Any child who displays any symptoms of Covid must be collected immediately and we expect parents and families to make provision if they are not based in the local area during the school day. When the child is awaiting collection, they will be moved to a room where they can be closely monitored and looked after by a member of staff. We will use the room next to the Headteacher's Office, which provides good ventilation in accordance with DFE Guidelines.
- Where necessary, the adult supervising the child will wear full PPE clothing when dealing with a suspected case; this includes a face mask, face shield/ visor, apron and gloves.

Everyone's health and safety is our priority and we hope that, by reading this document, all parents and families are reassured that the school staff are taking every possible measure to create a happy, healthy and safe learning environment for all our community.

