

ST. JOHN'S C OF E PRIMARY & NURSERY SCHOOL

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Headteacher: Mrs Lulu Esua

Dear Parents and Carers,

Monday 15th June, 2020

We hope that this letter finds you safe and well, and we appreciate how challenging home learning can be for you all. Thank you for all the messages of support that we have been receiving. All the staff appreciate your kind words. We are writing to you to update you on our current situation. As you will be aware, the Government has revised its stance on opening schools more widely this term and we are as disappointed as you are not to be able to welcome all children back.

Wider Opening of the School

The Government announced back in May that primary schools should begin to plan for the phased return of children in a way that is measured, reduces risks and is guided by Science. They said that schools could open for Reception, Year 1 and Year 6 from June 1st. As was made clear in Department of Education Guidance published shortly after the statement, this high level ambition has to be implemented within the context of:

1. the safety of pupils, their families and our staff being paramount
2. limitations inherent in our school buildings and premises, especially the number of classrooms available, and their size
3. available staff numbers

Every school's situation is unique. As a result, as made clear by our Local Authority in its letter to parents and carers dated 18th May, every school's wider opening will look different.

St John's has put in place very stringent safety measures. As previously communicated, these involve staggered start and finishing times, "bubbles" of pupils no more than 11 strong, individual desks 2 metres apart, one way systems within school and rigorous hand washing and cleaning routines. In St John's terms, in KS1, this means a maximum of 8 in a class due to the small size of the classrooms. However, in upper KS2, with slightly larger classrooms we can accommodate up to 11. So the government's guidance of up to 15 cannot apply at St John's. We shared our class photos in our newsletter so that the children and families could see what measures had been put in place and had an idea of how the school now looks inside and out.

The number of classrooms and staff available also had to be factored into our planning. In accommodating 140 pupils from Nursery, Reception, Year 1, Year 6, keyworker families and the vulnerable, we are at full capacity with our current model. We are trying to be creative with our space and have erected a Yurt in the field as a potential learning space. We are using 6 of our 8 classrooms, the school hall, outdoor space, Bluebridge House and Computing suite and all of our available staff. Some of our staff are shielding and working from home for health reasons.

Bearing in mind our safety measures, our premises and our individual staff circumstances, we have accommodated as many of our children as we possibly can up to this week. As advised, our return to school has been a gradual phased approach, as we stated in our earlier correspondence and cannot be full time for every child. Taking into account all the circumstances and restrictions, we took the decision to initially invite Reception, Year 1 and 6 (key transition year); keyworkers and vulnerable pupils back to school to join children for whom school has remained open throughout. This week nursery is returning to school.



Our initial phased return was based on the number of staff available, the science, and maintaining stringent safety measures. We were also keen to have all children start back in their own classroom. As we drew up a thorough risk assessment, we were aware that our children had been away from school for up to 10 weeks and each child's experience of 'Lockdown' had been different. With every child's wellbeing in mind, we planned for children in Early Years and KS1 to return to their own classes especially where some bubbles did not have their own class teacher. In order to ensure safety measures and social distancing were kept, our bubbles in KS1 were 8, and 11 in KS2.

In spite of the Unions' recommendations, all our staff have been happy to clean classrooms and equipment used in between sessions, and at the end of every day. In addition, our cleaning team ensures all spaces used are cleaned as well as a deep clean on Fridays. Every bubble begins their day in a thoroughly cleaned class.

As the weeks have progressed, we now have more staff available and therefore we are in a better position to increase our provision for Reception and Year 1. From Monday June 22nd every child will have 2 full days in school each week till Thursday 16th July, and Nursery and Year 6 will finish on Monday 20th July. Their class teacher will organise the 2 days and inform you this week.

Remote Learning

We will of course continue to upload our Home Learning plans onto our agreed platform and website weekly. We will not be providing live stream lessons as there is no evidence to suggest that this improves the child's learning and there are so many considerations that require due diligence (safeguarding and personal data protection foremost among them).

Although Years 2 – 5 are not in the government priority year groups, they continue to be our priority alongside all children who are attending school at the moment. Our teachers are working tirelessly to plan rich varied learning for **all** children and give them an opportunity to continue their learning at home.

Transition days

We have carefully planned 3 transition sessions for the new Years 3- 6 (current Years 2- 5). As these year groups have not be able to return to school, we believe it is crucial to have them in more than once. It is also important that they visit their new classroom with their new teacher. We will ensure all surfaces and equipment are cleaned after each session.

To support parents we continue to recommend the Oak National Academy and BBC Bitesize websites, which both have fantastic daily lesson offerings that are easy for children to follow as an additional resource.

For BBC Bitesize, click this link <https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/dailylessons> and chose the appropriate year group to see what lessons there are that day. If you want to find lessons from previous days, scroll down the page.

Daily Lessons

From BBC Bitesize

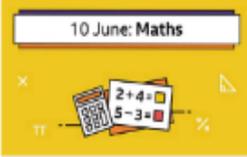
Pick your year and start homeschooling

You'll find daily lessons for home schooling for all year groups and subjects. You can also find regular extra help for extra support. See our help page for more.

Year 1/P2 Age 5-6 lessons	Year 2/P3 Age 6-7 lessons	Year 3/P4 Age 7-8 lessons
Year 4/P5 Age 8-9 lessons	Year 5/P6 Age 9-10 lessons	Year 6/P7 Age 10-11 lessons

Year 3 and P4 lessons

Latest lessons

10 June: Maths  Equivalent fractions: Finding missing numerators and denominators 10 June - Learn how to simplify equivalent fractions and find the missing numerator or denominator.	10 June: English  Using a thesaurus 19 June - Learn how to use a thesaurus.	10 June: Science  Renewable and non-renewable energy 10 June - Learning about renewable and non-renewable energy.
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For Oak National Academy, click this link: <https://classroom.thenational.academy/year-groups> and then click on your year group before either choosing to look at the day's schedule or search by subject



As explained above, given our classroom and staff numbers, and to enable robust safety measures, we will be at full capacity from Monday 22nd June with the Government's statutory priority year groups.

Our focus now is to begin to plan ahead for whole school reopening in September for the 2020 -2021 academic year. We of course will be looking at further guidance and direction given by the Government and will communicate with you as soon as we know the direction they intend to go.

We hope that you are all keeping safe and well in these unprecedented times.

Yours sincerely,

OPESWA

Headteacher

&

Lynn Charlton

Chair of Governing Body