



St Joseph's Catholic Primary School

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Headteacher Mr S Belbin

Dear parents,

Re: School to reopen Monday 8th March.

Following the Prime Minister's announcement last Monday, we are delighted to be in a position to open the school fully to all pupils. Having spoken to many parents over the last few months of lockdown, I know that this is something you welcome as it allows children and families to return to something that is beginning to look like 'normal'. I know I speak on behalf of all the staff at school when I say we have certainly missed having all our children in and settled in class. We are looking forward to it!

Many of you have shared your concerns about the impact of being off school for so long and how it has affected your children. I think this goes beyond falling behind in their learning, but also includes children's pastoral and social well-being, as well as their mental health. We also recognise there has also been a significant impact on the welfare and well-being on parents and the wider family, trying to juggle the responsibilities of raising a family, work commitments and home learning.

When we reopen, we will have four weeks before Easter. During this time, we will try and cover some of the learning that may have been missed during the last term and also endeavour to cater for children's social and pastoral needs.

We received some additional guidance from the Government. With this in mind, here are some changes we are proposing:-

- School gates will open as usual from 8.35. Entry into class will be from 8.45.
- Entry onto school premises for adults will only be allowed with **face coverings**.
- To maintain safety within bubbles, we will keep our KS1 classes and KS2 classes completely separate. We will no longer take KS2 children from KS1 down the hill in the morning and back up in the afternoon. Instead;
- Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 will finish at 3.00pm
- Key Stage 2 will finish at 3.15. This should allow time for parents to walk round
- KS1 lunches will continue to be served in classrooms
- Years 3 and 4 will have their lunch at 12.00 before going out to play
- Years 5 and 6 will have their lunch at 12.30 before play at 1.00.
- Welfare staff will stay with their bubbles and wear protective clothing

I can understand that the decision to totally separate KS1 and KS2 will be inconvenient to some parents, and I can only apologise about that. To minimise the impact, parents are welcome to drop their KS2 children off in their playgrounds in the morning before walking round to KS1. Similarly, with KS1 finishing at 3.00pm, this will allow time to walk round to the KS2 playgrounds.

COVID has hit our community pretty hard. We have had to close our school, either fully or partly, five times, far more than most other primary schools. A significant number of adults in school have contracted COVID as have some of our children. We are aware that several of our families have also tested positive and had to self-isolate. At the same time, we know that the rate of infection and hospital admissions are falling, and there seems to be light at the end of the tunnel for us all. By introducing these minor changes, I hope that we can provide a safer school environment for us all.

We will of course review these changes and 'ease' us back to normal as soon as we can.

The two walking buses will restart on the same day.

Finally, you may be interested to know that the Governors are interviewing for a new headteacher in the next couple of weeks, to start in September. The school celebrates 125 years of education this year. I really hope that they are able to appoint someone to the post, who will bring new leadership and take St. Joseph's forward on the next stage of our journey towards the next 125 years.

As always, if you have queries or concerns, please do not hesitate in contacting the school.

Yours,

Steve Belbin
Headteacher