

Dear Parents and Carers,

We hope that you and your families are safe and well at this time. I wanted to thank all of the parents and carers who have emailed, tweeted and written in support of St Mark's staff. I know that we have all felt your support and prayers invaluable.

We'd like to thank you all on the great job that you are doing with home schooling and for sharing your experiences with us. Home schooling will continue after half term, information and tasks will continue to be available on your child's class page each week.

We want to inform you of a unanimous decision that our full Governing Body has arrived at in response to the Government's 'ambition' to open schools on June 1st - to Nursery, Reception, Year 1 and Year 6.

We have decided that we will not be opening school before 15th June to any children other than those of key workers, EHCPs and the vulnerable, as we have done for the past 8 weeks.

We think it is important to be clear, governors and senior managers want to guarantee safety for our children, their parents, our staff and their families. The staff at St Mark's have been, and will continue to be, exemplary, and have children at the heart of all that they do.

Having taken account of government and Local Authority 'guidance', and with the knowledge of our school, our views are that we have a duty of care to our staff and our children and that, until all risk assessments set by the Local Authority have been adhered to, we will not be opening.

As you know, we have remained open throughout this crisis to the children of key workers, which allowed them to continue to carry out their jobs on the front line in the fight against Covid 19. Our thanks and appreciation to them during this very difficult time and thanks to our own staff who have looked after the children in school.

We are however, anticipating a rise in the number of requests for places for children of Key workers. As a consequence, we will need to work on a phased, priority basis in order to make this transition. Enabling the children of key workers to return. These families will have to be a priority, before the children in nursery, reception, Y1 and Y6.

In the first instance, priority will be given to children where both parents are key workers, then one parent as a key worker, then to pupils in Y6, Y1, Reception and nursery in that order. A form will be sent out to all parents to establish which children will be allocated a place. We will then contact you to approve this by text or by a phone call. Children will ONLY be able to attend school if you have provided us with this form and evidence of Key worker status, and you have received confirmation from us.

If we are able to open to other pupils our Year 6 will, unfortunately, not be able to enjoy celebrations, shirt signing, final assemblies, etc. However, as soon as social distancing restrictions are lifted I will be inviting our present Year 6 children back to school to celebrate properly (this will hopefully be in the Autumn Term.)

We will continue to update you in the coming days/weeks once we are able to do so.

Please stay safe and keep our school community in your prayers.

Mrs Alison Miller (Head Teacher)

Mrs Monica Lowes (Chair of Governors')

