



## HOLY SOULS CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

"a place where we pray together and everyone is important"

Mallard Close, Acocks Green, Birmingham, B27 6BN

**Tel:** 0121 272 1776  
**Email:** enquiry@holysoul.bham.sch.uk  
**Website:** www.holysoul.bham.sch.uk

Head Teacher: Mrs Rachel Girling



A St. Teresa of Calcutta  
Multi Academy Company  
School

Friday 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2020

Dear Parents,

### Partial Re-Opening of Schools

I hope that this letter finds you and your family safe and well. We have been keeping you all in our thoughts and prayers.

I am writing to you today, as you will no doubt have seen the announcement by the Prime Minister about the potential part re-opening of schools from 1<sup>st</sup> June 2020 and I thought you would appreciate some further details and clarification.

So that you are aware, we only found out about this at the same time as the rest of the country, on Sunday 10<sup>th</sup> May 2020. This is when we discovered what was being planned in terms of the early return of Reception, Years 1 and 6. Subsequent information published on Monday 11<sup>th</sup> May 2020 also made reference to the "ambition" for all other primary year groups to spend a month of time in school before the end of the Summer Term. Further guidance has since been published for schools by the Department for Education.

As with all schools we would love to have our children back with us and back learning in the classroom – but only when it is safe to do so.

The government have now outlined their guidance for the return of children, but I feel as parents you must make the decision for your child – what I will do is outline how we anticipate this reality looking.

Please remember that whatever happens in the summer - **this will not be a return to school as it looked before the lockdown started in March.**

Please also note that the government have made it clear that parents will not be fined for the non-return of their children if they choose not to send them to school during this period.

I suspect that as parents you will all largely have one of two views – you would either very much like your child to return to school in whatever form as soon as possible, or you will not yet feel the time is right and be unsure how safe it is for the return of large numbers of primary aged children to the school setting.





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This is our interpretation of the government guidance for our school – as we see things working at this time. Please note this could change substantially depending on a range of outside factors, beyond our control.

### How will the partial return to School work?

Based on what the government have published this week we would anticipate arrangements working as follows –

Provision for children of keyworkers/vulnerable children would continue in a similar way to present, remaining as a group and not reintegrating with their year group or interacting with any other children on site.

From 1<sup>st</sup> June, at the earliest, we would see the return of Reception, Year 1 and Year 6. The order of priority established by the government for the phased return is Reception, then Year 1 and then Year 6.

The government guidelines state that children ***“only mix in a small, consistent group and that small group stays away from other people and groups”***.

Therefore, this would most likely work as follows –

Children in Reception, Years 1 and 6 would be split into groups of **up to 10** children per class. Technically this would mean each class would be split into groups.. We know from the group of children we have in now we can only safely accommodate between 8 – 12 children in our classrooms at 2 metres apart. However, the government guidelines only require that desks ***“should be spaced as far apart as possible”*** so if we needed to have 15 children in a class **this would not reflect the wider restrictions of social distancing being implemented to help stop the spread of COVID-19.**

Due to the restriction on the number of children allowed per class, we would not expect to be able to have all children in these year groups in school together full-time, so we would most likely run a system of children being in school 2 days a week for a consecutive two day block (Monday and Tuesday) or (Thursday and Friday). Wednesday would be used to change around resources and equipment for the second half of the week and for a deep clean of all areas. This would complement the ongoing day-to-day cleaning which would take place in a similar fashion to the current arrangement we have for the





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small group of children presently on-site. Sessions would be allocated by the school. We will be operating a staggered system of arrival in the mornings and collection in the afternoons to avoid large numbers of parents assembling together to drop-off and/or wait. It will be essential that parents arrive and depart promptly within the allocated slot to maintain appropriate social distancing.

There is a requirement to reduce movement around the school, keep small groups together throughout the day and avoid larger groups of children mixing. This will have an impact on how the day is structured, the content of lessons and the organisation of any break times and associated activities which could be run.

Play-times and lunch time arrangements would be determined by the numbers of children in school. This would mean we would need to utilise classrooms and/or stagger lunchtime sittings, and this will be dependent on having an appropriate number of lunchtime and support staff to facilitate this.

Hygiene would continue to be a priority - as with the children currently in school, classes would be expected to wash hands on a regular basis throughout the day and our cleaning team would ensure areas and surfaces are cleaned at regular intervals throughout the day.

Depending on how the initial phase goes there is an "ambition" by the government for all other primary year groups to attend for up to a month before the summer holidays. Again, this would have to be a split class arrangement with children in groups attending for set days. Due to the complexity of the organisation of having larger numbers of children on site, we would not be able to guarantee that siblings attend on the same days.

The government advice also recognises that "**Early Years and primary age children cannot be expected to remain 2m apart from each other and staff,**" which means any plans we make must reflect this, whilst trying to reduce the transmission risk by ensuring that children and staff, wherever possible stay away from other groups/adults while at school. This has implications for how we can organise the lessons, social times and timetable.

As we have some staff in the clinically extremely vulnerable and extremely vulnerable categories they may not return during the Summer Term, and as numbers in different year groups may substantially vary, we cannot guarantee that children would have the staff who have previously worked with them. The government have also stated that if no teacher is able to teach the group then a Teaching Assistant may lead the group.





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Parents of pupils in Reception, Year 1 and Year 6 have received a phone call to indicate whether they would choose to send their child to school if we have a partial re-opening in June. I thank them for their time and will use this information to shape our plans for the partial reopening.

If your child is already attending school as part of our provision for critical / key workers / vulnerable children your child's place will continue.

School closes on Friday 22<sup>nd</sup> May for all pupils for half-term. This will enable us to prepare for the partial reopening from June 1<sup>st</sup> 2020. Monday 1<sup>st</sup> June is an In-service Training Day with school closed to pupils but open for staff training.

We will continue to draw up further contingency plans and risk assessments with consideration to the Working Safely during COVID-19 guidance. Decisions will need to reflect not only our own local circumstances but also guidance and advice from teaching and support staff unions, the Local Authority and the Government itself. The safety of children and staff must be our utmost priority.

As a result of updates and developments we continue to prepare for our partial reopening and will be contacting parents of Reception, Year 1 and Year 6 via telephone and email during the week beginning June 1<sup>st</sup> 2020.

Home learning will resume after half-term. Please see the Home Learning tab on the website. Please keep on tweeting your wonderful work and sharing your learning.

Please be aware that our Local Governing Body were consulted on all matters relating to our school reopening and that they have ratified our proposed plans.

At this time we continue to hold one another, our community and the world in our hearts, thoughts and prayers. St Teresa of Calcutta – Pray for us.

Stay safe and well.  
God bless,

*R. A. Girling*

Mrs R A Girling  
Head Teacher

Mr M Cunningham  
Chair of Governors

