



# St. Mary's Catholic Primary School, Birchley

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**Headteacher:** Mrs Andrea Hymers, B.Ed.(Hons)



Dear Parents/Carers,

As we near the end of term, and following the announcement last Thursday by the government to re-open schools fully from September 2020, I am writing to inform you of the arrangements in place for welcoming back all of our children in September.

As a school we are very excited about seeing all of our children once again and the staff are currently working extremely hard to ensure that we are able to offer our children a safe, happy and welcoming learning environment to return to.

Staff have also begun to review and adapt the curriculum to reflect the gaps in learning that many of our children will have, as a result of school closure. This will be an ongoing process as staff respond to further Government Guidance; their initial observations of the children at work; baseline assessments/quizzes and learning talks with the children.

Following Government Guidelines, we will still need to operate school slightly differently from normal in order to maintain the safety of our children, staff and wider school community. As you can appreciate, no school can guarantee 100% safety from the virus, but we have taken advice from both the government and Public Health England to put all necessary risk assessments and safety precautions in place and will continue to do so over the next few months.

In order for school to operate as safely as possible the following measures have been put into place. This list is not exhaustive and will be adjusted accordingly over time and in response to local and national outbreaks.

- Children will be taught in whole class bubbles. These bubbles will be kept away from other bubbles as far as is practicably possible.
- Please note that although Y1 and Y2 will be taught, eat and play as separate bubbles, because they use the same toilet block, they will also be classed as a larger Y1/Y2 bubble for record purposes (in the event that test and trace needs to be used).
- This is the same for our Y4/5 children. They too will be taught, eat and play as two separate bubbles, but because they share a toilet block, they will also be classed as a larger Y4/5 bubble for record purposes (in the event that test and trace needs to be used).
- Children will be supervised by the same adults as much as possible.
- In KS2 and Y2, children will be sat in pairs – all children will be forward facing.
- As Reception and Y1 have circular tables, we are not able to sit all children in pairs. Numbers on tables will be restricted and wherever possible, children will be forward facing.

- Children will be encouraged to keep an appropriate distance apart from adults and other children not in their bubble, although we recognise that this is not always possible with young children.
- The sharing of resources will be restricted. It would really help school if parents of Y1-Y6 children could provide their children with their own named pencil case (to include pencils, sharpener, coloured pencils, glue stick, ruler, scissors and a rubber). Pencil cases need to be able to be wiped clean – furry or sequined pencil cases are not suitable. Pencil cases will need to be left in school and must not travel backwards and forwards between home and school. If parents are unable to provide pencil cases, school will prepare wallets of resources for those children without pencil cases.
- All children will have their own white board, pen and rubber. (School will provide these.)
- The children need to bring their own water bottle into school every day. Please ensure that your child's name is on the bottle. All bottles must be taken home each evening. Water bottles are essential, as school will be unable to provide cups for the children to drink from if they are thirsty. Water bottles must not contain juice.
- School bags are not needed. A wipe-clean book bag is sufficient.
- Children should not bring unnecessary items to and from school e.g. if bringing a book in to read, it will need to stay in school until read – it cannot be taken to and from school on a daily basis. This is to reduce the risk of transmission.
- Packed lunch boxes can be brought into school, but boxes should be plastic and easily wiped every evening. Furry or sequined lunch bags are not suitable.
- The start and end of the school day will be staggered. (See separate timetable)
- Only 1 adult to drop off and collect their child/children.
- Times and entry/exit gates must be strictly adhered to in order to ensure that our families can safely socially distance from each another. Staff will man the gates each morning and evening.
- Adults must leave the school premises immediately after drop off/pick up – this needs to be quick and efficient in order to minimise contact between individuals.
- Adults should not stand talking on the playgrounds.
- Staff will be unable to spend time talking to parents at drop off and collection times. Quick messages are fine, but more detailed conversations will need to take place via telephone. Our KS2 children have home/school diaries and messages can be written in these.
- If adults need to enter the school foyer, it will be done on a one in one out basis. The glass partition between the office and the foyer will remain closed.
- All monies coming into school, should now be sent in using the new online payment system. (School Money)
- Lunchtimes and play times will be staggered.
- Lunchtimes will take place in either classroom areas or the hall. If the hall is used, only 2 bubbles at a time will be seated. Bubbles will be seated away from each other.
- School meals will continue to be offered – although they may be served in a variety of ways e.g. trays, hot lunch boxes, sandwich bags.
- Movement around school will continue to be minimised

### **School Uniform:**

All children will need to return to school in full uniform. Uniform does not need to be washed any more than you would normally wash it.

### **P.E. Kits:**

Children will need their PE kits and pumps. They will need to be kept in school until the half-term break when we will send them home to be washed.

### **Water bottles:**

All children will need a named water bottle that can be brought into school each morning and taken home to be washed each evening.

Polite reminder: Juice is not permitted in school. (Flavoured water is fine.)

### **Snacks:**

Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 children are offered a free piece of fruit each day. The children are also able to bring in a healthy snack to have just in case the children do not like the fruit of the day. Can we please ask that snacks are healthy.

(Please note that in previous years, Reception parents paid termly for school to provide the children with a snack. This will not be the case in September. They too will need to provide their own healthy snack. We will review this later in the school year.)

Children in Y3-Y6 can either provide their own daily healthy snack or they can opt to have toast. Toast will cost £1.50 per week. Payment for toast can be made through the school's new online payment system.

### **Handwashing:**

Handwashing will be key to keeping everyone as safe as possible and time will be spent teaching the children all about the importance of washing their hands. All children will be expected to wash their hands upon entering the school building; before and after they eat; before and after using resources and after using the toilet. We know that some of our children have sensitive skin and their parents have preferred to send in their own soap. This is fine to do, as long as the bottle is labelled with your child's name and the bottle stays in school. It cannot be brought to and from school each day.

Many children have also brought in their own hand gel. This again is fine, as long as it is labelled and stays in school. We will stress to the children though that hand gel is not to replace hand washing. School will not provide hand gel for the children to use, as the focus remains on regular hand washing.

### **Drop off and Pick Up:**

#### **Drop Off:**

With the exception of our new Reception children, all children will need to be dropped off at the allocated school gate at the allocated time. Please do not come at any time other than the specified time. Staff will man the gates and registers will be taken. The children will then walk to their classroom doors where they will be greeted by their teachers. Parents will not be allowed on site during morning drop off. This is to minimise parental contact with each other and to enable a quick and efficient start to the school day.

One Reception parent will be allowed entry onto the school grounds to walk their child to their class door. (On the first day, this can be both parents, whilst it is their child's first day at 'big school'.) Further information will be given to our Reception families during the meet and greet session next week.

### Pick Up:

Parents will be allowed onto the school site to pick up their children from the classroom doors. Please note that it must only be 1 adult per family – in order to reduce the number of people on the school site at one time. Children will not be released from their classrooms until the allocated collection time, so please do not enter the site too early as you will be stood waiting.

Y6 children can be **collected at the allocated time, from the fire door** at the bottom of their stair case. (The door is opposite ABC entrance and adjacent to the staff car park.) Drop off, in the morning, is via the allocated gate at the allocated time.

The timetable below details the drop off/ pick times and points of entry for all year groups from September. These times and points of entry must be adhered to in order to minimise contact between members of our school community. Children arriving after their allocated time will need to enter via the main entrance and will be marked late. Children who are not picked up at their allocated time will be taken across to ABC and a charge will be made.

Please note that the barrier system will be used once again in Autumn – closing off the front staff car park at drop off and collection times. The club car park will need to be used and parents will need to walk around to their allocated entry point. This is for the safety of our children. Please do not use a gate simply because it is convenient for you. A ten minute drop off slot has been allocated to allow families the time to walk safely from the club car park to their allocated gate and class doors. Staff will man the gates to ensure that correct entry/exit points are used. **Y6 children will need to enter via the correct gate in the morning, but can be collected from the fire door next to ABC in the evening (at their allocated time)**

Surnames	Arrival time	Collection time	Point of Entry/Exit
Surnames A-C inclusive	8.45am – 8.55am	3.10pm –3.20pm	Gate from club car park
Surnames S-Z inclusive	8.45am – 8.55am	3.10pm –3.20pm	Side gate next to Church
Surnames D-K inclusive	9.05am – 9.15am	3.30 – 3.40pm	Gate from club car park
Surnames L-R inclusive	9.05am -9.15am	3.30 – 3.40pm	Side gate next to Church

We appreciate that in the early days of returning to school, dropping your child off may prove to be an anxious time for some of our children (and yourselves) and some of them may be reluctant to leave you – especially at the school gate. Can we please reassure you that this will be normal for many of our children and that it will be ‘kinder’ to just leave your child with the member of staff if they are upset, rather than staying to reassure them, as this will just prolong their separation anxieties. Our staff will comfort and support them and your child will quickly settle once inside the classroom.

### **ABC Club:**

From September, we are asking parents to use our online payment system (School Money) to both book and pay for places in ABC. Bookings can be made up to 3.00pm on the day/s required. Payments can be made at the time of booking. In emergencies i.e. you are stuck in traffic or unexpectedly delayed, you can ring the school office and they will book your child on – but this must be done only in emergencies. Payment can then be made online later that evening. Parents who use vouchers can continue to do so.

Once in ABC, the children will be kept in their separate class bubbles as far as practicably possible. If needed, two larger bubbles will be formed – a KS1 and a KS2 bubble.

### **Money Payments:**

School is becoming cashless from September. All money will need to be paid via School Money e.g. dinner money, milk, levy, toast, ABC, school trips etc. All parents should have received a username and password via text or email by now. If you have not yet received yours, please contact the school office and they will arrange for one to be sent out.

### **Staffing for 2020/2021:**

Please find below a list of classes and their teachers for the new academic year. Our learning support assistants will work across several different classes to support our children in their learning.

<b>Year Group</b>	<b>Teacher</b>
Reception	Miss Davies (M-Th) Mrs Amor (F)
Year 1	Mrs Duffy (M-W) Mrs Taylor (Th-F)
Year 2	Mrs Talbot-Davies (M-Th) Mrs Ryan (Th-F)
Year 3	Mrs Ryan (M) Mrs Cotterill (Tu – F)
Year 4	Miss Gradwell
Year 5	Miss Davies
Year 6	Mrs Naylor

Many of you will have noticed that Mrs Hrabowenskyj's name is not on the list above. This is because Mrs Hrabowenskyj has decided to take early (or as she says - early, early) retirement this year. She is looking forward to spending some quality time at home and travelling with her husband. It won't be the last that we see of Mrs Hrab though, as she will be coming into school throughout the year delivering interventions, as well as supporting our Y6 children (after February half term) in their SAT preparation. We are extremely sad to see Mrs Hrab retire, as she has been a valued member of our school community during her time here. Her commitment and dedication to our children has been second to none and she has willingly gone the extra mile to ensure that our children have been helped and supported in their quest to be the best they can be. Mrs Hrab will be greatly missed and I would like to take this opportunity to personally thank her for all that she has done for the staff and children at St. Mary's; for her personal support of me in my role as headteacher and for, perhaps more importantly, just being herself. I can safely say that there will never be another Mrs Hrab 😊 We wish her every happiness.

As the teaching arrangements in Y6 will be different to previous years, school will either hold a Y6 Parents' Meeting in September, if permitted, or a further letter will be sent home to outline how the year will be organised. A list of key dates and events will also be given out.

**Goodbye and Good Luck Mrs Burrows and Mrs Anderson:**

Mrs Burrows and Mrs Anderson will also be leaving St. Mary's next week to take up other learning support positions at nearby schools. They have both been invaluable in the work that they have done at St. Mary's, not only with the individual children whom they have supported so well throughout their learning journeys, but in the work that they have also done throughout our whole school community. Both members of staff have been a joy to work alongside and we wish them both every happiness and further success in their future roles. Although we are saying goodbye to these two ladies, Mrs Burrows will continue in her role as a play worker in ABC and Mrs Anderson will still be part of our school family, in her role as a mum – so we will still see lots of them. 😊

I do apologise for the length of my letter – I seem to spend lots of my time writing long letters 😊 but I have tried to include all of the information that I think you will need for the new academic year.

I also want to take this opportunity to thank you all for the support that you have given, both to myself and the staff, over the last academic year and for your patience and understanding over the last few months, in what has been a very anxious and uncertain period of time.

My staff and I are really looking forward to returning to a new kind of 'norm' in September and it will be lovely to reconnect with all of our families.

Take care everyone, stay safe and have a lovely summer.

Kind regards



Mrs Andrea Hymers  
Headteacher