

St Matthew Academy

St Joseph's Vale, Blackheath, London SE3 0XX

Headteacher: Ms Miranda Baldwin

Head of Primary: Ms Joanna Chick



09 June 2020

Dear Parent and Carers

As we have come to the beginning of a new half term we are writing to you with some important information to support your child with learning for this half term. We are now pleased to be in a position to welcome our Reception pupils on **Monday 15th June.**

We have spent the last few weeks carrying our risk assessments to assess our ability to open safely to pupils and staff. We have been cautious in our approach but do believe we are in a position to welcome Reception pupils back to school on **Monday 15th June 2020.** The survey has provided us with some useful feedback to consider while planning for pupils' return and also gave us an indication of your intentions – however almost 50 % of you said that you were unsure and we completely understand this response. It is important that you base your decision on a number of factors including full details of what the return to school will look like for your child and the latest scientific evidence – the government made a final decision regarding this on 28th May.

So to our plans. Firstly the return to learning at school won't be quite as it was prior to closing in March. Essentially, children will be in groups of 12 and, as far as possible, they will stay in this group (or 'bubble' as we're calling it) in classrooms, outside at break time, lunch time etc. with a teacher and a teaching assistant. The aim is to have as normal a school day as possible, but with much smaller class sizes and classes/year groups will not mix as they usually do—e.g. in assemblies, break times, lunch times and arrival/dismissal from school. We know you will have many questions regarding these arrangements so we have tried to provide answers to some of them on the following pages.

For parents of Reception once you have made your decision regarding whether your child will be returning to school on **Monday 15th June** please email us at info@stmatthewacademy.co.uk **no later than 1pm on Wednesday 10th June.** We must stress again that our proposed start date is subject to any further decisions made by the government in the coming days or any changes to the guidance documents that would mean a change to our current risk assessment.

It has been a delight to see so many of your children engaged in high quality learning these past 9 weeks. Thank you to those who have taken the time to share some of their success with us, some of which has been shared in our weekly newsletter which we hope you have been reading and other examples of fabulous work have been posted on our Twitter feed here.

The staff here at SMA are missing their smiling faces so we have put together a short film to show them how much we do! Please take the time to watch this with your child and read this week's newsletter full of exciting lively news and top tips.

We look forward to welcoming back our Reception children and seeing as many of you as possible.

Yours sincerely

Ms M Baldwin
Head teacher

Ms J Chick
Head of Primary

: 0208 853 6250 : info@stmatthewacademy.co.uk : www.stmatthewacademy.co.uk : @stmattacad

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What is a SMA bubble?

- Up to 12 children in a bubble with a familiar class teacher and teaching assistant. Adults and children will stay in this bubble all day, in their specified area of the school and will be supported by one member of the primary leadership team
- Bubbles will be made up of a balance of boys and girls, additional needs etc. Bubbles are fixed
- Children will be spread out in class and there will be staggered playtimes/lunchtimes for year groups
- Children will be encouraged to stay in their bubbles at playtimes, through playing in designated parts of the playground/field
- Less sharing of equipment—children will have their own zip wallets with equipment and books
- Bags, coats etc. should be kept in a minimum and as normal will be stored individually outside classrooms
- Using outside spaces more, moving in the corridors less and one-way systems where possible

Will my child be socially distanced 100% of the time?

The government has been clear: the focus is on bubbles of up to 15 (12 at SMA due to size of classrooms). Primary-aged children cannot be expected to remain 2 metres apart from each other and staff. In Reception, social distancing is impossible and we will not even try to implement it as it could have greater emotional harm if implemented. In other year groups, children will be socially-distanced in the classroom. If your child needs medical attention that will be dealt with in the usual way, i.e. not socially distanced. The focus is on:

- Minimising contact and not mixing between bubbles
- Avoiding contact with anyone with symptoms
- Frequent hand washing and good respiratory practices
- Frequent, thorough cleaning of settings

When will my Reception child come to school?

- Once you have confirmed that you will be sending your child to school (**1pm, Monday 15th June** is the latest date for informing us) we will allocate pupils and staff to bubbles
- There will be a staggered start for pupils to enable them to travel safely to the Academy avoiding the peak rush-hour traffic
- Reception children should arrive at 9.00am – parents will not be permitted to enter the premises and once pupils are dropped off they will be lined up and walked to class by their teacher
- All children will sanitize their hands on entering the gate and SLT will ensure that all social distancing stipulations are adhered to
- Reception children should be collected at 2:45pm - parents will be encouraged to not congregate and leave promptly with their child

In following weeks pupils will attend from Monday to Thursday – this will enable a full deep clean of the building on Friday, planning and preparation time for staff and a staff meeting to review and evaluate procedures and make changes where necessary

We will provide you with guidance for learning for the Friday when your child isn't in school.

As a parent how can I help?

- Take your child's temperature before you come to school; we will only take temperatures if we have a concern
- If your child is at all unwell, or has a temperature above 37.8°C keep them at home.
- Ensure your child has washed their hands before leaving in the morning and on arriving home
- Be on time and stick to your time for the staggered start to the day
- School adults will not be routinely wearing face coverings so please socially distance from the teacher, and other adults Drop and go, please keep moving and do not stop and chat outside the gates. At pick up time please be prompt but socially distance while waiting

Send any messages for teachers via the school office phone number/email rather than when picking up your child – the reception will not be open to parents

What about Y2/3/4/5?

- At the moment, these year groups will stay at home with the intention of returning later in the term if our risk assessments indicate we are able to
- Y2/3/4/5 will continue to learn virtually – home learning and the use of Seesaw has been very positive this term and work packs will be available for any families that request one
- You can continue to contact teachers using the teacher email addresses
- Phone contact may be reduced as teachers will be covering our Critical Worker provision for pupils not in a Y1/Y5 bubble, preparing lesson videos and covering other year groups as needed.

What will happen if my child is in the specified year group to attend school but I choose not send him/her in?

- Our understanding is that the government will not be issuing fines to parents whose children do not return after next half term. However, if you choose to keep your child at home and change your mind you must contact the school first to discuss; you cannot just turn up. The earliest opportunity for your child to join at a later date will be **Monday 22nd June**.
- Our teachers are good—very good—but they cannot run a full time physical and full time virtual classroom. For this reason pupils that remain at home will be sent work-packs as the online platform Seesaw will not be regularly updated. All communication for year groups who are in school will go through the office and not via the class teacher
- How can I communicate with the school office?
- For the safety of our office staff, we ask you to communicate with the office via email to info@stmatthewacademy.co.uk and phone on 0208 853 6250.
- All items required for the day should enter school with the child. Forgotten items should not be brought in and will not be accepted

What will the Academy do if there is a suspected COVID-19 case?

- We have a separate isolation room (not the medical room) which will only be used for suspected cases
- The child will be supervised by an adult who will wear PPE equipment
- The parent will be called to come and collect the child
- The child will be given a face covering to wear (to protect others) when they leave the building to be collected by their parents

What happens if there is a confirmed case?

- The child/staff member would self-isolate for 7 days, with rest of household isolating for 14 days. Any child or member of staff who displays symptoms will be encouraged to be tested for COVID-19.
- Where the child/staff member tests negative, they can return to school. Where the test is positive, the rest of the 'bubble' will be sent home and advised to self-isolate for 14 days.
- Household members of the bubble do not need to self-isolate unless the child/staff member subsequently develops symptoms.

What should I do if my family are shielding or extremely clinically vulnerable?

- Children classed as extremely clinically vulnerable due to pre-existing medical conditions are not expected to return to school. Those classed as clinically vulnerable should follow medical advice as to whether a return to school at this time is advisable. If your child lives with an extremely clinically vulnerable adult then they should

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- Only attend 'if stringent social distancing can be adhered to'. As a school we cannot guarantee that, therefore your child will need to stay at home.

Do you or your child need someone to talk to?

- In this unusual situation, you may no longer have your usual support group around you. If you, or your child, would like a friendly voice on the end of the phone, help on how to cope with the current situation, one-off crisis counselling support or a combination of all three, please contact us. If you would like to access this support, please ring the office and leave a message for Mrs Laker or email dla@stmatthewacademy.org.uk

Safeguarding

- Our key priority is always the care and safeguarding of children. We are in regular contact with many families and pupils but, if you have a non-urgent safeguarding issue, please email dla@stmatthewacademy.org.uk. If something is urgent, you can contact MASH (multi-agency safeguarding hub) on 020 8314 6660 or the police on 999.

Government and Local Authority documents

Please find below links to documents that you may wish to read to further inform your decision.

Coronavirus (COVID-19): guidance for schools and other educational settings

What parents and carers need to know about schools and other education settings during the coronavirus outbreak

Actions for educational and childcare settings to prepare for wider opening from 1 June 2020

Information about schools and childcare during COVID-19

Travel advice from Transport or London ahead of some school years restarting on 1st June can be found here