



# St. Paulinus Catholic Primary School

Inspiring all to live, learn and love in the light of Jesus.

(cf John 8:12)



Monday 12<sup>th</sup> April 2021

## Changes to school and reminders for what still needs to be in place

Dear Parent/ Guardian/ Carer,

I just want to take a moment to celebrate the easing of restrictions today and I hope you all had a wonderful day exploring your new freedoms or planning your exploration for later in the week! How exciting it is that we are beginning to ease up nationally in terms of the protective measures needed in the country as we see Coronavirus cases fall. Just as Boris Johnson has a roadmap in mind, we too are beginning to think about how we can begin to make changes in school that will help us begin that journey while we still make it as safe as possible for our children, staff and parents. In this letter you will find that we are only intending to make 1 change initially, but having spoken to the children and staff we think this one change will make a real difference to the daily life in school and so we are very excited!!

### Reminder:

**If any member of your household is displaying symptoms of Coronavirus, no-one from that household can come to school until you have performed a PCR test** (the ones you can get from a drive through centre not the Lateral flow ones) to confirm if they are positive or negative. In accordance with the guidance for schools, it must be a PCR test not a lateral flow test that is taken. This test must be taken asap and you can usually book on the same day and results will be returned the following day. NB, As part of our safety measures, School will need evidence of this test so that they can take the appropriate next steps, but rest assured we will delete your screen shot or email as soon as it has been seen by a senior member of staff and it will not be kept on file.

### Attendance:

The Government have reinstated its expectation that all children return to school and attend full time. They have asked all schools to remind parents that they must send their child to school and that Schools must reinstate penalties for non-attendance. However, penalties will not be given to any families who are not attending due to following official medical advice like self-isolating due to contact with the virus and, in these cases, children should (if well enough) be completing the online learning during their period of isolation instead so that they do not miss out on too much learning.

Please remember that the pandemic is not over yet and we still should not be meeting up inside or in big groups outside of school. We should, where possible, be reducing our contacts to end the spread of the virus.

I'd like to also take this opportunity to remind parents that your child's attendance directly affects the School's performance both with their academic achievement but also with our OfSTED judgement. OfSTED look to see that as a school we have at least 96% attendance in order to achieve "Good" so by sending your child to school, you are helping the School remain a "Good" school for all children. It might interest you to know that in order to individually achieve 96% a child can only be absent for 6 days over the whole year. Please note that isolations due to the virus will not count towards attendance scores.

*'An outstanding school, which is deeply committed to the Catholic mission... this school inspires all within this faith community to live life to the full.'* Ofsted 2017

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### Medical appointments:

Please support the school and your child by booking these outside of school time so that your child does not miss out on any more learning and so that staff are able to concentrate on supporting the children in their learning rather than escorting children to and from the gates.

I thank you in advance for this support.

### Key reminders to pick ups and drop off

There are no changes to the timings of the day. Children need to be dropped off at school between 8.30am and 8.45am where they will go straight into class. EYFS, Y1 and Y2 can be picked up from 3.05pm, Year 3 and 4 from 3.10pm and Year 5 and 6 from 3.15pm. Siblings will be dismissed together with the eldest sibling.

**Following conversations with and at the request of many parents, please ensure you follow the advice below during pick up time and drop off times-**

- ✓ Wear a face covering, unless you are medically exempt – although we are outside, there are still large groups of us meeting up and so it is recommended that face masks are worn. A face mask protects the other people around you, including the staff.
- ✓ Keep 2m+ in between you and the parent in front of you
- ✓ Do not gather in groups, only family groups
- ✓ When you have collected your child, please move away from the gate immediately so that parents who are waiting can collect their child
- ✓ Do not stand near the curb when the buses are arriving or leaving
- ✓ Please stand against the wall and leave a gap wide enough for parents to pass without them having to go on the road or brush past you
- ✓ Only 1 parent should come to pick up to reduce numbers

### Helpful advice:

- Consider your time of arrival carefully. Part of the problems we face on a daily basis is because parents arrive before their child's pick up time which means we have a large volume of parents waiting. **There is no rush.** Under the current circumstances we will keep children until 3.25, so if you are a family that is shielding or you need to be extra careful, we recommend coming at 3.20 after the main rush.

Following pleas from many of our parents, our local councillors have been working closely with Kirklees and were able to gain access to another pot of money that can keep the barriers in place until May half term and so we will not be making any changes to these arrangements until then at the earliest.

### Things staying the same:

- Kids club is open
- Buses are running
- Lunch arrangements are staying the same (please ensure you have paid in advance for your child's meals)
- Handwashing arrangements are staying the same (yes the children can still bring their own soap) Please ensure you have let the class teachers know if your child cannot have school soap or hand gel.
- Staff will be wearing masks at various times, as they have done all year – there are no changes here. As always, children are welcome to wear them as well if this would help them feel more comfortable – indeed we have many children who choose to wear theirs.

- Don't forget your child's tissues and water bottle. Water bottles should go home at least at the end of the week but can go home every day if you would prefer – there are no changes here either.
- Reading books – should come to school every day and we aim to change books once a week in every class but we are aware that some of the higher level books are quite long and so more than a week will be needed. We also aim to read with every child at least once a week, so please make sure your child brings their book on their day to read.
- Children will still have their own equipment and sit next to the same person at all times to reduce mixing while inside the classrooms.

### **Our big news – Our first change!**

After observing the children over the last term and talking to them about their experiences of being back in school, I am pleased to report that the children told me that they were happy with all the things we had in place to keep them safe and would just like us to remind everyone to not come too close to them.

At the beginning of the pandemic, we had to move our desks into rows on the advice of the Government, which has been a challenge both socially and academically for the children of St Paulinus and has been disliked by many of the teachers (particularly teachers of the younger children). Now we know more about how the virus spreads, we have been researching steps we can take that will allow us to return to a more normal practice but still ensure the children are as safe as possible. The main reason for sitting in rows is so that the children were not sitting face to face and therefore spreading the virus through droplets as they spoke to each other. With this in mind, we got researching different techniques we could implement that will help the classrooms feel more like normal and help children develop socially and academically whilst still enabling us to stop the droplets spreading during face to face talk.

Then an email came across my desk, with these beautiful screens!



The screens mean that we can sit in 4's (max), or in other age appropriate seating arrangements like the horseshoe layout, to enable greater collaboration and make it easier for adults to come and work with children, which will benefit them academically. It gives us back the space we lost in the classroom and actually means that we can place the children further apart. The screens will stop the droplets that we exhale when we talk and so are a great added measure to slow the spread of the virus among children and certainly better than having no protection at all. I am really excited for our new purchases to arrive and to see how different classes use them to add to the safety in school. Another layer to our swiss cheese model! Once the screens have arrived, we will keep them under review and if it is found that they are not a strong enough measure or we have concerns about them, we will have to go back to rows until the pandemic reduces further, so fingers crossed they are just what we need!

We have trialled them with year 1 today and I can tell you they are a huge success! The children really like the rainbows and like the fact they can see their classmates. They also said they feel like they have more room in their classrooms now. Teachers are also really enjoying the fact they can help 4 children at once now rather than only being able to access 1 or 2 at a time! So far, so good!

**Current main Safety measures in place at St Paulinus:**

- ✓ **Ventilation (windows and doors open): to clear the air of the aerosols we breathe out**
- ✓ **Screens: to stop the tiny droplets we exhale while we speak when facing one another**
- ✓ **Handwashing: to kill the virus on our hands**
- ✓ **Cleaning: to kill the virus on surfaces**
- ✓ **LFD testing for adults: to identify cases early so they have less contact**
- ✓ **Suspected cases being sent home or advised to not attend: stops the spread of the virus**
- ✓ **Bubbles: to reduce the spread of the virus**
- ✓ **Not sharing equipment/ children have their own equipment: to reduce the spread of the virus**

I can't wait to see all the great things the children get up to this term, and rest assured we will continue to monitor the risk assessment and make any changes we can to make it even safer for the children as the term progresses.

Thank you for your continued support everyone,

Miss Hayes  
(Headteacher)