



St Joseph's Catholic Primary School
Regents Gate
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EX8 1TA

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Dear Parents and Carers,

As you will know we have been following all the guidance to make school as safe as possible for the children who have returned this term.

From September the school will open again for all children. We are really looking forward to having all the children back in school. We have missed them.

I know many of you will be anxious but we want to reassure you that we are doing everything we can to ensure school is as safe as possible. We will be following the Government and Academy guidance, whilst keeping school the friendly and familiar place it has always been. The children we have had in school have been amazing at adapting to the new routines and I'm sure the children in September will be just the same.

We fully recognise that some children will return to school, running through the gates with enthusiasm whereas for other children the return to school will be an anxious time and will require careful managing. To support the children with their return we have been running zoom meetings recently including one with their new teachers so they know what to expect. We will continue to support all the children in September and our whole school focus will be on Mental Health and Wellbeing with a topic called – Marvellous Minds.

Below I have laid out some of our plans for September to hopefully reassure you of the steps we are taking to ensure we keep our school community as safe as possible.

Most importantly, we are following the Department for Education guidance for effective infection protection and control.

This involves:

- minimising contact with individuals who are unwell by ensuring that those who have coronavirus symptoms, or who have someone in their household who does, do not attend
- cleaning hands more often than usual
- ensuring good respiratory hygiene by promoting the 'catch it, bin it, kill it' approach
- regular cleaning of frequently touched surfaces
- minimising contact and mixing by altering, as much as possible, the environment (such as classroom layout) and timetables (such as staggered break times).
- active participation in Track and Trace
- No whole school assemblies or gatherings

Classes and Bubbles:

In order to reduce the risk of transmission of the virus children will work in their class groups. Their class will then be part of a bubble which can mix for things like playtimes and lunch. Different bubbles will not come into contact with other bubbles.
Reception and Nursery will be one bubble
Yr 1, 2 and 3/4 will be one bubble
Yr 5 and 6 will be one bubble.

Start and finish arrangements:

We are using the guidance published by the DfE which suggests that schools should consider having staggered start and finish times to prevent gatherings on the school site. I was hoping to avoid this as they can cause a significant challenge for parents with children in more than one year group and are also problematic for working parents but they do work to help ease large numbers of people gathering on our school site. Therefore after much consideration we have decided that we need to adopt one staggered start. We are also going to use different entrances.

	Start time	Finish time	Drop off/collection point
Year 5 and 6	8.45am	3.15pm	Outside classroom patio area. Use main playground entrance.
Year 1, 2 and 3/4	8.55am	3.30pm	Outside classroom patio area. Use main playground entrance.
Reception and Nursery	Doors will be open between 8.45-8.55 to allow gradual drop off as we are aware some new starters may find this difficult.	3.15pm for Nursery 3.30pm for Reception	FSU garden entrance on the field. Enter either through field gate on Claremont Grove or through school carpark and around the back onto the field.

We recognise it is more difficult for parents with siblings but it has worked well this term with parents sending in the older sibling first and waiting outside or in the car until the younger sibling goes in. It is vital that parents do not come in earlier than the allotted time otherwise that defeats the point of having the staggered times. Please drop off and collect promptly and please only send one adult on site to collect rather than both.

When waiting to drop off or collect your child please ensure you socially distance from others. This is for your own safety and also sets a good example for the children.

Class teachers will welcome the children on arrival and all children will wash/sanitise their hands on arrival. Unfortunately, no parents may enter the classrooms or Yr 1-6 patio areas.

In class:

Class teachers will stay with their classes and teaching assistants will remain within their assigned class where possible. PPA teachers such as Mrs Turner can work across bubbles and in these cases the teacher will need to remain at a distance of 2m wherever possible.

In class the older children can sit next to each other but they will be in rows forward facing rather than the usual face-to-face in groups. The children will have their own resource pack of whiteboards, pencils etc to minimise contact between children. They will be able to share some resources which can be cleaned regularly.

Doors and windows will be kept open as much as possible.

Movement around school will be reduced so school library books will be kept in classes rather than the children all accessing the library. Books will be sent home weekly and when they are returned they will be quarantined for at least 72 hrs.

Outside:

The playground and field will continue to be zoned so bubbles can be outside without mixing. Outside play equipment will be cleaned between different bubble uses.

Unfortunately our wooden trim trail will need to remain closed off until we can find an effective way of cleaning it between uses.

Lunch:

School Meals will be available. All school meals need booking on ParentPay up to 8am on the day. For Reception, Year 1 and 2 school meals are free. Nursery, Year 3 and upwards are £2.35 and must be paid for when you book the meal.

In order to minimise contact between bubbles, Reception and Nursery will eat their lunches in classrooms. The hall will be split so the other bubbles are kept separate.

Bringing items into school:

We will continue to minimise the number of items that are transferred between school and home. Children should only bring in what they need: coat, book bag, reading book, lunch, water bottle, PE kit. Please do not send in any toys from home.

Medication:

If your child requires any medication this must be given to the office and a form completed.

School uniform:

Children should return in full school uniform. Nursery can wear their own clothes.

Uniform is grey skirt, grey pinafore, grey shorts or grey trousers – **not black**

White polo shirt

Green cardigan or jumper with the school logo

White or grey socks or tights

Green or white hair bands

Black sensible shoes – **not heels or boots**

PE kit:

Green logo t-shirt

Black shorts

Plain black or navy jogging bottoms for if it is cold.

Communication:

Staff are being asked to socially distance and should remain 2m away from other adults. You can have a brief chat at the end of the day but if you need a longer discussion, it may be easier to arrange for a phone call.

We will keep up with the current arrangements of only one adult in the office at a time so whilst you are welcome to come in please wait outside by the sign until the office is free. Alternatively, please feel free to phone.

Face masks and hand sanitiser:

Current guidance says face coverings in schools are not recommended for either staff or children. If a child wears a mask to school they will need to remove it before entering, place it tied in a double bag and then put it inside their school bag.

Children cannot bring their own hand sanitiser to school, we will provide it.

If someone has symptoms:

If a child or adult has symptoms they must not come onto the school site.

If a child or adult develops symptoms whilst in school they will be safely removed from the classroom and taken to an isolation area. In the event of a child developing symptoms we will notify parents/carers and ask you to collect them straight away.

Any adult or child with symptoms of covid-19 must isolate and remain away from school for at least 7 days. We ask that where possible children are tested so we can rule out any potential cases or isolate bubbles in the event of a positive test. It is an expectation that everyone engages with NHS Track and Trace if possible.

If a child or adult tests positive for Covid, the children and staff in that bubble will be notified and will need to self-isolate for 14 days. The school will work with Public Health with regards to necessary actions.

We require parents to inform us immediately of any positive test results within their family or contacts.

Breakfast and After School Clubs:

Breakfast and After School Club will start again in September. Please see the separate sheet attached.

We will not be running any other after school clubs for at least the first half term and then we will review.

School trips:

School trips are a big part of St Joseph's but at the moment unfortunately they are not possible.

For the Autumn term, if we are able to do any trips, they will only be trips within walking distance. These will all be risk assessed to check they can be carried out with the necessary protective measures in place.

Our yr. 6 residential has been postponed until March when hopefully it will be able to go ahead but we will follow the guidance. We have not booked our yr. 5 residential yet, we will wait and see what happens over the Autumn term.

I hope this offers you reassurance about all the planning we are putting in place to do our best to minimise risks to our school community for September.

If you have any questions or concerns please do not hesitate to ask.

Best wishes

Nicky Taylor-Bashford

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