



St Joseph's Catholic Primary School

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Archdiocese of
Birmingham

18th May 2020

Dear parents

'To accomplish great things, we must not only act, but also dream; not only plan, but also believe'

You will by now, have heard the Governments intentions to potentially increase numbers of children on site at schools from the 1st June. I am, along with my staff, working through plans and considerations for a future phased and sustained re-opening. However, it will not be possible for all of the identified year groups to return to St Joseph's on this date.

Thank you to those of you who completed the survey sent out on Friday to enable us to plan effectively for the phased return. The closing date is today so there is still time if you haven't yet responded. We will continue to use this method to access your views as we work to provide the safest and best way to bring our school family back.

The DFE guidance, at present, confirms that provision should be made for children of Pre-school, Reception, Year 1 and Year 6 ages. Any phased return must be managed with extreme caution and care so that all necessary protective measures can be put in place. This means that we will need to take a more gradual approach than the government has indicated. As you would expect, staff are also involved preparing detailed risk assessments, and revising our policies and practices in readiness for opening.

Please be aware that pupils will not return to a normal school regime, these are arrangements to date:

- The start and the end of the school day will be staggered.
- Classes will be group into groups of 15 max.
- Break and lunch times will be staggered.
- Home learning will continue to be published online and learning in school will mirror it.
- My Gospel assembly and Mrs Jackson Bibles stories will continue online.
- We will encourage social distancing through a nurturing approach as we understand children will find this difficult.
- New health and safety and hygiene routines will be in place.
- Some year groups will return on a rota basis and the school week may need to be reduced.

To date the decision for 1st June is to open our doors initially to the **children of key workers/vulnerable children and Year 6 pupils**. Further details of this with the planned phased integration of Year 1 followed by Reception and Pre-school pupils will be with you in due course. **At this stage any decisions could be subject to change.** Please do not worry, I will ensure that you have all the details as you need them. I will provide you with greater details on how St Joseph's will operate within the guidelines and, most importantly, what measures we will have in place to keep the children and our staff as safe as possible.

St Joseph's is an amazing school and in planning and preparing for this return, we are considering the school layout, staffing availability, class sizes, number of key workers in the community etc. These detailed decisions for our community here at St Joseph's, will mean that we won't necessarily offer the same as other schools in the area, but we will offer what is a carefully thought





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out and sustainable plan for St Joseph's. We have come this far together, and we will see this through together.

The staff and Governors at St Joseph's recognise that the response to Covid-19 is highly likely to be a long-term one. We understand that any vaccine could take a long time to develop and that there is no absolute guarantee one can be developed. We, therefore, recognise that some form of return to school for pupils and staff cannot realistically be put off indefinitely. A **gradual and phased** return to school is the most sensible approach to adapt to the new ways of working that will be inevitable if schools are to return before a vaccine or effective treatments have been identified. As I previously said in last week's letter, you are not legally required to send your child back to school at this time, all that I ask is that you read the guidance on the Government's websites to help you make this decision.

I really do appreciate all your support and feedback and both the teachers, teaching assistants and myself have enjoyed seeing your children's work both online and via emails. Thank you to the children for the lovely prayers too – keep them coming. They make my online assembly so special.

I am dedicated to doing what is best for our school community and cannot thank my staff enough for their support and commitment to this. Please keep us all in your prayers as we find the best ways forward in these unprecedented circumstances.

Yours in faith and partnership

Mrs Louise Bury
Headteacher

