



# St Thomas of Canterbury

## Catholic Primary School

*Where every child is special*



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Dear parents and carers

### Returning to school from 1<sup>st</sup> June

First of all can I thank each and every one of you for the amazing work you are doing at home. However much or little of the home learning packs you are managing to get through, it is all helping to keep your child well, happy and learning – every little bit helps!

I do hope you have been making good use of the website and keeping in touch with school friends and families. For all of us that sense of belonging and connection is so important.

So, the Government announced that from June 1<sup>st</sup>, if their 5 tests were met, primary schools would start taking back children in Early Years, Year 1 and Year 6 whether or not they were vulnerable children or children of critical workers – those whose jobs are critical to winning the fight against Covid-19. Since the announcement there have been so many headlines, so many changes and so many misunderstandings. Thankfully, we are able to step back a little from some of that and get on with planning what we think is right for our children.

My job is to establish an environment which is as safe as we can make it, to follow Government guidance and advice where it is relevant to our school and to offer all the places that I can and which it is safe to do. The decision about whether you send your child in to that environment is completely yours.

I have set out our plan below. I will be sending a lot of further detail next week about the nitty gritty and welcome back packs for all the children too. There will also be a return to school page on the website where all the teachers of the different groups will be introducing themselves and where we will be able to post a lot more information and support for managing the return to school.

Having read what I have gone on to write, it does all sound rather clinical and cold. I'm sorry for that but I need to share the detail so that you know what to expect. I hope it goes without saying that we will all be working **so** hard to make the school a positive, happy and loving place to be for your children, they are our number one concern - always - but we do need to take very strict measures to ensure everyone's safety. I know you understand.

**Making S=P+A+C+E for learning**

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## Government priorities

The first group we have to prioritise are the children of critical workers and vulnerable children as we have been doing since the start of the lockdown. The next priority group is children in EYFS, children in Year 1 and children in Year 6 in that order.

You will have read Ani Magill's letter and seen that in some of the Xavier schools no child is being able to attend who isn't a child of a critical worker or a vulnerable child. Our provision will hopefully be able to be more encompassing.

## The St Thomas' plan

### Dates of return

We plan to welcome EYFS children back on Monday 1<sup>st</sup> June.  
(The critical worker/vulnerable children group would be here as normal)

Year 6 children will be invited back from Wednesday 3<sup>rd</sup> June.

Year 1 children will be invited back from Monday 8<sup>th</sup> June.

This staggered start allows us to ensure that the protective measures we have in place will work.

Details of how the drop off and collection will work will be in the next set of details but please be aware that only one adult will be allowed on site with their child and no parents will be able to enter the school building – all messages will need to be passed by email or phone – sorry!

## Protecting your child

### - "Protective Bubbles" and social distancing

The children returning to school in the 3 year groups will be in closed protective "Bubbles" of 15 children along with two or three staff members. It is these bubbles which are crucial to everyone's health and wellbeing. **There can be no mixing of the Bubbles so the same children and the same staff team will be together all of the time, all day and every day and every week.** This applies to playtimes and lunchtimes as well as during the teaching day.

Each class in EYFS, Year 1 and Year 6 will be divided in to 2 bubbles and the teachers have planned this division along friendship lines.

The class teacher can obviously only be in one bubble and the other bubble will be taught by another teacher from another year group. (Although I am certain that the class teachers will be shouting hello from a safe distance as often as they can!)

The Year 5 team will work with the Year 6 teachers, the Year 2 team with the Year 1 teachers and the Year 3 team with the EYFS staff.





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The critical worker/vulnerable children group will be in two bubbles led by the Year 4 teaching team. *Please note that we have built in some contingency to allow this group to grow without affecting any other group. However, if it grows beyond a size that we can safely accommodate, we will have to remove the Year 6 access in order to comply with the Government priorities.*

The adult in the classroom will endeavour to remain 2m from the children and, for the children other than in EYFS, the tables have been set out as far from each other as possible. The children will be sitting between 1.2 and 2m apart in all rooms. In EYFS there will be spaced seating spots but we cannot guarantee that the EYFS children will be able to keep to social distancing with the other children in the classroom or the outside learning areas.

It will be easier in the other year groups to ensure that whilst in class the children remain in their places.

We will not be moving around inside the school. Lunches and snacks will be eaten in the classrooms or as picnics outside if the weather allows. Entry in and out of the school will be via the external classroom doors only. Each Bubble will have a designated and marked area of the field or MUGA (the top playground) and, for EYFS, their outdoor learning area and KS1 playground which will allow us to ensure the Bubbles do not mix. We cannot guarantee that the children will be able to be socially distant from each other throughout the outside time, only that they will remain "secure" within their Bubble.

## - Hygiene

The children will wash hands on entering and leaving the classrooms and before and after eating. All the classrooms have sinks, soap and paper towels which once used will be bagged in lidded bins.

The rooms and all the furniture and resources will be cleaned each evening by our contractors in line with government guidance. In addition we shall be ensuring a daily clean (on a constant rotation) of all door handles, door frames, taps, toilet doors and seats and also the classroom tables and chairs etc.

Cleaning materials for use by the adults in the Bubble will all be available in every room.

All doors and windows will be open to allow for air circulation around all of the rooms.

The children will not be able to share any resources and any resources we provide will be for individual use only and kept by that individual. The home learning packs will need to come in and out of school but will only be used by the individual child. (More specific details on the resources that the children will need in the different groups will follow). The children will sit in the same place every day.





## - Medical matters

We will follow ALL guidance from Government, Public Health England and the NHS around medical safety. We have new Xavier wide policies and frameworks which we will be putting into place. Non-COVID 19 related first aid and symptoms will be dealt with as normal by our Paediatric first aiders in the Office and any intimate care will be undertaken by adults with appropriate PPE.

In the event that anyone in the school showed COVID -19 symptoms they would be placed in an isolation room and you would be contacted to collect them immediately. Staff would have full PPE as necessary. There are then strict protocols that we would follow were anyone to be positive for COVID-19 and we would follow them.

## The school day

The day will start with drop off in to the class groups (details will follow).

There will be a slight staggering of times to allow for the school site to be as empty as possible.

8.50 drop off for Year 1 (and 3.10 pick up)

9.00 drop off for Year 6 (and 3.20 pick up)

9.10 drop off for EYFS (and 3.00 pick up)

Unfortunately due to the need to maintain the protective bubbles (see above) **we cannot offer Breakfast or After School club care** and there will be no after school activities.

**Every Friday the school will close at 12.00noon.** This is to give staff time to plan and prepare the home learning packs which will continue for all year groups and for the school to have a really good clean.

The daily teaching will follow the children's learning packs, so providing for the full curriculum offer and there will be live or recorded worships shared electronically in the classes each day and the opportunity for learning outside (in designated areas always maintaining the closed protective bubble). The EYFS children will spend as much time outside as possible whilst maintaining the protective group bubbles.

The focus will be on the children's wellbeing and safety.

The teacher will also lead PE using a larger area of the outside space and playing games and exercise which allows for social distancing as much as possible. There will be absolutely no contact sports!

There will be break times in the morning and afternoon for all children but these will be timetabled to ensure that there is enough space for the children to have a run round but keep to their protective bubble.

## What could go wrong?

Hopefully nothing at all!





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But... this plan builds in limited contingencies for an increase in attendance by children of critical workers/vulnerable children and for one or two staff to be absent due to illness (non COVID related). If numbers increase more than we can cope with or more staff have to be absent than we can cover, then we may have to start withdrawing places temporarily or permanently. I hope and pray that we won't be in that position but you need to be aware of that possibility.

I think that that is probably enough for now – there is doubtless more to add and things I will remember as soon as I have sent this, but I hope that you feel better able to make your decision about your child returning to school. As I said earlier, I feel confident that we will be doing all we can to keep everyone safe whilst allowing lots of our children to return to school. It isn't and can't be the same school experience that they were enjoying back in early March but we will all be working flat out to ensure that it is the best it can be and that your children are safe, know that they are safe and know that they are loved.

If you haven't already done so please do complete the survey I sent on Tuesday and thank you once again for all your support and encouragement and positivity – it makes a huge difference to all the staff and to our whole wonderful school community.

Take very good care.

With my love and prayers to and for you all

Neil Lewin

**Headteacher**

