



St. Mary's Catholic Primary School, Birchley

Birchley Road, Billinge, Nr. Wigan, Lancashire WN5 7QJ

Telephone: 01744 678610 **Fax No:** 01744 678611 **Website:** www.bstm.co.uk

Email: stmaryrcbp@sthelens.org.uk

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



Dear Parents/Carers,

I would like to welcome you and your child to our school family at St. Mary's. My staff and I are really looking forward to working closely with you, over the next seven years, to support your child in their learning journey – where they will be challenged to be the best that they can be – in a loving, warm, happy and nurturing environment.

Although your child is starting school at a time of uncertainty, can I reassure you that we, as a school, will do our utmost to ensure that their time in school is a happy one and that their learning journeys will be as seamless as possible.

We are sad that we have been unable to welcome you all in our usual St. Mary's way, but we hope that the Rising Reception Blog and Rising Reception Class Page have made you feel part of our school family and have enabled you and your child to prepare for school in a variety of fun ways. Sharing your photographs with each other has hopefully also enabled you and your child to put names to faces, so that on your child's first day at 'big school' they will recognise some of their new friends and 'big' school may not seem as daunting.

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.
- Reception children will remain in their classroom base for the majority of the school day – initially eating their lunch in their base too.
- Reception children have their own toilet block within their base, as well as their own play area.
- 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 our youngest children – especially if they are hurt or upset.
- The sharing of resources will be restricted and some resources will be used on a rotation basis to enable them to be cleaned before they are used again.
- 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.
- 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 (with the exception of Reception parents during their child's first week at school).
- 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. Please ensure that all uniform (including trainers and coats) is labelled. Slaters (Wigan) and Whittakers (St. Helens) both stock the school's uniform. They have their own social distancing systems in place. Reception children will also need a pair of named wellies to leave in school.

P.E. Kits:

For the Autumn term, Reception children can come to school on a Friday (their P.E. day) in a pair of navy blue jogging bottoms, navy blue fleece and the school's P.E. t-shirt. If it is warm the school's P.E. shorts can be worn instead of the jogging bottoms. Trainers can also be worn, but we would appreciate it if the trainers had Velcro fastenings. The jogging bottoms and fleece do not need to have the school logo on them – any, plain supermarket brand is fine. Please do not send your child in anything other than these items (leggings, football tops, different coloured joggers and fleeces etc. are not allowed) as the joggers and fleece are their school uniform for the day. We have decided to try this for the Autumn term initially, so that the children do not need to bring P.E. kits to and from school. If this is successful, we will continue with this for the remainder of the year. Please note that P.E. lessons will take place outdoors, as much as possible, so it is essential that the children are dressed appropriately for the weather e.g. joggers on cold days, shorts on warm days.

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.

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. Can we please ask Reception parents to spend time over the summer showing your children how to thoroughly wash their hands.

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:

The timetable for the first three days, for our Reception children, is as follows:

Day One (Wednesday 2nd September)

Group 1: Surnames **A - L** to arrive at school at 9.30am. Entrance will be via the back gate of school – leading off from the club car park. Both parents are able to enter the school site to walk their child to the Reception Class door. Staff will be at the gate and the classroom door to welcome you. Group 1's session will run from 9.30am – 11.30am. The children can then be collected from the school's main entrance door at the front of school from 11.30am.

Group 2: Surnames **M - W** to arrive at school at 12.30pm. Entrance will be via the back gate of school – leading off from the club car park. Both parents are able to enter the school site to walk their child to the Reception Class door. Staff will be at the gate and the classroom door to welcome you. Group 2's session will run from 12.30pm – 2.30pm. The children can then be collected from the school's main entrance door at the front of school from 2.30pm.

Day Two (Thursday 3rd September)

Both groups will come together today. Entrance will be at 9.30am via the club car park gate. Both parents are welcome to walk their child to their class door. Pick up will be at 12.30pm today and the children can be collected from the school's main entrance.

Day Three (Friday 4th September)

The children will all stay for lunch today. All Reception children are entitled to a free school meal. If you prefer, your child can bring a packed lunch. Entrance will be at 9.30am via the club car park gate. Both parents are welcome to walk their child to their class door. Pick up will be at 2.00pm today and the children can be collected from the school's main entrance.

The children will then start full days at school from Monday 7th September. Drop off and pick up times are staggered from this week onwards and only one parent will be permitted on site to drop their child off at the classroom door and to collect them at the end of the day.

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.

| 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.

My staff and I are really looking forward to returning to a new kind of 'norm' in September and we can't wait to welcome you, our new families, into our learning community, as well as reconnecting with all of our existing families.

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

Kind regards

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "A Hymers".

Mrs Andrea Hymers
Headteacher