

ST ANDREW'S CE PRIMARY SCHOOL

NUTTALL LANE RAMSBOTTOM BURY LANCS BL0 9JD



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15th May 2020

Dear Parents/Carers

I wrote to you on Monday following the Prime Minister's update on 11th May. I said at the time that I would keep you updated as much as possible.

Primary schools are requested to welcome back pupils in Reception, Year 1 and Year 6 from 1st June at the earliest, alongside the other priority groups already attending school.

We have been told that the impact of these changes will be assessed closely, working with medical and scientific advisers as well as sector leaders. At a point when the most up-to-date assessment of the risk posed by the virus indicates that it is appropriate to do so, more primary groups will be asked to return to school. We are unsure at the moment as to how this next stage can be organised and we await further guidance from national and local government.

There are ongoing discussions between government and the teaching unions about how the decisions were made and the scientific facts behind any decision-making.

I am extremely grateful to the parents of Reception, Year 1 and Year 6 pupils who have completed the online survey that we set up to gauge how you are feeling about the government plans. We have had over 100 responses to our survey. There has been a fairly even three-way split in response to sending children back to school. A third said they would send their child back, a third said they wouldn't and a third are undecided and are waiting for further information regarding the scientific facts or the planning that we put in place at school.

Since Monday we have also been provided with guidance and advice on trying to reduce the risk of virus transmission once children return to school. Over the coming week, I will be working with staff and governors to consider how we can implement these measures to the best of our ability.

Each school will make plans depending on their own circumstances. Please do not compare what we decide with what is happening elsewhere. All our decisions will be made with the best intentions for our children, families, staff and the wider school community. We are desperate to see our children back at school, learning and playing, where they belong but only when it is deemed safe enough for them to do so.

All schools will be restricted by the actual school building. At St Andrew's we have some classrooms that are 148 years old and others which were built two years ago. The size of our classrooms varies across the school site.

As we plan we can already say that:

- To cater for social distancing requirements your child will be taught in a smaller group than usual. They may be taught in a room that isn't their usual classroom by a member of staff that might not be their usual teacher. The advice is that this group does not mix with other groups in school, even of the same age.
- Start and end times of the school day will be arranged so that there are no large gatherings of adults collecting and dropping off.
- Break times and lunchtimes will be staggered and shorter in length. Children will eat their lunch in their classrooms or the hall to maintain group separation. There will be the usual lunchtime supervision.
- There will be outdoor teaching and exercise activities keeping the children in their groups.
- Personal Protective Equipment will not be used by staff or children. Staff may use PPE when providing intimate care or first aid.
- Handwashing will be frequent, in accordance with advice. Social distancing will be insisted upon for the older pupils. This is more difficult for the younger children but they will be encouraged.
- Children can wear their own clothes as this will make washing easier.
- Children should not bring a bag into school. All stationery will be provided so children should not bring in pencil cases or any other equipment.
- The curriculum taught will be flexible.
- If any pupil or member of staff shows symptoms of COVID-19 they will be sent home and they can attend the testing centre located at Waterfold Business Park in Bury. If tested positive, the full group and staff member will be asked to self-isolate for 14 days. Wider family members do not need to self-isolate unless their own child is the affected pupil or their child develops symptoms.
- Home learning will continue for those pupils who are staying at home.
- SOCKS provision will continue but the usual fees will be in place from 1st June. Similarly, the school's summer holiday club will run and details will be provided at a later date.
- Pupils in other year groups than Reception, Years 1 & 6, whose parents are keyworkers will continue to attend school if no alternative is available. Depending on space available these children will be in a separate group or may be integrated into other smaller groups.
- There will not be any larger gatherings of pupils such as assemblies.
- We will expect all older pupils to adhere to instructions regarding hygiene and distancing. If they disregard this advice, they may be asked to stay at home.
- The school office will operate as a cashless operation. All payments will have to be made online.
- We are still to be informed about catering. We are assuming that lunches will be provided for children on free school meals, including all Reception and Key Stage 1 children who are normally entitled to a universal free school meal.

Any of the above plans may be subject to change if national or local government advice/guidelines change. If Teaching Unions recommend a course of action, the plans may change to reflect this.

Please note, you will not be penalised if you choose to keep your children at home.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the majority of parents who have given us their support. I would ask parents not to use social media to criticise school and the decisions we have made, even if you think you would done things differently. At best this is unhelpful, at worst demoralising and hurtful. None of us were ever trained in how to deal with a global pandemic. We are trying our very best in unprecedented times. Let's work together, be safe together and look after each other as a community.

Yours sincerely



D Marsh
Headteacher



dyslexia aware school