



St. Monica's Catholic Primary School  
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26<sup>th</sup> April 2020

Dear Parents and Families,

**Re: Ongoing School Closure**

I hope that you and your families are well.

I am writing to let you know how we are getting on and to provide information with regard to some queries which have come in from parents while we have been closed.

The school continues to be closed to all children except a very small number of children of key/critical workers who cannot be looked at home while their families are at work. We have previously provided information as to key/critical workers. If you need any further information on this, please email us at the address in red above.

Other questions I have had include:-

**Why is the school closed and when will the school re-open?**

We closed the school on the order of central Government last month as part of their attempt at social distancing to slow the spread of the COVID virus.

We have had no information from the central or local Government about re-opening and have not been asked at this time to prepare for it.

We will be in touch with regard to re-opening when we have any relevant information.

**I have applied for a school and/or Nursery place at St Monica's recently but have not had confirmation of a place.**

If you have applied for a school place for Reception class for September 2020, Milton Keynes Council should have contacted you to confirm by now. All children whom we know have applied have been offered places so let us know if you have not heard.

If you have applied for a Nursery place for September 2020, I will be in touch with individual families by phone from next week to confirm places, including which hours you require.

We still have a number of places in all year groups for September 2020, including Nursery, Reception and Year 3 for those of you with children in first schools.

If you or your friends are looking for school places with us, please let me know at the email in red above.

### **Does my child need to do all the work the teachers are setting?**

No. We are providing for most year groups three lessons a day. Please view these as opportunities for your children to work rather than compulsory. We understand that families are in varying positions as to their work commitments, the amount of time to support children and have varying computer and internet resources.

You do not need to print off the work and we will not be collecting it in when school re-opens. I have asked teachers to send work for no more than two days at a time as some parents were finding it tricky to deal with a large number of attachments at once.

If you have any queries about the work, please contact your child's class teacher directly on the email address from which they send you the work.

Teachers are keen to know how much work is being done so if you could email them some feedback and any pictures of work they would be very grateful. So far, teachers have heard from about 10% of parents and it would be useful if they could hear from more. Please take some time to email them if you can.

### **How else will teachers communicate with families?**

Many teachers are going to use the internet more to get in touch with pupils from next week, including many using Google Meet as a platform to have more direct communication. We have decided not to use Zoom at this time as its security does not appear to be as effective and a number of schools have reported problems with it. You will get further information on this from your class teachers. Again, please contact them directly by email if you need any assistance.

A number of teachers have also requested children's phone numbers so an increasing number of you may hear from teachers by phone next week.

### **My child is in Reception Year, Year 1, Year 2 and/or Year 6 – what will happen about their YR Early Learning Goal, Y1 Phonics and Y2 and Y6 SATs results?**

We have been told by the Government that we will not be submitting these results to them this year due to schools being closed.

We will get back to you when we know more about this. We are happy that we know where the children are in terms of assessment so will be able to carry on working effectively with them on their return to us in the absence of these exam results.

We are being contacted by secondary schools with regard to Year 6 children going to them in September. We are providing the information in the form each secondary school requires so they will be well informed about your child when they start, even though they will not be sitting end KS2 SATs.

### **My circumstances have changed – is my child now entitled to Free School Meals?**

A number of your children are entitled to infant school meals free up to the end of Year 2. The government has put nothing in place with regard to the vast majority of these children as yet.

However, there is Government support for children of all school ages who are entitled to Free School Meals due to their parents being entitled to benefits. If you are and/or have recently become entitled to any of the following, your child may be entitled to free school meals (including financial support while the school remains closed):

- Income Support
- income-based Jobseeker's Allowance
- income-related Employment and Support Allowance
- support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- the guaranteed element of Pension Credit
- Child Tax Credit (provided you're not also entitled to Working Tax Credit and have an annual gross income of no more than £16,190)
- Working Tax Credit run-on - paid for 4 weeks after you stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit
- Universal Credit
- Children who get paid these benefits directly, instead of through a parent or guardian, can also get Free School Meals.

If you believe you may be entitled to Free School Meals as you get one or more of these benefits and you are not currently claiming those meals, please contact us at the red email address above and we will get back to you.

### **Further information**

The Government has put together a documents to assist parents with queries with regard to school closures. It is at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/closure-of-educational-settings-information-for-parents-and-carers>

The Government has also put online lessons from the Oak National Academy which provides lessons each day for all year groups (including secondary) if you wish to access them. They can be accessed here - <https://www.thenational.academy/>

I will be in touch with further information as it arises. In the meantime, please direct any queries regarding school work to the teachers and any other queries (including about this letter), please mail to the email in red above and we will be glad to hear from and get back to you.

Kind regards,

Yours sincerely,

**Mr O'Malley**

**Headteacher**