

Dear Parents and Carers,

Firstly, I must say a huge thank you to you all for the kindness and support that you have shown us throughout this awful time. The pandemic is far from over and it will be a long time before we are able to return to any semblance of normal at school.

This is a very long letter – many apologies!

As you are aware the Prime Minister has asked Headteachers to prepare for a **possible gradual** start to reopening schools on the 1st of June **“at the earliest”**. I need to reiterate that at this time this has not been confirmed and may not be confirmed until during the half term break. Please do make plans but do not assume it is definitely going to happen!

We have been asked to focus on Reception, year 1 and year 6. I realise that for many families this will mean having to make a decision whether or not they are going to send part of their family to school whilst still having children at home. At this time, it seems highly unlikely that we will have the staffing levels to bring all pupils back to school before September.

The children of key workers and pupils deemed ‘vulnerable’ who already have places will continue to attend. If you are a key worker and have not previously used our key worker provision, we will do our best to accommodate you but the number of places will be limited due to the restrictions put in place by the Government. Please contact the office if you wish to be considered for a key worker place.

The Government, in its document, has made it clear that young children will not be able to keep to social distancing rules and certainly that is our experience with the children here.

In choosing to send your child back to school you are agreeing and understand that it is impossible to maintain social distancing between the children and the staff and children. Whilst the staff will do their best to protect the children and remind them not to get too close to other children and themselves we also understand being close to their peers and playing with them is a natural part of childhood. We will never tell the children off for doing what is perfectly natural.

Returning pupils are expected to attend every day unless they are unwell.

The Government has asked headteachers to make a plan to do our best to mitigate the risk of transmission of Covid-19 from family to family. Please understand that is with a heavy heart that I have to put these measures in place. Many of them go totally against everything that we believe but in doing this we will be doing everything we can to keep our community safe.

Draft timetable for return;

Half term – School closed	School closed
Monday 1 st June	Closed to pupils except key worker’s children and those pupils deemed vulnerable.
Tuesday 2 nd June	Year 6 return
Wednesday 3 rd	Year 1 return
Thursday 4 th	Reception classes return

Drop off and pick up times

To minimise the risk the school day has had to be tweaked.

NB pupils must not be brought to school or picked up by anyone outside of your household – this contravenes the Government rules and you will be required to keep your child at home for 14 days should it become evident that this has happened.

It is imperative that these times are kept to. **If you are running late you will need to wait until all of the year groups have been dropped off before we will be able to accept your child as we are not able to mix the groups.**

Year group	Drop off	Pick up
Key worker and those deemed vulnerable	Between 8.25 – 8.30	3.45
Year 6	Between 8.35 – 8.45	3.35
Year 1	Between 8.50 – 9.00	3.25
Year R	Between 9.05 and 9.15	3.15

The following measures will be taken to try and reduce the possibility of Covid-19 transmission:

- No parents will be able to enter the school.
- Parents will queue with their child following social distancing requirements, 2m apart from other households in the car park as directed by staff. (Year 6 may be left at the gate to queue up to come in)
- Only one adult should accompany the child onto school premises.
- At the hall door pupils will be temperature checked and any messages for teachers taken.
- No books will be sent home.
- **Nothing** should be brought from home this includes book bags, rucksacks, pencil cases, gym kits and as far as possible lunchboxes.
- The children should bring a water bottle clearly labelled with their name which will remain in school – the staff will Milton the bottles every night.

Uniform

- Children should be in school uniform or school PE kit, summer dresses in blue are now allowed. All cardigans, jumpers and coats MUST be labelled. (no sandals, flip flops, or flimsy daps/plimsolls – the children will be doing lots of activities outside)
- Long hair MUST be tied back securely. No dyed hair, no skin heads, no clipped hairstyles below number 3. (but we will forgive unusual wonky styles!)
- Sun hats MUST be worn by ALL children and labelled with their names.
- Raincoats MUST be brought to school by ALL children and labelled with their name.
- Pupils may wear sensible face coverings. If they do wear a facemask they must be able to put them on and off themselves. If they are left around school they will be thrown away as they are a biohazard to others once removed.
- Gloves should not be worn, this is because they offer no protection unless changed after every activity and prevent good hand washing practices.

In School

- Each year group is going to be split in half
- They will be in groups of a maximum of 15.
- The children will not necessarily be taught by their current teacher. As I have made an early decision on who is teaching which class next year if they are not taught by their current teacher, I will do my best to ensure they are taught by the teacher they will have next year.
- In year 6 desks have been set up across 2 classrooms with 2 metres between each.
- All pupils will be reminded to stay apart.

Lunches

We are of the opinion that lunchboxes are a risk to the transmission of COVID-19. It is impossible to offer storage where lunchboxes are kept apart. We are fortunate at St Nicholas to have a trained chef who produces delicious meals every day so we would be grateful if the following could be followed;

- All pupils entitled to free school meals in year 6 will be expected to take up the offer.
- All pupils across reception and year 1 are entitled to universal free school meals so they will be expected to have a school lunch every day.
- For the remainder of the year 6 pupils we are reducing the cost of meals to £2 per day in the hope that the remainder of children will also have school lunches

Cleaning

A cleaner will be in school most of the day. She will be rotating around the school cleaning taps, toilets, door handles etc.

Older pupils will be required to clean down their desks and equipment at intervals throughout the day as directed by their teacher with paper towels and food safe disinfectant spray provided by the school.

Handwashing

Pupils will be required to wash their hands

- On arrival in school
- After each section of learning
- Before snack
- After snack
- After playtimes
- Before lunch
- After lunch
- After using the toilet

Soft toys and dressing up clothes will be removed from the Reception classrooms. Plastic toys will be washed overnight in Milton on a cleaning schedule after use.

Work for pupils not attending school

Paper packs will be available to be picked up during the first week of next term for all year groups. Pupils in school will keep their paper packs in school to use so that all children are doing similar work. We will inform you of the times you may do this. Virtual school will continue but please understand that the amount of time available to many staff to message children will be reduced as many of the staff will be needed in the classrooms. We will do our best though! Phone calls to families will continue.

Year 6 Leavers

Currently it will not be possible to do a leavers service or prom. Our plan to have a party weekend in September remains the same – we will make sure they have the proper send off in the end! We will save the year books for then but year 6 pupils may wear their hoodies to school from whenever they arrive! We will not be able to do shirt signing this year but again when we have the prom we will be able to!

Illness

Pupils who are ill will be sent home. Those showing even the mildest symptoms of COVID-19 will be isolated in our deemed 'isolation room' on their own with a member of staff 2m away. Parents will be expected to book household testing and the child will not be allowed back to school until the results are known. Should any child test positive for COVID-19 the Government guidelines will be followed.

Testing

Should any child show symptoms of COVID-19 the household will be able to book testing.

I understand that many of you are struggling to decide whether or not to send your children back to school. Again I have to re-iterate that we will do everything we can to protect everyone but we cannot guarantee that we will succeed. This is an ever changing picture so I apologise in advance for any changes that may occur going forward.

I really appreciate everything that you can do to support us in bringing the children back to school. If you have any questions please email me on head@stnicholasschool.co.uk or message me on our Facebook page.

Stay safe everyone

Best wishes,

Nicki Smith

Headteacher.