

SACRED HEART RC NURSERY AND PRIMARY SCHOOL

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Dear Parents / Carers,

I am writing to you to inform you of the arrangements for the new term. I have learned over the past eighteen months that things can change very quickly so have left it until September has arrived before giving you an update. I am hopeful that the new academic year will be a positive one and one where we see many pre-covid practices returning.

The government released updated advice for schools over August and I have received further guidance from our Trust, Plymouth CAST and the Local Authority today. Using the recommendations in this correspondence, I have now written a new risk assessment for September plus an Outbreak Management Plan to be put into place if positive covid-19 cases rise in the school. Both are a requirement in all schools.

With Torbay, and the rest of the South West experiencing high rates of covid-19, particularly amongst the younger generation, I would like to reassure you that we will still be adhering to robust safety measures in school, in particular hand and repository hygiene, enhanced cleaning and ventilating classrooms. You will have probably seen in the press that due to the high rates of covid infection being seen currently the Devon, Plymouth, Torbay, and Cornwall areas have been moved to an Enhanced Response Area (ERA) by central government. This will be in place for 5 weeks initially but will be reviewed after 4 weeks. This move enables the area to receive additional capacity and to put in place additional measures to try to reduce transmission locally, for example secondary schools wearing masks in communal areas.

I am delighted to share that we can make some changes though and begin to take steps in the right direction towards relaxing some safety measures. Apologies for yet another long letter but this is an important part in 'getting it right'.

Staggered start / end times

Drop off

From **Tuesday 7th September**, we will be returning to a universal drop off and pick up time as per our pre-covid arrangements. The side gate will open at 8:45am and remain open until 8:55am. School officially starts at 8:55am but we welcome the children into class from 8:45am to naturally stagger the start of the day. Please note that this means that you do not need to be queuing up

outside school prior to 8:45am. It is going to feel very busy to start with as we get back to more regular routines. Some of you haven't experienced school life pre-covid so I will be as clear as I can be. We will keep the one way system going for now, so exiting will continue to happen through the back gate as we have been doing over the past year.

Helpful Practice:

- Please do not park in the school carpark or on double yellow lines at the back of the school.
- One adult to bring your child means less adults in the playground
- Use the whole ten-minute window rather than queuing in the lane – you do not need to arrive for the gate opening at 8:45am.
- Walk with your child to a space in the playground to watch them walk into the school building. Please do not stand and wait near the entrance or exit gate as it blocks natural pathways.
- As soon as your child has gone into school, please leave the playground.
- If you need to speak to your child's class teacher, please wait until they are free and respect social distancing. If they are having a conversation with another parent, please respect their privacy. Your child's class teacher will be in the playground every morning.

Pick Up

School ends at 3:15pm. The gate will open at 3:05pm to avoid congestion in the lane. Nursery & Reception will be dismissed from the blue gates, Y1 from the bottom of the ramp and Y2&3 from their classrooms. This will give you an idea of where to stand. Y4 & 5 will be released from an adult via the steps near the garden and Y6 will emerge from the hall door. There will a video on Facebook on Monday to assist you with this.

Helpful Practice

- Please do not park in the school carpark or on double yellow lines at the back of the school.
- One adult to collect your child means less people in the playground
- Find a space in the playground and wait for your child's class to be dismissed.
- If you stick to a similar waiting area every day, both your child and the staff will find it easier to locate you.
- If you need to speak to your child's class teacher, please wait until they have released **all** the children before approaching them and respect social distancing.

Bubbles

We will not be operating a bubble system on return to school. However, we will not be rushing into bringing the whole school back together in assemblies and the lunch hall on day one either. Assemblies will continue to be held remotely at the start of term as we all settle back in.

Morning break times will resume to our pre-covid slots of Y1-3 and Y4-6. There will no longer be tyres separating the playground.

Separate lunchtime arrangements will remain in place for the first few weeks.

Face Coverings

There is no longer a requirement to wear face coverings in school but some staff are choosing to do so, especially those who are yet to be double vaccinated. If we have an outbreak, the director of public health may advise that face coverings are reintroduced and we will all need to comply.

Where adults are in an enclosed or crowded space where they may come into contact with people they don't normally meet, a face covering should be worn

Breakfast and After School Club

Breakfast and After School Club children will now be allowed to mix with one another and not be kept in seven separate bubbles. A Google form link has been sent out via email for bookings for those of you who need childcare before and after school.

I will be meeting with staff next week to discuss ways forward with potential extra-curricular groups. Where we have provided multiple free clubs in the past, staff are not paid to run these groups; they are led on a voluntary basis. We need to ensure that reintroduction is logistically possible.

Personal Belongings

One of the positives from Covid restrictions from a logistical point of view was the lack of unnecessary oversized school bags and giant furry pencil cases. Now, I'm a big fan of stationery and bags and both have their uses but may I ask that you consider these items carefully on return to school.

What does your child actually need?

Reception/Y1/Y2: book bag, lunchbox, water bottle, waterproof coat.

Y3/4: lunchbox, water bottle, waterproof coat. Pupils' trays are not accessible throughout lessons so neither is access to personal equipment.

Y5/6: A flat pencil case that can fit in their tray. Y5 and 6 pupils have their trays under the desk so access to personal items is a lot easier. On asking Y6s what they find useful in their pencil case, they report: a pack of coloured pencils (felt pens are not used in books), a glue stick, highlighters and a pencil sharpener with a lid.

In summary, your child can return to school with a bag or pencil case but please consider if it is needed and if its size will fit on your child's peg along with their coat. Pencil cases that cannot fit in a child's tray will not be able to be used in school.

PE Days

After speaking to a quite a few parents at the end of term, the feedback was unanimous to keep the arrangement of coming to school dressed ready for PE. From our point of view, the benefits are very positive. No forgotten or lost kits and most importantly, no lost learning time getting changed. PE lessons were longer and children started them in a calmer manner.

Towards the end of the year, the sportswear being worn by some pupils was not acceptable (slashed joggers, crop tops and multi-coloured leggings to name a few). If we are to keep this arrangement for now, correct attire must be worn.

- A school PE T-shirt or plain white t-shirt. This can be covered with a school sweatshirt or cardigan.
- School PE shorts (maroon) Plain jogging bottoms in black, grey or maroon or plain black leggings.
- Suitable footwear such as trainers or plimsoles.

If a child attends school on a PE day wearing clothing unsuitable to be part of a school uniform then a letter will be sent home.

There will be no PE on Tuesday 7th September. Details of PE days for the Autumn term will be sent out by your child's class teacher.

Parking

Just a polite reminder that parents/carers are not permitted to park or drop off in the Church carpark at the beginning or end of the school day. This is to protect your children and to keep everyone safe.

Reception Parents

You should have received an email containing a letter with details of your child's starting date. If you have not received this email, please contact the school office on 01803 558298.

Covid-19

I've left it until last but we cannot escape from the fact that it is still amongst us. I am sorry to hear about how many families have been affected by the virus this summer. We've had some quite poorly children but I have not heard of any of our school family being hospitalised so that's good news.

As you will be aware, the rules changed again on August 16th meaning that unless we have an outbreak and are instructed to switch to our contingency plan, classes will no longer be required to isolate.

Close contacts will be identified by NHS Contact and Trace; education settings will no longer be expected to undertake contact tracing. Therefore, your child will only be identified as a close contact from school if a pupil identifies them as such. Even if they are identified, children under 18 are no

longer required to isolate so therefore even if someone in your household has Covid-19, remarkably your child is free to attend school.

If your child has been identified as a close **contact they will need to have a negative PCR test before returning to school**. If your child receives a positive PCR test result, he/she should isolate for a period of 10 full days in line with Stay at home: guidance for households with possible or confirmed coronavirus (COVID-19) infection - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

Symptomatic Children

If your child is unwell, please keep them at home. If a child presents with any covid like symptoms whilst in school, they will be isolated and parents will be called for immediate collection.

I think that is all you need for now. Please note that Monday 6th is an INSET day and that the children are not due back until **Tuesday 7th September**.

I look forward to seeing everyone on Tuesday. It will be nice to see parents' faces for the first time in a year.

Enjoy the last few days of the holidays.
Take care,

Mrs Nichola Day
Headteacher