



# St Cuthbert's

## ROMAN CATHOLIC ACADEMY TRUST

Monday 29<sup>th</sup> June, 2020

Dear Parents / Carers,

I write to give you an update in relation to wider opening plans in our Trust primary schools. As you know, our schools have remained open throughout the 'lockdown' period for children of key workers and for some of the most vulnerable students. At the start of this term, following a request from central Government, we expanded our provision to include a 'phased opening' for children in Year one, Reception and Nursery. Indeed, last week saw the completion of this sequence as the final cohorts of children in FS1 have been welcomed back to school.

All of this has taken place in strict accordance with Government guidelines for health and safety. The heart of our planning has been to create the safest possible environment in each school and I am delighted that, as a result of the full co-operation of parents/carers and children, staff have reported that the transition back into school for these younger children, has been very smooth.

We were very sorry that our plans for the safe wider opening of schools during the month of June, meant we were unable, at this time, to welcome Year 6 pupils. We did, however, undertake to try to ensure that some kind of return to Year 6 would be possible before the end of term. As a result of the changes in general guidance with effect from 4th July, I am now very pleased to say that we have completed the necessary planning and risk assessments to the extent that we will be able to expand our on-site staffing levels and welcome Year 6 children back to school during the week beginning 6th July 2020. Heads of School will be in touch with further details and specific arrangements for this in each individual school.

Any further expansion of our wider opening arrangements for other Year groups this term will unfortunately not be possible. We have set up the 'safe bubbles' for the younger children and have established clear routines. In order to accommodate more children, we would have to abandon what we are currently doing and start again. To deconstruct our current arrangements at this late stage of the term would be profoundly disruptive and counterproductive, potentially undoing the good work that has been achieved in recent weeks. Furthermore, the required change to risk assessments and the way



each school has been safely set up - in terms of clear signage/video communications etc., means there simply isn't time to give children in Years 2 to 5 (and indeed in our secondary school St Mary's College Years 7-9) a safe and meaningful educational experience. Please be assured that these children remain greatly important to us and staff will continue to deliver their home learning programme and to keep in touch on a regular basis. They will be able to return to school next term, when it is safe and practical for them to do so.

We have achieved what we have set out to achieve and what we have been asked to do in terms of wider opening during this half term. School leaders are now very busy planning for a full opening next term as well as continuing to oversee arrangements for home learning. They, along with all their staff, are looking forward to welcoming Year 6 before the end of term to share a celebration and draw a close to their time in primary school.

I would like to thank you for your patience and forbearance, during what has been the most extraordinarily difficult time for our schools and indeed wider society. I wish you all a happy and safe summer holiday and look forward to the time, hopefully in the near future, when our schools will have returned to some kind of normality.

Yours sincerely,



Peter Fearnley  
Chair of Directors

