



## St. Benet's R.C Primary School

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Head Teacher: Mrs. A. A. Blakey



18<sup>th</sup> May 2020

Dear Parents and Carers,

Thank you for your support and hard work during these difficult and complicated times.

I appreciate the time you've taken to complete our survey as this helps to give us an indication about how you feel about a possible partial return to school.

The government has asked us to initially support Nursery, Reception, Year 1 and Year 6 pupils. These year groups are to be prioritised alongside the continued support for vulnerable children and the families of Key Workers. To plan and prepare for this possibility we have worked in collaboration with Sunderland Local Authority, school staff, unions and the Monkwearmouth Catholic Partnership of Sunderland schools. During this stage we have duly considered guidance from the Department for Education.

The past few weeks have been very challenging for everyone involved - our children, you - our families, our staff and our governors. I hope you agree that we've worked together as a school family throughout this. We all want a full and happy school but must move cautiously in the current situation to build confidence and capacity. Every school setting is different, due to our facilities, staffing and resources. Here at St Benet's we are drawing up plans to ensure we put in place government recommendations. Our duty of care for the health and safety of our children, our families, our staff and their families continues to be our utmost priority. Whilst considering our survey, a variety of views are apparent. However, what is very clear is your support and appreciation, for what our staff have done over the past eight weeks and on their behalf I would like to thank you for your gratitude. Likewise all staff and governors are appreciative of your dedication and hard work through this time. I'm sure that all of us have had some very tough times throughout this but we will get through this by sticking together. And even though we may have differing views about how to move to the next stage, we are a school family and by continued communication we can move forward.

Whilst considering a wealth of information, advice and guidance, it is fair to say we've come across a lot of mixed messages so please understand that what we will put in place has come after great consideration. Everything we will put in place has been risk assessed. The government recommends up to 15 children in the classroom but equally would like us to socially distance 2 metres apart. Physical constraints of St Benet's school building does not allow for this. Our largest rooms can cater for one teacher to 10 children. We know in reality social distancing with children, especially the youngest, cannot be guaranteed, but we will do our best to put it in place.

In light of our risk assessments and health and safety regulations, our school will look different in the weeks, if not months, to come. We will take small considered steps to ensure that we are constantly assessing what we have in place is right for our children, our families and our staff.

Some of these changes will include the following - Staff will be wearing PPE equipment - please help us by explaining this to your children. We will have staggered drop-off points and times during school opening and closing, fitting in with year groups and also Redby Academy as we share the same site. We will ask that only one adult drops off a child and collects the child as we try to minimise the amount of people coming onto our school setting. Your child might not be taught by their regular teacher or teaching assistant. They will most likely be taught in a small group of 8 to 10 pupils with at least one member of staff. This group of children will have breaks and lunch together, and following current advice, will not mix with other pupils in the year group. We will endeavour to make our children comfortable throughout this, focusing upon nurture and well-being. We will share further advice and information over the coming week, and as you can imagine, this is a dynamic situation, so updates will come out when available.

I would like to pass on our love and condolences to anyone in our school community who has suffered bereavement and loss during this crisis.

As I previously stated please keep communicating with us. We ARE in this together and we will find a way through by working together. Stay safe and God bless. #StBenetsFamily

Yours truly

*A. A. Blakey*

Ann Blakey, Headteacher

**Chair of Governors**  
**Mrs Denise Willis**