



St. Mary's Catholic Primary School, Birchley

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



Dear Parents/Carers,

After spending the last two weeks confirming numbers and preparing school for our phased re-opening, I am writing to confirm the arrangements for our Reception and Year 1 children returning to school on Monday 15th June.

We have had twelve children from Reception and twelve children from Year 1 confirm their attendance. The remaining children will continue to access home learning as they have been doing since school closed in March. The Reception and Year 1 teachers will continue to upload daily activities on the class blog, which will restart on Monday 8th June, following a two week half term break.

With 24 children in total, school explored the option of having 3 bubbles of 8 children, but this option meant that one of the bubbles would have been a mixed bubble of Reception and Year 1 children and we did not feel that this would be of benefit to the returning children or fair to those kept apart from the rest of their year group.

In order to keep the year groups as separate bubbles, we are going to create two bubbles with twelve children in each. (These numbers are slightly higher than those published in the initial letter, but are still within the guidelines of 'bubbles no greater than 15' published by the government.)

Our school bubbles will be named after the colours of the rainbow.

Reception's bubble will be known as the **RED** bubble.

The Reception bubble of 12 will have three members of staff working with the children and as a result will be divided into three smaller working groups when working within the classroom base. These groups will rotate between the three staff throughout the day. The children will only come together as a 12 when having lunch (sat at individual tables) and during outdoor play activities.

The Reception bubble will be led by Mrs Duffy on a Monday/Tuesday and Mrs Taylor on a Wed/Thurs. We believe that having the Year 1 teaching staff leading the bubble will be of great benefit to the children, as they will get to know their new teachers for September and similarly the teachers will have a clear understanding of the children's strengths and areas for development before the new academic year. Miss Parr and Mrs Mustard will also be based in the Reception classroom to support the children's learning.

Each child will have their own desk and named resource pack.

The children will be supervised during lunchtime by Mrs Gannon, who has been their named midday assistant since September.

Year 1's bubble will be known as the **ORANGE** bubble.

The Year 1 bubble will be led by Mrs Talbot-Davies and Mrs McDonald. Again, as with the Reception children, we believe that having Mrs Talbot-Davies leading the bubble will be of great benefit to the children, as they will get to know her before September and similarly, Mrs Talbot-Davies will have a clear understanding of the children's strengths and areas for development before the new academic year.

The children will be divided into two smaller bubbles when working within the classroom setting and will rotate between Mrs Talbot-Davies and Mrs McDonald. The children will come together as a bubble of 12 for lunchtime and outdoor play/activities.

Each child will have their own table and resource pack. If you are able to provide your child with their own pencil case (contents as detailed in previous letter), this would be really appreciated. This pencil case will need to stay in school until the summer break and must not travel between home and school.

The children will be supervised at lunchtime by Mrs Lightfoot or Mrs Crompton. Both members of staff are known to the children.

Mrs O'Donoghue and Mrs Crompton will also be working with the children from the Red and Orange bubbles throughout the week. Their work will focus on hearing individual children read; catch up phonic activities and number skills. Mrs O'Donoghue will work primarily with the Reception children and Mrs Crompton will work with the Year 1 children.

If Infant numbers increase, a new mixed Year 1/Reception bubble will be created. This mixed bubble will then be led by Mrs O'Donoghue, with support from Mrs Crompton.

Points to note:

- **Reception** children's day will run from 9.30am – 3.00pm Mon-Thur. Entry is via the main entrance. Parents need to observe social distancing when dropping off and collecting children.
- **Year 1** children's day will run from 9.15am – 3.30pm Mon-Thur. Entry and pick up is via the side gate next to Church. A member of staff will be present at the gate to greet the children. Parents will not be allowed on school site.
- Although we have done our utmost to ensure that the children's individual desks are 2m apart, there will be times in the day when the children will come into closer contact with each other. In order to minimise risk, contact between other bubbles and staff will not be permitted and frequent handwashing will become a major part of the school day.

- Children can wear their own clothes – suitable for outdoor play and weather appropriate. If possible, the children should wear a set of different clothes each day.
- Children should **not** be sent into school with a face mask. Government guidelines states *'face coverings should not be worn in any circumstances by those who may not be able to handle them as directed, as it may inadvertently increase the risk of transmission'*.
- Children do not need to bring school bags into school.
- The children will need a water bottle and snack each day. (These can be carried into school.)
- All children are entitled to a free school meal (as per government guidelines for Infant children)
- If your child prefers to have a packed lunch just let school know and they will need to bring a lunchbox into school each day. Can lunch boxes please be plastic, so that they are easily cleanable each evening.
- School will be closed to all children on a Friday (with the exception of Keyworker children).

Keyworker School – Fridays

Of the 24 Reception and Year 1 children attending school Mon-Thurs, 4 have requested a place in the keyworker school on a Friday. In order to support this request, and in order to keep the Y1/Rec children separate from the other key worker children, we are able to offer provision on a Friday to these children on the understanding that the 4 children will be placed together as Friday Y1/Rec mixed bubble. We unfortunately are unable to keep the children as 2 separate bubbles due to staffing restrictions and the low numbers requesting a Friday place. If you have concerns about your child mixing with the children from the other year group, then you will need to make other arrangements for your child to be cared for on a Friday. (Please note that all of the children requesting Friday places have been part of the much larger key worker school and have mixed with other year groups since March 2020.)

All other details remain the same as in the letter uploaded onto the school website on Friday May 22nd. If you require any further clarification, please contact school either by telephone or email.

Finally, in order to prepare your child to return to school, I have attached a letter to be shared with them. I would appreciate it if you share the letter with your child and discuss the contents with them. Many of the children may feel anxious coming back to school and this will be normal. We will do our utmost to ease their anxieties and allay your fears in what will be a very different 'norm' for the children.

Take care everyone and stay safe.

Andrea Hymers

Mrs Andrea Hymers
Headteacher

A message to Reception and Year 1 from Mrs Hymers

Hello children. I hope that you are all well. I have missed you lots and I hope that you are looking forward to coming back to school. I can't wait to see you all.

When you return to school:

Some things will be the same:

- The staff
- You will have similar lessons
- You will be taught in your own classroom
- The playground and fields
- Our school will be clean and tidy
- You will be able to talk to your friends and staff
- You will have snacks, lunches and drinks of water
- You can have a school lunch or packed lunch
- You will play outside
- You will use your usual toilets
- You will be sent home if you are unwell



Some things will be different:

- You will start and finish school at a different time
- You will be dropped off and picked up in a different place
- You will only come to school on a Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday
- You will be taught by a different teacher. They are looking forward to spending time with you and getting to know you. This will make the move to your new class much easier in September.
- You won't need to wear your school uniform
- There will be posters around school to remind you to wash your hands and to remind you not to sit or stand too closely to others
- The staff will smile and wave at you more
- You will not be able to sit closely together - you will have your own desk
- You will wash your hands lots of times throughout the day
- The number of children in your class (bubble) will be less than normal
- You will play, eat and work with the children in your bubble
- You will not be able to take things to and from school – other than your lunchbox and water bottle
- You will only bring your lunchbox and water bottle into school – not your school bag
- You will spend more time learning outdoors and there will be some new, exciting play equipment for you to use



Take care children and I will see you all on Monday 15th June – remember to say hello when you see me and give me a BIG smile and a thumbs up.

