

Archdiocese of Birmingham
St. Gerard's Catholic Primary School and Nursery
Headteacher: Mr A Crehan



Yatesbury Avenue, Castle Vale, Birmingham, B35 6LB

15th July 2020

School Update - July

Dear Parents

I would like to start this letter by expressing my sincere gratitude for your support, patience and cooperation over this very challenging and unprecedented time. As you are aware, the guidance from the government has changed several times over the last few months and we have had to make many changes to the way our school has functioned. I am extremely proud of the staff of St Gerard's who have persevered through this pandemic to ensure all the children are safe, have had opportunities to learn online and in school, and who have cared for the children of 'keyworkers' and those classed as vulnerable. They really have shown that teaching is more than a job, it is a vocation, and I thank them for what they have done.

Leavers

Today, our Year 6 children will be officially leaving us. I would like to wish them the best of luck as they start the next chapter of their lives. I hope that they take all they have learnt here with them, not only their fantastic academic abilities, but their faith, love and kindness too. I know they have learnt that God will always be with them. *"For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future."* Jeremiah 28:11. Despite missing a lot of their last year in primary school, they will have many fond memories of their time at St Gerard's, as we have of them. Mrs Nye has compiled a wonderful video for them to remind them of their time here – it can be found on our website.

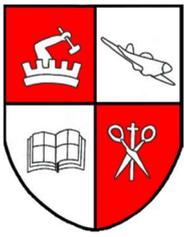
The Autumn Term

As we approach the end of this academic year, we are busy planning for the Autumn Term. The Department for Education announced that from September, **"All pupils, in all year groups, will return to school full-time."** We look forward to **welcoming Year's 1 to 6 back to us on Wednesday 2nd September 2020.** When they return we will be focussed on supporting their emotional health and well-being, and supporting their 'academic catch up'.

Moving Up

In September, your child will go straight into their new classes. As you know, we are a family at St Gerard's, and your child will already know who their teacher is and where their new classroom is too. We do understand that they will still be nervous and we will help them through this transition. The teachers have prepared some videos to introduce themselves and show the children around their new classroom. They are available on our website and I hope you and your child can sit and watch them together.

Our new parents in Reception and Nursery have already received letters giving them information and welcoming them to our school. A reminder that our **Reception children start full-time on Thursday 3rd September**, a day later than the rest of the school. Our Nursery children will begin their part-time induction on Monday 7th September 2020.



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Groupings

In September, we have made changes to the 'bubbles' or groupings in accordance with DfE guidance which states, "Consistent groups reduce the risk of transmission by limiting the number of pupils and staff in contact with each other to only those within the group". For the majority of the day, each class will form their own bubble and have minimal contact with others. But during lunchtimes and break times we will have 4 groupings in school to minimise pupil's contact with others. Nursery and Reception will form an 'EYFS Bubble', Year 1 and Year 2 will form a 'KS1 Bubble', Year 3 and 4 will form a 'Lower KS2 Bubble', and finally Year 5 and 6 will form an 'Upper KS2 Bubble'. This will allow us to stagger lunch timings without taking any time away from teaching the curriculum.

Drop off & Collection

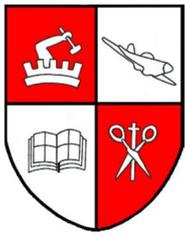
Drop off and collection will not be back to normal. We are still being directed by the government to reduce the amount of adults on site, and to do this, parents will only be allowed limited access.

Drop off will be between 8.40am – 9.00am. At 8.40am all gates on our site will be open and a member of staff will be on duty. **You can drop your child off at any gate** and they will **make their own way** into the classrooms. There will be lots of adults to direct the children and teachers will be waiting for them in class with a morning task. **In the mornings, parents will not be allowed on site**, and in order to avoid congestion, **the staff on gates will not be taking messages**. If you need to pass anything urgently on to the teacher you will need to call the office or email us the night before.

For Reception children's transition days on Thursday 3rd and Friday 4th September, parents can bring their child through the 'visitor's gates' on Renfrew Square, where a member of staff will be there to greet you.

Collection times will be staggered to reduce congestion. We will allow parents to congregate, at a social distance, on the main playground. **Only one adult per family will be allowed to come onto the school site.** We will mark an area for you and ask that you do not come close to the doors. Teachers will dismiss children from specific exits. The children will come to you. Once you have collected your child, we ask you to leave the site as quickly as possible, supervising your children at all times. If you have children in multiple classes you will have to wait in the parent area. Please do not let children play as there will not be room. I will send more information about this at the end of August, but to help you plan, **collection times will be as shown below:**

- **Nursery: 3.00pm**
- **Reception, Years 1 & 2: 3.05pm**
- **Years 3 & 4: 3.15pm**
- **Years 5 & 6: 3.20pm**



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Uniform

Children are expected to wear full school uniform in September. They will need to have their PE kits in school ready for their PE lessons. We do not expect them to wear any jewellery or have hairstyles that are not part of our normal school policy. If you are unsure of any items, please see our prospectus on the school website. During the start of the Autumn Term, most children wear the Summer Uniform.

Lunches

School dinners will be available from the kitchen. In September, parents cannot come to the school office. We are currently trying to set up a contactless system and will give you more information on this in September. In the meantime, if your child is in Year 3, 4, 5 or 6, and would like a school dinner, you will need to send the money into school with them. This will need to be the correct money, in a clearly-labelled envelope. The school dinner amount for this year is £12 a week.

Covid-19 Cases

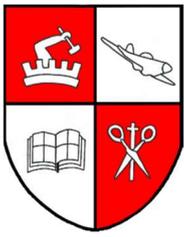
If anyone develops symptoms we need to know immediately. They must then self-isolate and get a test. All children can be tested, including children under 5. Staff and pupils **must not come into the school** if they have symptoms, and **will be sent home** to self-isolate if they develop them in school. The DfE states that, *"Anyone who displays symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19) can and should get a test. Tests can be booked online through the NHS [testing and tracing for coronavirus website](#), or ordered by telephone via NHS 119 for those without access to the internet. Essential workers, which includes anyone involved in education or childcare, have priority access to testing."* You will only be allowed to return to school when you show us a negative test result. If you or your child test positive, you must contact the school immediately and we will advise you based on advice from Birmingham City Council and Public Health England.

Attendance

School attendance will be mandatory again from the beginning of the autumn term. This means from that point, the usual rules on school attendance will apply, including:

- parents' duty to secure that their child attends regularly at school where the child is a registered pupil at school and they are of compulsory school age;
- schools' responsibilities to record attendance and follow up absence
- the availability to issue sanctions, including fixed penalty notices in line with local authorities' codes of conduct

If you have any concerns about attending school, please contact us by email at enquiry@stgerard.bham.sch.uk before the start of term, and we will try and answer any questions you may have. The DfE ensures us that, *"The risk to children themselves of becoming severely ill from coronavirus (COVID-19) is very low and there are negative health impacts of being out of school."*



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I hope that the information in this letter helps with your planning for September. I hope you and your family have a lovely summer break, and we look forward to seeing you soon!

God bless.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'A Crehan'.

A Crehan
Headteacher