**Holy Cross Catholic Primary School**

*‘Loving and learning together in faith*



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Headteacher: Mrs Clare Higgins

Headteacher:

Mrs A Sheridan 22nd May 2020

Dear Parents and Carers,

As you will be aware, the government has published an intention for primary schools to consider opening for certain year groups from 1st June at the earliest, pending the continued stabilisation of the national situation. They will not confirm this intention until the 28th May but have asked schools to plan and prepare for this eventuality. It is clear however, that we must go step by step and above all, ensure that we are keeping everyone safe.

All the guidance that we have received from national government and the local authority has stressed that individual schools should use national guidance to conduct thorough risk assessments of their capacity and physical spaces before opening. Individual schools need to create plans, organise classes and spaces, ensure they have resources and timetable activities, lunchtimes and breaks to ensure that the children return to school in as safe a way as possible for our families and staff. This will result in schools making different decisions when factoring in these matters.

Schools will also be limited by the numbers of staff available. Staff who are shielding will not be able to return to school at this point and have been instructed that they must remain working at home. Some schools on Wirral will be greatly affected by this necessary measure, indeed we have several members of staff who will not be able to return to work.

As children must be in small groups, they may well not be with their own class teacher or all their friends or in their own classroom. The government guidance says that as far as possible, they will need to remain with the same group and the same adult while they are in school. Breaks must be taken in the same small groups, staggered so that the children do not mix in larger groups.  As a result, playtimes and lunchtimes will need to be different than usual.

Schools will need to carry out additional stringent cleaning everyday so that when children leave, the spaces and resources that they have used are thoroughly cleaned to reduce the risk of the spread of the virus. This is already happening daily but as numbers increase, there will be more areas and resources to clean. Additional time for cleaning will have to be factored into any arrangements that schools make for the return of more pupils.

The leadership team, Chair of Governors and I have looked carefully at our school and the individualised opportunities and constraints the school building offers and devised a reopening plan that we think takes on board the key messages from current government guidance (as out lined below for you), the risk assessment of our school and structure and our duty of care to our staff.

**I cannot stress strongly enough that you must be aware that we may have to make changes as the next weeks and months unfold and reserve the right to do so.**

**Proposed phased opening**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Phase 1**  **1st June** | **Phase 2**  **8th June** | **Phase 3**  **15th June** |
| **Phase 1**  **Extending support and provision for children of key workers and vulnerable children** |  |  |  |
| **Phase 2**  **Offering provision to children in Year Six** | **X** |  |  |
| **Phase 2**  **Offering provision to children in F2** | **x** | **x** |  |
| **Phase 3**  **Offering provision to Year 1** | **x** | **x** |  |

When the identified groups of children do return, we have put the following procedures in place to ensure safety for the children, parents and staff.

* We will stagger times to arrive at school and to collect children so that schools can try to safely manage this and ensure there is minimal adult contact.
* Parents must not gather at the school gates when arriving or departing. - 2m distancing between adults must be maintained.
* To minimise the risks on the school site parents will be asked to drop their children off at their allocated gate to the member of staff who is responsible for your child’s group.
* If parents need to speak to a member of staff, please telephone the school office.
* Parents wishing to leave anything at school office will only be allowed to visit the school between 09.00am – 10.00am for essential purposes such as complete registration, leave medication etc. We will clean the office foyer after this point. Only exception to this will be if a child is ill.
* If your child is late, they will enter the premises on their own via the main office.
* Only one adult can accompany children to school.
* Children must wear clean clothes each day to school, this does not need to be their uniform
* We are unable to offer breakfast club or any after school clubs.

These are challenging times for us all. Many of you will be anxious to get back to work but many will be worried about sending children back to school. School staff understand and share those anxieties for their own children and families. We will do everything we can to respond to the guidance given by the government but will also be ensuring that we do this safely.

If you feel the time is not right for your child to return, that is your choice. There is no compulsory education at the moment, and parents will not be penalised in any way for choosing to keep their children at home for a little longer.

We would love nothing better than to have everything back to normal and to welcome your children back with open arms, but we are all in unprecedented times. Welcoming your children back safely must be our priority and we know you would want this to be the case.

I would like to thank you all for your support and I will write to you all with further details when the Government has confirmed their intentions on the **28th May 2020.**

Yours sincerely

Mrs Clare Higgins

Headteacher