



Christ is the Centre of St Patrick's School, where we live, love and learn together

ST. PATRICK'S R.C. PRIMARY SCHOOL  
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12.6.2020

Dear parents

I am sure you are aware that this week the Secretary of State for Education finally clarified the Government's position regarding the full opening of primary schools for a month before the end of term. He has accepted that most schools (particularly primaries) do not have the capacity, in terms of both physical space and staff, to welcome back all students. He then went on to say that if schools do have the capacity, the Government would like them to accommodate the return of more children before the end of the summer term. As a result of this statement, we (myself, the staff and our governing body) are considering what this means for us here at St. Patrick's.

In the last few months we have been asked to respond, usually at very short notice, to circumstances we could scarcely have imagined as we entered into 2020. Over the past few weeks, we have been tasked with the complete redesign and reorganisation of our classrooms and other learning spaces in school to ensure they were safe for a phased return of Reception, Year 1 and Year 6. Following several incarnations of risk assessments, this has meant: emptying classrooms of furniture to enable social distancing; sectioning off playground equipment and outdoor spaces; the installation of further hand sanitising stations as well as acquiring sufficient PPE for staff, should we need it. Revised timetables were then drawn up to allocate staff to these smaller groups. Home learning activities have been uploaded to our website weekly for you and your children to access. We were, of course, committed to doing this and more. We thank the governing body and you, the parents, for your support in delaying the start until this was in place and the school was as safe as possible (following Government guidelines) for your children to begin to return in the chosen year groups.

By the end of next week, each child in the year groups allowed to return will have done so (if parents chose to send their child back to school). Measures that have been put in place will be constantly reviewed and amended if necessary. Clearly, if there are any major changes, we will inform you as soon as possible.

At present, because of the physical size of our school, and the structure we have planned for the groups who are returning to school along with the expanding key worker provision, I have to be honest with you and say that, unfortunately, we currently do not have the capacity to take any children from Year 2, Year 3, Year 4 or Year 5 at this

time while current social distancing restrictions apply and classes are limited to groups of 15 maximum.

We understand that this is far from ideal and is frustrating for both yourselves and, more importantly, your children. You, and they, will have many questions about the future, some of which we cannot answer ourselves at the moment. As a staff, we all feel very concerned for the children who remain at home. We know that some have been keeping up with our online learning, but this can never replace the experience of physically being at school. If we were able to bring everyone back safely, believe me - we would do it.

We are awaiting the next announcement from government to find out what arrangements for September will be. Thankfully, the number of new deaths and infections from Covid-19 continue to fall almost daily at present, so we are hopeful that September may bring the opportunity for a normal start to the school year. We can only, like you, keep our fingers crossed at this stage.

As the situation changes so rapidly at present, I will contact you with our responses as soon as decisions are made. Thank you for all of your support over the past few months as it has made an incredibly difficult situation much more manageable and ensured that we have all been able to stay safe and healthy.

If there is anything else I can help with at the moment, please contact me at school.

Stay safe.

Mrs Jobling

*JM Jobling*

Acting Head Teacher