



St. Matthew's Primary School

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Headteacher: Mr Tony Davies

Saturday 20th May 2020

Dear Parents and Carers,

You may be aware that the government has now announced that it considers it safe for schools to begin to open to more children. We wrote to you just before the holiday to explain that if the government did this then we would be writing to parents to confirm whether or not they would take up the offer of sending their child into school for this first phase or re-opening. You can find the link to the survey below. Using the information from our last survey, we are also able to tell you a little more about what a potential wider opening of St Matthew's will look like.

This survey needs to be completed by the Parents and Carers of children in Nursery, Reception, Year One and Year Six, and also parents and carers of Key Workers who intend to send their children to school during this first stage of wider opening. Our plan is to begin with one year group at a time starting the week beginning 8th June, such that all of the year groups that we are able to open will be in operation at some point during the end of the week beginning 15th June. Which year groups we open to will depend on the final numbers that come through this survey. Please be aware that parents who do not complete the survey may not be able to send their child to school during this stage of wider opening.

We ask that parents and carers read the information below before completing the survey that can be found at this link - <https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/MQR6KDL> - **Please complete no later than 12pm on Monday 1st June.**

We want to welcome children back into school as soon as it is safe to do so. We are working to implement all government guidance for a wider opening. Whether this guidance is enough for schools to be safe to open more widely is still proving controversial. I am sure you will want to consider these issues as you make your decision. We also want you to be aware of some of the following points about how school will be organised before you decide whether or not it is right for your child to return to school at this point:

- When it is safe, we want to open St Matthew's to all of the children the government has asked us to consider – Nursery, Reception, Year One and Year Six. However, we will not be able to confirm to which year groups we will offer a return to school in June until we have the results of this survey. Our first survey indicated that we would *just* be able to offer a place to all those who said they would like one (a little under 50% of children). However, this uses all available staff, including teachers who teach in other year groups. If numbers increase

significantly in this survey, we will have to withdraw the offer to some year groups.

- For Nursery, the plan will be to have one group attending Monday and Tuesday and a second group attending Thursday and Friday.
- For Reception, Year One and Year Six, the children would be coming to school full time Monday to Thursday and also Friday mornings. The days will be slightly shorter to allow for staggered starts and finishes to the day.
- If you are a key worker and wish your child to attend school full time (i.e. including Friday afternoon), then your child will have to be in a “Key Worker” group separate from the other children in their year. This group will be with the children of other key workers from across the school. Once these groups have been set up, children in the key worker group will not be able to mix with friends in their year group classes or move to a different group at a later point until current guidance changes.
- The children in school will be taught in group sizes of a maximum of 14 (one or two rooms are large enough for 15). This is following guidance from Cambridgeshire Local Authority.
- Start and finish times will be staggered: those starting at 8:45 will finish at 2:45; those starting at 9am will finish at 3pm; those starting at 9:15am will finish at 3:15pm. Friday will be a half day with finish times also staggered (except for the Key Worker Group(s). Details of this will be confirmed when we have final numbers in. In this way we aim to reduce potential crowding at the start and end of the school day.
- Please be aware that your child is likely to be in a group that will not be taught by their usual class teacher. Half of the teachers in Nursery, Reception, Year One and Year Six are following government guidelines on shielding and social-distancing and so not able to come into school to work.
- Children will not be able to move between their glass groups, and neither will staff. This means that we will not be able to cover absent staff as we would normally. As a result, it may be that a class will have to close at short notice if staff are absent.
- If there is a confirmed case of Covid 19 in a class group, all of the children and staff in that class group will be sent home and will need to self-isolate for 14 days. Parents and carers will therefore have to make sure that they can be contacted immediately while children are in school.
- The government has said that having the children organised in bubbles means that strict social distancing is not required in schools. While we will be teaching the children about social distancing and doing our best to organise our classrooms to minimise close contact between children, we cannot say that all children will be practicing social distancing in school.
- We understand that for some children returning to school after a long time away might be difficult. If your child is finding it difficult to say goodbye to you at the start of the day, we will not be able to pick them up or give them a reassuring cuddle as we may have done before. If your child is crying or distressed and cannot settle, then it is likely that you will have to take them back home. Parents are not going to be allowed into classrooms at the start or end of the school day.

- If you say that you do not want your child to come to school during this first stage of wider opening, we will have limited ability for your child to return to school until the government announces that we are moving to the next stage of wider opening. We are not expecting to have staff left who are not already allocated to allow us to open up additional class groups.
- In our survey, we also ask about whether or not your child would use breakfast club or after school club. It may be that this is not available as children cannot be in a class group during the day and then go into a different group of children before or after school. It might be possible to organise for key worker group(s), but this will depend on numbers.

As always, thank you for your patience and support in these difficult times. Once we have analysed the results of the survey, we will write to parents as soon as possible next week to confirm arrangements.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tony Davies". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping 'T' and 'D'.

Tony Davies
Head Teacher