



# St. Mark's Catholic Primary School

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Friday 22<sup>nd</sup> May

Dear Parents/Carers,

I hope you and your family are well. Firstly, thank you for your continued support and patience during what has been a very busy 2 weeks. You will have heard the government announcement *proposing* that from June 1<sup>st</sup>, schools can open to pupils in Reception, Year 1 and Year 6 as well continuing to provide provision for the key worker and vulnerable children.

In order for St. Mark's Catholic Primary School to cater for a larger intake of children, robust risk assessments and stringent plans on how to manage the school re-opening to bigger numbers of children must be completed. I can assure you, that your child's safety and the safety of the staff in school is my priority and this will not be compromised in order to meet the government's proposed date of June 1<sup>st</sup>.

A great deal of work has been undertaken recently by leaders of St. Mark's to ensure that if the school were to re-open, it would be safe to do so. The figures in the table below show parent responses to the following question, 'Would you send your child to school after 1<sup>st</sup> June?'

	Yes	No	Maybe
Reception	11	10	8
Year 1	6	11	10
Year 6	10	8	10

Despite the government not expecting children to remain 2 metres apart from other children and staff, our intention and plan *is* to still keep (where possible) a distance of about 2 metres between children. Therefore, the maximum capacity for each classroom is 10 children.

We **do not** have the capacity to accommodate the number of key worker and vulnerable children that we have currently attending St. Mark's, and accommodate potentially three whole year groups returning to school. It is for this reason that we have planned a phased return for two year groups only. School will be able to safely accommodate the numbers in the table above (yes and maybe figures combined) for Year 1 children from Monday 8<sup>th</sup> June. School will be able to safely accommodate the numbers in the table above (yes and maybe figures combined) for Reception children from Monday 15<sup>th</sup> June.



To clarify,

**From Monday 8<sup>th</sup> June – Year 1** children will be able to return to school.

**From Monday 15<sup>th</sup> June – Reception** children will be able to return to school.

**All Key worker and vulnerable children will continue to attend school.**

I am aware that there is a great deal of press coverage at the moment in relation to what parents, schools, government ministers and people in the public should and shouldn't do. I have included some important notes below which will hopefully provide you with some clarity and reassurance.

### **Do I have to send my child to school?**

No, you don't. You can choose.

It is very important to understand that it is your choice as to whether your child comes to school. The school and Local Authority will not be issuing penalties for non-attendance and the government will not be holding the school to account for attendance rates. It is your personal choice as to whether or not your child comes to school and the school will not put you under any pressure. We are open if you choose to use us but only you can decide if you want to send your child/ren to school. (Please be aware that if you do decide to keep your child(ren) at home, we will be setting work for your child to complete at home and our expectation will be that we would like correspondence from you in relation to how your child is getting on with home learning tasks.)

### **Are there any children who cannot attend school due to health reasons?**

Some children must not attend school. Children who are extremely clinically vulnerable and shielding should continue to shield and not come to school. Clinically vulnerable children should follow medical advice. Children who live in a house with someone who is extremely clinically vulnerable and shielding should not attend because we cannot guarantee the stringent social distancing required.

### **Is it safe to send my child to school?**

The government believes it is safe for certain groups of children to come to school and has published guidance for schools to follow. I can assure you that we will be following the government guidance fully as well as local authority risk assessments and further guidance. The reason for us opening no sooner than the 8<sup>th</sup> June is that staff and the school building must be fully equipped and prepared to manage the return of other year groups and this is going to take time.

### **Preparations for children returning to school**

If you are the parent of a Year 1 or Reception child, you will appreciate that St. Mark's school will appear differently to what the children remember when they return, and they will have a different experience of school than they will be used to. **Please do not worry, as further information will be provided to you the week beginning Monday 1<sup>st</sup> June on how you can best prepare your child for their return to school. You will also receive information on what measures we have taken in school to keep your child safe.**

Please note: Only parents of key worker, vulnerable, Reception and Year 1 children who stated 'Yes' or 'Maybe' in their questionnaire will be provided with this information.



If you are a parent of a child in Reception and Year 1 and you decide to send your child to school after initially stating 'No' in your questionnaire, you will still be able to send your child to school but please inform the office 2 days before you want your child to return to school so that we can provide you with the necessary information and support your child's transition back into school.

St. Mark's has always been, and will continue to be, a family school whereby relationships with children, staff and families remain of the utmost importance to us. For all other children not able to attend school, we value your learning and so, home learning activities will be set on a weekly basis because where possible, we would like all children in school to be completing similar activities to all children at home. This will enable us all to share some common learning experiences and help you as parents to best support your child with some age-appropriate joint learning tasks. Staff will be continuing with phone calls home for all children not attending school and information will continued to be shared via the school website, text messaging service, post and/or email.

Our first priority before any formal learning will take place, is to support your child's well-being. If you have concerns regarding your child's wellbeing, please inform myself, Mr. Hemmingway or Mrs. Dykes so that we can provide the best support possible (this applies to children learning from home too).

I would like to thank you all for your continued support and understanding.

Yours sincerely,



Mrs. Linley  
Headteacher

