



Dear Parents,

I hope all is well with you and your children. The recent announcement about schools reopening has certainly not affected the amount of wonderful home learning your children completed this week. The staff and I are committed to ensuring all the children are provided with as many learning activities between now and the end of the school year.

As you will know from the news, unions are still very much against schools reopening until there is medical evidence to say it is safe to do so.

On this basis we are still unable to confirm for certain that St Catherine's will reopen. However we will continue to aim for a 8th June opening starting with our nursery cohort first and gradually building up each week with the additional specified year groups.

On the advice of the Local Authority we have spent this week carrying out a risk assessment to determine the risks involved in opening St Catherine's to the Early Years children, Year 1 and Year 6 whilst providing childcare for children whose parents are Key workers.

Today we are opening consultation with all stakeholders, parents, staff, governors, unions and the Local Authority.

Please see the risk assessment on the school website using the link below.

<https://st-catherines.barnet.sch.uk/news-and-calendar/newsletters/>

Thank you to our Key Worker parents who have completed the childcare survey this week. This has helped us to determine numbers of staff needed and what space is required so that children can keep a safe distance and access toilets and hand washing facilities whilst maintaining group sizes of no more than 15.

Nursery parents will receive their second survey today reminding them they have until 29th May to confirm their decision.

Reception parents will receive their survey this evening indicating their preference for the sessions we are proposing to start on 15th June. As you can appreciate we are unable to meet every parents individual request but we will do our best to ensure the children are catered for in a suitable safe space with the appropriate numbers of adults.

Again the provision we are offering is based on the reduced number of staff we have and the lengthy guidelines and tasks we must follow in order to reduce the risk of spreading the virus as far as possible.

Every school will have a different kind of provision or start date or number of year groups in school based on their risk assessment which will be based on their staffing situation but also on the layout of their building and their toilet facilities so that bubbles do not cross over.

The Leader of the council has also provided this message on the council website. Please see link below.

<https://www.barnet.gov.uk/news/message-leader-llr-dan-thomas-update-parents-and-carers-barnets-school-children>

Please note when completing the surveys parents cannot sign up for nursery or reception sessions and request childcare as well (even if they are a critical key worker). Parents are only permitted to choose one or the other so that the "bubbles" these groups create remain separate at all times.

You can of course access childcare and then move into a year group once the sessions open but not the other way round.

Next week is half term and we will be closing our online learning for the week so that staff can have a break. It may be an opportunity for the children to have a week off from screen time too.

Our childcare is also closed so that the cleaners can carry out a deep clean in preparation for the possible opening. The week beginning 1st June will involve moving furniture, taking away soft furnishing and sorting toys and equipment into separate boxes for the separate bubbles of children.

We want to do everything we can to minimise the risk of children staff and their families contracting the virus.

The childcare will reopen 1st June. Children will enter the school via the "old" school playground gate next to the green on the High Barnet Station side. They will be met by a member of staff who will direct the child to the "Child care painted path" to the dining hall. They will be kept in a group of 15 in the dining room, a group of 10 in Class 2F and another group of 10 in Class 2H. If numbers are higher than 35 we will make another group in the school hall which will cater for a further 15. The children will be restricted to these rooms and access to the dining room toilets and the playground will be according to a designated pathway clearly sign posted. Parents will then collect their children from the same single playground gate on the station side of the school at the end of the session.

If the school reopens on 8th June it is important you explain to your children that the school will look very different from what it was before. Rooms will be mostly empty of furniture. There will be minimum toys and resources allocated to each group. There will be no soft chairs, cushions, toys or dressing up clothes. They will also be restricted to their own designated area. They will also need to enter the school independently from the school gate following the marked out lanes to their class door. I am telling you this information now so that if you decide to opt into the sessions you have the time between now and then to talk to your child about the changes so that they are prepared. Please also tell them that they will be greeted by a grown up that they have seen before who will be ready with a smile, kind words and imaginative activities that they will enjoy with some of their friends nearby.

Your child's well being is incredibly important to us, we want this situation to be as manageable as it can be for them.

After half term we hope to provide you with a comprehensive list of guidelines, as outlined in the risk assessment, which will support us in protecting the children staff and St Catherine's families from contracting the virus as far as possible.

In the meantime please see the link below from the DFE on school opening advice and procedures.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/closure-of-educational-settings-information-for-parents-and-carers/reopening-schools-and-other-educational-settings-from-1-june>

The safety of every person and their family is our first priority.
Your help and cooperation will be hugely appreciated.

For now please be very proud of what you have done to support your child's learning and their health and well being. You have completed over half a term of home schooling!

Enjoy the half term break with your children. You deserve it.

Take care of each other.

Best wishes

Maureen Kelly
Headteacher