



Scotforth St Paul's C of E Primary & Nursery School

"Let faith be your shield"

Scotforth St Paul's Primary and Nursery School
Scotforth Road
Lancaster
LA1 4SE
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18.5.20

Dear Parents

I am sure you will have seen and read many, possibly conflicting, articles on the "re-opening" of schools. I appreciate that this is a very confusing time for everyone, and can assure you that there is nothing my staff and I would like more than to be able to safely welcome more children back to school. Unfortunately the science on the safety of further opening is at best, uncertain. Primary schools across the district continue to stay open to children of critical workers and vulnerable children - children with a social worker or unmet needs at home and those with an education health care plan (EHC) if appropriate. We are encouraging all eligible children to attend school (where there are no shielding concerns for the child or their household).

We want to see all our children return to school but the safety of our pupils, staff and families is always our first priority. We are deeply concerned about the government's plans for our youngest children in Reception and Year 1 to return on June 1st. Although the Government states that, 'Early years and primary age children cannot be expected to remain 2m apart from each other and staff.' they ask that 'If you can keep older children within those small groups 2 metres away from each other, you should do so.' Sufficient evidence to base this difference of approach has not been shared and therefore the risks around managing our youngest children are unclear.

We ask that the government publishes the scientific and medical evidence that underpins their guidance and the decision to reopen schools at this stage so that parents and school staff know it is safe to do so.

Schools were asked, 'to begin to plan for a phased reopening of schools from June 1st at the earliest' and the Prime Minister aspires to all pupils to be in school for a month before the end of term. The government's guidance to schools has been changing each day since the announcement. Also, following the safety advice will make it difficult for many schools to physically accommodate the proposed children and it is incompatible with the Prime Minister's plan to open for further year groups. This lack of clarity is deeply concerning. We have been told we will receive clearer scientific guidance on the 28th May (Friday of half-term). The timing of this guidance makes it unrealistic therefore for schools to commit to opening to other children by the beginning of June. Currently, schools cannot commit to arrangements for Nursery, Reception, Year 1 and Year 6 in addition to the children of key workers and vulnerable children on June 1st.

When school leaders have a clear understanding of the safety risks to children, staff and their families, individual schools will make decisions about which further provision will be offered based upon their own building capacity and staffing levels and risk assessments.





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NB At Scotforth 1st June is a planned INSET day, where we are shut to all children anyway. This INSET day will continue for staff as we will be in school undertaking training on planning how to try and make our school "Covid-19 Secure" School will open on 2nd June for current vulnerable and key worker children.

Going back on the 2nd June, or even soon after, under the Government guidance means we would not be able to deliver the same educational experience for our children, it won't be the Scotforth experience our children know and love. The stringent infection control guidelines from the government that we must follow will mean for example that:

- Children will be in small groups "bubbles" all day with one adult (who may not be a teacher or teaching assistant they were taught by previously).
- Meals will be eaten in a classroom.
- Toilet times will be on a rota so they can be cleaned after each "bubble" has visited
- Children from one bubble will not mix with those from others at any time
- Playtimes will be staggered for different Bubbles so the children don't mix
- Desks will be 2m apart and children will not be allowed to move from them during lesson time
- Classrooms will have had all non-vital furniture and equipment removed as well as all soft furnishings
- Any equipment used will have to be cleaned before any other person uses it.
- Belongings from home will not be allowed to be brought in
- Only one parent will be permitted to bring/collect children
- Start and finish times will be staggered for different "bubbles" to ensure social distancing

These are just a few of the many changes we will have to implement. It will be nothing like our usual happy and fun provision. Therefore, I am sure you understand the governing body and myself must take the time to get this right - it's too important not to!

I know you are all supporting us and I can only thank you for that support and for your brilliant efforts at home schooling. I am also very grateful for the support of our amazing staff team who carry on behind the scenes each and every day. School did not close and our dedicated and caring staff continue to support remote learning, welfare and other additional needs by working closely with Lancashire County Council, the Foodbank and other agencies and by keeping in touch with you as families in a variety of ways such as social media, video/text messages, email and by phone. I hope that you feel a strong part of our Scotforth St Paul's Community through these measures and continue to feel fully supported.

I am sorry again that the way forward is not yet clear but we will get there...when we are satisfied it is safe to do so - for all of our children, staff and families.





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In the meantime, I continue to work with staff and governors to put detailed plans and risk assessments in place. It would be very helpful therefore if you would please complete the Survey Monkey questionnaire by Wednesday 20th 10 am as that is when the survey will close (it should take just a few minutes).

Once we have the results we will be able to plan how to most safely expand our provision. If we are able to offer your child a place we will let you know in writing- please do not just turn up unannounced as a place in a bubble will not have been allocated.

Many thanks for your support, and if you need to get in touch my email is head@scotforth-st-pauls.lancs.sch.uk

Yours sincerely,

A.Aylott

Mrs A. Aylott

