



11th May 2020

Dear Parents

I hope you and your families are keeping well and that the slight easing in lockdown will provide you will a few more opportunities to get out and about. As you have no doubt heard the Prime Minister has announced the next step for schools. Given the context it's understandably vague, his exact words were:

“At the earliest by June 1, after half term, we believe we may be in a position to begin the phased reopening of shops and to get primary pupils back into schools, in stages, beginning with reception, Year 1 and Year 6.”

And today in the written detail it said *“the government’s ambition is for all primary school children to return to school before the Summer for a month if feasible, though this will be kept under review.”*

Our headteachers and staff have been getting ready for a partial reopening but as you can imagine this isn't straightforward. It is not in the best interests of our children or families to simply bounce back into school as if we have had a long holiday. Many of our children will be fine but some will feel anxious about returning. In addition to this some families will have ongoing issues at home whether it be shielding letters, work issues, concerns about grandparents or siblings who are still at home. To help us have the best possible restart, we have established six principles in reopening our schools and I thought it would be helpful to share these with you. We will

1. Do our utmost to ensure everyone attending our schools is kept safe
2. Focus on the emotional, spiritual and physical well-being of our children
3. Support the well-being of our staff and our community
4. Be aware of, and adapt to, the challenges each family face
5. Prioritise any gaps in learning whilst ensuring all children make progress
6. Ensure proper transition arrangements are in place for each year group

Hopefully the picture of how we reopen will become clearer over the next two weeks. We will update you as soon as we know more about how schools will operate. Having said that I need to be upfront with you in saying that if three year groups return at once **we will not be able to guarantee social distancing**. The reality of attempting to keep thirty reception children 2 metres apart in class, break, toilets and lunch would be beyond anyone, however well-intentioned. An additional two year groups plus key worker children only compounds the problem.

We will be in touch with all families over the next two weeks to get feedback about their lockdown experience. This will enable the teachers to adapt their planning to meet the needs of the children. When we first return the curriculum will look slightly different in all our schools for a short period of time.



We have listened to the experts and have been advised that children will need routine, structure and familiarity; coupled with activities to promote their well-being and help process their experience.

Staff have been working very hard on this so the children have the best possible start when they return to school. We will obviously also be continuing to provide home learning for those year groups not in school and will be adapting this to meet the ongoing needs of the children.

Our staff have worked exceptionally hard over the last seven weeks and one thing that has helped enormously is the support you have shown them and all the lovely messages and emails they have received from you. Thank you very much for this, it has made a huge difference and is really appreciated. As we move into the next phase please continue to be patient with us. We are all in uncharted territory but I hope you know we will always do our very best for every child in our care

Take care and I hope you and your families continue to keep well. Please God we will all be together again in the foreseeable future

Kind regards

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Ani Magill', written in a cursive style.

Ani Magill
CEO Xavier Catholic Education Trust