



BIRMINGHAM CITY COUNCIL EDUCATION DEPARTMENT
ST EDMUND'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY & NURSERY SCHOOL
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Live Together, Pray Together, Learn Together and Grow Together in Christ

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Wednesday 20th May 2020

Dear Parents,

You will have heard about the Government's proposals to get children in Reception back into school as soon as possible after June 1st.

This letter explains how we plan to do that at St. Edmund's. I apologise that this will be quite a long letter, but there are lots of details to let you know about.

Before I begin, on behalf of all the Staff and Governors I would like to extend my condolences to those families who have lost loved ones to the virus. Be assured that we pray for you and your families in school, and will do our best to support your children when they return. Your child's class teacher will give you a call in the next week, please could you let them know if you have lost a family member and if you would like some additional support for them on their return to school.

Here are some of the key facts that you will need to know before we can re-open the school to any of the children:

- **We will make sure that, as far as possible, children are spread out in the classroom. We will have a 'no touching' policy for both children and staff (though we will have to be sensible about this if a child is hurt or upset). However, I must be honest with all parents at this point. I cannot, and will not try to guarantee that 'social distancing' as we have come to know it will be achieved in school. Even with smaller groups this is not possible and our youngest children will not be able to keep 2m apart from each other or their teachers.**
- **Parents will have the right to decide whether they think it is safe and appropriate to send their children back into school when we open for each year group. Any parent who does not send their child back to school before the summer holiday will not be fined.**
- Although we will be planning for up to 15 children in each group, we expect that not all parents will choose to send their children back to school yet.
- On Thursday 21st May parents of children in Reception will receive a text message, asking if they intend to send their child back to school at the moment. Please reply to this text with just **the name of the child**, the **class name** and either **YES** or **NO** (for whether they will be returning or not).
- Please respond straightaway. If we have not heard from you by the end of Thursday 21st May, we will attempt to call you to find out what you intend to do.
- Children will be working in much smaller groups - there will be **no more than 15** children in each class, and I hope to provide two adults to work with each group.
- **Children in a group will not mix with any other children during the course of the day.** They will keep together as a group, play outside together, eat lunch together and not even use toilets at the same time as children from other groups. All groups of children will have allocated toilets to use - with no more than two groups having access to the same toilets. There will be cleaning of toilets throughout the school day.

- Children will be encouraged to wear school uniform between now and the Summer holiday. However, as the virus can be carried on soft fabrics, as far as possible children should come to school in freshly laundered clothes each day, and it may not be practical to be washing uniform every night. If children have grown out of uniform or school shoes then please send them into school in clothes that are comfortable and practical for working indoors and outside - they will not be changing for PE so jogging bottoms and sweatshirts (or shorts and t-shirts for warmer weather) and trainers would be ideal. However, all school policies regarding jewellery and hairstyles etc remain the same.
- There will be supervised handwashing for the children on several occasions during the day. If parents wish, children may wear masks or gloves on the way to and from school. The Government advice for both staff and children in school is that wearing masks or gloves is not recommended. Children fiddle with masks and this means putting their hands around their faces far more - making it potentially more dangerous. Soap and water kills the virus, gloves do not - they give a false sense of security and touching your face with gloved hands is far more dangerous than touching your face with regularly washed hands.
- We will also be asking for parents to support these messages at home, by reminding the children - and supervising them - to wash their hands properly and regularly.
- Subject to Government advice and safety information we are planning that children in Reception will return to school on **Wednesday 3rd June**. Start of day and end of day times will be staggered so that we minimise contact between parents and between children from different groups.
- **School will start at 8.40 for Reception.**
- Children who arrive late will have to return home. We cannot risk children coming into contact with other groups and the office will be closed, so parents will not be able to 'sign children in' late.
- **The school day will end at different times for each year group. Reception will form a line using social distancing markers and be collected at 2.40pm.**
- The adult bringing and collecting each child **MUST** live in the same household as the child.
- Only one adult per child will be allowed onto school premises to drop and collect. **No parents will be allowed inside the school building unless by prior appointment.** This includes parents of children in Reception - we know that some children will be unsettled and could be upset when they return, but unfortunately parents cannot come into class to help 'settle' them - as they will come into contact with other children.
- For anyone using public transport to get to or from school - please read the Government advice at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-safer-travel-guidance-for-passengers>
- Between now and the Summer holiday there will be no Breakfast Club and no After School Club provision. This is because we must keep children isolated from each other within their groups - and this would not be possible in before or after school care.
- During this time, to avoid possible virus transmission we are asking parents to provide the children with their own water bottle - with a sports cap - which can be brought home to be washed out and refilled each day. We can provide sticky labels for the child's name.
- All staff will be returning to help teach these smaller groups. **Children in Years 2, 3, 4 and 5 will continue to have work set online**, but this will change to a greater amount of work once per

week, rather than tasks set everyday, and, though staff will still be available by email, it may take a little longer for them to respond.

- Children in Reception whose parents decide not to send them back to school will no longer have work set online.
- **School will not be open on Friday afternoons.** This is to allow for more thorough cleaning and to give the staff time to set and respond to work online for the children in Years 2-5, as well as planning and preparation.
- Parents will not be able to have the same casual 'drop in' conversations with staff at the beginning and end of the school day. **The office will be closed to parents, except by phone.** If you need to speak to a member of staff, it will either have to be by telephone, or by making an appointment so that an appropriately timed socially distanced appointment can be arranged.
- Every classroom will have its own drop off and collection point, and some children will be taught in different rooms - parents will be informed about these details in the next letter. Parents will be expected to keep a strict 2m social distancing when dropping off and collecting. We will also be asking parents not to meet and socialise by the school gates - because this will increase the risk of children coming into contact with children from other groups.
- We will be doing everything we can to reduce the possibility of transmission of any infection between groups. Because of this, children must stay isolated from other children and adults outside their household when they are out of school. For example, if we discover that a child has spent the evening playing at their friend's house - who is from a different class group or different school, we will not accept them back into school for 7 days. Every parent plays a part in keeping every child in the group safe, and we cannot risk possible transmission from a person outside of the household and school group.
- Children at school and school staff who display symptoms of COVID-19 are now eligible for a test. If a child displays symptoms in school they will be isolated from their group immediately and the parent called to collect them. Children will not be permitted to return until they have the results of a test. In the case of a positive test, all other children in that group will have to isolate at home for 14 days. As is usual practice we will call you if your child becomes unwell and the expectation is that your child will be collected **as soon as possible** after the phone call.
- Children will bring sandwiches if they normally do, these will be eaten in the classroom. All other children whether free school meals or paid meals will be provided with a packed lunch from the kitchen which will again be eaten in their classroom.
- Children of key workers and children with an allocated social worker from any class can continue to come to school as they have been throughout the lockdown period. If there are any other children from Years 2 - 5 with key worker parents or an allocated social worker, who need a school place, parents will need to telephone the office to check availability, but we will be very limited in the number of children we can accept.
- For all other children in Years 2-5 who are entitled to Free School Meals, we will continue to provide the weekly food parcels/ vouchers which we have done throughout lockdown.

Finally, I appreciate that this is going to be a difficult and inconvenient time. Some parents will have to put up with later drop offs or earlier collections, no before or after school care, and siblings from different classes who are still at home. I accept that this may lead some parents to decide against

sending their children back to school at the moment. However, a great deal of learning has been lost, and this is a good chance to get the children back in school routines before the Summer holiday. I am sorry that some parents will find these arrangements difficult, but please do remember that every decision we are making is based on trying to keep all of the children in school, and the staff who work with them, as safe as possible.

Please reply as soon as possible to the text message on THURSDAY.

With best wishes to all our school community - keep safe, keep well.

God bless,

Mrs M O'Friel
Headteacher
St Edmund's Catholic Primary school