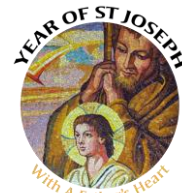




St Joseph's Catholic Primary School
Diocese of Clifton



Inspiring everyone to REACH through
Faith, Hope, Love

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Acting Headteacher: Mrs Clare Howells

21st July 2021

Dear parent/carers

Living with COVID-19

As the country moves to Step 4 of the roadmap, this marks a new phase in the government's response to the pandemic, moving away from stringent restrictions on everyone's day-to-day lives, towards advising people on how to protect themselves and others, alongside targeted interventions to reduce risk and to reduce the disruption to children's education.

Our priority is for us to continue to deliver face-to-face, high quality education to all pupils and I would like to update you on the government's latest guidance issued on 14th July, which will apply from the beginning of the Autumn term. As ever, our plans are always subject to following the latest government advice, so will be kept under constant review. They are therefore subject to change!

I apologise in advance for the lengthy letter, but hope it will go some way to answering some questions you may have over the holidays about returning to school in September. You might find it helpful to keep this letter handy as it contains some handy links and advice.

Mixing and 'bubbles'

From the autumn term, bubbles will not need to be used in school, assemblies can resume, and we will no longer need to make alternative arrangements to avoid mixing at lunch. Your children will see a change in the layout of their classrooms, moving away from rows of desks facing forward, returning to blocks of desks, making group working easier. We have plans in place to cover the possibility that it may become necessary to reintroduce 'bubbles' for a temporary period, to reduce mixing between groups, on the advice from Public Health England (PHE). Any decision to recommend the reintroduction of 'bubbles' would not be taken lightly and would be implemented only for the protection of our school and local community.

Control measures

The school will maintain the control measures which have been in place since the start of the pandemic.

Your children will already be familiar with these, so they do not need to prepare for anything new in September:

1. Ensuring good hygiene for everyone, including regular hand washing and the 'catch it, bin it, kill it' approach for respiratory hygiene.
2. Maintaining the current cleaning regimes such as regular cleaning of areas and equipment and frequently touched surfaces.
3. Keeping occupied spaces well ventilated. Classroom windows will be opened to improve natural ventilation and internal doors will continue to be kept open in some areas to assist in the throughput of air and some external doors may also be opened, where safe to do so.



4. All children in Years 2,3,4,5 and 6 are asked to provide their own clear plastic pencil case containing a 30cm ruler, plain rubber and barrel pencil sharpener to avoid sharing of equipment. We will provide a pencil, colouring pencils and other less used resources.

We ask that only essentials are sent to school with the children. For example, lunchbox, water bottle, cap/hat and coat.

5. All staff, pupils and other adults should continue to follow public health advice on when to self-isolate and what to do: [When to self-isolate and what to do - Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](https://www.nhs.uk), including not coming into school if they have symptoms, have had a positive test result or other reasons requiring them to stay at home due to the risk of them passing on COVID-19 (e.g. if they are required to quarantine). Anyone developing symptoms of COVID-19, however mild, will be sent home and they should follow public health advice. Wherever possible, we ask that pupils are collected by a member of their family or household. The household, including any siblings should follow the PHE stay at home guidance: [Stay at home: guidance for households with possible or confirmed coronavirus \(COVID-19\) infection - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk)

Confirmatory PCR tests

Pupils with a positive Lateral Flow test should self-isolate in line with the stay at home guidance mentioned above, get a PCR test and whilst waiting for the result, the individual should continue to self-isolate. If the PCR test is taken within 2 days of the positive lateral flow test, and is negative, it overrides the self-test and the pupil can return to school, as long as the individual doesn't have COVID-19 symptoms.

Tracing close contacts and isolation

When we return in September, close contacts will be identified via NHS Test and Trace, who will work with the positive case to identify close contacts. Contacts from a school setting will only be traced by NHS Test and Trace where the positive case specifically identifies the individual as being a close contact.

From 16th August, children under the age of 18 years old will no longer be required to self-isolate if they are contacted by NHS Test and Trace as a close contact of a positive COVID-19 case. Instead, children will be contacted by NHS Test and Trace, informed they have been in close contact with a positive case and advised to take a PCR test. We would encourage all individuals to take a PCR test if advised to do so. We will continue to have a role in working with health protection teams in the case of a local outbreak. If there is an outbreak, or if central government offers our area an enhanced response package, a director of public health might advise us to temporarily reintroduce some control measures.

Face coverings

From 19 July, the government is removing the requirement to wear face coverings in law but expects and recommends that they are worn in enclosed and crowded spaces where you may come into contact with people you would not normally meet. We would very much appreciate parents continued support in wearing face coverings at pick up and drop off times, to help keep the school and village community safe.

Stepping up and down measures

This means that there may be occasions when it is felt that, for the safe protection of our school community, we may need to reintroduce measures temporarily. But given the detrimental impact that restrictions can have on children, any measures in our school will only ever be considered as a last resort, kept to the minimum number of pupils and staff as possible and for the shortest amount of time possible. Such a decision will only be taken on the advice or guidance from our local health protection team and the local authority. We will keep a close eye on the number of confirmed cases of COVID-19 at any given time, to identify a potential 'outbreak' at the earliest opportunity.

Attendance

School attendance is mandatory for all pupils of compulsory school age and it is priority at St Joseph's Catholic Primary School to ensure that as many children as possible regularly attend school.

Where a pupil is required to self-isolate or quarantine because of COVID-19 in accordance with relevant legislation or guidance published by PHE or the Department for Health and Social Care (DHSC) this is recorded as 'not attending in circumstances related to coronavirus'. Where they are unable to attend because they have a confirmed case of COVID-19 the absence will be recorded as an 'illness'. For pupils abroad who are unable to return, their absence will be recorded as 'unauthorised'. However, in some



cases, the headteacher may authorise the absence as an exceptional circumstance. Further information about exceptional circumstances and unauthorised absence can be found in the school's attendance policy: [Attendance Policy 2019 - Final \(1\).pdf](#)

If you are intending to travel abroad this summer, please bear in mind the impact on your child's education which may result from any requirement to quarantine or self-isolate.

Remote Education

As you will be aware, not all people with COVID-19 have symptoms. We will support those pupils who need to self-isolate because they have tested positive to learn from home if they are well enough to do so. St Joseph's Catholic Primary School will continue to deliver high quality remote education for the next academic year, using Microsoft Teams, working collaboratively with families and will put in place reasonable adjustments so that pupils with SEND can successfully access remote education. For those pupils joining us in September, this may be very new to you, but we are confident that you will soon be experts in using the technology.

We will continue to provide free school meals support to any pupils who are eligible for benefits-related free school meals who are learning at home during term time.

Pupil Wellbeing

Some pupils may be experiencing a variety of emotions in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, such as anxiety, stress or low mood. This may become more apparent as September draws nearer. There is lots of useful information on the school website which parents can look to for help during the holidays: [Welcome to St Joseph's Catholic Primary School \(Nympsfield\) \(st-josephs-nympsfield.com\)](#). If you have any concerns about your child's wellbeing, as they return to school in September, please let us know by emailing slt@st-josephs.gloucs.sch.uk.

Extra curricular clubs and educational visits

We have not been able to run clubs or go on educational visits this year and we are hoping to reintroduce them in the forthcoming academic year. More information about these extensions to our curriculum will be shared with you when children return in the Autumn Term.

Arrangements for the Autumn Term

1. Uniform

Children will be expected to wear either Summer or Winter Uniform at the beginning of the Autumn Term. Please see our website for the correct uniform. [Welcome to St Joseph's Catholic Primary School \(Nympsfield\) \(st-josephs-nympsfield.com\)](#)

2. Drop off and pick up times

We will no longer operate staggered drop off times, nor use different entrances for year groups, which we hope will make the morning drop off much less stressful for parents, especially those with two or more children in school.

The school gates will be unlocked at 8:40 am when teachers will be in the playground to receive your children. Parents of children in Y1 – Y6 are asked to leave their children at the school gate (either through the main entrance gate or churchyard gate by the playground), allowing them to enter the school grounds on their own. Children will be asked to line up in front of their class teacher, who will escort them into the school building. We recognise that children have become used to saying goodbye to their parents at the gate and politely request that parents do not enter the playground at this time.

Parents of Reception class children are asked to bring their children to the staff car park gate at 08:45 am, where Miss Berry will meet them and accompany them into their classroom.

If you arrive after 8:50am, parents must take their children to the main reception, where they will be required to sign their child/ren into school.



3. **After school 'pick up'**

The school gates will be opened at 3:10 pm, to enable parents to access the playground. Children will be released from their classroom to their parents/carers at 3:15 pm by the class teacher. We politely request that you leave the playground as soon as possible after your children come out and no later than 3:25 pm, as teachers will need to return to their classrooms promptly. Children cannot be left in the playground unsupervised and we would be grateful if parents reminded children that they should not run off and play on the field.

4. **Parking**

It would be much appreciated if parents could make full use of the village hall car park and also Benton Court. We have a number of new families joining us in September, and it would be really helpful if they could find some parking in front of the school, until they have found their bearings in the village. Please also respect our villagers and be mindful of where you park. Do not block or park on peoples' driveways and for the safety of everyone (but particularly our pupils) park away from corners, where visibility is reduced and causes traffic problems.

I would like to thank all of our families for their support throughout what has been a very challenging year and wish you all a relaxing and happy holiday with your children. All staff are really looking forward to welcoming you back in September for the new academic year, hopefully with fewer restrictions in place.

Yours sincerely

Miss N Jones
Acting Headteacher