

Dear Parents and Carers

We hope that you are all well and that you are all bearing up in these difficult times. As you know the Government has started to lift the Lockdown restrictions and as part of their plan schools are to prepare for a wider opening from the 1st June.

We recently sent you a questionnaire on your intentions about whether your child would be returning to school, if eligible. We thank the great many of you who returned the online questionnaire which has given us a rough idea of numbers and has informed our planning. As part of that questionnaire we included a link from the Government which provided parents and carers with information about the wider opening. We have attached this again for your reference.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/closure-of-educational-settings-information-for-parents-and-carers>

Over the last week we have been working hard formulating a plan which will enable St Nicholas to open to a greater number of pupils. Along the way we have met with the other local Headteachers within the Sturminster pyramid to discuss and share our plans. However, each school's plan will be different as it is dependent on many factors such as pupil numbers, staff availability (as some are shielding) school buildings, layout, accessibility etc combined with our key priority of keeping children and staff as safe as possible.

Please take time to read the plans set out below. They have been agreed by our Governing body and the risk assessment for the school will also be submitted to Dorset County. The risk assessment is available on the school website should you require more details. As parents it is important for you to note that school is not and will not be the same as when your child left it. We have had to make many changes in class sizes, staffing, zoning, equipment and procedures in order to prepare for the wider opening. It is down to you as parents to decide whether you wish your child to attend, should they be eligible, after reading about the range of measures we have put in place. Only you can decide if you feel that it is safe enough and whether you want your child to attend school in the environment that we have outlined.

Following the guidance set out by the DfE schools should prepare for the wider opening from the 1st June to Years R, 1 and 6. Children of Critical Worker parents and those deemed most vulnerable by the DfE will be given priority to attend as they currently do. After this priority will be given to the youngest children if the setting is unable to open to all year groups.

Should the Government meet its five key tests and the DfE make the decision to proceed with phased school opening at their meeting on 28th May our plan is:

- May half term week – the school will be closed, as it normally would be during half term week in order for staff to have a break and to enable preparations for the following week. No online learning will be set during this time.
- From **Monday June 1st** we will be open to Critical Worker and Vulnerable children, Year R and Year 1.

- From **Monday June 8th**, if staffing allows, we will be open to Year 6 children.

Outlined below is the temporary plan for opening at St Nicholas –

Classes

- Class group sizes will be limited to a maximum of 15 children.
- There will be two groups of critical worker /vulnerable children – Years 2&3, Years 4,5&6
- Each group will have a designated classroom
 - Year R – Acorns Classroom (Miss Ireland)
 - Year 1 – Chestnuts Classroom (Mrs Sanders is pregnant and shielding so this will be Mrs Wilson/ Mrs Corbett)
 - Critical workers Years 2 & 3 – Willows classroom (Mrs Corbett/Mrs Ferguson)
 - Critical workers Years 4, 5 & 6 – Ash classroom (Mr Adey/Mr Paterson)
 - Year 6 – Oaks classroom (Mrs Salisbury is shielding)
- Children will have staggered breaks and lunches in their groups. Groups will not mix.
- Within classrooms desks will be spread out and there will be a maximum of two children to each table.
- Children will be given their own labelled stationery pack and will have their tray on their desk to keep their work in.
- Belongings will be on the floor or chair next to them.
- All unnecessary items in classrooms have been removed and stored to aid in the spreading out of desks.
- All soft furnishings, soft toys and toys that are hard to clean every day have been removed.
- Each class group will have their own entrance and exit to the classroom.

Toilets & Sinks

- Within the small groups one girl and one boy will be allowed to go to the toilet at a time. This will help minimise movement around school.
- Additional cleaning of the toilet areas will take place during the day.
- Each class will also have hand sanitizer available to use.

Other areas in and around school

- The playground will be split into two zones for smaller groups to use.
- The field will be split into two zones for smaller groups to use.
- The outdoor classroom and picnic bench areas will be allocated to one smaller group on a daily rota basis, before being cleaned at the end of the day.
- The outdoor play trail will not be in use as it is too difficult to clean
- Children will work in the designated classroom most of the time or outside on a rota basis.
- Outdoor equipment will be divided between class groups to use.
- Tape will be used in the corridors in school to aid keeping the children apart.
- We will do everything we can to encourage children to social distance and remain two metres apart however, from our current experience with our critical worker groups this is impossible to manage with this age of children. We therefore cannot guarantee that social distancing will be maintained once in school.

Drop Off/ Collection

- There will be a change to the timings of the school day. They will be staggered to aid social distancing and minimise other adult to adult contact.
- There will also be a slightly shorter school day, apart from for critical worker children, to aid our increased cleaning regime.
- Additionally, school will finish at lunchtime on Tuesdays and Fridays to give teachers planning, preparation and assessment time (which is a statutory requirement). Many of the teachers will be teaching outside of their normal class during the day (due to other staff shielding) and will also have to set home learning for their own year groups afterwards. Childcare will still be provided for the critical worker groups.
- Timings for drop off/collection
 - **Key worker & vulnerable children** - 8:40 and 3:15
 - **Year 6** - 8:50 and 2:40 (Tuesdays and Fridays - 1:35)
 - **Year 1** – 9:00 and 2.30 (Tuesdays and Fridays - 1:25)
 - **Year R** – 9:10 and 2:20 (Tuesdays and Fridays - 1:15)
- Drop off and collection will be in a designated area in the playground accessed through the gates at Acers classroom. The gate between the Recreation Ground and the school next to Acorns class will not be used at this time.
- Please also note that The Ark will be using the path and the pavement outside the Raft for parents to enter. To avoid meeting and adhere to social distancing as much as possible please access the gates by walking your child behind the cars in the car park.
- Please note under current guidance, if your child needs to be brought to the teacher one parent/carer can escort a child to/from school. Otherwise they can be dropped off at the roundabout as normal. Where possible siblings should not escort a child to/from school. If this is unavoidable they should not be allowed to run off/ play on site or touch other people.
- Current guidance also states that parents are allowed in the school building by appointment only.

Other points

- In line with current practice no visitors/staff/children/families/contractors can enter the building or site if they have symptoms.
- Critical worker children in Year R, 1 and 6 will move into their own small year group base. When school finishes early and parents are unable to collect their child/children they will be put into another small group for childcare until the end of the school day.
- If you choose not to send your child to school and they are in an eligible year group home learning will still be set but it will not be the same as what is happening in the classroom.
- We would ask children to bring a packed lunch and drink to school. If you are entitled to free school meals or the universal infant free school meals a packed lunch will be provided for your child but you may wish to supplement it with additional items.
- Children should only bring essential items to school such as lunch boxes, water bottle, sun hat etc in order that a limited number of items are travelling between home and school.

- Government guidance advises that children and adults wear clean clothes daily. In light of this school uniform should be worn where possible however if not PE type clothing should be worn which is easily laundered.

We are aware that this is a lot of information and it may take a bit of time to digest. These procedures have been created inline with guidance from the DfE and do the best we can to keep children and staff as safe as possible.

Based on these details we are asking you to make an informed choice as to whether you wish your child to attend school. If you decide not to send your child to school we will continue to do our best to support you at home whilst also catering for the pupils within school. Inevitably the nature of home learning will change due to staff being in school and the time and effort this will also require.

It is important to note that parents will not be penalised at this time if they decide they do not want to take up the offer of childcare or school sessions.

If you wish to discuss any matters further then please do email or call the school. We ask that if you do intend your child to return to school from the proposed dates that you inform us so we know who to expect, which will inform our onward planning.

Critical worker parents, please continue to let us know in advance as much as possible about your childcare requirements. This is even more important now to aid our plan for staffing.

Given how different school is going to be for the foreseeable future, it might be helpful to discuss the pared back environment and some of the changes outlined above with your child, in order to prepare them for their return to school.

Thank you once again for your continued support and understanding during these challenging times. None of us have made this journey before but we are doing our best to keep the children's needs at the heart of what we do, and we will support you in whatever choice you make.

Yours sincerely,



Jill Watson
Headteacher



Lauren Radburn
Chair of Governors