



# St Cuthbert's

## ROMAN CATHOLIC ACADEMY TRUST

Dear Parents and Carers,

Since the beginning of 'lockdown', the schools in our Trust have continued to provide a school place for small numbers of vulnerable children and the children of key workers. The Government have now asked us to consider a phased and partial expansion of the number of children we can safely accommodate in school, beginning after half term. The DfE guidance is clear that this should only go ahead if their five tests have been met, importantly, including the 'R level' coming down, and test, track, trace & isolate being in place. We understand this decision will be made on **28<sup>th</sup> May 2020**. In view of this, in line with other local schools and to give us time to prepare for some increase in our provision, we will begin our expanded offer for Year 1 initially on June 8<sup>th</sup> 2020. We will then phase in Reception and Nursery children as detailed in the table below.

Thank you to the families of FS1, FS2, Year 1 and Year 6 children who completed our indicative survey. This has really helped us to understand your concerns and your intentions regarding whether to send your child to school or not. Informed by your feedback and the many understandable concerns you have expressed about health and safety, the Trust expects to be in a position, to slowly and steadily begin to expand our provision after half term, should the conditions exist to do so.

Our chief concern, as ever is the health, safety and well-being of all members of our Trust family. All decisions regarding the reintegration of children will be made on this basis. Of course, all our staff have missed the children a great deal and want them back in school to continue their education. We can only do this however, when it is safe to do so.



Our plan for all the Primary schools in our Trust will be as follows:

	Key workers	Vulnerable children	Year One	Reception (FS2)	Nursery (FS1)
June 1 <sup>st</sup> to June 5 <sup>th</sup> 2020	Yes	Yes			
June 8 <sup>th</sup> 2020	Yes	Yes	Yes		
June 15 <sup>th</sup> 2020	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
June 22 2020	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes half day placements
June 29 <sup>th</sup> 2020	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes half day placements
July 6 <sup>th</sup> 2020	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes half day placements
July 13 <sup>th</sup> 2020	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes half day placements

If your child returns to school in June, they will be educated within a small group of children with at least 1 member of staff. This will be their “bubble”. Contact will be minimised with anyone outside of their “bubble”.

**At this point, it is unfortunately not possible to make provision for Year 6.** We will review the reintegration of the younger children from a health and safety perspective and will aim to make some provision for Year 6 children to come into school to bring about some closure to their time at Primary school and say goodbye to staff etc. We would hope that this would be able to take place in July.

This strategy has been carefully developed in the light of extensive risk assessments, professional understanding about the needs and behaviours of our youngest children and the availability of staff to provide the best care that is realistically possible in the extremely challenging circumstances presented by Covid-19. Government guidance appears to be changing on an almost daily basis, so it may be that we have to review this approach, should the landscape change.

We know that social distancing is impossible with very young children. In supporting the youngest children in school over the past few weeks, we have prioritised their mental health and emotional well-being when they have needed reassurance, for example where they have been upset and needed close adult contact. This approach would continue.

The Heads of School in our seven individual Academies, will be writing with further specific information on how children’s entry to and exit from school will be safely managed, catering arrangements and daily routines etc.



**In the meantime, and considering the additional information provided here, can I ask that all Parents and carers of Year 1, Reception and Nursery children complete a brief final survey, informing us of your intention to take up the offer of a place or not.**

<https://bit.ly/3bRbILG>

The final deadline for the receipt of this survey is **Tuesday 26<sup>th</sup> May 2020 by 3:30pm please**. The information you give us will assist us in planning to provide the safest school environment that we possibly can. It is important to note that accepting the offer of a place is entirely your decision. We won't at this time, be pursuing issues of non- attendance in the way we usually do. However, you should note that it is unlikely you will be able to change your decision for the rest of the Summer Term. We do understand the concerns that have been expressed and cannot guarantee a Covid-free environment due to the inability of very young children to socially distance and unclear science about who can spread the virus. We can however assure you of our best efforts to develop health and hygiene routines and cleaning regimes that will limit the risk as far as is possible and as we understand it.

All the Primary Academies in our Trust will be offering the same provision throughout June. This will be under constant review as we assess health and safety risks and respond to any local or national developments.

For children in Year 6 and in Years 2-5, and indeed for any EYFS and Year 1 children who are not in school, our home learning will continue to be managed as it currently is.

I'd like to close by thanking you for your patience and understanding as staff do their very best to support our children's education during this extraordinarily difficult time. Please remember our schools in your prayers as we take these next careful and tentative steps towards a return to normal schooling.

Peter Fearnley

Chair of Directors

