

Dear parents and families,

RE: Conditional re-opening of Schools to children from Nursery, Reception, Year 1 and Year 6

I am writing in response to the Government's recent announcement that schools may re-open to children in Nursery, Reception, Year 1 and Year 6 classes on Monday, 1st June, the first day back after the half term holiday.

The Government say that this will only happen provided that the 5 key tests set by them justify the changes at the time, including that the rate of COVID infection is going down. As a result, they are asking schools, colleges and childcare providers to plan on this basis, ahead of confirmation that these tests are met.

Please click this link which will take you to the Government's advice to parents:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/closure-of-educational-settings-information-for-parents-and-carers/reopening-schools-and-other-educational-settings-from-1-june>

I have had a number of questions from families on this issue, the answers to which may be relevant to you.

What will happen if I do not send my child back to school due to COVID?

We understand that this is a difficult and uncertain time and we will not increase any difficulties for families by not allowing parents to keep their children at home if you wish. As teachers and parents ourselves, we understand why you may wish to do so.

The Government guidance confirms that parents will not be fined for children not coming to school at this time.

The Government will also not hold schools accountable for children not attending school due to COVID at this time.

Even though our school will follow guidelines and also use our own judgement about putting the most effective procedures we can in place, you may not wish to send your child back to school from 1st June.

This may be for a number of reasons which have been mentioned by families and more widely, including:-

(a) you are concerned for your child's safety and the risk of infection, including concern that your young child will be unable to socially distance effectively. This concern has been raised widely and is an understandable concern at this time for all of us and our children, not only the youngest who will find it particularly difficult as they may not understand the importance of it or be able to do it.

(b) your child has some brothers and sisters who are not allowed back to schools (primary or secondary) and you do not want to bring some of your children to school to be exposed potentially to increased risk of infection and have other children at home.

(c) your child and/or somebody in your home has an underlying health condition. The guidance talks about children and young people who are considered [extremely clinically vulnerable and shielding](#) should continue to shield and should not be expected to attend. You should follow any medical advice on your child.

Children and young people who live in a household with someone who is [extremely clinically vulnerable and shielding](#) should only attend if social distancing can be adhered to and the child or young person is able to understand and follow those instructions.

(d) your child or somebody else in your home has or has recently had symptoms of coronavirus. If that happens, it is likely in those situations that your household members, including children, will not be leaving the house for up to 14 days. Please see <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance/stay-at-home-guidance-for-households-with-possible-coronavirus-covid-19-infection> for more details.

(e) for some other reason, including that you are of the view that your child or other family members are more likely to be harmed should you get the virus and concerns about this group of children being the first age group to return to school.

What the school needs to know

As a school, we need to know if you plan not to return your child to school when we may open on 1st June.

This is for two reasons:-

(a) for safeguarding reasons – if your child is to be off school, we need to confirm if it is because of the current COVID situation or for another reason.

(b) we need to plan for exactly the number of children we will have in school. This is to ensure we have the right number of staff in and the right number of places in classrooms so we can be as safe as we can given the circumstances.

Therefore, we ask you to do the following:-

What do you need to do?

If you do not wish your child to return to school on 1st June, you must let the school know.

Please email the school on stmonicas@st-monicas.co.uk or your child's teacher on the email they have used to email you **by Friday, 15th May** to let us know if your child is not returning on 1st June. Please put the child's name, class and teacher's name in the email.

We will phone many families for a short chat from next week to confirm you have had these details and to discuss return or otherwise. We realise things may change after these emails/phone calls but we are looking to plan ahead as well as we can.

In the meantime, if you have any questions on this, please contact me on stmonicas@st-monicas.co.uk

I will provide further information to you as we receive it and as plans are finalised in school.

Kind regards,

Yours sincerely,

Robert O'Malley

Headteacher