



English Martyrs' Catholic Primary School

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Head Teacher: Mrs H. Appah

26th May 2020

Dear Parents and Carers,

I hope that you and your family members are well. I know that these past weeks have been difficult for everyone, thank you for your continued support.

Planned Reopening of Schools

I am writing to you following the Government's recent announcement that signals the start of a phased return of children to schools.

At the moment, the government's intention is to open primary schools initially in reduced numbers to children from Nursery, Reception, Year 1, Year 6, children with an EHCP and children of key workers from possibly the 1st June, with the ambition of bringing in all primary year groups before the summer holidays. It is important to state from the outset that this plan is conditional and depends upon whether the five key tests set by government justify the changes at the time. However, schools are being asked to plan on this basis, ahead of confirmation that these tests are met.

I would like to emphasise that the safety of children, families and staff remains of paramount concern. We are currently in a risk assessment phase as directed by the Department for Education. We would like to stress our plans to prepare for a phased return will be based upon thorough planning to determine our capacity to implement the protective measures outlined by the Government for schools. This process is being carried out by all schools both locally and nationally at this time. And, whilst the plans in individual schools may eventually differ slightly based upon local circumstances, we are working closely with other local schools.

It is important to stress that we recognise that the decision whether or not you send your child back to school as part of the phased return is an extremely difficult one. I would like to stress that at English Martyrs' School there is no expectation that parents should choose to send their children to school as part of this phased return should they not wish to. You should give careful consideration to the question before making a decision. During this period attendance at school will not be monitored in the usual way. Parents will not face consequences for non-attendance and schools will not be held to account for attendance levels.

- *Children with conditions which render them clinically extremely vulnerable **should not** attend school. Children who live with someone with conditions which render them clinically extremely vulnerable **should not** attend school. Please see link below to view this list*

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-on-shielding-and-protecting-extremely-vulnerable-persons-from-covid-19/guidance-on-shielding-and-protecting-extremely-vulnerable-persons-from-covid-19>

At English Martyrs' School we are working hard to put into place rigorous control measures to best meet these requirements. Parents should be advised that the safety of children, families and staff remain our highest priority. We will always strive to reduce risk by adhering to the latest guidance and stringent safety practices however, we are unable to guarantee the complete removal of risk. The government has issued guidance for schools which we will adhere to but I must inform you that for the time being attending English Martyrs' will not be as it was.

What does this mean for my child?

In line with government advice the following will be put in place should schools reopen:

Your child will be in a class of up to 15 children to maintain social distancing of 2metres.

Your child may not be with their teacher and may be with a member of staff that they do not know as well.

They may be in an unfamiliar classroom and not be in the same classroom as their friends;

Guidance says children should not mix with other groups at playtime and lunchtimes and therefore play and lunchtimes will be staggered.

The school day will start and end with staggered times and parents/carers will be expected to keep to the given times.

Only one family member will be allowed when bringing children to school and when collecting and they will be expected to stand in line 2m apart from other parents.

As part of our risk assessment, it is possible that staff might follow the advice of their professional bodies and choose to wear PPE in order to manage the risk of transmissions. Stringent additional hand washing and cleaning will need to take place throughout the day to help manage the risk of infection.

I recognise the difficult decision placed on all of our families. I hope that you understand that the information provided in this letter is not aimed at causing any additional fear or anxiety. However, we feel that it is important that we provide some additional information on how we will implement protective measures in order to keep children, families and staff as safe as we are able and how these will impact on the day to day running of the school. It should be remembered that risk cannot be entirely removed and so it is for parents to come their own decision based upon the information that we have provided.

I will then advise you of finalised plans as soon as we are able.

I would like to thank all parents for their cooperation and support of the school during this challenging time. Whilst, we know that home schooling in itself presents problems we are so impressed with how this has been handled. Thank you for your support at this extremely challenging time and we must remember that safety for all is our main concern. If you have any further concerns please contact office@englishmartyrs.southwark.sch.uk

Sending you all God's blessings and warm regards

Kind regards

Mrs Appah
Head Teacher

