



St. Mary and St. Joseph's R.C. Primary School

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Dear Parents/Carers

May I start by taking this opportunity to thank you all for your support during this unprecedented time and one which we have never experienced before. As a school we remained open and have continued to provide a safe environment for our key workers and more recently for our Reception, Year One and Year Six pupils. Our teachers have also been providing online lessons through Class Dojo and I pass on their thanks for the hard work and dedication which has been put into home learning. We appreciate that this has posed different difficulties for each and every family, however you have all risen to the challenge and every bit of time spent with your child, no matter how small, will make a difference.

The Government has announced that **all pupils** will return to school in September and our teachers and other school staff are committed to delivering the best possible education for them when they return. There will be mixed emotions about returning to school. People may have expectations that this will mean a return to how things were before, however, things will be different.

I am sure that as parents and carers, you will have concerns and questions and I hope to answer many of these in this information pack. We would also like to share some practical advice to help you prepare over the summer to ensure that your child/children are ready to settle back into school life in September.

How will dropping off and collecting my child/ren be different?

To stay with Government guidelines associated with social distancing we have introduced a one-way system around the school premises for dropping off and collecting pupils. Our pupil school gate on Bennington Street will open from 8:40am to allow for a staggered entry. **ALL pupils must be in school by 8:55am.** Parents will walk their child/children around the building and drop them off at the allocated entrances. Parents must then continue to walk around the building to exit the premises. We ask that only **one adult** brings or collects and that parents do not stand around to talk to others. Please stay socially distanced at all times.

Staff will be at various points around the building to help and guide you

Years 1, 4 and 5 will enter the building through the fire door via the small infant playground

Years 2, 3 and 6 will enter the building through the main entrance off the large playground

Reception will enter the building through their own playground.



The arrows show the one-way system around school

Collecting you child/ren at the end of the day

When collecting your child walk around the one-way system. All of the children will be waiting on the playgrounds from 3pm and be ready to take home.

Reception children - from their own playground

Years 1, 4 and 5 – from the infant yard

Years 2, 3 and 6 – from the main playground

Please make sure your child brings appropriate outdoor clothing, as they will not be able to wait inside.

You will then exit the premises via the breakfast club path.

What do I do if I need to speaking to my child's teacher?

Due to social distancing and our new routines for collecting and dropping off you will not be able to speak to your child's class teacher during this time. Please make an appointment via school Dojo or the office and we will arrange a suitable time for the class teacher to telephone you.

What will school look like?

Our children will return to their new classroom. This will be their 'Bubble' and they will stay in that bubble throughout the day including break and lunchtimes. The children will all be seated apart and facing the same way and all stationery will be provided. School will also provide every child with a water bottle that will be kept on their desk at all times.

Where equipment is required, this will be washed and disinfected regularly. Our cleaning rota has also been amended to ensure all areas of school are regularly disinfected. Within our new daily timetable we have done our very best to support social distancing through lessons, videos and regular reminders, but please understand that in returning to school there is a very real likelihood that children will at times forget to social distance.

How will we support our children in the first few days back in school?

We firmly believe that in being open and honest with our children we will be able to better support them in dealing with changes in school and the wider world in relation to the Covid 19 crisis. We will spend the first week in school talking about our 'new normal' in an open and honest way using child friendly language, books, games and activities. We want to help our children feel safe and educate them on how they can keep themselves safe through social distancing on their own playgrounds, washing hands at intervals throughout the day and following our new routines.

We have put links to videos, books and stories that explains what viruses and germs are and how we can stay safe. These can be found on the Coronavirus Section of our website if you wish to look at them with your child before September.

How will school maintain high levels of hygiene?

We will follow the Government guidance and our school risk assessment to ensure high standards of hygiene are adhered to. Hand sanitisers have been placed around school to ensure that sufficient handwashing facilities are available. Surfaces that children and young people are touching, such as toys, books, desks, chairs, doors, sinks, toilets, light switches, bannisters, will be cleaned more regularly than normal. Staff and pupils will frequently wash their hands with soap and water for 20 seconds and dry thoroughly including on arrival at the setting, before and after eating, and after sneezing or coughing. At all times staff and pupils will be encouraged not to touch their mouth, eyes and nose and use a tissue or elbow to cough or sneeze and use bins for tissue waste ('catch it, bin it, kill it'). Staff will encourage young children to learn and practise these habits through games, songs and repetition. Where possible, all spaces should be well ventilated using natural ventilation e.g. opening windows and doors (bearing in mind fire safety and safeguarding).

What will break time and lunchtime look like?

The school will run staggered break times and lunchtimes to maintain as much spacing as is possible in the hall and dining room. Those children who have a school dinner will continue to receive meals and a scaled back menu will be completed in the Autumn Term. Those children choosing to bring in a packed lunch from home may still do so. Each class bubble will socialise in their own designated space.

What will learning look like?

Our initial focus, for as long as we feel necessary, will be on supporting personal, social, health and emotional aspects of learning to support children's wellbeing. The children, their families and our staff have all gone through an incredible period of change and experienced loss on a number of different levels. All have had changes in routine, loss of communication etc and some may have sadly even experienced the loss of a family member. This shouldn't be ignored. Our nurture work and our whole school focus on making St Mary and St Joseph's Primary School what it is, will support children's learning.

We will of course ensure that skills in English and Maths continue to be our priority and our timetables will reflect catching up on any missed learning and in the initial weeks, we will ensure that we are aware of gaps in learning and plan lessons to address individual needs. Our topic-based approach will continue.

In following guidance, we will not be having any mass gatherings in school including assemblies and worship. These will take place in classrooms.

What about school uniform and P.E uniform?

All children must wear their school uniform when they return in September. This is the new uniform and is available from Whittakers and other suppliers. School will provide all pupils with a tie. We will inform you via text message when these are available to collect.

P.E.

To minimise any possible infection we have decided that children can come to school in their P.E kit on the day which they will be doing P.E. In the Autumn Term we will inform you of the day which your child will come to school in their P.E kit. This is their house colour T shirt (red, white, green or purple) and navy shorts/jogging bottoms/leggings. We ask that these are plain navy and not branded or named. The children can wear trainers. The children can also wear a plain navy sweatshirt.

Will there be a Breakfast Club?

Breakfast club will resume as normal. The doors open from 7:45am. Unfortunately, if you arrive after 8:25am your child will not be able to attend and an adult will need to wait until school opens before they can enter the building. The children will sit in their class bubbles in the dining hall and be taken to their classroom by a member of staff at 8:40am. The cost remains at £1.00 per day. Booking your child/children into breakfast club is essential and unless they are booked in they will not be able to attend if they just turn up on the day. If you want to book your child in to Breakfast Club please ring the office the day before to allow staff to set up the correct number of tables and ensure safe social distancing in bubbles.

Will there be any Before and After School Clubs?

For the short term, we will not be providing any extracurricular clubs before and after school, as we want to minimise contact and the mix of too many school groups.

What if I need to go to the School Office?

This is a very busy time so please bear with us. If you need to use the main school office to pay for lunches etc, please wait at the markings and maintain social distancing. Hand sanitiser is also available.

How will the behaviour policy change?

In line with our new routines, we have added to our school Behaviour Policy to ensure the safety of all our staff and pupils in relation to Covid19. We have attached this in the pack.

What will happen if children become ill in school?

We will follow the Government guidelines and our school risk assessment should someone display symptoms. If anyone becomes unwell with a new, continuous cough or a high temperature in school, they will be sent home and you will be advised to get tested. The household will then be advised to follow the guidance for households with possible coronavirus infection. When a child is awaiting collection from school, they will be removed to a designated room where they can be isolated behind a closed door, with appropriate adult supervision. PPE will be worn by staff caring for the child while they await collection.

The classroom which the unwell child is in will be emptied and thoroughly cleaned and the school will take responsible steps to inform all parents of pupils within that bubble.

It is extremely important to keep minimising contact with individuals who are unwell by ensuring that those who have coronavirus (Covid-19) symptoms, or who have someone in their household who does, **do not**, under any circumstances come to school.

How can I prepare my child to return to school in September?

We ask that you help support your child by talking about what school was like and what it will be like now. It will be different.

Talking – Talk to your child about returning to school and how it will be different. Always be open and honest and try your best to answer any questions. Your child may be scared or confused so use the resources on our website that make things easier for children to understand. Remember no question is a silly question, so listen to your child and support them through this. They will respond to your behaviour so try and be positive and keep your own worries and anxieties for grown ups.

Structure- Try to keep days as structured as possible as they must be ready for the school day. Set times for waking up and going to sleep are essential and it will ensure that in September you are able to get your child up early to be in school on time. If your child has been having a daytime nap it may also be necessary to stop this. Try and ensure that your child has daily exercise planned into the day as this is excellent for reducing stress and helps promote positive mental health. If possible, home learning can continue and often small learning activities will help keep your child's brain stay active over the summer.

There are lots of activities and information to support parents in establishing good routines for sleep, exercise and routines in the Covid Section of our school website.

Online- Being online is now a part of many children's lives and has many positive benefits. We remind you that there are also many dangers and it is essential that we aim to keep our children as safe as possible. To support you with this we have added a factsheet for parents on our school website in the Covid Section which will support you with this.

Routines- In school we will be washing our hands, practising social distancing where possible and being aware of keeping ourselves safe. This is something which you can model and do at home or when you are out in the community. There are videos and booklets on the Covid Section of our school website which explain social distancing and handwashing in a fun and interactive way.

Behaviour- All children can become angry or upset when they are tired, hungry or bored. These are difficulties all parents face and can be very challenging. There are many ways to tackle this through praising good behaviour, ensuring that they have plenty of sleep, exercise and a healthy diet and keeping their minds busy. We have attached some ideas to keep the children busy at home and some simple reward systems that may help with behaviour. These can be found on the Covid section of our school website.

Coping with loss - For children who have experienced loss, it will be important that they are supported to understand what has happened and have opportunities to talk. Like adults, children respond to grief in different ways, particularly during these times when they may not have had opportunity to say goodbye. Key staff in schools have undertaken further training to enable them to support children who may have experienced loss. There are many leaflets and links to professional support related to bereavement should you require this. It is also important to let your child's teacher know if you have experienced loss to ensure that we can provide support for your child.

Social anxieties - Some children will look forward to returning to school but find aspects of being around others frightening and overwhelming. Social distancing will have caused increased anxiety for some children and adults in their interaction with others. For some time, our experience of other people may have been limited to immediate family. Staff will be sensitive to this and will provide support where needed.

Separation anxieties - Most children have become accustomed to spending extended periods of time with their parents/care givers and immediate family during lockdown. Although many children will be eager to regain their freedom and see their friends, it may also be a potential source of anxiety for them. Children may struggle when they are initially separated from their parents and may feel a sense of anxiety for some time after. School staff will be aware of these anxieties, and will support pupils sensitively to manage their concerns. Please support your child and the school by being supportive and calm and remaining positive. They will respond to your positivity. Please send your child into school and if they are upset a member of staff will take them into the building. Staff will then settle the children and get them into the classroom.

I must reiterate that both I and the Governors of St Mary and St Joseph's Primary School hold the safety and well-being of our children, their families and our staff of paramount importance. While our aim is to have all pupils back in September, we have planned for the possibility of a local lockdown and how we will ensure continuity of education. We are currently busy auditing the provision pupils have at home for access to the internet and devices for learning. Thank you to those who have responded via Dojo. If you have not already done so please can you inform school of your home provision as soon as possible. In response to some parent feedback and to improve our home learning we are also busy constructing individual pupil access to the Office365 Educational suite of tools to allow remote learning to be facilitated at home.

We hope that you have found this information helpful in supporting you in what we know are difficult and challenging times. There are many links to additional information that you may find helpful on the Coronavirus Section of our school website. This include activities for children, support with routines, sleep, diet and exercise, videos and books to teach children about Coronavirus and links to Government advice.

For further reading please may I recommend:

DfE Guidance for full opening: schools

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/actions-for-schools-during-the-coronavirus-outbreak/guidance-for-full-opening-schools>

If you cannot find answers to your questions, please email me on:

email: office@smsjrc.blackburn.sch.uk

I hope you all have a wonderful summer, take care and stay safe and I look forward to welcoming you all back in September.

Mrs Thomson