



St. Jérôme Church of England Bilingual Primary School

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Tuesday 26th May 2020

Dear parents/ carers,

Expanding provision from the 1st June 2020

At St Jérôme School we value the health, safety and well-being of every member of our school community and we want to provide the safest environment possible for children to learn. Whilst we recognise it is impossible to reduce the risk of Covid-19 transmitting in our setting entirely, it is our duty to minimise this risk as greatly as possible, as we seek to support our children's continuing learning.

For this reason, whilst acknowledging and adopting all that is helpful in the government guidance issued for schools, we want to go beyond this guidance, in order that we can assure our community of excellence in keeping our staff and children safe. We believe that the government guidance falls short of what is possible to keep children safe and therefore our school leaders and governors have adopted key principles that will determine our planning for extending our provision to more children. As lockdown measures ease, the risk of transmission in the community increases and the NHS and public buildings must plan for increased measures to minimise risk.

We will not extend our provision to more children until:

- The government informs us that the science indicates it is safe for schools in England to begin a phased expansion of provision. This is due to be reviewed next on 28th May.
- All parts of our school site and the activities that will be undertaken have been fully risk assessed by school staff and governors and validated during onsite visits by a suitably qualified external health and safety officer who has received clinical training in Covid-19 infection control. We are currently working on these risk assessments and plans and expect them to be validated by the end of this week.
- Any modifications to the site, staffing arrangements, welfare and PPE provision (Personal Protective Equipment) have been fully put in place and checked by our external adviser and we can assure stock availability of any items essential to health and safety. This is currently in process and we aim for it to be completed during the week beginning 1st June.
- All staff have received accredited training in infection control specific to Covid-19 and the correct and appropriate use of any required PPE (Personal Protective Equipment) to the same level as staff working in the NHS. This is likely to take place in the week beginning 1st June.
- All staff have received training in our infection control procedures and supporting and guiding children to follow the procedures and controls in our risk assessments. This is likely to take place in the week beginning 1st June.
- A comprehensive guide for parents/carers has been produced so that parents and carers know what is happening in school and how they can support our plans at home.
- Each member of staff and each child returning to our site has been risk assessed and appropriate action taken for those who need additional precautions or arrangements.

Staff are working throughout the coming week to ensure that all necessary arrangements are in place and I would like to provide advance notice to parents that it will be unlikely that all arrangements will be complete before Friday 5th June and that the **earliest likely extension of our provision will be from Monday 8th June**. Home learning will continue to be available for all year groups in the week beginning Monday 1st June.

In order to effectively implement social distancing in our school we need to **reduce our class sizes**. Our larger classrooms can accommodate up to 12 children and this will be the maximum class size. The extension of our provision will be phased with the aim of bringing as many children back to school as quickly as it is safe to do so to staff and classrooms that are familiar to them. Due to restrictions on our site and availability of staff and the likelihood that class size restrictions will be in place for several months at least, it is most likely that the extension of our provision will be **initially on a part-time basis**. Initially this is likely to be for two full days per week, but we will hope that this can be increased as social distancing restrictions are reviewed. On the days that pupils do not attend school they would need to learn at home using resources provided by the teacher. For year groups waiting to return to school we will continue to provide home learning activities and resources.

Our risk assessments currently indicate that the safest way to prioritise children returning to school is to begin with the oldest children (currently Year 3) first and so it is most likely that our plan will be to do this. This is because the risk of transmission is assessed as being significantly lower in Key Stage 2 classrooms than it is in Early Years and Key Stage 1 classrooms. Once we are confident that arrangements for these children are working effectively, we will extend our provision to further year groups as quickly as it is safe to do so.

Children who have a social worker, EHC plan or whose parent(s) are critical to the response to Covid-19 and cannot safely be looked after at home will continue to have access to our care provision, even if their year group is open. This provision is operating during this week and will continue to operate in the week commencing the 1st June and for the rest of the Trinity term.

When children are invited to return to school, we will provide detailed information for parents to support them in understanding how the school is minimising risks and what procedures will be in place, especially for drop off and pick up each day, which will have to be staggered. We will be offering flexibility regarding uniform as we appreciate that it is not possible to easily purchase new items where necessary. Parents are not obliged to send their children to school before they feel that they are ready and will not be penalised if they choose not to send them. Parents who choose not to send their children to school will be able to access home learning activities that mirror the learning taking place in school.

When the government guidance was first published suggesting that Reception and Year 1 may be the priority to return to school, we launched a consultation to gather parental views. Thank you to all those parents who completed our survey. We have listened to your responses which have supported the development of our planning and confirmed our reservations about offering initial priority to younger children. I would now like to invite parents of children in Year 2 and 3 to respond

to the same consultation in order that we can hear your views. Please respond to the survey by clicking [here](#).

I appreciate that there will be no situation that is entirely satisfactory for all until we can invite all pupils to return to school on a full-time basis and we hope that we will be able to do this as soon as it is safe to do so. I hope you will understand and appreciate the need to balance our decision to 'return to school' with the need to keep everyone safe.

Please note that this is a highly dynamic situation that continues to change on a daily basis.

I will write to you with a further update by the end of this week, Friday 29th May and hope to share our final agreed and verified plan in due course.

Thank you for your patience and understanding and I hope that you all continue to remain safe and well.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D Norris', with a horizontal line underneath.

Revd. Daniel Norris

Executive Headteacher