

Updated 21st May 2020

Dear Parents,

Well, as promised, I am keeping you updated as to what our plan is as a school, as we approach the gradual transition of expanding our pupil numbers beyond key worker children and those who may be vulnerable.

Keeping abreast of DfE guidance, LA guidance and the various union contributions over recent weeks has been no mean feat. Nevertheless, we feel that we have 'a plan' to begin to step into the next phase of opening St Bert's to more children. Obviously, this will only happen if we have the official go-ahead on 28th May 2020.

It goes without saying that detailed risk assessments have been conducted for each aspect of the extension of our opening. One of the key findings of our risk assessment was that we need all staff to be trained in what will become our new health and safety regimes. As a school we already have very stringent measures in place, however, more specific hygiene rules are going to be necessary if we are to feel confident about more children safely attending school.

As you are aware, school will be closed from 22nd May to 8th June 2020 for essential repairs. We will open again on 8th June for key workers' children and others who are deemed to be vulnerable. Instead of working as one group the children will now be split up into 3 groups. (*Group 1* Pre-school, Reception, Y1 and Y2.) (*Group 2* Y3 and Y4.) (*Group 3* Y5 and Y6.) These groups will become known as 'pods' and will have a maximum of 15 children. The key aspect of this being that cross contamination will be reduced as each 'pod' will operate within its own confines with the same member of staff for one-week periods (again to minimise cross contamination). We expect to see an increase in numbers during the first week of term as the government will reveal a revised list of key workers on 31st May 2020. (Please leave a message on the school answer machine if this applies to you.) Key worker children are now invited to stay at school for the whole week rather than picking and choosing on a daily basis, this will allow us to plan more carefully for their activities.

As from 15th June, we are hoping to introduce our pre-school children back into school. They will function as 2 pods. Kathryn will be in touch with all parents prior to their child returning to ensure you are happy with the arrangements and to give you more detailed information.

As from 22nd June, providing we still have the staffing resources available and everything is going to plan, we will introduce our reception children back into school. Reception will function as 3 separate pods. Again, further details for affected families will follow in due course.

At this stage we will closely monitor the situation with regards to the numbers of key worker children, the number of vulnerable children in school, as well as the number of pre-school and reception children who are attending. We will constantly review the health and safety measures in place and risk assess our staffing ratios in order to ensure that we are all satisfied with our procedures and protocols. If at this stage we are happy and have the staffing capacity to further increase our numbers, we will invite Y1 children back into school (as from 29th June) and again, they will function as 3 separate pods.

Going beyond this date 'the plan' is somewhat difficult. The 'plan' is not rigid and we may have to change 'the plan' as we go along since we realise we are dealing with unknown numbers. As I said at the beginning of the week, our primary concern is the health and safety and wellbeing of **all** in our school community. We need to make it work for **our** school community. We realise that teachers, parents and children need to feel confident about coming to school. Our aim is to increase confidence for all concerned, so that St Bert's can begin to flourish once again.

Again, as I said earlier in the week, the decision as to whether you want your child to take up a place (if invited) is entirely up to you. It is your decision and not your child's. As a parent you need to feel you have the confidence in us to care for and protect your child as you would care for them yourself. I sincerely hope we can build your trust and that whenever the time is right for you and your family, your child can be welcomed back to St Bert's.

All parents of children invited back to school, will receive official notification. They will also receive a parent's information sheet detailing the differences they can expect to see as well as detailing the expectations of families if they are going to send their child/ren back to school. In the meantime, 'home learning' will continue for all children until the end of term. Oak National Academy online resources are receiving some excellent reviews – please take a look. This is a government lead initiative which will be used more extensively throughout the country if home learning continues.

Thank you for taking the time to read this update. I hope you can see that we are making progress towards returning children to school, but that we are very keen to do it in a measured fashion and in a way which prioritises the health and safety of the whole school community.

God Bless

Julie Barron

KEY DATES

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|---------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 22 nd May - 7 th June | School closed for repair work. |
| 28 th May 2020 | Decision by government as to whether schools will extend their opening. |
| 31 st May 2020 | Revised list of key workers released. |
| 8 th June 2020 | School re-opens for key worker children. Children encouraged to be in school every day. |
| 15 th June 2020 | Pre-school children return. |
| 22 nd June 2020 | Reception children return. |
| 29 th June 2020 | Y1 children return. |

Please note: Universal free school meals for key worker children will come into operation for children in school from 8th June 2020. These are for children in Y2 and below.