

29 May 2020

Dear Parents/Carers

On Wednesday, our **Governing Body agreed to a provisional date of 8th June for the reopening of the school.** Our school proposal is for **Year 6 and Nursery A children to return from June 8th.** From **June 9th, Year 1 and Reception children** will return. Our ongoing **childcare will continue** alongside this; **Nursery B will return on 11th June.**

Last night, the Prime Minister informed us that the key tests which the government set at the start of this national crisis have been met, this means we can start to reopen St Aloysius in a phased way. The reason I am calling the governor's decision 'provisional' is because local, regional and national guidelines can change. However, I believe, it is vitally important that the children are back in school for their **mental well-being, their educational development, for a return to routine and some sense of normality.**

Prior to the school opening for more pupils we have been **required to do a risk assessment.** To provide some background, on the 11th May the Government and Public Health England (PHE) published guidance which set out how to operate safely. This **risk assessment** must be completed in consultation with unions, the wider community, employees and Public Health. **I have attached a copy of it for you.** It has now been agreed by South Tyneside Council.

Governors are asking staff and children to return because we believe it is safe for them to do so. **Whilst parents, pupils and staff may be anxious about returning, as long as the appropriate measures are in place and adhered to, we are confident our procedures will keep us safe.** As I have previously explained to you, we will be creating year group zones within school, with bubbles of no more than 12 pupils. We will have more members of staff for each zone to support lunchtime, to support practical arrangements e.g. safe toileting and to facilitate first aid. When we have final pupil numbers we will be able to plan carefully the number of staff needed in each area. Senior leaders will be allocated a zone.

Attendance

- We would like all children in eligible groups to attend school (where there are no shielding concerns for the child or their household).
- There will be no pressure to send your children to school, as we recognise that you know your children and personal situation best and that there are many factors which will influence your decision. Furthermore, due to government guidance, no family will be penalised for keeping their child at home during this period.
- If a child or a member of staff lives with someone who is clinically vulnerable (but not clinically extremely vulnerable), they can attend their education or childcare setting.
- If a child or staff member lives in a household with someone who is extremely clinically vulnerable, as set out in the [guidance on shielding](#), it is advised they only attend if stringent social distancing can be adhered to.
- Parents should always follow medical advice if their child or a family member is in a vulnerable category.

- Currently, it is not possible for us to accept siblings of children in the specified year groups other than those who are the children of key workers. **From next week the child care base will be the Infant School.**

To support our planning we need to finalise the numbers of pupils who are wanting to return. I am asking you to confirm your position with us. **Email us at reopening@st-alloysius.co.uk to let us know if you are intending to send your child into school.** Please put your child's name and class in the subject line of the message. Following this we will be able to confirm our bubbles for Nursery, Reception, Year 1 and Year 6. The information will enable us to plan our first returning pupils. If you are in the identified year groups and you choose to send your child in at a later date **we will need 48 hours notice and we will confirm.**

School logistics and safety considerations:

- Our high standards and expectations for behaviour and work will remain, all children are asked to wear freshly cleaned school uniforms each day.
- Throughout June our home / school based learning will mirror each other as much as possible so all children are able to access learning equitably.
- From 8th June we will no longer be providing vouchers to FSM families in Nursery, Reception, Year 1 and Year 6. If you choose to keep your child at home, we can provide you with a packed lunch, if requested, which you can pick up from school. We will continue to provide vouchers for families in Y2, Y3, Y4 and Y5 because they have not been invited to return.
- All children will be provided with a school lunch, this will be either a packed lunch taken to their classrooms or a hot meal in a bag (eg sausage in a bun and chips).
- We will limit all visitors to school to essential services only and appropriate risk assessments and strict hand hygiene will be adhered to.

Each day we receive daily updates from the government. As updates change, we will keep you informed. Last week I shared with you our overall plans, these are now saved on our website. I will share with you further practical arrangements next week so you are clear on our expectations regarding how you will arrive at school.

I am proud to be the leader of our school. **It is a privilege** to lead such a dedicated group of passionate and caring individuals. **I am grateful** for your unconditional support so far. **Please try not to get anxious or worried** about our phased school return. This is **our school!** This is the **family** we love! We have been through the tough period and are slowly **progressing into happier times**. When we return to school we need to be **positive and compassionate - supportive** of our confused children and help them progress into a new **sense of normality**. We are developing tight safety procedures which will be applied with **common sense**.

Eventually our whole school community will be together again as one. We need to be united behind these plans for the good of our community whilst supporting our school and our country back on its feet!

Be positive and look forward to a time when things will be more normal again - this is the next phase in seeking the rainbow!

Nick Conway



Head teacher