



St Joseph's Catholic Academy

Member of the Newman Catholic Collegiate

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Acting Executive Principal- Mrs D Farmer

Acting Head of School – Mrs R Wilson

Monday 25th May 2020

Dear children, parents and families of St Joseph's,

I write to you this week with very mixed feelings. In one respect, myself and the staff of St Joseph's are very excited to be able to welcome back some of children and families that we have been missing so dearly on 1st June. However, we are under no illusions that the transition of children back to school will be very challenging for us all. Since school closed, we have wanted nothing more than to see our children returning through our doors, ready for learning, with smiles on their faces, looking forward to spending time with their friends and being keen to get back to lessons. In reality, we are only returning in part, with many children from Year 2 - 5 being unable to return yet, and many parents of children in the other year groups feeling that it is still too soon to send their children back to us.

I fully understand the concerns and questions that I am sure all of you will have at this time and unfortunately, I am still not in a position to answer all of these at the moment. The collegiate have produced a document called **Guidance for Parents to Promote and Maintain Safer Working Practice During Covid-19** which I recommend your read prior to sending your child back on 1st June. You will find this document on our website under the Coronavirus tab. There is also an amendment to our behaviour policy which is also worth reading. The plan is that, from 1st June, we will open our doors to the children in Early Years (Pre-school, Nursery and Reception) and Years 1 and 6, if it is safe to do so. A final decision will not be made by the British government until Friday, 28th May. Many staff were in school last week, working incredibly hard to clean and resource the classrooms ready for children's return, and I have included some photographs on the last page of this letter to give you an indication of what school looks like. In Year 1 and Year 6, each child will be provided with their own resources and sit at their own table, to ensure that social distancing measures are adhered to. They will remain with the same 2 members of staff, within their 'bubble' at all times. Likewise, children in Pre-school, Nursery and Reception will remain with their class teacher and support staff all week, and outdoor learning will be timetabled to ensure they get ample fresh air and exercise. We will encourage our Foundation Stage children to socially distance and not share resources if at all possible, but I am sure you will appreciate that it is far more difficult for our younger children to understand and practice this than it is for our Year 6 pupils. In all year groups, lessons will be planned and taught in line with the year group curriculum to enable children to begin to catch up with the more formal education they have missed over the last couple of months.

Preparations have also been taking place around school, with a one-way system mapped out and 2m markers on the floors of main corridors and thoroughfares. Parents are also asked to adhere to the one-way system in place please, with everyone entering the school premise via the middle gate



leading down to the school office and following the one-way arrows to your child's entry point into school. Pre-school parents will drop their children off at the pre-school door as usual; Nursery and Reception at the Foundation Stage gate leading onto the outdoor area; Year 1 at their classroom door and Year 6 at the entrance that they usually enter via. Parents are then asked to leave via the bottom gate where you would usually enter and exit.

Please ensure you stick to the drop-off and collection times that were text out to you on Friday so that we can avoid a large number of people congregating in the school grounds. Only one parent should be bring their child into school and collect them- please do not bring siblings from Year 2 to 5 with you. Parents are also politely requested not to stand talking to other parents in the school grounds and to avoid coming into the school building unless in an emergency. For the time being, please contact school via telephone or email should you need to speak to the office or a staff member.

When collecting your child at the end of the school day, again, please do not enter the school premises until your collection time and leave as soon as you have collected them. Please adhere to social distancing rules and stay 2 meters apart from other parents while waiting for your child in the following areas:

*Pre-school-on the grassed area directly in front of pre-school

*Nursery/ Reception: enter the Foundation Stage yard through the gate and wait on the grassed area to the right of the gate, adjacent to Mobberley Road

*Year 1 and Year 6: on the grassed area opposite the Year 1 and 2 classrooms. Mrs Grange will let her Year 1 children out of the class door as usual; Mrs Cox will bring the Year 6 children down to the door and let your children go one at a time as she sees you.

Children will be asked to come in their school uniform (no ties necessary); however, we do ask that they have a clean, fresh uniform on every single day. In line with collegiate policy, we ask that you do not send anything from home into school with your child, other than a waterproof coat, a filled water bottle and a healthy snack. Children will not need book bags, reading diaries, etc. Your children will be reading daily in school but we will not be sending any books home at present.

I know that some parents are concerned that their child may not adjust to school life if you have chosen to send them back. Some children may be upset that school is not as it was, their friends are not there, etc. and you may decide, after your child has been in for a day or two, that it is not right for them to return after all. Although we do strongly advise children to be in school if at all possible, you can of course take your child out and will not be penalised for this decision. If however, you decide that you want them to return again after a few more days at home, you will need to give us a week's notice before their return.

If your child is in our Early Years, Year 1 or Year 6, and you have decided not to send them back to school yet, the staff will be unable to provide you with further activities to complete at home; neither will they be writing the weekly letters or making fortnightly telephone calls home. However, please continue to use the existing resources on the class pages alongside the BBC Bitesize and National Oak Academy websites, which I believe will continue to provide home learning for all year groups for the time being.

Should the time come that you decide you would like your child to return to school, please notify us at your earliest convenience. We will only be able to add to the class bubbles every Monday, so we ask that you give us at least one week's notice if you would like your child to return.

Children of key works from Year 2- 5 will continue in their own 'bubble' but parents must also adhere to the drop off and pick up times. Children will complete their home learning in class.

For those children in Years 2- 5, home learning, letters and fortnightly telephone calls will continue as before. If your child is struggling at home emotionally or academically, please do get in touch with us so that we can offer you support- school will be open and staff will do all they can to help.

This is very difficult and unsettling time for us all. We all have our own opinions about when school should re-open and I hope that everyone is able to respect one another's decisions about whether or not to send their children back to school. We fully understand that every decision that our families have made has been made in the best interests of their children. I have to say that the staff of St Joseph's have been very accepting of the government's constant and often confusing guidance, and have shown remarkable strength and resilience during this time. It is important to acknowledge that they too may be concerned about the impending return to school, and so I ask that we are all kind to one another over these next few weeks as we all wait to see what may happen next. School is closed next week to give all of our staff a well-earned rest, but we will of course notify you of any further updates and guidance.

This week should have been our May half term, so we have decided not to set any home learning for your children. We hope that our families are able to relax and enjoy this coming week and that we will be blessed with some good weather.

I very much look forward to welcoming some of our families back to St Joseph's on 1st June. In the meantime, I would like to thank you all for your continued and remarkable support- it is very much appreciated.

Take care, stay safe and God bless.

Mrs R Wilson,

Acting Head of School.

Classrooms in preparation for children's return



Pre-school



Nursery



Reception



Year 1



Year 2



Year 3



Year 4



Year 5



Year 6