

St. Michael's Church of England (VA) Junior School

Barnard Road Galleywood Chelmsford Essex CM2 8RR
Telephone: (01245) 472682  stmichaels.junior
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Website: www.st-michaels-jun.essex.sch.uk
Headteacher: Mrs Rowen Prigg BA (Hons)
eputy Headteacher: Mrs Lisa Dines BA (Hons)



Thursday 14th May

Dear Parents and Carers,

Important - Please read this message carefully.

In line with the Prime Minister's announcement and Government Guidance, there will be some changes to our procedures as from the 1st June 2020 to allow a return to school for our Year 6 pupils.

I am very aware of the enormous emotional and practical impact that Covid-19 has had on all of us in the school community and completely understand how you may be feeling at this uncertain time. Unfortunately, we still all face difficulties in our lives and within our communities. Throughout the lockdown period, we have been inundated with advice from numerous Government agencies and I wanted to share with you how we will respond to the changes that the Government has proposed should take place from the beginning of June. This letter has to be factual, as this supports your future decision making and updates you on how we will implement the Government's advice at St. Michael's.

What's the current situation?

The Department for Education (11th May 2020) states:

'We want to get all children and young people back into education as soon as the scientific advice allows because it is the best place for them to learn, and because we know how important it is for their mental wellbeing to have social interactions with their peers, carers and teachers. Children returning to educational and childcare settings in greater numbers will also allow more families to return to work.'

'We are therefore gradually increasing the numbers of children and young people attending schools and colleges. The decision is based on the latest scientific advice...by returning pupils gradually settings can initially reduce the number of children and young people in classrooms compared to usual and put protective measures in place to reduce risks.....our ambition is to bring all primary year groups back to school before the summer holidays, for a month if feasible, though this will be kept under review.'

The Government's guidance on the coronavirus has changed from a full school closure (except for those critical worker and vulnerable families) to a partial reopening for all year 6 pupils. The Government's decision has been based on the fact that year 6 children are finishing KS2 and are preparing for their transition therefore would *'benefit from time with their friends and teachers to ensure they are ready'*.

Every school is getting a daily update, at 8am, from the Department for Education and we would like to reassure you that we are taking all the necessary steps to protect our community and are continuing to follow official guidance from the Government, Public Health England and the Essex Local Authority. We continue to have direct contact with the



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Department of Education through a schools communication inbox and continue to support reducing the spread of infection within the whole community.

First phase of wider opening of educational and childcare settings

- On the 1st June 2020, provided the Government's tests are satisfied, children in year 6 are strongly encouraged to return to school (where there are no shielding concerns for the child or their household)
- Children and young people, who have been classed as 'clinically extremely vulnerable due to pre-existing medical conditions' have been advised to shield by Public Health England (NHS). These children are not expected to attend school.
- A child/children who lives with someone who is clinically vulnerable (but not 'clinically extremely vulnerable') including those who are pregnant, can attend their education or childcare setting.
- Children should not attend school if they have symptoms or are self-isolating due to symptoms in the household. If you need further clarification on these categories, please contact your GP as these are medical decisions and guidelines that Public Health have published.
- If you choose not to send your child/children back to school in this first phase, you will not be fined.
- There is no current guidance that the school will be opening over the summer break.

What we're doing to protect and support pupils and staff

Managing risk and rate of transmission:

In response to these guidelines, we have completed a risk assessment and we have planned for an implementation of protective measures which apply to our cleaning and hygiene measures, the organisation of the year 6 classes, staffing, use of the building, strict self-isolation measures including a one way system in the school building and staggered times to enter and leave school as well as utilising the outdoor space as much as we can. In addition, we have established different entry and exits in response to managing the risk of transmission.

From Monday 1st June, provided the Government's tests are satisfied, we will open the school to year 6 children on Monday to Thursday from 8.40 am until 3.20pm. The children will be split into four groups (Mrs Dines and Mrs Stevens are currently completing this task). Each of the groups will be supervised by the same two adults for the remainder of the term. We will be operating staggered start and finish times for each group of children. You will be informed of these times as soon as possible so you can prepare in advance. We will be keeping attendance registers as we did before, but parents will not be fined for non-attendance.

Unfortunately, due to staffing shortages and the cleaning protocol we have to follow, we will not be opening our Breakfast club or Wrap Around Care at this time, but this will be continually reviewed in line with Government guidance. We will be closed to all year 6 pupils on a Friday.

Each group will work within the same classroom every day and the layout of the classroom will be in line with the social distancing guidelines. As this will be completely different and unfamiliar



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to the children, we will initially need to spend time discussing why these measures are necessary. We will also reassure them that that, even from a distance, we can offer nurture, care and positive guidance and respond to their worries and concerns. Throughout the day, we will ensure that children are aware of our revised systems and that good hygiene practices are put into place. In line with current advice and social distancing rules, the four groups will not mix; they will move around the school and enjoy unstructured times of the day together, only with the staff that are leading that group.

Within their groups, children will be enjoying a range of activities throughout the day and we will be operating a 'Recovery curriculum' which may not look the same as our normal broad and balanced curriculum but will instead, certainly initially, be directly responding to the children's mental health and wellbeing, support with transition, lead an outdoor curriculum as much as possible, preparing them for a return to learning and possibly begin to assess where pupils are in their learning. However, this will evolve and change once the children return but we will prioritise our pastoral care in the first instance.

Before the lockdown, we completed a lot of work around the importance of hand washing and this will continue; we will ensure that the children wash their hands regularly throughout the day for at least 20 seconds using soap and water. We used resources from the e-Bug project, which is led by Public Health England, and it has a dedicated webpage about hand washing and respiratory hygiene if you would like to investigate this further.

<https://campaignresources.phe.gov.uk/schools>

In preparation for the children's return, we have also installed new hand paper towel dispensers in each classroom. These are perforated paper towels that can then be thrown in the bin. Each classroom will have soap dispensers and refillable sanitiser bottles as well as tissues. Sanitisers are located in several places around the school and will be refilled as needed. Children will be asked to sanitise their hands before entering school. If you would like your child to bring in their own mini hand sanitiser, it can be kept in their tray and we will remind them to use it.

Enhanced cleaning protocols will ensure strict hygiene measures are maintained and staff will be encouraged to wipe down surfaces in between structured and unstructured times of the day, where possible.

Further measures

- We have asked our cleaning team to focus particularly on surfaces that children and staff touch, including door handles, doors, doorframes and all tables and chairs. These will be cleaned with anti-bacterial spray.
- Necessary stationery and equipment will be provided in school. Children should not bring in their own equipment or school bag.
- Children should only bring in their packed lunch box/bag and a water bottle. These will be kept in the classroom. Please ensure that they have a water bottle, as the drinking fountains will be out of use.



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- We will restrict all visitors into school.
- We will be marking out 2metre distances on the front playground to allow for social distancing during pick-up times. Only one parent should accompany their child to and from school – please adhere to the allocated markings if you do. You may encourage your child to walk or ride their bike instead, but they must take responsibility for sanitising their own bike.
- If you are not picking up your child and are happy for them to walk home by themselves, please inform the office in writing or by email.
- Collection at the end of the day – to try and avoid the daily congestion we will be walking the children on to the front playground from three different exits.
- Where possible, children should continue to wear school uniform but we realise that over the lockdown period they may have grown out of it. Sensible footwear should be worn as we will operate an outdoor curriculum as much as possible – black trainers will be fine. Government advice is that any clothes worn to school should be washed every day as soon as your child returns from school. Our uniform policy remains the same in every other sense regarding nail varnish, hair colour, etc.
- We will not be checking your child's temperature on arrival and they are not required to wear face masks; this is in line with the Government's advice.

What we need you to do:

- Please use the Google form link to indicate whether your Year 6 child will be attending school. School is not reopening for siblings in other year groups at the moment.
- Please also indicate whether you will require lunch to be supplied (currently, we are only planning a 'Grab and Go' lunch option) – FSM pupils only.
- Observe the new social distancing measures on the front playground
- Ensure your child is not late to school and that they are collected promptly after school, as this will compromise the staggered times which have been put in place to minimize the risk of infection to the children and staff.
- Please ensure that we have the most up-to-date contact information. If you've recently changed your contact details, please inform the school office as soon as possible via telephone or email. This is vitally important.
- If we call you because your child is showing symptoms, you must come and collect your child straight away. The current guidance states that your child will have to remain



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isolated and may have to be treated by a member of staff wearing PPE, which we understand will be very difficult for the child and adult but is necessary.

- Children in years 3, 4 and 5 will be getting work for the last half of the summer term and will be asked to continue to work remotely.
- While we are usually very accommodating to parents asking to use the toilet with younger children at pick up/drop off times. In the present situation, the office team will not be able to allow this.

What happens if the school has to close?

We will only close if we're either officially advised to do so or we don't have enough staff to run the school.

In either case, we will:

- Alert parents via email and post information on our website about how long the school will be closed and when it is likely to reopen.
- Inform parents about how to access learning activities for their child via email

We have been advised today via Essex Schools Communication of some advice given by the Dept for Education helpline as follows:

- If any child or staff member has all 3 symptoms, i.e. cough, fever and shortness of breath the class should be sent home (only that class), the classroom cleaned and then they return the next day.
- If it is more than one class then we may be advised to close the whole school for a deep clean, again opening for children and staff without symptoms the following day.

It is a tricky time and we are all worried about the impact this might have on our community. It's important we keep each other safe and talk about these events to help with any anxiety. I hope that this letter has helped in part to do this.

Thank you for your continued support.



Rowen Prigg
Headteacher



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