

17.01.21

Dear Parents and Families,

**Re: St Monica's School Closure due to COVID-19**

I hope you are well.

The school remains closed to all children except Nursery children and children of critical workers/vulnerable children.

I hope that those of you at home are doing well and are able to access the remote learning being provided for your children.

I am writing to answer questions, including some which have been raised by parents contacting our email [stmonica@st-monicas.co.uk](mailto:stmonica@st-monicas.co.uk) over the last two weeks.

**Why is the school closed?**

The school is closed as we have been instructed by the Government to do so as part of the national lockdown due to COVID-19. Our hope is that these restrictions will lessen transmission of COVID- 19 so that we will be able to open to all children again as soon as possible.

In line with current guidance, children of critical workers may attend school. Please contact the email above for more information if your employer notifies you that you are a critical worker who cannot work from home for these purposes.

**When will the school re-open?**

At the moment, the Government position is that schools will remain closed until the half term holiday. This would currently mean school re-opening to all children on Monday, 22<sup>nd</sup> February. This is subject to change by the Government.

**Why is the school Nursery class open from this week?**

The Government has asked that all school Nurseries be opened.

**How is work being set for our children at home?**

Work is being set remotely, generally by your accessing it over the internet by email or by GoogleClassroom. Some parents are receiving paper packs due to internet access or device issues.

If you are having problems with a lack of a device for your child to access the internet or internet connectivity, please contact the email above.

We have a limited number of laptops we can provide and there is also a Government scheme where mobile data providers can provide extra mobile data for those homes without broadband to which we can apply on your behalf.

## **Can my child get Free School Meals?**

If you are currently receiving one of the benefits listed below, you might be entitled to free school meals:-

- Income Support
- Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance or Employment and Support Allowance
- Support under part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- The guaranteed element of Pension Credit
- Child Tax Credit (as long as you are not also entitled to Working Tax Credit and have an annual gross income of no more than £16,190)
- Working Tax Credit run-on
- Universal Credit

If you think you may be entitled, you can check online on a new MK Council website at <https://www.cloudforedu.org.uk/ofsm/sims>

Please email [stmonica@st-monicas.co.uk](mailto:stmonica@st-monicas.co.uk) if you believe you may be entitled to Free School Meals and Miss Shanahan will contact you to advise and assist in your application.

## **How can my child make best use of live Google Meet lessons?**

Many children will be invited to Google Meet lessons with at least one member of staff. For safeguarding and pupil privacy reasons, these lessons must not be recorded and photos of the screen are prohibited.

In order for Google Meet lessons to be successful, we ask:

- Please do not have your mobile phones with you when attending the lessons.
- Remind the children to switch their webcams on.
- Help the children to mute and unmute themselves independently.
- Support your child to be ready to enter the group promptly because late arrivals may not be admitted.
- Remember the lesson is for the children. Parents must keep in the background and out of camera shot as much as possible.
- Accept that your child might not get a chance to talk to the group every session.
- Make sure the children sign in with their proper name (no nick names etc).
- Encourage the children to use the chat function appropriately.
- Ensure the children are dressed and positioned appropriately for the session (no pyjamas and no accessing lessons from your bed!).
- Make sure the children are in a suitable and quiet place in your home and be aware of their surroundings.

### **When will Parents' Evenings take place?**

Parents' Evenings will take place when school re-opens fully.

If schools do not open after half term, we will make other arrangements for parents' evenings.

### **What about SATs and other usual tests?**

The Government has confirmed that all the usual tests will be cancelled this year.

This includes Year 1 Phonics, Year 2 SATs and Year 6 SATs.

### **My child is in Year 6. How will the absence of formal SATs affect their transition to secondary school in September?**

SATs usually form only part of the information secondary schools receive from us on your children. We will work with secondary schools to provide them with all information necessary (including end of year levels) for a good transition for your child to secondary school. With many of the secondary schools you choose (including St Paul's), part of the process involves Year 6 teachers meeting with secondary staff to discuss each child.

### **I want to apply for a place in school for my child, including for Reception starters in September 2021 – what do I do?**

We have places available in all year groups at the moment, including for those who are four and looking for a place in our Reception classes later this year.

Please contact the email above or the school office phone on 01908 606966.

### **Who do I contact I have any questions while school is closed?**

If you have a concern about the welfare or safety of a child, please contact [stmonica@st-monicas.co.uk](mailto:stmonica@st-monicas.co.uk)

If your question is about your child's work, please contact your child's teacher by email.

If the question is about something other than work or children's welfare/safety, please contact the email [stmonica@st-monicas.co.uk](mailto:stmonica@st-monicas.co.uk)

Kind regards,

**Mr O'Malley**

***Headteacher***