

Metropolitan Borough of Sandwell
ST JAMES CE PRIMARY SCHOOL

*Wolverley Crescent
Oldbury
West Midlands
B69 1BG*



*Tel: 0121 552 5491
Fax: 0121 552 2794
www.stjamesprimary.co.uk*

Headteacher: Mrs C McGregor

Friday 17th July

School reopening in September

Dear Parents and Carers

I am writing to inform you of the plans that are in place for children to return to school **on Thursday 3rd September**. As you will be aware, the government are now expecting all children to return to school in the new academic and this is no longer optional and is compulsory. You will also have received a letter from Sandwell Local Authority outlining expectations for children's return to school, which contains important information.

School have had to make sure that the site is COVID safe and this has taken a lot of pre-planning to ensure all children can return to school in September, minimising the risk of transmission of the virus. A full risk assessment has been conducted and will be available to view on the school website which outlines detailed protective measures the school is putting in place.

I understand that children returning may be a cause of anxiety for some of you so I would like to outline the procedures we have in place to ensure children and staff are protected.

There will be a lot of information in the letter so I suggest you save it somewhere for future reference. In order for the procedures to be effective, we must make sure that all parents are following them.

Essential control measures to make school safe

Our school will always prioritise health and safety and we have planned a revised way of running the school to help reduce contact between children and to maximise distancing in our school community, whilst minimising the potential for transmission of the virus as far as is reasonably possible.

Essential measures include:

- Minimising contact with individuals who are unwell by ensuring that those who have coronavirus (COVID-19) symptoms, or who have someone in their household who does, do not attend school.
- Cleaning hands more often than usual - washing hands thoroughly for 20 seconds with running water and soap and drying them thoroughly or using alcohol hand rub or sanitiser ensuring that all parts of the hands are covered.
- Ensure good respiratory hygiene by promoting the 'catch it, bin it, kill it' approach.
- Introducing enhanced cleaning, including cleaning frequently touched surfaces often, using standard products such as detergents.
- Ensuring that children and young people are in the same groups each day – creating 'bubbles'.
- Actively engaging with NHS Test and Trace.

- Managing confirmed cases of coronavirus (COVID-19) amongst the school community and containing any outbreak by following local health protection team advice.

How children will be grouped

Children will be taught in their usual classes of up to 30 children and these will form a protective bubble. Children will not mix with other classes and they will be kept in these bubbles throughout the day. There may be times when they are receiving small group work with other children for learning purposes, however these will be kept in small, consistent groups. Playtimes and lunchtimes will be staggered so children do not come in to contact with other children in different bubbles. This is to reduce the risk of contamination between children and adults and means in the event of a positive coronavirus case, a small bubble of children will be sent home to isolate for 14 days and the rest of school can continue in its normal capacity.

In addition to the above our 'bubbles' will follow these principles:

- Avoiding large gatherings such as assemblies or workshops.
- Making adaptations to our classrooms to support distancing. This will include seating pupils side by side rather than face to face.
- Pupils will have their own items that cannot be shared e.g. pens and pencils.
- Classroom based resources, such as books/games, shared in class will be cleaned regularly, along with all frequently touched surfaces. Many of the resources will only be used by the class and not across the whole year group bubble.
- Resources that are shared between bubbles, such as sports, art and science equipment will be cleaned between use by each bubble.
- Staff maintaining distance from pupils and other staff as much as possible – avoiding close face to face contact and minimise time spent within 1 metre of anyone. We recognise that younger children will not be able to maintain social distancing, and it is acceptable for them not to distance within their group subject to good respiratory hygiene and handwashing.

School day times

We will continue to use staggered start and end times to avoid large gatherings at gates.

We will be using four different gates for different year groups to enter school and to pick children up. This is to alleviate pressure from the two gates we usually use and to avoid large gatherings at one particular gate.

We ask that ONE PARENT ONLY do drop offs and collections.

We appreciate that many children may be anxious about returning to school and the youngest of children will need more support in entering school. For this reason, we are allowing parents to enter with children initially in Nursery, Reception, Year 1, Year 2 and Year 3 **only**. We are requesting that parents of children in Year 4, Year 5 and Year 6 **do not enter** the school site and drop their children off at the specified gates. Staff will be on hand to support children with getting to classrooms.

We must make sure that we limit the number of people on the school site to limit the potential transmission of the virus.

These arrangements will be reviewed once children have settled in to school so that we can limit the number of parents on the school site further. We will inform parents when this has been reviewed.

Where parents do enter, we ask that you respect social distancing guidelines, using the markers, and do not gather to talk to others. We also ask that you drop your children off and leave promptly. If you wish to share information this can be sent via letter to the child's class teacher within their book bag or emailed into the school office. There will be no message facility on the gates.

Coming into the school site without an appointment will not be allowed. Appointments must be made by contacting the school office by phone or email.

Year Group	Entry time	Exit time	Drop off gate	Collection gate	Gate Key *see map
Nursery	8.45	3.00	Enter through nursery gate and wait on nursery playground	Nursery gate and wait on nursery playground	A
Reception	8.50	3.15	Enter through Shelsley Avenue gate and drop off in Reception play area	Same as drop off	B
Year 1	8.50	3.15	Enter through nursery gate and wait in Y1 outside area	Children will be dismissed to parents at nursery gate	A
Year 2	8.50	3.15	Enter through Shelsley Avenue gate and drop off in KS1 playground	Same as drop off	B
Year 3	8.50	3.15	Enter through Shelsley Avenue gate and drop off in KS2 playground	Same as drop off	B
Year 4	8.45	3.15	Children to enter at Wolverley Crescent gate. No parents to enter school site.	Children dismissed to parents from Wolverley gate. Parents not to enter.	C
Year 5	8.50	3.20	Children to enter at Wolverley Crescent gate. No parents to enter school site.	Parents wait at front gate outside school office (but not to enter school). Children will be dismissed to parents from the AstroTurf pitch.	Drop off at C. Pick up at D.
Year 6	9.00	3.30	Children to enter at Wolverley Crescent gate. No parents to enter school site.	Children dismissed to parents from Wolverley gate. Parents not to enter.	C

***please see attached map for location of gates A-D.**

Uniform

It is expected that children wear uniform as usual as stipulated by government guidance.

On days where children have PE, they can come into school wearing PE kits so as to not change in school time. Parents will be made aware of the days that children have PE as soon as possible after the start of term.

Breakfast Club

Breakfast club will run as usual **but to the children we currently cater for only** in the first instance (7.45-8.50).

Children will be split into two smaller groups within the hall and must not mix. Only cereals will be served and these will be served to children by staff.

Bagels

Children will be offered bagels in the classroom bubbles once in school. They will no longer be available on the playground. Strict hygiene rules will be in place.

After school clubs

After school clubs are currently under review and will most likely be set up after a settling in period of a few weeks. More information will follow.

Lunch times

Lunches will be eaten in classrooms. Only sandwich meal options will be supplied in the first two weeks and will be given to children in Reception and KS1 who get Universal Infant Free School Meals and those in KS2 who are eligible for FSM.

After two weeks, a hot option will then be introduced once the catering team are fully re-established. These will continue to be eaten in the classrooms.

Children will be given dedicated outdoor time to play and this will be done on a rota system so bubbles do not mix.

Classroom/school organisation

Government guidance states it is safer to seat children in rows so you will see classrooms set up slightly differently to normal. We recognise that this will not be possible for the youngest of our children however.

Children will be expected to wash their hands on entry into school and at regular intervals throughout the day, especially before and after eating. There are hand gel dispensers outside all classroom areas that children can use prior to entering the classrooms. There will also be supplies of hand gel and tissues in every classroom.

There are also one way systems and floor markings in place to help children move around school safely. Children will be expected to stay within their bubbles and these will form pods with allocated toilets for children to use.

Curriculum

Our aim is that our curriculum remains broad and ambitious and that we focus on developing the key skills of reading, writing and maths as well as continuing to teach a wide range of subjects. All our topics outlined on our curriculum overviews remain the same (see school website) and do not need substantial modification. Our plans will be informed by an assessment of pupils' starting points and addressing the gaps in their knowledge and skills, in particular making effective use of regular formative assessment (for example, quizzes, observing pupils in class, talking to pupils to assess understanding, scrutiny of pupils' work).

Supporting well-being

Pupils will be experiencing a variety of emotions in response to the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak, such as anxiety, stress or low mood. We will support the pupils in understanding that these are normal responses to an abnormal situation and have already planned work for the children's return to school around feelings and emotions. Some of our children may need support to re-adjust; others may have enjoyed being at home and be reluctant to return. Others however will not be experiencing any challenges and will be keen and ready to return to school.

We will therefore base our first few weeks' provision on pastoral activities designed to:

- Support the rebuilding of friendships and social engagement.
- Address and equip pupils to respond to issues linked to coronavirus (COVID-19).
- Support pupils with approaches to improving their physical and mental wellbeing.

Behaviour

As we are now working with very different rules and guidelines, we have amended our behaviour policy with an **addendum to the behaviour policy** which is available on the school website. As we will be operating strict social distancing and hygiene rules in schools, we have amended the behaviour policy to reflect a set of specific COVID-19 rules eg. adhere to one way systems, remain in own bubbles, follow instructions on hand washing etc. We fully appreciate that children will need a lot of support settling back into school and we will spend a lot of time establishing relationships and supporting children to understand the expectations once they re-enter school.

Face coverings for children

The government and Public Health do not recommend the use of face masks for children because children may inadvertently increase the risk of transmission through misuse. Children are at very low risk of serious illness from

coronavirus and increased preventative controls such as social distancing measures, increased handwashing and promotion of good respiratory hygiene such as 'catch it, bin it, kill it' will effectively work to limit any potential transmission.

We are asking that children do not wear face masks in school as all the measures we have put in place will protect them. We understand that some children may wear them on public transport, however, if they arrive at school wearing them we will instruct them to remove them. They will be instructed to not touch the front of their face mask when removing them. They must wash their hands immediately on arrival, dispose of temporary face masks in a covered bin or reusable face masks will be put in plastic bag to be taken home and washed. They will then be instructed to wash their hands again before going to the classroom.

Symptoms/NHS Test and Trace

We ask that you do not bring children to school if they are exhibiting coronavirus symptoms or have tested positive in the last 7 days (or who have someone in their household who does). These symptoms include:

- A high temperature
- A new continuous cough
- A loss or change to your sense of taste or smell

If a child becomes unwell in the school day, they will be sent home immediately and advised to follow the 'stay at home' guidance which sets out that they must self-isolate for 7 days and should arrange to have test.

If a child is awaiting collection, they will be isolated within a room away from others (supervised by an adult).

Government guidance asks that parents and carers be ready and willing to:

- [book a test](#) if they are displaying symptoms. Staff and pupils must not come into the school if they have symptoms, and must be sent home to self-isolate if they develop them in school. All children can be tested, including children under 5, but children aged 11 and under will need to be helped by their parents/carers if using a home testing kit
- provide details of anyone they have been in close contact with if they were to test positive for coronavirus (COVID-19) or if asked by NHS Test and Trace
- [self-isolate](#) if they have been in close contact with someone who develops coronavirus (COVID-19) symptoms or someone who tests positive for coronavirus (COVID-19)

School will ask parents and staff to inform them immediately of the results of a test:

- if someone tests negative, if they feel well and no longer have symptoms similar to coronavirus (COVID-19), they can stop self-isolating. They could still have another virus, such as a cold or flu – in which case it is still best to avoid contact with other people until they are better. Other members of their household can stop self-isolating.
- if someone tests positive, they should follow the '[stay at home: guidance for households with possible or confirmed coronavirus \(COVID-19\) infection](#)' and must continue to self-isolate for at least 7 days from the onset of their symptoms and then return to school only if they do not have symptoms other than cough or loss of sense of smell/taste. This is because a cough or anosmia can last for several weeks once the infection has gone. The 7-day period starts from the day when they first became ill. If they still have a high temperature, they should keep self-isolating until their temperature returns to normal. Other members of their household should continue self-isolating for the full 14 days.

If there is a confirmed case in school, then school will take swift action and liaise closely with the local Public Health team. It is likely that only one bubble will be asked to self-isolate for 14 days.

Local Lockdowns

Parents will be made aware of any cases where local lockdowns are enforced. It may be that Sandwell as a local authority are requested to go into a local lockdown at short notice. If this is the case, parents must be aware that school will close at short notice.

School will continue to support children with their learning from home should this be the case.

Home learning will also be delivered to children should they need to isolate as part of a bubble if there is a positive COVID case in school. This will continue through the use of Class Dojo initially.

More information will follow on this in the new academic year.

Equipment

To reduce the amount of belongings being brought into school from home, we ask that children only bring minimum resources into school with them. They will only require a lunch box if they use one, a coat and a **named** bottle of water (as the water coolers will be out of use in school). Children can also bring their book bags but we ask that they do not bring bags as all stationery will be provided to them in classrooms. As most shared cloakroom areas will be out of use in school, children will be taking their belongings into class with them so we need to keep this to a minimum.

No PE kit is needed as we ask that children come wearing their PE kit on days they have PE (see above).

Term Dates

All term dates are available on the school website.

Tuesday 1st September and Wednesday 2nd September are teacher training days so school is closed to children on these days. School will open to children on Thursday 3rd September.

Please note, for children in Nursery and Reception, these dates (and times) may differ depending on individual start dates provided to you by staff in Early Years.

Final thought

I understand that there is a lot of information in this letter, however, it is essential that all parents and carers are aware of the procedures to enable a safe return for children in September. Please be assured that the health, safety and well-being of your children, the staff working within the school and the wider community remain our most important priority. I do hope this letter has provided you with some reassurance about September and our plans moving forward.

We are really looking forward to seeing everyone again and seeing all our wonderful children back in school, making it the school it should be. We hope you have a wonderful summer break, get a well-deserved rest and look forward to seeing you in September.

Kind regards



Mrs McGregor