

Dear Parent/Carer

The Return to School – September 2021

I hope that you all managed to have some time to rest and relax over the summer holiday.

It has been lovely to welcome all the children back to school this week, including some new families. I was also delighted to meet our new Reception children yesterday – I hope they really enjoy being part of the St Monica's family.

With the latest covid guidance, everyone is keen to get back to some sort of normality and colleagues and I feel optimistic about the forthcoming Autumn term. We will continue, however, to be mindful of the ongoing coronavirus pandemic. Whilst there is cause to be upbeat and positive, this also needs to be tempered by a pragmatic and reasonably cautious approach to day to day life at school. We are continuing with regular hand washing and ensuring good ventilation with lots of open doors and windows (be prepared to send in extra warm clothes when the weather becomes colder). We had our first assemblies this week which was wonderful and made a change from the virtual ones we have been having. It was just infants and juniors and not whole school just yet; we hope to start them in the coming weeks if we have few covid cases.

Congratulations!

We were delighted to hear the news that Ms McCarron had a baby boy in August – welcome to the world George! Mum and baby are doing very well.

It was a privilege to attend the Mass at the cathedral on Tuesday evening when Fr Mehall was installed as Canon! Our previous Parish Priest, Fr Shaun was the celebrant and so it was also lovely to see him! Here are a few photos of the occasion <https://www.flickr.com/photos/catholicism/sets/72157719798151419/>

Expectations regarding positive cases and close contacts:

If your child has a new, persistent cough, high temperature or loss of taste or smell you must keep them at home and arrange a PCR test. If the test is negative they may return to school. If it is positive, they must isolate for ten days.

- If your child comes into school and develops a cough, high temperature or loss of taste or smell we will contact you to pick them up. Sometimes a cough is due to asthma or you may already have done a PCR, so please advise us of this when you call and then your child will not need to be sent home.
- Regular lateral flow tests are a good idea to keep a check on whether anyone in your family has covid but with no symptoms.
- Children up to the age of 18 years and 6 months do not have to self-isolate if they are in contact with someone who has a positive case. Instead, they can attend school as normal but must take a PCR test. If the PCR test is positive then the child will be advised to isolate.
- Adults who are double vaccinated also do not have to isolate if they are in close contact of a positive case.
- Schools no longer have any responsibility to contact track and trace, but we will monitor any potential 'outbreaks' and respond appropriately.

Some general reminders

- All children are expected to wear school uniform (white shirt and tie or gingham dress. Skirts or pinafores must be green.)
- Children must come into school wearing their PE kit and trainers (not plimsolls as they do not support the feet well) on PE days. If you cannot get a green t-shirt or shorts from the uniform shop or elsewhere, they should wear appropriate PE clothes until you can get the green kit.
- School starts at 9am so please make sure your child arrives between 8.50am and 9am
- Both gates are being opened in the morning/afternoon for Years 1-6, to allow for more social distancing and you can choose which one is most convenient. Reception children will continue to use the side gate by Tony's house (Site Manager) for the time being.

Homework

Homework for Years 1-6 will be set on Google Classroom. The technicians are in the process of moving classes up and teachers around and so until this is sorted, teachers will send home any homework on paper (on Fridays). I am hoping that all the usernames and passwords for the children will remain the same and will of course let you know of any changes. This will be a new experience for Year 1 and their usernames and passwords will be sent as soon as the technician has sorted them out.

I hope you all have a lovely weekend.

Kind regards
Kate Baptiste
Headteacher