

# All Saints' Catholic Primary School

Kitswell Road, Lanchester, Durham, DH7 0JG

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Head Teacher: Mrs. F. Stephenson Deputy Head Teacher: Mrs. A. Conlin

Chair of Governors: Mr. M. Quigley



Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> May, 2020

Dear Parents,

I hope you and yours are well.

On Sunday the Prime Minister announced that the government would like a phased return to school, beginning with pupils in Reception, Year One and Year Six at the earliest date of 1st June should the data be favourable.

I realise it is now Thursday and I thank you for your patience; considering how to open the school safely for a significant number of pupils and adults is a complex and daunting prospect and quite frankly, there is no easy way forward.

On Friday 20th March, school closed for the vast majority of pupils; children and staff alike were apprehensive and upset knowing that their time with each other was ending prematurely and were unsure of what lay ahead. Since then, a lot has happened. Every individual in our wider school family has been impacted by the virus, and some families have been hit harder than others. Our staff have continued working, every single day. School has remained open and staff have assisted families in a range of different ways (often unseen by the majority). I want to be very clear with you all: our staff want our children back in school. We want the corridors to be bustling; the classrooms to be filled with energy; and the heart of the school to beat again. Our staff want to come to work, return to normality and do their job however above all of this we want to make sure that our school is safe.

It will come as no surprise to you that the prospect of opening to greater numbers of people is a difficult one. The children will not return to the school that they left: upon a phased return, classes and staff will be split, the children will only be able to access parts of the school at particular times of the day, they will have limited access to resources and new routines and procedures will have to be followed. Social distancing will be strictly enforced for the good of all.

Planning for the 1st June (or indeed whenever school is to open for a phased return) is underway but many questions still remain and hurdles have to be crossed before decisions can be made. For parents of children of Key Workers, pupils in Reception, Year One and Year Six, I would like to ask for your feedback. Please answer the below questions, indicating your initial thoughts regarding whether you will send your child to school, whether you do not plan to send your child back to school (fines will not be imposed) or whether you are undecided. Your response will only be used to help assist risk assessments. If you do not have a child in those year groups mentioned but would like to send your thoughts, please do so. As I anticipate a large number of responses, unfortunately we will be unable to reply individually to all submissions.



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I know lockdown has been a very difficult situation for families. I understand many of you have been holding down a job while trying to provide tuition for your child. I know the sacrifices that have been made and the pressure families are under. I am not trying to persuade you to send your child in nor keep them at home; I am simply trying to display the options available and ask for initial feedback.

This is a uniquely difficult time. Social distancing is virtually impossible in schools, especially in one as small as ours with such high pupil numbers; social distancing is also counterintuitive to our usual teaching practices which the children are used to therefore, any decisions made in the current climate have to be made with safety at the forefront of our minds.

At the point that we are able to identify a plan for opening (whether that is on 1st June or not, for all three year groups or not), we will share all relevant documentation with you in enough time to ensure you have all of the information you need before deciding upon when your child will return to school. At this time, unfortunately I do not have a date for when that documentation will be shared.

I would like to sincerely thank you for your support, feedback and comments - it really does mean a lot to everyone here. We dearly want our school family back together: the absence of laughter and happy voices filling the classrooms and corridors breaks our hearts, but the safety and wellbeing of our school community is of paramount importance to us and we must act accordingly in these most difficult times.

With my very best wishes,

Mrs. F. Stephenson

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Please reply by email stating the following:

Name of child:

Initial response to phased reopening:

- \* I will be happy to send my child to school
- \* I do not plan on sending my child back to school yet
- \* I am undecided
- \* I am a key worker **and my child is not in Reception, Year One or Year Six**; I will need to send my child to school for **childcare** from (or around) the 1<sup>st</sup> June.

Any additional comments:

