

Returning to School

A parent and carers' guide to full opening in March 2021

Date of last update: 26.02.21

Current guidance

The Government guidance last updated on 22nd February provided us with a context for their decision to request that schools open to all children from March 8th 2021 and issued guidance for schools to adhere to and manage when opening. The guidance issued can be found in full here.

At St Matthew's, we have been working hard on our plans for a full opening in order to:

- ensure that the safety and wellbeing of everyone children, parents, staff and the wider community are central to all our decisions and actions
- balance this commitment to safety with the necessity to continue to provide a high quality, broad curriculum to best support our pupils in their education

Keeping children and staff safe

All schools must comply with health and safety law which requires them to assess risks and put in place proportionate control measures. Essential measures include:

- a requirement that people who are ill stay at home;
- robust hand and respiratory hygiene;
- enhanced cleaning arrangements;
- active engagement with NHS Test and Trace;
- formal consideration of how to reduce contacts and maximise distancing between those in school, wherever possible, and minimise potential for contamination so far as is reasonably practicable.

All schools have been provided with a set of actions to 'prevent' and 'respond to infection' which are summarised below:

Prevention:

- Minimise contact with individuals who are required to self-isolate by ensuring they
 do not attend the school.
- Ensure face coverings are used in recommended circumstances.
- Ensure everyone is advised to clean their hands thoroughly and more often than usual.
- Ensure good respiratory hygiene for everyone by promoting the 'catch it, bin it, kill it' approach.
- Maintain enhanced cleaning, including cleaning frequently touched surfaces often, using standard products such as detergents.
- Consider how to minimise contact across the site and maintain social distancing wherever possible.
- Keep occupied spaces well ventilated.

In specific circumstances:

- Ensure individuals wear the appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) where necessary.
- Promote and engage in asymptomatic testing, where available.

Response to any infection:

- engage with the NHS Test and Trace process
- manage confirmed cases of coronavirus (COVID-19) amongst the school community
- contain any outbreak by following local health protection team advice

Bubbles

A **key** protective measure when opening to more children is to minimise contact and mixing. It is important to reduce contact between people as much as possible, and we can achieve that and reduce transmission risk by ensuring children, young people and staff, where possible, only mix in a consistent group and that group minimises contact with other people and groups.

This involves assigning children to 'bubbles' which do not mix with other bubbles.

At St Matthew's, the following bubbles will be formed:

- Early Years: Nursery and Reception
- Years 1
- Year 2
- Year 3
- Year 4
- Year 5
- Year 6

We should make every effort to keep children in different bubbles separate, and at least 2 metres away from each other. While in general groups should be kept apart, brief, transitory contact, such as passing in a corridor, is considered to be low risk but if it can be avoided, it should be.

Before Your Child Leaves Home in The Morning



Please check your child for any of the following symptoms

- high temperature (37.8 degrees or more)
- loss of taste or smell
- new continuous cough.

If any of these symptoms are evident, do not send them to school, contact our school office on 0161 865 1284 or email admin@stmatthewsce.co.uk. Government advice, which can be found here, must be followed.

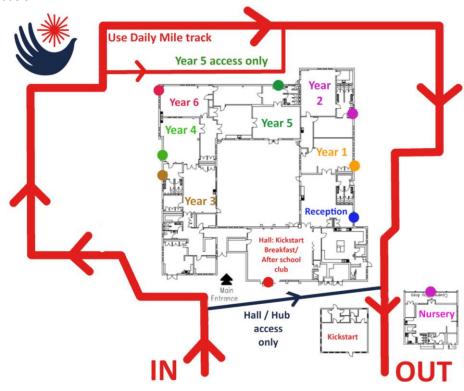
Travel to and from school

In accordance with our current risk assessment, we encourage parents, staff and pupils to walk, use a scooter or cycle to school if at all possible. The new bike and scooter shelter is in use now, and found in front of the Hub. Please use appropriately, securing bikes or scooters to the racks provided, and do not leave bikes or scooters blocking others from entering safely. Children should park their bikes and scooters and then return to the one-way system.

Children and families should ensure they are following social distancing guidelines whilst travelling to and from school. Face coverings are required at all times on public transport (including for children aged 11 and over). We ask that families walk to school on school's side of Poplar Road, and walk away from school on the opposite side. Please avoid parking on Poplar Road past Elm Drive to make social distancing easier for families walking to school.

Drop off and pick up

Parents will be expected to follow the one-way system for drop off/collection and not enter the school building except the school reception for urgent matters, on an appointment only basis.



Only one parent per family will be allowed on site and we ask that all adult visitors to site wear a face covering. Drop off and pick up will be staggered, with parents given a time for both based on their child's team. If you have more than one child to drop off, please drop them off in the order you come to their classroom on the one-way system. Parents are asked to queue 2m apart on the red dots outside your child's classroom and only move forward when a space becomes available. We ask that parents do not pass the final red dot and do not enter the school. Once you have dropped off your child, or collected them, please leave the queue and the site as quickly as possible to make way for others to join the queue.

We respectfully ask that all families follow our timetable for drop-off and collection to ensure there is adequate space for parents and carers to queue outside the classroom on the red dots provided.

Reception - Year 6

	Mandela	Turing	Malala	Pankhurst
Drop-off	8.40-8.45	8.45-8.50	8.50-8.55	8.55-9.00
Collection	2.55-3.00	3.00-3.05	3.05-3.10	3.10-3.15

Nursery

	Full-time	Morning	Afternoon
Drop-off	8.45-9.00	8.45-9.00	12.00-12.15
Collection	3.00-3.15	11.45-12.00	3.00-3.15

Please note: We will review the collection arrangements regularly and will make amendments to timings and arrangements if we feel it is necessary.

Whilst we are currently unable to provide free toast during drop-off, a piece of fruit or toast is still offered to children in school later in the morning. However, please make sure your child attends school having had an adequate breakfast to fuel them for their morning of learning.

Parents will not be able to communicate with the class teacher at 'drop off' and 'pick up' times but will be encouraged to communicate via email, phone or Weduc.

Snacks

Children in Nursery and Reception receive free milk daily, and children In Early Years and Key Stage 1 are provided with a free piece of fruit for their daily morning snack. If your child is in Year 3 or above, you are welcome to send in a healthy snack for their morning break. We ask you to follow the same guidance as for packed lunches below.

Availability of water on site

All pupils should bring in their own labelled water bottle that is untouched by other children or staff. No water fountains are currently available at school. Bottles should be sent in full but water is available in school to refill children's own water bottles once emptied.

Parents should ideally send children in with bottles the children can undo themselves to avoid the need for staff to touch them when refilling. Otherwise, parents are welcome to send in two full water bottles.

Break times

Children will receive staggered break times or separate spaces so they are not on the same area of the playground at the same time as another bubble.

Lunchtimes

To allow for fewer children in the hall at any one time, the school kitchen will operate a rotation of hot dinners and school-prepared packed lunches.

One week, half of the school will have hot dinners (or homemade packed lunches) in the hall whilst the other half enjoy school-prepared packed lunches (or homemade packed lunches) in their classrooms. The following week, the two halves will switch. This will allow children to enjoy a hot meal at least half of the time.

Free School Meal vouchers will no longer be available as children will receive their free meal in school, and all children in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 will again be eligible for Universal Infant Free School Meals.

Please inform the office at the earliest opportunity of any change in your child's lunch arrangements e.g. switching to school meals.

We have moved to a pre-order system to reduce contact required at lunch time. This new system, called Evolve, allows parents to order each week's meals for the children. This includes parents whose children are eligible for Free School Meals.

If parents are unsure about whether they are entitled to Free School Meals and need to pay or not, they should visit: https://www.cloudforedu.org.uk/ofsm/sims-trafford or contact the school office. We are aware that many families' situations may have changed due to the COVID-19 pandemic and therefore if you could now be entitled to free school meals and the pupil premium funding, please visit the website above or contact the school office and we will support you with this. We have arrangements in place to ensure that during lunch time, separation between 'bubbles' is maintained. Children will always have the chance to wash their hands before eating.

If you are sending in a packed lunch with your child, please make sure that this is a healthy, balanced meal - we ask that parents avoid sending in chocolates, sweets, fizzy drinks or nut products. Please ensure that children can manage the food on their own and have all the cutlery they require.

Kickstart

From 8th March, Kickstart will reopen their wraparound care to all children which can be booked online here. If you have an existing contract with Kickstart, this will continue from this date. You will also be able to enquire about a new contract which may be possible dependent on space available. We are exploring the possibility of reopening sports clubs in Summer term.

Within the classroom

All children from Year 2 upwards will be seated at forward facing desks, sat side by side, with distancing wherever possible. Aisles or corridors should be in place to allow easier access for staff and children.

Staff will avoid close face to face contact wherever possible and minimise time spent within 1 metre of anyone.

For individual and very frequently used equipment, such as pencils and pens, staff and pupils will have their own items that are not shared. Children will have a pencil case with their own stationery and should keep this in their tray.

Distancing

The guidance recognises that younger children cannot be expected to remain 2 metres apart from each other and staff at all times. Children in EYFS and Year 1 to some extent will be following a free flow, play-based curriculum and whole class teaching sessions will be no longer than 15 minutes. Classrooms will be well ventilated throughout the day. It will not be possible, nor is it required, to enforce social distancing measures with children in EYFS. This means that children will come into contact with all the children in their class and they are likely to come into contact with all the children in the Early Years bubble during outside free flow and lunchtimes. Children will wash their hands often and surfaces and equipment will be regularly sanitised.

St Matthew's are taking the view that wherever possible, children in Key Stage 2 should be encouraged to distance from children within the same bubbles if possible. However, we will not do this to the detriment of the children's wellbeing.

Hygiene arrangements

Another key protective factor is ensuring frequent hand cleaning and good respiratory hygiene practices.

Hand sanitiser stations will be added at the school entrance for pupils and any other person passing into the school to use. There will be additional hand sanitiser stations at key points in the school, such as in the hall, first aid area, reception. They will be checked daily in case they need replenishing.

Expectations of parents and staff

We will resend the 'Full opening school agreement' which sets out the expectations we have of our families as they all return to school. It is important that families follow the latest government guidance to help protect themselves and the whole school community.

Welfare

It is essential we carefully consider and monitor the welfare of our returning pupils, as well as those at home. It is important that time is given to PSHE activities allowing children to share how they're feeling, which we do at St Matthew's using the Colour Monster (EYFS) and Zones of Regulation (Y1-6). Teachers will be able to report any concerns as they do now using our online tool CPOMs, and these will be followed up by a Designated Safeguarding Lead or a Senior Leader if necessary.

Uniform

It is an expectation that all children will wear our school uniform. We know our children take great pride in their school and this is reflected in the way they dress. Please read the Uniform Policy 2020 for further guidance. We ask that you send children to school in clean uniforms, although no additional cleaning is required due to coronavirus. St Matthew's understands that elements of school uniform may be harder to source whilst non-essential shops are closed. If you have any difficulty sourcing any elements of school uniform, please contact the school office in the first instance, who will be able to assist.

Once a week, on your child's PE day, we ask that children are sent to school in their PE Kit, including suitable footwear and a plain black sweatshirt. PE will begin the week beginning 8th March, and parents will be reminded of PE days before the children return.

Minimal belongings

We ask that children only bring in essential items for that day e.g. book bag with their reading book, water bottle, healthy snack (KS2) and a coat if necessary. All items should be named.

The importance of fresh air

Windows and doors will be left open as much as possible to aid ventilation. Teachers will include outdoor learning activities in their planning and children will be taken out for breaks and lunchtimes in all weathers. Therefore, it is essential that the children come suitably dressed for all weather possibilities e.g. layers of warm clothes even if it looks sunny outside.

Use of face coverings in schools

The government is not recommending universal use of face coverings in all schools or recommending their use in primary school classrooms as there are other measures in place to help control the spread of coronavirus.

As children aged 11 or over are being asked to wear face coverings on public transport, we recognise that some children may come to school with face coverings from their journey. Children are welcome to come into school and wash their hands before removing their face

covering, but should be sent in with a resealable plastic bag to store it in for the remainder of the day. Disposable masks can be disposed of in the classroom lidded bin.

Face coverings are recommended for use by staff and visitors in areas outside of the classroom where social distancing is not always possible. Therefore, we are asking all visitors to wear face coverings when entering the school site to drop-off or collect children, or for any other reason. Face coverings are mandatory when entering the school building (pre-arranged visits only) e.g. for any meetings with staff which cannot happen over the phone or online. Staff will also be able to wear face coverings in these circumstances. Their use in other circumstances will be reviewed regularly.

School office

The school office will remain closed to visitors unless a prior appointment is made. Parents should do all they can to ensure that children have all that they need for the day (e.g. packed lunches) at the start of the day and if there is an instance where their child needs to be collected at a different time, they should telephone the school office to make arrangements. Staff will then arrange to meet parents with their child outside the office.

All other communication should be done by telephone or e-mail as far as possible.

We ask that all parents and carers wear a face covering when attending school for an appointment taking place inside.

Communication

Communication with parents is very important to us. Due to the current restrictions, we would request that meetings with members of staff are by prior arrangement only so they can be carried out in the safest way possible - we will always explore phone and video calls before face-to-face meetings. Please organise this by emailing admin@stmatthewsce.co.uk or phoning the school office on 0161 865 1284 and staff will support you in making these arrangements. Please keep face-to-face conversations to a minimum at the school gates.

Behaviour

We launched a new behaviour policy in September to reflect the changes in how behaviour is managed at St Matthew's. Last academic year, we were already on the journey of reviewing and updating this policy to make it a positive, trauma-informed policy, and this is all the more important after what has happened this year. Our St Matthew's values, ethos and high expectations remain unchanged, and children are expected to uphold them.

We have replaced our traffic light system of red and yellow cards with a largely positive system, underpinned by our three very clear rules: Be **Ready**, Be **Respectful**, Be **Safe**. We will work closely with children to ensure they know and understand our new rules and policy, but we are sure they will appreciate the recognition they will receive for showing good behaviour. This policy is available on our website so you too know how school recognises positive behaviour and addresses negative behaviour.

An addendum to our behaviour policy was formulated in June 2020 when the first groups of children returned to school and the addendum has been kept but shortened. In the addendum, we have had to change some of our expectations around pupils' behaviour and make these clear to all. In these times of heightened risk to our health, it is important that children and staff are aware that behaviour which jeopardises the health of others is taken very seriously.

Children must be aware of the new requirements in the addendum namely that they must:

- For older children (KS2): keep at least 1 metre+ apart from each other whenever possible (with a common sense approach taken to EYFS and younger pupils);
- Use their own specific equipment (including resources) and not share any of these;
- Not share any food, drinks, cups or water bottles;
- Work, eat and play in our designated groups and minimise contact with children from other groups (including in the playground, anywhere on the school site and on their way to and from school)
- Move around school as instructed by their teacher/adult and avoiding other people
- Never cough, sneeze or spit towards another person; catch all coughs and sneezes in a tissue and throw it away (catch it, bin it, kill it), then wash their hands
- Wash hands frequently (including whenever they are asked to), with soap and water for 20 seconds (e.g. by singing Happy Birthday twice) or with hand sanitiser if soap and water are not available.

It is essential that the children listen to and follow instructions at all times and adhere to the guidelines set by the government and the school. This is required inside school and outside during breaks and lunches. Any child who is capable but unwilling to do this is risking the safety of themselves, other children and staff and we will work with parents to resolve this.

A risk assessment will be completed for any children unable to follow the instructions (age-appropriate) to determine the safest way possible to deliver the curriculum.

Enhanced cleaning regimes

Our school has had enhanced cleaning systems in place for some time. We have adjusted our cleaning rotas with our site team to ensure that more regular cleaning goes on during the school day — with particular attention paid to those surfaces that are frequently touched like door handles. School staff not normally involved in these duties like teachers and support staff have also been helpful in keeping their own classrooms clean and extra materials have been provided for this purpose. We anticipate these arrangements will stay in place until further notice.

Procedures for suspected and confirmed cases



The primary symptoms of COVID-19 are:

- high temperature (37.8 degrees or more)
- loss of taste or smell
- new continuous cough.

St Matthew's will work to contain any outbreak by following local public health team advice. For the avoidance of doubt, the new guidance says that we 'must send home those people who have been in close contact with the person who has tested positive, advising them to self-isolate immediately and for the next 10 full days counting from the day after contact with the individual who tested positive.'

'Close contact' now means:

- anyone who lives in the same household as someone with coronavirus (COVID-19)
 symptoms or who has tested positive for coronavirus (COVID-19)
- anyone who has had any of the following types of contact with someone who
 - has tested positive for coronavirus (COVID-19) with a PCR or LFD test:
 - face-to-face contact including being coughed on or having a face-to-face conversation within 1 metre
 - been within 1 metre for 1 minute or longer without face-to-face contact
 - sexual contacts
 - been within 2 metres of someone for more than 15 minutes (either as a oneoff contact, or added up together over one day)
 - travelled in the same vehicle or a plane

What will St Matthew's do if someone displays symptoms of coronavirus?

At school:

When a case is suspected in school, the child will be immediately isolated from other pupils and staff in the Meeting room, where they can be isolated behind a closed door, depending on the age/understanding of the child and with appropriate adult supervision if required. Ideally, a window should be opened for ventilation. If it is not possible to isolate them, move them to an area which is at least 2 metres away from other people - ideally outside in one contained space. Staff supervising these children should also try to ensure they remain two metres away while still aiming to provide the reassurance and care particularly young children will need. Enhanced PPE is available for these staff. The school will contact parents and request they collect their child, and any siblings, from the school immediately.

We ask that parents whose child has been identified as having a suspected case of COVID-19 should seek immediate medical advice and book a test, informing school of the result. The guidance says 'Anyone who displays symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19) can and should get a test.' School now has a small number of home testing kits available to send home with children with symptoms.

If no test is undertaken, or the result is not shared with school, then we expect children to self-isolate according to the Public Health England guidance here:

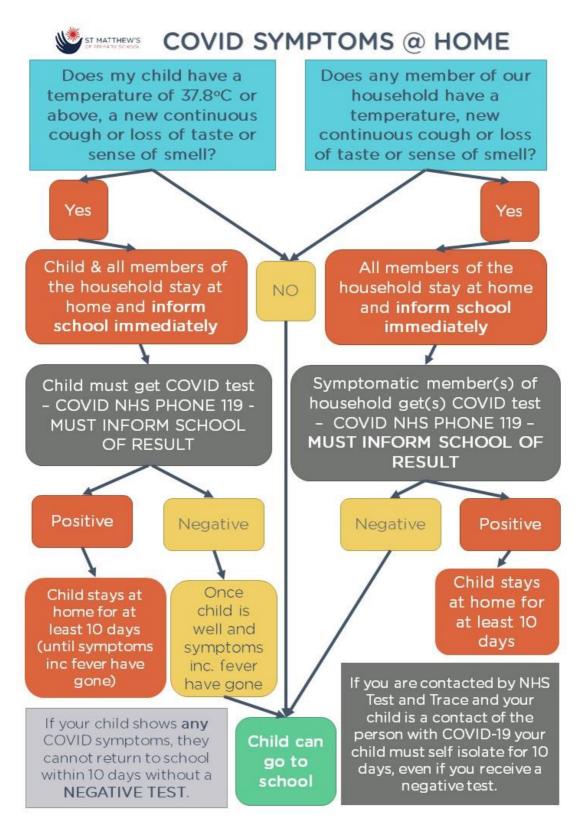
https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance/stay-at-home-guidance-for-households-with-possible-coronavirus-covid-19-infection

Households with a confirmed case of Coronavirus should follow the advice laid out by Public Health England above.

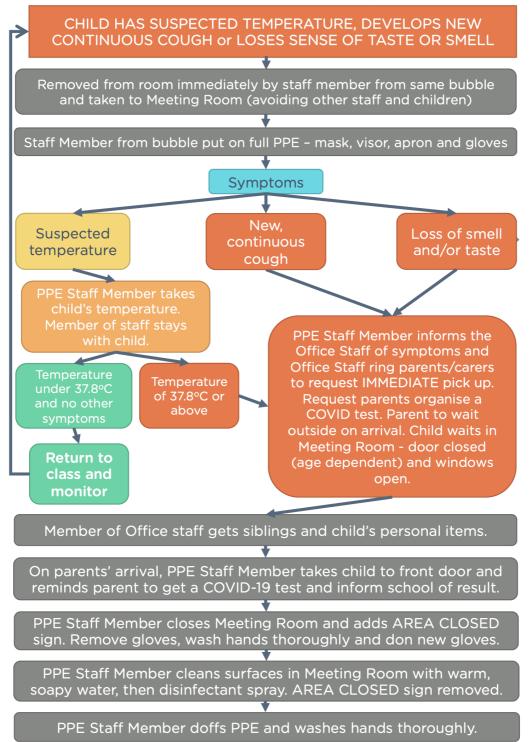
In the vast majority of cases, we expect to be in agreement with parents that a child with symptoms should not attend school, given the potential risk to others. In the event that a parent or guardian insists on a child attending school, the government has made it clear that school can take the decision to refuse the child if in our reasonable judgement it is necessary to protect pupils and staff from possible infection with coronavirus (COVID-19). Any such decision would need to be carefully considered in light of all the circumstances and the current public health advice.

At home:

Families must inform school immediately if their child or anyone in their home is displaying any coronavirus symptoms. They must follow the rules to self-isolate with other members of their household for 10 days. They must order a test for anyone with symptoms. Their child and family members would need to have a negative test before they can return to school prior to the isolation period ending. Even at the end of the isolation period, children should be well enough to return, with no symptoms including a fever.







What will St Matthew's do if a member of school tests positive for coronavirus?

Schools will contact the local health protection team. This team will also contact schools directly if they become aware that someone who has tested positive for coronavirus (COVID-19) attended the school – as identified by NHS Test and Trace.

The health protection team will support school with identifying who has been in close contact with the person during the period that they were infectious, and ensure they are asked to self-isolate.

The health protection team will work with school in this situation to guide them through the actions we need to take. Based on the advice from the health protection team, school must send home those people who have been in close contact with the person who has tested positive, advising them to self-isolate for 10 days since they were last in close contact with that person when they were infectious.

What will St Matthew's do if more than one member of school tests positive for coronavirus?

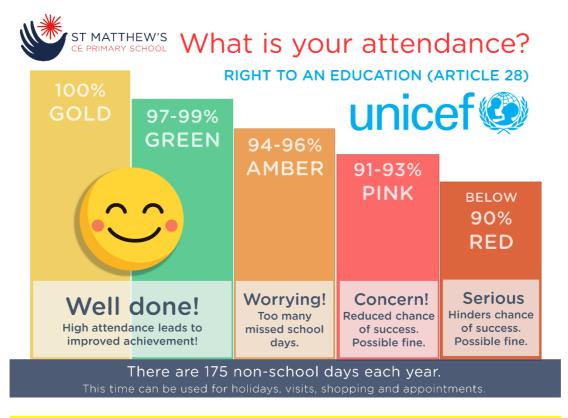
If school has two or more confirmed cases within 14 days, or an overall rise in sickness absence where coronavirus (COVID-19) is suspected, we may have an outbreak and must continue to work with our local health protection team who will be able to advise if additional action is required.

In some cases, health protection teams may recommend that a larger number of other pupils self-isolate at home as a precautionary measure – perhaps the whole year group. As school is implementing control measures, addressing the risks we have identified and therefore reducing transmission risks, whole school closure based on cases within the school will not generally be necessary, and should not be considered except on the advice of health protection teams.

Attendance

Which children should attend school?

All children will be welcomed back to St Matthew's CE Primary School from Monday 8th March and attendance is mandatory. This means that from this point, the usual rules on school attendance will apply and we expect children in school every day, on time. It remains the school's responsibility to record attendance and follow up absence, and the school regains the ability to issue sanctions, including fixed penalty notices, in line with local authorities' guidelines. However, we are hopeful that by working in partnership with parents to ensure children are in school learning whenever possible, we can avoid the use of such sanctions.



Over the next month, we will be planning many activities to ease all children into school, helping them feel safe in school and reducing any anxieties. It is important that children attend from the 8th March so they are able to fully participate in these sessions.

Due to staggered starts, a child will be 'late' if they arrive more than 10 minutes after the last drop-off time (9.10am onwards) and the register will close at 9.30am, after which time the children will be marked down as missing a session. It is imperative that children are in school on time to aid their transition back to school and so they don't miss out on further learning.

A small number of pupils will still be unable to attend in line with public health advice to self-isolate because they:

- have symptoms or have had a positive test result
- live with someone who has symptoms or has tested positive and are a household contact
- are a close contact of someone who has coronavirus (COVID-19)

Absences where children are following public health advice will not be penalised.

The advice for pupils who have been confirmed as clinically extremely vulnerable is to shield and stay at home as much as possible until further notice. They are advised not to attend

school while shielding advice applies nationally. If this is the case for your child, please send a copy of the shielding letter sent to you regarding your child to confirm that they are advised not to attend school or other educational settings whilst shielding guidance is in place.

Recovery Curriculum



Let Your Light Shine

Expectations of learning

St Matthew's recognises that children will have had a variety of experiences during their time away from school and, as a school, we shouldn't assume where children are up to in their learning.

Whilst we are confident that many children will quickly 'bounce back' after the lockdown, we are aware that there will be some children returning who have experienced bereavements amongst friends or family or who have experienced anxiety or stress during this time.

We will continue to ensure we are listening to the children, and providing opportunity for them to reflect and share their feelings, should they feel the need to. We will keep in touch with parents and carers about any concerns we have around changes in children's physical or emotional health over this period. In March, we will complete some work around the book 'What We'll Build' by Oliver Jeffers, all about developing our sense of belonging in the school community.

Teachers will be planning to move children on in their learning from where they are now. Time will be taken to assess children (often through low-stakes quizzing and questioning) to find out what they know now, and plan to build on this in the coming weeks and months. Please do not worry about your child being 'behind' or needing to 'catch up'. Many children are in the same position and we will be planning to meet the needs of each child. You can find out more about our approach to 'catch up' and our use of the 'catch up premium' on our website.

Pupils with additional needs

We are aware that for some children with additional needs, returning to school after lockdown may cause additional anxiety or stress. Children with additional needs will be supported by the class teacher, teaching assistant and SENCO to ensure a smooth transition when returning to school. Miss Charles has been working in partnership with our families to support children throughout school closure and will continue to support as necessary. In some cases, children with additional needs may require a risk assessment to be completed.

Staff will continue to be responsive to the needs of individual pupils and additional support will be provided where necessary. Small group or 1:1 support may take a different form so that adults and children remain safe, for example, sitting side by side, staff and pupils working at a greater distance from each other, working together for shorter sessions and working in different parts of the school building.

Remote learning

School has devised a robust remote learning policy for those instances when children will be absent from school due to COVID (e.g. for self-isolation). This can be found on our website.

Feedback to pupils

Marking expectations have been altered to reduce close contact and handling of books.

Assessment and reporting

Statutory assessments have been suspended again for the 2020-2021 academic year, including the phonics screening test, and KS1 and KS2 SATs tests.

Although teachers will be informally assessing the children and their needs from Day 1, more formal assessments will take place at the end of the first half term, including a practice Phonics Screening Check for Year 1 children. These will be carried out in a way that puts children at ease and allows children to do their best. These tests will provide us with information about children's learning and what we as a school can do to address any gaps.

Assemblies

There will be no traditional whole school or key stage assemblies and these will be replaced by virtual assemblies, which will be watched by children in multiple classrooms on their interactive whiteboards.

Reading Books

After the first week back, reading books will continue to be sent home, however, on their return to school, they will be placed in a box and left for 72 hours before returning to the shelves.

If your child has a reading book at home, please return it on the first day back so these can be quarantined ready to be sent home again.