



21.5.20

Dear parents/carers,

Schools continue to receive, daily, numerous amounts of guidance from a wide range of agencies including the Department for Education. It is not helpful that this guidance is amended each time and plans that were made the previous day to manage the safe return of children and staff have to be changed. As of today schools have been asked to prioritise the return of Early Years children and Year 1. Once these year groups have returned, Year 6 will follow.

Local authorities are making their own decisions as to whether to adhere to Government advice. I have attached Manchester City Council's position statement. As stated in this document, "It is highly unlikely that children in the government identified priority year groups will be able to attend school full time from June." They continue to say "It is also clear that any return for children and young people will not look the same as before COVID." This was released on May 15<sup>th</sup>. The Government have advised that we keep children in "Bubble" groups. This means that the same small group of children stay together all day and don't interact with any other group at any point during the school day. This would be entirely impossible in breakfast and afterschool clubs and so regrettably, we will **NOT** be able to offer this provision from June 8<sup>th</sup>.

We have contacted by telephone, every parent in The Acorns, Nursery, Reception and Year 1 in order to ascertain their views in relation to the children's return to school. Where we haven't managed to get through, voicemail messages have been left.

A great many of you had made the decision to keep your children at home. This is entirely your prerogative. Whilst we will do our very best to ensure we minimise risk, we cannot guarantee that the children will always be socially distanced. These are the youngest children in our school and they have no understanding of the concept of social distancing. School has completed a detailed risk assessment and it is clear that we cannot accommodate the return of all of these year groups and meet the Government safety requirements. Therefore, each returning year group will return on a rota basis with staggered start and finishing times. You will receive an email detailing the weeks your child/children will return. For some year groups where the numbers returning are very low, the children will return on a full time basis. For others, the children might only return for a two week block. I know that this will not be the news you might have wanted, but it is the best way we can arrange it in order to keep your children as safe as we possibly can. I also know that many of you will now be returning to work and need child care provision, however, we cannot accommodate every child's attendance on a daily basis as this would mean reopening school fully. This is not an ideal situation but it is the very best we can do given the circumstances.

The classrooms will look different upon the children's return. They will be working on individual tables and all soft furnishings will have been removed. Lines for social distancing when dropping children off, will be placed outside the drop off zones. School start times and end times will be staggered and only one parent will be allowed to drop a child off. This is to ensure rules around social distancing are met.

For those families who receive free school meals, school will order your vouchers for the remaining weeks of the summer term. We ask that ALL families with children returning to school, to provide a packed lunch in disposable packaging in order to reduce the risk of cross-contamination. School will not be providing school dinners.

School will close at 1.00pm every Friday in order to allow for a deep clean of the classrooms, ready for Monday.

This is a lot of information to take in and it does mean that school and what it can offer, will be very different from June 8<sup>th</sup> onwards. No doubt there will be continued guidance issued and changes will be made over the remaining school weeks. Plans to return the children in years 2,3,4 and 5 will be made after half term and will be very dependent on how successful the programme to return early years, year 1 and year 6 children is. I will continue to keep you updated. We will work with this plan unless we are told either by the Local Authority or the Government that schools can no longer re-open.

Again, I know that many of these changes will be disappointing to some of you but the safety of the children, our staff and your families is paramount. I hope that you trust us to do the best for you all.

### **Congratulations!**

I am delighted to announce that Mrs Malone has been appointed as Assistant Headteacher from September. Those of you who know Mrs Malone are already aware of how dedicated she is to the children and families of St. Kentigern's. She will undoubtedly make an excellent addition to our leadership team.

Chester congratulates Mrs Malone on her appointment.



With continued best wishes,

*Madeine Muldoon*

Mrs Muldoon

Headteacher