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*'Happy are those who hear the word of
God and keep it' Luke 11.28*

Friday 15th May 2020

Coronavirus – School re opening from 1st of June 2020

Dear Parent/ Carer,

You will be aware from the announcement made by Boris Johnson that it is the Government's intention that schools 're-open' for certain year groups from the 1st of June.

As I shared with you previously, we have been awaiting further guidance from the Department for Education, Local Authority and the Diocese so we could begin to consider what this may look like in reality. The proposal was to offer places to year groups Reception, Year one and Year 6 whilst still offering the provision for pupils of key workers and those classed as 'vulnerable'.

The proposals state that pupils would have to be taught in 'bubble' groups with maximum numbers of 15 pupils having no interaction with others. In order to maintain social distancing we have had to consider the numbers that can safely be in our classrooms and numbers would be as small as 4 – 6 pupils. Each of these small 'bubbles' or groups cannot interact with each other, cross in corridors, share equipment etc.

We have a list of guidance that we had to follow when making our plans and conducting risk assessments. Schools will have consider what is right for them individually and for their staff and pupils considering the school environment- class room size, corridor space etc.

I wish to stress this has been an incredibly hard process but the heart of every decision I make must be what is in the best interest of the pupils of St. Mary's school. I do hope that it is evident that I care deeply about each and every member of the St Mary's School family. As Head Teacher, you, our families, entrust me to ensure the safety and well being of your children and both of these factors have a crucial role to play within this decision making process.

I can consider and plan for the 'environment' The physical space, the need for additional PPE, staggered drop off/ pick ups, the preparation of cleaning rotas etc. but, crucially, I must also consider the psychological wellbeing of our pupils when providing the additional 35 days openings (from 1.6.20 to 17.7.20).

I wish to emphasis that school is not currently and cannot be under the circumstances 'normal'. Pupils would be coming back to an environment which is completely alien to them. They would have less equipment, not be able to play with their friends, not be able to touch or interact with friends and staff, they would be in

classrooms which have had resources removed, desks spaced apart, would not be able to share breaks or meal times and would not have assemblies and/ or school trips.

I have to reflect on how this would make our pupils feel. St. Mary's school is a happy, loving, family school in which pupils feel relaxed and safe and this is not an environment that in the current climate I can provide. I have to balance the small amount of academic gain (for the targeted year groups on rota) within a maximum of 15 days against the psychological impact such changes may have. It is my belief that the changes and adaptations required would be dis- proportionate to the academic gain the pupils may achieve.

It is therefore the case that I am, with the full support of the Governing Body, making the decision that our school **WILL NOT** re open from the 1st of June 2020. School will remain closed except to those pupils of key workers or those pupils deemed vulnerable.

Myself and the staff want nothing more than to see the children and have them back with us learning in partnership, growing, interacting and developing as a family but this will not be possible at present.

I thank you for taking the time to read this letter and I once more thank you for your continued support and cooperation.

Kind Regards

Mrs. A. Brogden
Head Teacher