



Dear Parents,

On Sunday evening, it was with bated breath that the nation awaited the announcement from the Prime Minister outlining the potential easing of lockdown procedures as we move to the next phase. Arrangements for schools, particularly around protocols for a phased return of pupils, was of particular interest.

In his statement on 10 May, the Prime Minister outlined that there may be a partial reopening of primary schools in England from 1 June "at the earliest," but only if there is sustained progress in tackling the disease, particularly in reducing the infection rate. The Government's Covid 19 recovery strategy subsequently confirmed that pupils will return in stages, beginning with Nursery, Reception, Year 1 and Year 6. Schools should also make preparations for secondary pupils facing exams next year (Years 10 and 12) to enable some face to face time with their teachers this term. The aim is "for all primary school children to return to school before the summer for a month if feasible."

While we would not wish to pre-empt any decisions on reopening, schools do need to be ready to welcome back pupils as soon as possible and in a position to look after all their needs including academic, pastoral, social and emotional.

For your information, I have included the headlines from the government guidance below in bullet points. Additionally, Mrs Carbonaro will be sending out a survey to parents of the children who will return on 1 June. I know this is early days, but we would like to get an idea of what you, as parents, are feeling and thinking. Based on information from the Government, we are planning for our Nursery, Reception, Year 1 and Year 6 children to be back in School by 1 June. At the present time, we are considering different ways of making this work for St Aubyn's. As a Prep School, we have a large cohort with three-form entry in all age groups, except for Years 7 and 8. This in itself creates a challenge for social distancing.

We need to consider the following in all our decision making:

National Key issues

- Public health and social distancing
- Who attends school and what are the teaching arrangements?
- Welfare and safeguarding
- Staff returning to school
- While the government has announced which year groups should return and/or basic rota arrangements, schools still need flexibility to assess what this means for their own school community, based on the need to implement social distancing requirements, curricular needs and staffing capacity. Working within the framework set by government, schools will need to decide:
 - * how staff can enable continued learning for all pupils, both those on-site and those at home.
 - * how to deliver this mixed package and the pressure this will put on individual teachers.
 - * how to make flexible arrangements in teaching arrangements should staff fall ill, need to self-isolate or shield others.
 - * the subjects which can be taught on-site and whether it is safe to do so – e.g.
 - * practical science lessons are hard to teach online, but in schools this often involves working in pairs or groups.



Localised Key issues

- School arrival and departure
- How will pupils and staff work to restrict movement and contamination
- The possibility of retaining the online learning concept, especially in Year 6 to accommodate half the cohort in school at any given time (currently, this is just an idea)
- Break time arrangements
- Lunchtime arrangements
- Time for outdoor exercise

These are the primary considerations. The School cannot guarantee social distancing, especially in EYFS and Pre Prep. However, we will endeavour to implement strategies which limit movement, as well as ensuring appropriate sanitising, cleaning, limiting “other” people on-site and handwashing etc.

[The headlines from the additional government guidance are as follows:](#)

- The Prime Minister announced on 10 May, by 1 June at the earliest primary schools in England may be able to welcome back children in key transition years – Nursery, Reception, Year 1 and Year 6.
- Progress will be monitored every day. If the spread of the virus continues on a downward trajectory and the R remains below 1, then – and only then – will it become safe to go further and move to the second step and reopen schools.
- Early years settings may also be able to open for all children. The aim is for other primary years to return later in June, but this will remain under review, and there are currently no plans to reopen secondary schools for other year groups before the summer holidays.
- Priority groups, including vulnerable children and children of critical workers who have been eligible to attend throughout school closures, will continue to be able to attend schools, colleges and early years settings as they are doing currently.
- The Government is asking schools and childcare providers to plan on this basis, ahead of confirmation of the scientific advice.
- This will only happen when the five key tests set by the Government justify the changes at the time, including the rate of infection decreasing and the enabling programmes set out in the Roadmap operating effectively.
- Schools should **operate reduced classes**, ideally no more than 15 pupils, as well as planning for **consistency of teachers** to reduce the mixing of groups.
- Where the physical layout of a setting does not allow small groups of children to be kept a safe distance apart, we expect practitioners to exercise judgement in ensuring the highest standards of safety are maintained.
- In some cases, it may be necessary for providers to introduce a temporary cap on numbers to ensure that safety is prioritised.
- In general groups should be kept apart. However, brief, transitory contact, such as passing in a corridor, is considered low risk.
- Consideration is to be given to phased drop-off and collection times to keep adult contact to a minimum.
- There is no requirement for the use of face masks by pupils in schools. Additionally, staff should not need these for everyday interactions. However, further guidance will be issued outlining when PPE may be necessary for staff in schools over the next few weeks.
- All schools should undertake a specific risk assessment for their school setting.
- Safety remains the priority, and school leaders should consider the following safety measures when assessing and planning the reopening. These include:



- minimising contact with individuals who are unwell by ensuring that those who have coronavirus symptoms, or who have someone in their household who does, do not attend childcare settings, schools, or colleges
 - cleaning hands more often than usual - wash hands thoroughly for 20 seconds with running water and soap and dry them thoroughly or use alcohol hand rub or sanitiser, ensuring that all parts of the hands are covered
 - ensuring good respiratory hygiene - promote the 'catch it, bin it, kill it' approach
 - cleaning frequently touched surfaces often using standard products, such as detergents and bleach
- minimising contact and mixing by altering, as much as possible, the environment (such as classroom layout) and timetables (such as staggered break times)

To reiterate, the aim is that all primary children return to school in some capacity before the summer break and, if feasible, this should be for at least a month. All planning needs to be based on this proposed outcome.

You may feel that in your setting you would prefer to have Year 5 or Year 8 in school but the direction from government very specifically says in their guidance document:

"We expect all mainstream schools and colleges, including independent schools, to follow the same approach. We encourage middle schools to do the same and welcome back children in year 6, to ensure national parity for children in this year group."

This is one of only a very small number of instances where independent schools are mentioned in any current guidance. You may feel Year 8 represents no more of a risk than Year 6 and are the transition age group in your school but the government has explicitly chosen Year 6.

I hope this gives you an idea of the considerations we need to make as we move towards 1 June 2020 and a possible phased opening of the School, all of which hinges on the R number remaining under 1.

Please see link for further helpful information. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/closure-of-educational-settings-information-for-parents-and-carers/reopening-schools-and-other-educational-settings-from-1-june>

On a lighter note, our eco – committee has embarked on a photo competition under Mrs Slade's guidance. The winners of the competition are illustrated below.



Milan 4UM



Bailey 3JA



Cassie 1CM



Lexi 8SS



Aarav 6NS



Shriya 5MA



James RBW



Lewis 2NF

Sincerely,
Leonard Blom