

Dear parents and families,

COVID 19 Partial School Closure

I hope that you and your families are well.

I am mailing to update you on our COVID 19 Partial Closure, including in answer to some questions asked of us by parents.

To which children is the school open at the moment?

In line with Government guidance, the school is currently open to children of **key/critical workers** and children in **Nursery, Reception, Year 1 and Year 6**.

Given that these children who have returned are split into two or three small groups per existing class to lessen the risk of wide range infection, the vast majority of our staff members are taken up with providing for those children and/or planning for ongoing work for in the region of 300 children who are not currently attending school.

We have been asked by the Government to encourage children from Nursery, Reception, Year 1 and Year 6 to return to school this term. It remains our view that this is up to the parents of these children and we will support your decision if you wish to keep your children at home. However, some of these year groups are reaching the maximum capacity we can accommodate so if you wish your children to return to one of these year groups before the Summer holidays, you should consider informing us sooner rather than later.

It remains the case that we need two clear school working days' notice emailed to stmonicas@st-monicas.co.uk if you wish your children to return to one of these year groups.

Given the number of staff and rooms deployed to provide for these classrooms, we do not envisage having the capacity to bring back children from other year groups before the Summer holidays.

When will children from other year groups be returning to school?

We have had no guidance from the Government yet on this but very much hope for the return of all children in September as they have suggested. The Government states that schools will have further guidance over the next two weeks.

Will school be open over the Summer holidays for any children?

No. The current plan is that school will close to all children on Friday, 17th July and re-open to children on Thursday 3rd September.

Having been open over the previous two holidays, school will **not** be open to children of key/critical workers. This is due to the great decrease in numbers of parents whose work is directly connected to issues arising specifically out of COVID 19 and our need to prepare the school for wider return after the holidays.

Will work continue to be set for children at home?

Work will be set until the 17th July by the teachers.

If you wish your children to do work over the Summer holidays or extra work on top of that set by your child's teacher during term time – there is a full national online curriculum at <https://www.thenational.academy/> I have had positive feedback from parents whose children have used this site and my own children have benefitted from using it.

Go to the section headed 'Classroom' and you can pick the work you want your child to do. Year 6 children may want to have a go at Year 7 work to aid their transition to secondary school.

We will be in touch nearer the holidays regarding how our curriculum will support children catching up once they return in September and during next year.

The Local Authority, Milton Keynes Council, have suggested they will be putting some Summer activities in place. We will provide you with details of this once we get them.

Building Works

We are having three classrooms extended over the Summer, starting next Monday, 29th June. Those classrooms are the current Year 3 AP and both Year 4 classrooms. This will complete our work on extending six classrooms last year and this.

The works mean that the Reception class working with Miss Shannon at the moment in Year 2 will be based in Miss Carman's Reception classroom from next Monday.

Please can you bring your child in through the front gate (Gate 1) in the morning and come through the front gate after school to pick them up? Thanks for your help on this.

What will happen if I do not send my child in Nursery, Reception, Year 1 and Year 6 back to school due to COVID?

We understand that this is a difficult and uncertain time and we will not increase any difficulties for you by not allowing you to keep your children at home if you wish. As teachers and parents ourselves, we understand why you may wish to do so and many of you have explained your reasons when we phoned you.

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.

Why did the Government choose the year groups it did to return to school first?

We do not know.

Do we have to do all the work the class teachers set for children at home?

No. The amount of work your child does at home is up to you. We do not expect all work to be done and will not be collecting it in. We realise the families may not have time or wish to lead their children in all work set.

Where can I get advice about Nursery 30 hours funding and/or tax free childcare?

Please see <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/what-parents-and-carers-need-to-know-about-early-years-providers-schools-and-colleges-during-the-coronavirus-covid-19-outbreak/what-parents-and-carers-need-to-know-about-early-years-providers-schools-and-colleges-during-the-coronavirus-covid-19-outbreak>

Is there any more Government information on the current school closures?

Yes, there is further information at the following links:-

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/help-primary-school-children-continue-their-education-during-coronavirus-covid-19>

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/supporting-your-childrens-education-during-coronavirus-covid-19>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/closure-of-educational-settings-information-for-parents-and-carers/closure-of-educational-settings-information-for-parents-and-carers>

Where can I get advice on changes to everyday life due to COVID 19, including social distancing?

Please see <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/staying-at-home-to-avoid-getting-coronavirus/> for NHS guidance.

What do I do if I think my child may have symptoms of COVID 19?

Please see <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/coronavirus-in-children/> for NHS guidance.

What do I do if I or somebody I live with has symptoms of COVID 19?

Please see <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/what-to-do-if-you-or-someone-you-live-with-has-coronavirus-symptoms/> for NHS guidance.

What if I think I or a family member may have symptoms and I want a test?

Please see <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/testing-for-coronavirus/> for NHS guidance.

Where can I get advice if I believe I or a family member may be at higher risk from COVID 19?

Please see <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/people-at-higher-risk-from-coronavirus/> for NHS guidance.

What if I need food from or wish to volunteer or give food to MK Food Bank due to COVID 19?

Please see <http://mkfoodbank.org.uk/> or please call the Food Bank Helpline on 01908 565852 to discuss your situation in confidence with experienced staff. The Helpline is open between 10:00am – 4:00pm, Monday – Friday.

What if I have signed on for benefits from the Government due to a change in job status recently? Will my child be entitled to Free School Meals?

If you have had a change of job status, including being unemployed and/or claiming certain benefits for even a very short of time, please get in touch with us by this email. Your child may be entitled to Free School Meals which can involve a payment to you of up to £15.00 per week per child while school is closed to your children and free lunches each school day once they return. Your child may also be entitled to extra funding to support their education going forward. All enquiries will be dealt with by Miss Shanahan, our Deputy Headteacher, and will be dealt with in the strictest confidence.

Going forward

We look forward to school returning to a more normal state in time in line with Government guidance which will come out in two weeks.

As ever, if you have any questions on this or any aspect of your child's education including the work being set for the by their teachers, please contact their class teacher by email or me on this email address.

Kind regards,

Mr O'Malley

Headteacher