



# Saint Thomas More R.C. Primary School

Headteacher, Joanne Butterworth, Deputy Headteacher: Anna Quigg  
Assistant Headteacher: Sarah Dodd

22nd May 2020

Dear Parents, and Carers,

## **Coronavirus update – Phasing children back into school in June 2020**

We hope that you and your loved ones are all keeping safe and well at this time. We want to thank you for all the messages of good will and the sharing of the activities and work the children are completing; we know this is keeping the spirits of our staff high. We now want to update you on the decision made by school following the ambitious plan for phasing children back into school.

As you know St Thomas More prides itself on keeping everybody safe, this was highlighted in our Ofsted report April 2019. The situation in school remains the same we had to close due to health and safety issues, these included reduced staff due to: shielding, self-isolation or social distancing criteria, including no caretaker. School has also been further affected by sewage flooding Mrs Hickman's classroom. All of these have had a significant impact on the availability of space and classrooms.

School had never fully closed, except this week and next week due to a positive case of COVID 19. We have had more than the 2% the government advertise, attending our provision in school, for those parents whose work is critical to the Coronavirus response and those who meet the government guidance weekly. The number of places requested for provision has risen dramatically since the announcement by the Prime Minister on 10th May. The guidance clearly states "If necessary, settings have the flexibility to focus first on continuing to provide places for priority groups" (COVID19: Implementing protective measures in education and childcare settings).

### **Decision**

Therefore due to the reduction of available space, the reduced hours of available cleaning (due to Caretaker Shielding) and the increased requests for places in provision St Thomas More will not be phasing any other year groups back into school on Monday 8<sup>th</sup> June. We will reopen our provision Monday 1<sup>st</sup> June for those who have a confirmed place. Those already who have secured a place and been attending will be prioritised; any later applications will be contacted next week to be informed of any availability. If you want to make an application please complete the Key worker form on <https://www.stthomasmorerc.co.uk/coronavirus-parent-updates> and attach any relevant document to your form. In order to maintain the recommendations in the government guidance we require this information to ensure numbers remain manageable; we will need confirmation of numbers attending on each day. In line with the government guidance, if numbers become unmanageable, we will have no option but to cap the numbers attending. We will be providing packed lunches from Mellors, however we need to start charging families for lunches who would normally pay, this includes Nursery and Key Stage 2 children who are not on free school meals.

### **Future plans ...**

Thank you for all those who replied to the Survey Monkey to glean the numbers in Nursery, Reception, Year 1 and Year 6 children. We are continuing to aim to meet some of these requests for more year groups to be phased back into school. Initially the plans are to have the plumbing issue rectified and the classrooms decorated and re-floored, in order to be safe for them to be accommodated. In the first instance this would be for Year 6. However I am sure you understand in that in the current circumstances this could take longer than

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we would like, so it would certainly not be on Monday 8<sup>th</sup> June, as already stated. The situation is to be reassessed at the end of June. We are also going to challenge the support for cleaning hours, as this also limits the area available in school.

## **Support**

It is so wonderful to hear from Mrs Quigg that 68% of our children are accessing Google Classroom. This support is going to continue, with activities being shared. The pupil email accounts that were set up initially also allowed children to communicate with their teacher and their friends; this will continue, plus the wonderful sharing on the Twitter accounts have been very uplifting. We are assuring you that these forms of communication will continue. There will be a letter next week regarding reports and plans for children to communicate with school.

## **September**

As yet we have no details from the government about September, therefore our normal transition work has not yet begun, including looking at classes. As you know we have prided ourselves, in the recent past, with involving the children in this process, this is something we cannot promise to do this year.

We do want to reassure you that when we do return to some sort of normality, our first priority will be the well-being of the children and ensuring that they acclimatise back into school life. Once they are settled then we will ensure that the curriculum will restart, plans for this have already begun.

## **Finally for those attending provision**

It will be essential, that we have a clear indication of numbers to ensure that we can effectively staff the provision. The children attending will not necessarily have their own teacher on a daily basis, plus there will be added safety mechanisms in place to ensure that we limit any transmission. As was discovered this week, it is important that parents understand that school could be closed at very short notice if a positive case is identified for the safety of the children and staff.

Please look after one another and stay safe,

Best wishes,

Mrs Butterworth

Mrs K Kennedy and Mrs L Williams

Mr D Flint

Head teacher

Co-Chairs

Vice-chair

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