

# St John's Church of England Primary School

'The JOY of the Lord is Your Strength' (Nehemiah 8:10)

Headteacher: Mr Phil Thomson



Friday 19<sup>th</sup> June 2020

Dear Parents and Carers,

I am writing to you today with the latest updates from St. John's. I hope you and your families continue to be safe and well.

We are delighted to announce that Year 6 are able to return to school on Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> June should they wish to. Miss Halsall has been double checking with families this week to see if children will be attending so that we can plan accordingly in school. I have added a (lengthy) checklist to the end of this letter as a little reminder of the arrangements for Year 6 on Monday. It will be handy for parents of children in other years to read this as it may give some direction on what school will look like should we open to more year groups in the future.

At this time only Year 6 will be attending school in addition to the 'Key Worker' group. With Year 6 returning and the Key worker group growing this is taking up a lot of our space and staffing capacity within school. We would dearly love to have as many children as possible in school: however, we are limited by the constraints of our Victorian building and the number of staff we have available to ensure children are supervised adequately. Whilst the government would ideally like further year groups to attend, each school has the ability to prioritise based upon their own circumstances. We are continuing to make plans for the return of further year groups and will notify you if this is something we can accommodate in the future.

If you are a key worker and need childcare provision for your child then please contact us at school as we have some capacity within this provision. We have had more and more children make use of this service over the last few weeks which has been lovely! With Year 6 re-starting, we now need to insist that all booking forms for the Key Worker service are returned to school **by the end of Wednesday of the previous week.** This is so we can plan staffing across the different groups as staff and children are not allowed to move across the two groups.

Sefton have asked us to pass on the following message about the identification of key workers as this is a different situation to that of parents who are being called back to work but may not fit the criteria for critical workers:

*The guidance for the identification of critical workers has not changed and you need to follow this guidance. Other people returning to work are not necessarily classed as critical workers and I would recommend you check the government advice.*

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-maintaining-educational-provision/guidance-for-schools-colleges-and-local-authorities-on-maintaining-educational-provision>

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*In short it is: health and social care; education and childcare; key public services; local and national government; food and other necessary goods; public safety and national security; transport; utilities, communication and financial services.*

*Other workers are not classed as critical workers and as such are not given priority according to the guidance. Schools are within their rights to ask for proof of evidence you are on this list.*

*Priority is still for critical workers' children (as defined by the government) and vulnerable children. If schools do not have capacity due to staffing and/or space for any or all of the identified year groups then priority is given to critical workers' children and vulnerable children.*

At this time we do not require proof of 'critical worker' roles: however, this may change if we reach capacity.

A reminder that children will all need to continue to bring a packed lunch to school for the foreseeable future as our caterers, Mellors, are not returning yet. Children should only have their lunchbox and a drink bottle with them each day aside from any clothing / items appropriate for the weather such as coats or sun cream. A snack for playtime in the morning is fine but please remember that we have children and staff in school with severe nut allergies so please do not bring food containing nuts into school. As little equipment / resources as possible should be making the journey from home into school and vice versa children will not need backpacks or pencil cases at this time.

In the meantime, we continue to move towards the end of the summer term and September gets closer and closer. Year 6 will be part of a very different transition to their high schools and we hope all goes well for them. Around this time, we would also be welcoming our new Reception class into school for some visits and a little taste of life at St. John's. Mrs Thomas will be sending out welcome packs to all families which will be followed up with a phone call during the week commencing 29<sup>th</sup> June. We are delighted to welcome our new Reception class to St. John's, some of whom have siblings here already and others who are brand new to our school. I will continue to ensure you are kept up to date with any arrangements for September but, given recent months, I would be prepared for the need for flexibility in September depending on what the guidance is at that time!

Home learning will continue until the end of term. Thank you to those continuing to keep in touch with us through Class Dojo and those who are submitting their response to the weekly challenges. Charlie in Year 1 won last week and I will be announcing the winner of the pizza challenge later... Miss Lovelock has added some virtual classrooms to our weekly timetables; these classrooms include loads of links to videos and web pages all about our country of focus for the week. Next week we are focusing on India.

I will leave it there for today but, as always, should you have any questions or want to discuss any aspect of this letter further, please do not hesitate to contact me at school.

Kind Regards

Mr P Thomson

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## **Checklist for Year 6**

We are delighted that many members of Year 6 will be starting back with us on Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> June. I have copied the key points from the letter sent on 8<sup>th</sup> June which will remind you of the key information for the return to school.

The list is certainly not exhaustive. As staff, we are experiencing working through a pandemic for the first time and, as such, our plans and risk assessments are always changing. Should you have any questions or suggestions, please get in touch.

## **Class Arrangements**

Year 6 will be split into class groups within their own Year 6 'bubble'. The maximum size of each class group will be 12 so that we can ensure social distancing is maintained as much as possible. Following our phone calls, we are expecting around half the class to return. One class will be taught in the Year 6 classroom and the other in Year 5. Children will be at individual, named desks spaced appropriately and with all necessary resources provided. These class groups will be organised alphabetically with children told which classroom to report to on their first day.

There will be set teachers for the Y6 bubble, different to those within the Key Worker bubble. The main teachers with responsibility for teaching Year 6 will be Miss Halsall, Mrs Thompson and Mrs Comstive. Year 6 will be in their 'own bubble' within school and will not have the opportunity to mix with the Key Worker group and the staff assigned to that group during the school day. The timetable for shared areas will be organised so that there is limited opportunity for these groups to cross over.

## **Times of the Day / Week**

Provision for Year 6 will run from Monday to Thursday each week. We are not able to have children in school on Friday as we will need to deep clean the Year 5 and 6 classrooms. Cleaning will take place each day but we need to deep clean regularly and there is no way our wonderful cleaners can keep on top of the Y5/6 area as well as the Key Worker area.

The school day for Year 6 will run from 9 am until 3 pm. We need to enforce a slight time difference between the key worker group and Year 6 so that it does not become too busy around school.

Year 6 will enter and exit via the usual side gate to the playground. Please do not use the front entrance.

Children will leave via the playground gate at 3 pm. And will be picked up / walk home as per your instruction. We do ask that no adult enters the playground and that every effort is made to maintain social distancing on the way into and out of school.

Some children in Year 6 have been utilising the Key Worker service and this will remain in place 5 days a week. If your child is in Year 6, and you feel you need to utilise the Key Worker service on a Friday, this is absolutely fine. However, we have to preserve the integrity of the groups and any Y6 children who attend on Fridays will be looked after within their own little Key Worker group. Government guidance dictates that we need to ensure there is as little crossover of groups as possible within school.

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## **Curriculum**

The time away from school will have been fantastic for some whilst others will have found the time very distressing. One of our main curricula aims will be to ensure that there is plenty of focus on PSHE (personal, social and health education) and that there is plenty of time to rekindle friendships as many will not have seen each other for weeks.

Work will be timetabled throughout the week by the teachers and will reflect what would normally be completed in school at this time of year in terms of topics. Teachers will continue to upload home learning activities for those who choose not to attend school. We will be aiming at mixing in some activities to prepare children for high school alongside those topic lessons and a few bits and bobs to sharpen up those skills which may / may not have been used over the past couple of months – in a fun way!

All necessary equipment will be allocated to the children with a programme of disinfection in place as needed. It may be that some equipment is shared within school, especially at playtime, but we will ensure that children are washing their hands regularly throughout the day.

We do ask that children attending school do not bring any un-necessary equipment with them please.

## **Attendance**

Attendance is not compulsory and must be a decision based upon your own family circumstances: whilst things are improving, it is still a difficult and worrying time for many. The government will take no action against children who do not attend school.

Year 6 do not have to attend every day from Monday to Thursday (or Friday for key worker children) but we ask that you communicate any changes to us in advance as pupil numbers have a huge impact on the provision we are able to offer in school.

Registers will be taken each day in class and we will ring home to check if any child we are expecting does not attend.

If your child is unwell for any reason, please report absence in the usual way. Guidelines for self-isolation still stand should any child or member of the household be diagnosed with Coronavirus.

Ideally, we expect children to wear school uniform for their time in school but realise that this may not be possible if it has been outgrown or wasn't bought for the summer term. If uniform is not worn, please ensure clothing is fit for activities and lessons which could potentially include P.E, gardening, baking, art amongst other subjects of the curriculum!

## **Distancing**

Children will be expected to social distance as much as possible within school and will be reminded of this throughout their time in school. Key points of the day such as start / end times, playtimes, lunchtimes will be staggered to ensure the minimum number of children and staff are moving around school at any time. Classroom desks will be spaced appropriately and children will have all resources readied and provided for them. The Key Worker and Y6 groups will remain separate throughout the school day with no opportunities to mix at this time.

There will be set rules and routines for toileting and to ensure good hygiene throughout the day which children will be expected to follow. If we feel that children are not willing / able to follow the rules and guidelines put in place then we will ask that they do not attend for the safety and wellbeing of others.

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According to government guidance, children and staff should not wear PPE for their everyday interaction; however, we do have some stock in school should it be required to deal with an emergency

We do ask that parents do not enter the building or playground, and if accompanying their child to school, leave their child at the gate where staff will be present. Please let us know in advance if you need a chat about anything as members of staff will be needed to supervise 'bubbles' – we don't have many spare! Children are able to bring their bikes or scooters to school should they wish; the government have after all requested that, where possible, children walk or cycle to school. Bikes can be stored as usual in the shelter.

## Dinners

All children are required to bring a packed lunch as we are not able to provide a dinner service at this time. If the weather is pleasant we are likely to eat outside; if not, the hall will be used in shifts so that we can aim for social distancing! Children are able to bring a snack for the morning and we are a little more lenient with this than would usually be the case in school: we do ask that no food is brought into school which contains nuts.