



15th May 2020

Thank you for your continued support of school

I hope that you are all well, you all continue to be in our thoughts throughout this trying time.

Following the letter I send out earlier in the week I would like to update you as much as I possibly can on the current situation in schools and in particular with St Bede's. Thank you very much to everyone who completed the questionnaire sent earlier in the week, the information was useful. I have now sent out a more specific questionnaire that will help us to finalise our plans. This relates directly to each child in our school and whether they need childcare after the May half term holiday, during the school day. This is the link to the questionnaire if you have not already completed it <https://forms.gle/mFpAZzFDM29iJrwZ6>

There is a lot of information to process and plans to be made using all sorts of information which is updated on a daily basis. There is no guarantee that any school will reopen on 1st June as this is still under review by the government and St Bede's now has the possibility of essential building work that should have happened during the Easter holidays, taking place during the fortnight following 1st June. If this work does take place the building can only be open safely to those children who cannot be cared for at home due to their parents working commitments.

The guidance published to schools is clear in certain ways but also gives a large amount of discretion to individual schools due to the huge difference in buildings and staff numbers. In order to keep children and staff as safe as possible we will be taking some hard measures in school when we open to more children. I want to be honest and say that I worry about the possible negative effects these measures could have on your children. Some parents are of the view that returning to school will have a positive effect on well-being, but I am not convinced this will always be the case.

School has been open to children of critical workers who have had no choice but to use the school as childcare. We have tried our best to provide the best childcare for these children and I would like to thank these parents and all other critical workers for everything you are doing in these difficult times. We will remain open to these children but I ask again that you only use this service as a last resort.

All of the staff would love to see schools return to how they were before Covid-19 but that is not possible at the moment. We all miss the fun and laughter that we were so used to, the learning and assemblies, the singing and socialising that was possible. Until this can happen again though, school will be a very different place with many of the measures that you will have seen in the media this week. One huge change will be that the children will be in 'bubbles' which at the most will have 15 children in them. The bubble will remain in the same room in school using the outdoors when possible and may be with a teacher who is not their usual teacher.

Other measures will be put in place to reduce the risk of contracting or transferring the virus while the children are at school however without further scientific evidence we cannot say that the risk is completely removed. We will update you nearer the time on all the measure that we will put into place.

I do not wish to alarm you with this information but do wish to give you an honest view so that you can make an informed decision when the time comes.

Do not hesitate to contact me about this or if you have any other issues, Therese Worrall

Although things are not as they usually would be in the school year the staff are going to take a half term break because they need to recharge their batteries ready for the next chapter in this very extraordinary story.

In order that we can remain open for key worker children in the holiday week the breaks are going to be staggered. With some staff having next week as holiday and others having week beginning 25th May.

I would like the children to follow suit with this too, making sure that they have a week off from school work. If possible they could have time off when their teacher does but if this causes complications in the home please organise the best way for yourself. While you child's teacher is 'on holiday' if you need something urgently please contact school via the admin email – admin@st-bedes.northumberland.sch.uk

These teachers will be having a holiday during week beginning 18.5.20

Miss Clark, Mrs Behic, Mrs Young, Mrs White, Mrs Hart

These teachers will be having a holiday during week beginning 25.5.20

Miss Collins, Miss Inglis, Miss Rowley, Miss Grigg, Mrs McCarron

I am sure that you will join me in wishing all the staff a restful time.

From Tuesday 19th May until after half term the school car park will not be in use for parents, children or visitors. The works to improve St Benet Biscop are nearing a close and part of these works are to remove the old demountable classrooms that adjoin our carpark. This work is beginning next week and so contractors will need to use the carpark.

If you are bringing your child to school for childcare or you have to come into school for another reason please use the gate on Catholic Row and walk around the building to the main entrance.

Thank you for your understanding with this.