



Headteacher's Newsletter

2 July 2020

Christian Value for this half term:

Truthfulness

TRUTH and TRUTHFULNESS

'Tell the truth to each other.'

Zechariah 8.16

Dear parents/carers,

Welcome to the July newsletter.

As we move into another week of lockdown I hope that you are all keeping safe. It's hard to comprehend that we have now passed 100 days since lockdown began.

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As you are aware the lockdown restrictions are gradually being lifted following the Prime Minister's statement to the House on COVID-19 He stated that primary and secondary education will recommence in September with full attendance. He also stated that from 4th July:

- People are asked to follow guidance on social contact rather than legislation.
- Where it is possible to keep 2 metres apart people should, but where it is not, people should keep a social distance of 'one metre plus' with additional mitigations in place (such as face shields, hand sanitiser, consistent staff groupings).
- Two households of any size are able to meet in any setting inside or out. These do not have to be the same two households consistently.
- Several households can only meet in groups of up to six outside – this has not changed
- Pubs, restaurants and hairdressers will be re-opened, with changes to the way they operate.
- Most leisure facilities and tourist attractions will reopen, including libraries, social clubs and community centres.

We are continuing to follow the guidelines of keeping our pupils in their bubble groups with a maximum of fifteen pupils and are pleased to see that more pupils are returning to school.

Schools are waiting for government guidance for how schools will operate in September. We will be in contact when we know more.

Best wishes,
Mrs Graham
Headteacher



Schools Reopening



Although there have been leaks in the media about how schools will operate (e.g. class bubbles, staggered start,

lunch and finish times) we simply do not know and so school leaders are keen to get the guidance.

As ever there will be a balance between the ambition of the government with the art of what is possible. Personally, I would like the guidance to be simple: the whole school as a bubble and we put in protective measures to keep our pupils and staff as safe as possible. We would then be able to operate in full again. The challenge will be if the government guidance is for classroom bubbles as this throws up challenges such as whether we can operate before and after school care or not, what time children start and finish and how to we manage our staff.

Please be assured that my ambition and that of the staff, Trustees and Governors is that all our children are back in full in September with a robust plan to enable this to happen. It is then that the work of our 'recovery curriculum' will start.

Recovering the Curriculum

There will be many challenges to plan for in September, both academically and socially.

Staff are already working hard to put in place a 'recovery curriculum' which will address gaps in academic learning. Some things will be quick to fix, others will take longer—months and even years.

Teachers are meeting next week to liaise with each other in 'handover meetings'. Teachers will be talking about their current class, celebrating

what their strengths are as a group, what the whole class needs to work on, what reading, writing and maths from the current year needs re-visiting, as well as discussing individual children.

There will be a period of transition in September so that our children have a carefully planned and supported return to school. We will share details of this in the coming weeks.

The curriculum in September will be heavily focused on mental health and wellbeing for the first few weeks, along with reading, writing and maths. The priority will very much be on getting the children used to being back in school and back in the routine of how we do things as well as re-establishing relationships with their friends and with school staff.

Preparing your children for return

Some children will be excited to get back to school in September whilst other children may be worried about the return. Staff will be well prepared to support the children when they return but there are steps parents and carers can take before then to prepare for the new academic year.

- **Sleep routine** – help your child return to their normal sleep routine in the weeks before school starts again.
- **Talk about school** – start to talk through the daily routine that they were once so familiar with. It doesn't have to start as a conversation about worries, but these might arise as you talk.
- **Model coping strategies** you use when feeling stressed such as reconnecting with friends before returning, doing regular exercise or using breathing techniques. If it applies, you could share your own worries and feelings about returning to work and ways you are managing these feelings.
- **Make yourself available as much as possible** – they may want to come and

Preparing your children for return

“debrief” but maybe not when you expect. Create space for talking in different ways, such as going on a walk together or baking together – there may be less pressure in these circumstances than when sitting face-to-face.

- **Practise the journey** to school—it may help your child to do a few dummy runs so that the experience becomes a normal one. Equally, trying on their uniform while doing the dummy run may also help
- **Look at the positives** – as schools reopen, other things will too. It might be helpful to talk about things the child is looking forward to, like their favourite shop reopening, seeing friends in the park or getting ice cream from their favourite café.

Compulsory Attendance

The government is clear that the choice of sending children back to school has been removed from parents and all children must therefore return to school in September. It has been widely publicised that fines should be given to families where children are not attending.

I would like to reassure parents and carers that at St. Catherine's, whilst we too wish to see all children return, we will work constructively with you where your child has barriers to returning and you struggle are struggling to get them in. Working together to plan actions for their return will be far more effective in getting your child back into school than the government's threat to penalise you with a fine.

End of Year reports

Teachers have been writing academic reports which take account of your child's learning up to 20th March.

These reports do not provide the usual assessment of attainment as obviously we don't have the up to date data to be able to give you this—the children didn't even sit the end of spring term assessments which had been scheduled.

With all this in mind we are planning for some form of parent consultations in the first few weeks of September, which will be an opportunity for you to hold a conversation with your child's new teacher and information can be shared such as concerns, celebrations of achievement during lockdown and next steps for their learning and personal growth.

Year 6 Leavers

Our current Year 6 joined us many years ago as small children and they leave us in a few weeks as young adults.

There is a real sense of loss that their primary school years ended, for most of them, in March when school closed for the Covid-19 lockdown. They have missed the 'rite of passage' events such as their leavers' service, Crocky Trail, leavers' party, leavers' service at Manchester cathedral and even SATs (although I'm not sure how devastated they are about that).

Staff are busy preparing a Leavers' service CD as well as delivering Leavers' packs (details will be shared on when this will be).

I hope they look back at their time at St. Catherine's with fondness and perhaps return and regale us with their achievements. I am proud of them all and wish them good luck in the future.