



St John & St James Church of England Primary School

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18th May 2020

Dear Parents and Carers

I hope that you are all continuing to stay safe and manage in the current period of lockdown. I know that things continue to be challenging for everybody, but I also hope that you are taking the opportunity to enjoy some family time as well.

We want to share information with you as and when we get it so that you as parents and carers always feel informed about:

1. What is happening at StJJ – particularly with regards to our educational provision for your children
2. What is on the horizon in terms of strategic planning for the months ahead or communicating any changes
3. The School's response to any government announcements regarding COVID-19 and how these may affect your children.

In addition to our regular letters, I hope that you are also accessing the other ways in which we are regularly communicating updates via the School's website <https://www.stjohnandjames.enfield.sch.uk>

Regular Contact Home

We are committed to ensuring that every student receives a call home once a week to check in and see how things are going during this period and also to see how they are coping with the online work. I hope that you and your children have found these calls supportive and helpful. I would be delighted to hear some feedback from parents and carers about the impact of these catch up calls. Please feel free to e-mail me your thoughts on website@stjohnandjames.enfield.sch.uk.

Return to School Planning – an Update

As you will now be aware, the Government announced last Sunday that primary schools are being encouraged to welcome back children from Nursery, Reception, Year 1 and Year 6 between 1st June and the end of the academic year. Importantly, that this will only happen "provided that the 5 key tests set by the government" are met. It is our understanding and our expectation that the government hopes that years 2, 3, 4 and 5 will return to school before the summer break.

While the announcement has been contentious and has sparked a lot of debate in the media, social media, and from teaching unions and there are many differing opinions, it is the view of the leadership of the school that we need to plan for providing this opportunity. Our principal consideration in all our planning has been (as you can imagine) the health and wellbeing of our children, our families and our staff team.

All preparations for any potential reopening of the school to identified year groups will include all staff (and their union representatives), members of the Governing Body, the local authority and the



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London Diocese Board of Schools. We have also been in regular dialogue with other headteachers in the local area to share our thinking on the matter.

Thus far, we have agreed three principles:

1. Focus on high quality remote learning – This is the main focus across all the schools, as this will form the cornerstone of the provision for all students in all year groups.
2. A commitment to a staggered start for children returning from 1st June to prevent unnecessary contact arriving and leaving for the school day.
3. Provision will be dependent on the health and wellness of the staff at St John and St James, and may be subject to change.

We are fully aware that as and when our children do return, their experience of school will be very different to normal. This is unfortunately inevitable owing to all the restrictions that will have to be implemented in order to keep them safe.

We know that our students and their families will have had very different experiences during lockdown. A few students have been in school for the last couple of months, and for them school will have been a very different place. The majority of our students will have been at home and each of them will have had their own experiences. It will take time for them to re-establish and re-learn the expectations of school life, behaviour and learning. Returning to school will not just be about the academic side of school life. We know that we will need to allow our students time to re-build relationships and get used to being in school again, this will not happen overnight.

The Government has now issued guidance for schools to support the planning for opening again, there are some points that I wish to highlight with you all that we have thought about at St John and St James:

- There will be significantly reduced numbers of students in school at any one time to allow for social distancing measures to be implemented
- We will be redesigning classrooms so children have maximum space to spread out.
- There will be staggered arrival and departure times for different groups of students
- There will be regular scheduled handwashing throughout the day
- Cleaning of the school site will take place throughout the day.
- Students will only be in contact with other students within their groups (safety bubble) and we will minimise the movement around the school, the children will remain in the same room all day when they are not using the outdoor space.
- Handling and sharing of resources will be kept to a minimum where possible.

Whilst we will be implementing systems to support the children and adults regarding social distancing, we know that some students may find it very difficult– especially the youngest children. I understand that many of you may feel anxious about sending your children back to school, but please be assured, we will do our utmost to make sure that they are safe, and that risks are minimised.

For some of you, a return to school may not be an option - especially if there is a family member who has a pre-existing medical condition. The Government has made it clear that parents will not be penalised if they choose to keep their children at home at this time. We recently sent out a survey to parents and carers of children in specific year groups, asking you about your thoughts and your intentions regarding the return of your children to school. This was sent via text at the beginning of last week. If you haven't responded please do so as it will help us with planning to keep children safe.

Finally, please note that any reopening of the school will be phased and will likely be done slowly over time: please do not assume that students will be returning to school on 1st June or that they will immediately return to a full time provision. We will share our plans as soon as they are finalised.

We feel that overall, home learning has been going well. However, we know through our reviews

and via feedback from students and parents that there are some children who are finding the remote learning experience challenging. We urge you to persevere with the online lessons as we do not yet know for certain when the children will return to school:

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/dailylessons> and <https://www.thenational.academy/>

I would also like to stress to parents that if some work is too difficult or incomplete, please do not allow your child to get too worried about this. We will help everyone catch up once your child is back in school.

Alongside the above, the school remains open for the children of key workers and our vulnerable children, from all year groups, every day, alongside provision for those year groups returning to school on or after 1st June subject to confirmation. However, these will remain separate provisions to minimise contact.

Mental Health and Well-Being

We know that this lock down period is a very challenging one (as we have said a number of times). With that in mind, I would like to again share the information below from Enfield local authority about the services that are available to provide support for anyone who needs it.

The main information can be found here. <https://www.stjohnandjames.enfield.sch.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/EPs-Family-Support-Line-Summer-2020.pdf>

... And Finally

I would like to thank all of our families for their continued support!

Take care and stay safe!

Kind Regards

Patsy Cuncarr
Headteacher