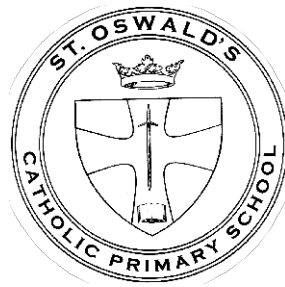




INCLUSION
CHARTER MARK



ST. OSWALD'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

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18/05/20

RE: School Opening Arrangements

Dear Parents/Carers,

I hope that everyone is safe and managing to cope with this strange new world we are all living in. I'm sure that there isn't a family that hasn't in some way been affected by this virus and I pray that we can all come through this together as best we can.

Following on from the communications from Steve Reddy, Director of Children's Services, outlining the Liverpool Position on school reopening, our Governing Body has elected to follow this guidance too but with some slight alterations, namely the timing of the half term break.

I wanted to write to you to further clarify our position as a school, and the potential way forward; all decisions the Governing Body and I have made have been with the best interests of our children, staff and community at heart. In communications with families, we have been overwhelmed by the positive and kind comments, these have been so welcome and have helped us through some very anxious times.

Since March, St Oswald's school has been open as a safe space Hub for the children of key workers and vulnerable children. There has been as expected, a limited uptake for this facility, this is as it should be, as the Hub was always open on the understanding that it was a last resort and the safest place for everyone was at home.

On May 22nd the St Oswald's Hub will close for the final time and all Liverpool schools will have the planned half term break. As previously agreed, St Oswald's will reopen on June 8th for the children of key workers and vulnerable children, this should continue to only be where there is no other viable alternative, as the safest place for the vast majority of children is their home. This provision will be childcare not education based and we will continue to provide home learning for all our pupils during this time. We will be applying challenge when families ask for a key worker place, just as we did when we opened the Hub. Please do not be offended, this is to make sure we can provide a safe environment for all.

As outlined in Steve Reddy's letter from Friday last week, on June 8th Liverpool City Council will be conducting further risk assessments to ascertain whether Year 6 pupils return to school later in June. Once we know more, we will be in touch. These risk assessments, which will include liaising with public health and taking into account the local context of Covid 19, will continue before other year groups potentially come into school.

Schools too are making risk assessments based on their own circumstances' around space, staffing numbers and availability to be able to meet the stringent requirements to reopen.

As and when children do return to school, it will by no means be in 'normal' circumstances, I want to make this very clear from the start; school will be very different. We have to introduce strict social distancing measures, which I'm sure you can imagine is extremely difficult. Children will have to adhere to the new stricter behaviour requirements and those who cannot or will not follow social distancing would have to be risk assessed to determine whether it would be safer for them and others if they stayed at home.

We will be allowed no more than 15 children in a class group, so half the children will not be in their usual classroom or with their teacher. We have been advised that the children must remain within the group that they are with for lessons, break times and lunch times. The 15 child bubble will only be allowed to mix with themselves, no other friendship or learning groups will be allowed. Within each class group children will be socially distant, separate on a table, working in the same area, with the same equipment throughout the day to prevent cross contamination. Children will be limited to bringing only a coat and possibly a packed lunch in a disposable container, a drink bottle will be a requirement to prevent sharing of cups.

Lunch and playtimes will have to be staggered so that these bubbles of children do not mix. The school day will have to be altered to accommodate arranged times for drop off and pick up. Entrances and exits from the building will have to be agreed with adults having to distance at the agreed points. Throughout the day there will be planned and regimented hand washing and cleaning protocols, the buildings will have one way systems for travelling.

As you can see there is a lot of planning and risk assessing that will go into any decisions to safely open school. I feel sad just thinking about how this goes against all our usual, happy school life. For our year 6 who must want so much to have leaving celebrations and big goodbyes, sadly there will be none. We are not allowed to gather together so that expectation must be managed with your children.

I want to make it clear that there is no expectation for you to send your children back to school, this is a family decision, and there will be no pressure to attend. If families make the decision that your child is safer at home then we respect that decision, no one will be penalised for non-attendance at this time.

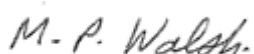
Having had communications with some families we understand that a number of you do not intend for your children to return to school at this time so alongside any potential reopening we will be continuing to provide access to home learning and communications with teachers via the usual method of Weduc and the website.

There has been lots of commentary and fear about children falling behind in school, well ALL children are not in school so there can be no falling behind. When we do get back to normal school, the professionals will ensure gaps are filled and basic skills reemphasised, but for now my advice is to look after each other, enjoy the precious time together and try and be happy. Anxiety needs to be minimised.

So in closing, I just want to reiterate that there is nothing more I as Headteacher or my staff want more than to be back in school with all our pupils, laughing, learning, celebrating success and being the wonderful family that we are so very proud of, however we also want everyone to be safe, our children, their families, our staff and all our extend families. The future is certainly uncertain and I fear it will be a long time until we can go back to our old lives. This virus is like nothing we have ever known and so our response has to be like nothing we have ever known, staying safe is our first priority for everyone.

Stay safe and well everyone and I hope to see you all as soon as it is safely possible.

Yours sincerely,



Mrs Walsh

Headteacher