



We are called to be the hands and face of Jesus as we learn, love and grow together

Headteacher: Mr J White BEd (Hons) NPQH

St. Vincent de Paul Catholic Primary School

Bedwell Crescent, Stevenage, Herts., SG1 1NJ

Tel: 01438 729555

Email: admin@stvincent.herts.sch.uk

www.stvincent.herts.sch.uk

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Dear parents and carers

The wider return to school from Monday 8th March 2021

As you will be aware, from Monday 8th March, all pupils will be able to attend school again. This is the moment that I know many of us have all been waiting for; it will be wonderful to welcome everyone back. Our children have coped with so much since January, and you have all been brilliant in supporting your child(ren) to remain safe, to continue learning and to develop independence. Thank you for all that you have done to work in partnership with us to enable this. If we plan these next steps well, I am sure the future will be bright for us all particularly with the speed at which the vaccine groups are being catered for currently. There is a great sense of hope as we find our way through the Spring Term.

A cautious return

Whilst we are planning for the great return, it is important to recognise that this will occur whilst we remain in lockdown and, as such, we need to plan for this meticulously and act with a heightened sense of caution. This is not a return to normal; it is a return to how we acted in school throughout the Autumn Term. Covid cases in Stevenage currently remain amongst the highest in Hertfordshire and therefore we cannot be complacent. It is important that everyone sticks to the government guidance carefully, otherwise cases will rise and bubbles will close as they did in the Autumn term in order to prevent further spread.

Risk assessment

I am currently working on our 'Risk Assessment' in relation to all pupils returning. As soon as this is ready, I will share this with you. However, the mitigations that it covers are very similar to those which were in place during the Autumn Term:

- Children will remain in class sized bubbles which will remain independent and will not mix;
- Meticulous hand hygiene routines will be promoted, with pupils having access to handwashing facilities and hand gel throughout the day;
- Heightened cleaning measures will be in place throughout the school;
- Pupils will be encouraged to maintain a distance from each other wherever possible;
- Staff will keep 2m away from each other and will not mix between bubbles and they will keep a distance from pupils wherever possible (as hard as this is);
- Staff will wear masks on site and in class for the majority of the day;
- Anyone over 11 yrs old will wear a mask on site at drop off / pick up times;
- Only one adult will be permitted on site at pick up / drop off time and Y6 will be encouraged to access the site independently;
- Staggered start and finish times (as in September) will continue;
- Parents will not be permitted to linger on site;



- Parental access to the class teacher will continue to be via email or telephone only;
- A strict one-way system (in through Bedwell Crescent, out through the back gate onto Fairlands) will be adhered to, without exception whilst the gates are open;
- Avoiding gathering at or beyond the gates and keeping a distance from other parents (and children), including those in the same bubble.

Vigilance in and out of school

It is vital that we all remain highly vigilant and follow the rules in place when outside of school too, such as: no play dates, sleepovers, mixing indoors, gathering on the way home or at birthday parties. Bubble closures can still happen, and it is everyone's responsibility to abide by the law. Only a small minority of the staff team have been vaccinated so far (many are unlikely to have access to the vaccine until July), yet each day the nature of their work will require them to be in close contact indoors with 30 children for the full day. As such, as well as excitement at being together again, many staff are also understandably anxious about the weeks ahead. Therefore, I urge the whole community, at school and at home, to play their part in doing the right thing. This aims to keep all our families safe, protects community and paves the way for wider society to be able to move out of lockdown. Abiding strictly by the rules now, as hard as it may seem, will allow a quicker route to normality in the long-run.

Curriculum priorities – the 'recovery plan'

We have been planning carefully for the return of all children and are aware that things may be difficult for some on return. Our curriculum and routines will take this into account. Initially the work that the children are presented with will seem very familiar and will mirror the format that is currently presented.

Our 'recovery plan' will focus on the following priority areas:

- (1) A continued prioritisation of **WELLBEING**;
- (2) Reaffirmation of **SAFETY & ROUTINES**;
- (3) An affirmation of our **CORE VALUES**;
- (4) A continued engagement with **GOSPEL VALUES**;
- (5) A focus on **RELATONSHIPS** and an awareness of change in relation to these;
- (6) Acknowledgement of **LOSS, CHANGE & BEREAVEMENT**;
- (7) A continued focus on the **LEARNING PIT** and the promotion of positive learning powers (building on the independence that remote learning / new in school provision has promoted since January);
- (8) Then ...**Academic recovery**.

Not 'catch up', but 'bridging'

Although there has been much talk in the press about 'catch up', we will be turning this deficit model on its head and will instead talk of 'bridging work' and building new pathways. Our aim through this is to create a supported pathway between previous learning, lockdown learning and new learning. We will build upon the work that has occurred in school and at home. We aim to build upon the learning behaviours that have been developed in different learning situations and create a new exciting path of learning from this. Where possible we have stuck to the curriculum we normally would have delivered since January and children at home and at school have been given similar opportunities. As such, contrary to the media's view, learning hasn't been 'lost' it has just been different. We look forward to exploring this with your child upon return.

Home discussions

As we prepare for the return I ask that you discuss and reinforce the following 7 points with your child(ren) before Monday. These are just as important for the children who have been learning in school as for those currently learning from home:



- (1) Things will take longer than normal and we will all need to be patient and listen carefully so that we understand what is expected of us.
- (2) Things are not returning to normal yet. There are certain things that have to happen to keep us all safe in school; sometimes these won't be things that we want to happen – e.g. children who have been at home may be looking forward to coming back to play football at break times but this is still not allowed by the guidelines.
- (3) Please respect the need to keep a distance from each other and from staff. This is one way that we can all protect each other.
- (4) Now that there will be 30 children in class, you may need to wait for the attention of an adult; being patient and increasingly independent will really help.
- (5) We usually encourage sharing as this is the kind thing to do. However, currently, we will be sharing less things and will avoid touching things that belong to others in order to keep ourselves and others safe. We also won't be bringing in things from home apart from those things that are necessary (water bottle, pencil case, reading book etc)
- (6) You won't be asked to do anything that you are not capable of. We are aware that some skills will need building up again; we just ask that everyone tries their best and has a go. Remember, we are all able to learn from our mistakes providing we are willing to try.
- (7) Our three universal school rules remain the same as always and help our community to be a happy place to be:
 - be safe;
 - be respectful; and
 - be ready.

Thank you for working with us in partnership to ensure that a return to a full class is both fruitful and safe.

No online feedback on Friday

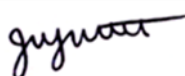
As you can appreciate, there is much work to be done by staff in school to prepare for a full return from Monday 8th March. As such, although work will be set for remote learners on Friday 5th March, staff will not be engaging with online feedback during this day as they will be involved in other work to enable your child's return on Monday.

Communicating concerns

If you are concerned about any aspect of your child's return on Monday 8th March please do make contact with your child's class teacher. Government guidelines mandate that all children (except those who are clinically extremely vulnerable) must return on Monday 8th March. If you are concerned about this please contact Mrs Sherry (rsherry@stvincent.herts.sch.uk) in order that arrangements can be made to discuss this further in a supportive capacity.

We look forward to welcoming the community back next week. Please keep the school, its staff and its families in your prayers as we work towards this important moment.

Yours sincerely



Jon White
Headteacher

