



The St. Bart's Multi-Academy Trust
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St. Bart's Schools Response - opening for children June 1st 2020

Dear Parents and carers,

As you are aware the government has issued guidance to schools and asked them to open to larger numbers of pupils from the 1st of June subject to final confirmation. To enable us to open safely for more pupils (we have been continuously open for vulnerable children and children of key workers) we have been carrying out rigorous risk assessments and reviewing the guidance documents carefully. These documents can be found on the gov.uk website.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/actions-for-educational-and-childcare-settings-to-prepare-for-wider-opening-from-1-june-2020>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-implementing-protective-measures-in-education-and-childcare-settings>

The government is asking schools to open for Nursery, Reception, Year 1 and Year 6 pupils. We have considered this request most carefully and weighed it against the guidance and our own risk assessments. With the additional actions we intend to take we believe that we can make our schools as safe as possible. However, as you will appreciate, despite all the measures we may put in place, the school environment can not be entirely risk free. As parents you will have to decide if you can accept the risks at this time and return your children to school. We will do our very best to make this work and be safe for your children and our staff, but we are not able to guarantee complete safety.

As part of our risk assessments we have concluded that **we will only take children from Reception, Y1 and Y6 on the first of June**, together with the current children of key workers. We have concluded that returning nursery children at the same time as Reception children compromises safety, particularly in open-plan school settings. A full EYFS return would hinder routines and practices being established and prevent the schools utilising the spaces needed for social distancing. We are therefore planning **a phased return for nursery children at a later date** to be decided once Reception children have settled back.

Further to this we have decided that **schools will close at 1pm on Friday afternoons** to allow for a **“deep clean”**. This decision has been taken following extensive consideration of the medical evidence and health and safety at work guidance available and we believe it will greatly aid and support infection control measures. Note: Children of key workers will be able to remain on site on Friday afternoon as per the current arrangements and that schools will confirm their own arrangements for staggered exiting to ensure children and parents remain as safe as possible.

Your school will contact every parent who has a child in Reception, Y1 and Y6 to ask them if they would like their child to come to school if we are asked to open on the 1st June. Please respond to this contact as a matter of urgency. Arrangements for the start and pick up times will also be communicated to you at that time.

It is really important that everybody understands that school will not look the way it normally does, particularly for our youngest pupils when they return. There will be a significant change to the way children are organised and children will not necessarily be with the teacher or teaching assistant that they were with before schools closed to the majority of children. We will need to change the layout of classrooms and children may not be in the classroom they are used to and it will not be possible to allow free movement or play. This is due to the guidance that schools are expected to adhere to. Furthermore, the curriculum will be modified to meet the needs of the children, with an increased focus on personal, social and emotional well-being.

Your child’s school will give further explanation of the specific organisational and safety arrangements being made for a safe phased return to their setting.

Is it compulsory for my child to attend?

It is not compulsory for your child to attend and there will be no sanctions for non-attendance. We will endeavour to follow all the guidelines and to take all the precautions we can to keep your child safe should you decide to send your child to school; however, we understand that you will want to make your own decision about what is best for your child under these circumstances and we will support and respect whatever you decide.

You can contact the school office by email if you wish to discuss any further concerns and a member of the team will call you.

We hope this letter sets out the approach adopted by the St Bart’s Academy Trust clearly. Your children’s safety and that of our staff are paramount. We thank you for your continued support throughout this difficult time.



Yours faithfully

Chris Brislen
Chief Executive Officer