

St Mary's Catholic Primary School



'Learning and Loving on our journey with Jesus'

27 August 2020

Dear St Mary's Parents and Carers,

Re: Return to school in September

Our risk assessment and plan for the return to school was passed by the Trustees of the Frassati Catholic Academy Trust this afternoon and can be accessed on the School website. Remember this is a 'live' document and may change on a daily basis.

I have been adapting and developing the Risk Assessment and Plan for a Return to school since July when I wrote to you last. As you can imagine, there have been many different versions as guidance and expectations have become clearer, the impact of certain decisions developed and the prospective date to welcome all children has become closer. I also want to assure you all, staff, parents and children that we cannot guarantee a COVID-free environment but we can try to build in protective measures wherever possible so that all can enter the school knowing that the school has tried its utmost to consider the needs and worries of all whilst providing a broad and balanced return curriculum for all the children.

To be clear, this has been a great challenge. Guidance and information changes on a regular basis and we are trying to keep as well-informed as we can. Hindsight is a wonderful thing – situations would be vastly different if we knew then what we know now. Please have patience if many aspects of the school day change at short notice – we may be adapting to circumstances beyond our control.

So – we'll start as we have done before with Questions and Answers!

Do we all have to follow social distancing?

- Although the government guidance says that young children cannot socially distance we do expect **all adults** to observe socially distancing within the school grounds and when they leave. **We will ask that you do not gather in groups on the pavement outside the school as this affects the safety of other road and pavement users.**
- Children, when they are able to understand, are advised not to touch each other – so much so that contact sports games are actively discouraged in the playground and in PE lessons.
- Children will be encouraged to keep 2 metres away from the teachers and teaching assistants which may have an impact on some subject areas.
- The classrooms will look a little different with all the children facing forward and encouraged to stay in their seats during lessons.
- If you have not already done so, please explain to your child about social distancing before they return to school so this is not a surprise.

Will there still be an emphasis on handwashing?

- Yes! All the hygiene measures that have been in place in school from our partial re-opening will continue. The regular handwashing and use of sanitiser will continue for the foreseeable future. It will help if you explain the reasons for handwashing and socially distancing with your child before they return to school.
- Hand washing/sanitising will occur on entry to school, after using the WC and after each transition e.g. after break, after PE and after using some shared resources.

- Songs and rhymes have helped so far to keep children in these good habits.
- It will have an impact on different points of the school day as ensuring 30 children wash and sanitise their hands takes some time.

What are the new bubbles?

- We will have phase bubbles because the children in parallel classes will need to mix, not only at break times but for different activities like maths, phonics and potential intervention groups.
- The guidance suggests year group classes but in mixed year group classes where some rooms are accessed via other rooms this would not work.
- We will have 3 bubbles Early Years, Infants, Lower Juniors and Upper Juniors but they will not mix at all during the school day. It will help if you can explain to your child that they will not be able to mix with friends or siblings in other phases during the school day.

Will there be staggered starts, breaks, lunches and home time?

- Most definitely yes! I appreciate that this may be inconvenient to some but we have to ensure that only the adults picking up will be on site at one time. We are trying to avoid adults congregating in groups at any point around the site so we will be looking for everyone to socially distance along the school path across the car park.
- Please enter the school by the main gate and then leave through the street gate so we can keep a one-way system going. See the timetable for your phase drop off and pick up times.
- The Year 1 children who came into school in the phased re-opening were able to do a 'kiss and run' into school and I am hoping that everyone else will learn to do the same. Work with us in this respect and prepare your child/children to understand that we will need to move at speed to avoid any pinch points.
- Year 1 children and older will be dropped off and picked up again at the large wooden gate – no parents will be allowed past onto the playground at drop off time. Children will get used to it and so will you! Please understand that the safety of all is guiding in us these decisions.
- When Early Years start, they will be able to use their wooden gate by Bumblebees at the start of the school day. We will review this once they have settled into their classes.

What if I have a question to ask the school or the teachers?

- We will be asking that you e-mail the office if you have any questions so as not to have to queue by the office entrance when we are trying to get children into school and observe social distancing.
- The start of the day will be very busy until everyone gets used to the routine. If you call or e-mail the office, I can always contact you after the morning rush!

Will there still be whole school worship and assemblies?

- There will not be any whole school assemblies as yet but we are considering phase assemblies and a larger role for class worship following the weekly Gospel. This will depend on guidance.
- With churches just opening for Mass we will keep the current guidance in mind should we be able to so we can say Mass as soon as we are able. It may be initially for the older children but no parents will be able to attend.

What will the Curriculum look like? Will my child be able to access all the subjects?

- We will be including wellbeing activities to settle the children back into the routines of the school day initially but we will be ensuring that they still have access to a broad and balanced curriculum.
- There are some subjects that will have to be adapted to make them safe for the pupils and teachers. In music children will not be able to sing or blow instruments until advice says otherwise. All musical instruments will be cleaned between uses and between phase bubbles.

- In computing – the 30 computers in our ICT suite do not allow for social distancing between the children or the staff. We are developing ways whereby the children will be able to receive their lesson but may undertake their tasks either at home, or in smaller supervised groups. This will depend on the area of the Computing curriculum being studied.
- Some assessment will take place to decide where children need support but hopefully the children will not notice this happening as it will take many different softer forms like quizzes. The guidance is very clear about this!
- PE will continue but without any form of contact and limited cleanable resources. The Virtual Games challenges will help to keep everyone interested and further curriculum support will be shared locally in September through the School Sports Partnership. PE will be outside for as long as we are able – let's hope we keep good weather for as long as possible.

Will there be Breakfast or after school clubs?

- The Guidance makes it clear that groups of children should not be mixed in these clubs unless there is space for them to be separated into phase groups. The space available in the Outside classroom is limited and until the guidance changes it is unlikely the on-site provision will change.
- Wise Owls, hosted at Riverside School, has provided St Mary's school with a risk assessment as to how they intend to organise both the bus pick-up and care for children after school as they have access to more space. You may wish to contact them if you have urgent needs.
- School will support the re-establishment of breakfast and After School club as soon as the guidance allows.

Does my child have to come to school in September?

- **Yes! Attendance will be compulsory with the prospect of fining those who do not send their children back to school without good reason.** If you were considering a holiday abroad or are returning from another country, please remember that there will be a quarantine period from some destinations. You will need to make sure you are back in time for your child to return to school on 3rd September.
- If your child is ill or there is illness in the family and you have concerns about your child returning, this will be dealt with on a case by case basis.

Will you all take into account that my child has not been at school for so long? What is he needs the toilet during the day? What if he gets hungry in the morning?

- We recognise that everyone will need to get used to the school day again after such a long time away. Morning healthy snacks, 'toilet times', waiting for lunch and keeping awake in the afternoon will be challenges for many children. It will help if you prepare your child by reminding them what the school day was like and the rules they had to remember.
- Remember – we do understand and will work together to make sure all children feel comfortable on their return to school.

What if we are late for school?

- **Please, please** try to be on time as this will impact on the next group of parents and children trying to access the school at the same time.
- If older siblings can be dropped off independently, please do this so our St Mary's child can be on time. You may choose that your Year 6 children can come into the school grounds on their own. Make sure everyone uses the right gate!
- Again, please be on time for picking up at your allotted time as we will be keeping phases apart and this could cause space issues at the end of the day.

What if I have children in different years? Can I pick them all up at the same times?

- Initially - no. Please work with us on this. The staggered starts and finishes is an intrinsic part of the guidance to ensure there is less congregation of parents/carers in the school grounds and in the wider vicinity of the school. If the guidance changes, we can look at this again.
- The dropping off window for the whole school is 8.30 to 9.00 am and the pick-up window is 3.00 to 3.30pm. We are trying to ensure that the children do not lose out by shrinking the school day in any way. The guidance is very clear about this too!

Will my child have to wear uniform?

- Wearing uniform helps children to settle back into school mind-set. Please make sure it is washed regularly (If you can, daily). Naming all uniform will make sure anything lost is returned to you.
- Long hair must be tied up as usual but please no jewellery – simple studs only and no necklaces or bracelets unless for religious purposes. Guidance suggest that this should be kept to a minimum for all individuals at school including staff.
- Please apply sun cream to your child before they come into school and make sure they bring a hat as we really hope it will continue to be sunny for as long as possible.

What will the classroom look like?

- Guidance states that children should be sitting at the same desk looking forward. We have arranged for the Smart TVs to be relocated so that all the children can see the board wherever they are sat in class.
- Classes are have undergone a transformation to remove all soft furnishings and soft toys and resources that cannot be easily cleaned. They have also been transformed by the new suspended ceilings and lighting that has happened over the summer break!
- Staff are required to ensure the children stay 2m away where possible. In some classes this will mean that the support from a member of staff may look different but rest assured that there will still be support and your child will feel cared for whilst they are in school.

Will staff be wearing PPE?

- There is no DfE requirement for staff to wear PPE. The majority of staff will not but I will not prevent a member of staff from wearing PPE should they request to do so.
- If a member of staff has to be working closely with a child or children for more than 15 minutes, then they will be encouraged to wear visors. We want everyone to feel safe and protected when at school.

Will there still be school lunches?

- Yes – so far with our new school caterer, Dolce, we are organising hot or cold Grab bags for lunch. Due to the staggered lunchtimes some children will eat in the hall and some will eat in their classrooms. Children are not allowed to mix phases in the hall and all surfaces will need cleaning between phases.
- All children are asked to bring in a refillable water bottle – not disposable please! Water bottles need to go home each night for a really good wash.
- All lunches from home must be able to be accessed by the child without help– e.g. no tight pots/ packets or things that need spoons or forks – unless you provide them.
- We suggest that the children bring in a healthy morning snack such as fresh fruit or dried fruit to keep them going – they will have become used to different eating timetables whilst at home.

Expectations of Behaviour in School

- We have had amendments to our Behaviour policy for these times and on the return to school but these will still sit under our new Behaviour Policy which is based on being:

Ready, Respectful, Safe

- The children are already familiar with this. We will be talking to then about what ‘safe’ looks like in these times and how all our procedures like handwashing and social distancing can help.

What can I do to help my child get ready?

- Talk to your child about how things will look different and how there may be new different children that they do not know so well in their class.
- They might be with a new teacher and new teaching assistants; reassure them that all St Mary’s staff are lovely.
- Practice hand washing and social distancing when out and reinforce toilet training.
- Teach your child to ‘Catch it, Bin it, Kill it’ into a tissue that can be thrown away into the bin.
- Tell your child that the staff in the school will be really pleased to see them!

What else can I do to help keep things safe for everyone?

- Be a good role model to your child especially about social distancing when you are out.
- Please do not send your child to school if you or anyone in your household are showing any symptom of Coronavirus – new persistent cough, high temperature, tiredness and/or loss of taste.
- If your child is unwell in any way – please do not send them in.
- Make sure your child does not bring in any toys or special things that might compromise the Bubble.
- We will not be giving Calpol or any similar medicines – if you child needs these, they should not be in school.

Time tables! There are strict 10 minute intervals between each phase drop off and pick up times. Please make sure you are on time for your child’s entry to school. If there is a queue of parents, please make sure you socially distance.

Early years

Start	Drop off	Home time	Pick Up Zone
Monday 7 th September onwards 0900 am	One way One parent to enter by street gate and leave by main gate Child enters by Bumblebees’ Wooden gate	1230pm	One way Enter by Street gate, pick up at Bumblebees gate and leave by main gate. Please socially distance in line to pick up the children.
Monday 14 th September	(as above)	3.00pm	As above

Key Stage 1/Infants

Start	Drop off	Home time	Pick Up Zone
0840am	One parent to enter by main gate and leave by street gate Children enter through large wooden gate at entry to playground, child goes through gate, and parent leaves by street gate.	3.10pm	Enter by main gate and socially distance queue to large wooden gate – pick up child and leave by street gate.

Lower Juniors

Start	Drop off	Home time	Pick Up Zone
0830am	<p>One parent to enter by main gate and leave by street gate</p> <p>Children enter through large wooden gate at entry to playground, child goes through gate, and parent leaves by street gate</p>	3.20pm	Enter by main gate and socially distance queue to large wooden gate – pick up child and leave by street gate.

Upper Juniors

Start	Drop off	Home time	Pick Up Zone
0850	<p>One parent to enter by main gate and leave by street gate</p> <p>Children enter through large wooden gate at entry to playground, child goes through gate, and parent leaves by street gate</p>	3.30pm	Enter by main gate and socially distance queue to large wooden gate – pick up child and leave by street gate.

This is truly a time for team St Mary's! If we work together we will make sure everyone is as safe as we can make them and your children return to school to enjoy a happy education!

Best wishes,

Sandra Barry
Head teacher