

St Matthew’s Primary School

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Principal: Mrs AM Kealey BA Hons in ED. PQHNI

01/07/2020

Dear Parent(s)

A group of Principals from our local schools met this week to discuss the implications of the DE publication, ‘Northern Ireland Re-opening School Guidance: New Day’ which was issued on Friday 19th June 2020.

After much discussion and with due regard to the CURRENT guidance, principals reached decisions which would help us move forward during this time of continued uncertainty. We are still facing a very uncertain outlook as to what the school-day will look like in September 2020.

I have shared this information with the school Governors and the Chairperson has agreed that the guidelines below are only a guide until further directives are issued from the DE.

Our school will open on Monday 24th August for **P1 and P7 pupils.** This will be an induction week for our new P1 pupils which will focus on helping them settle into the new school day and to familiarise them with the adapted school environment. All children in P1 and P7 will attend for part of the week and specific dates and times will be issued in due course.

All other pupils will return on Tuesday 1st September alongside the P7 pupils. More details for the phased return of all P1 pupils will follow later on, as final decisions have not yet been made!

*Please note Friday 28th August is a Staff Training day and Monday 31st August is a bank holiday therefore pupils will be off school.*

The guidance given to schools under Education Restart is based on classrooms that are 60sq meters. Our rooms are not big enough, and our classes have too many pupils to implement a full return of all our pupils. **If this continues to be the guidance, our school would be adopting Option A in September 2020**. Please be aware that this information is subject to change in the light of evolving DE Guidance. Our sincere hope is for a full return in September if guidance allows, if so we will be happy to open for all our pupils as outlined in Option B.

No guidance has yet been issued to schools regarding transport or school meals. Details will follow as soon as they are known.

We will strive to keep you fully informed of any relevant developments and we deeply appreciate your continued support and patience throughout this time. It is essential that you access and follow school communications, e.g. School Web-site, email (New P1 parents), Facebook, School App and School Text. Please make this a priority.

This has been a difficult time for parents and we greatly appreciate all the time you have spent supporting your child on Seesaw, with the class folders and liaising with teachers. I hope things will become much easier and clearer next term. We want all children back to school safely. We have really missed all our pupils and are looking forward to seeing them all again and getting to know our new Primary Ones.

Have a lovely summer everyone!

God Bless

Mrs Ann-Marie Kealey

Principal

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| OPTION A | OPTION B |
| **BLENDED LEARNING**  Children attend school 40% of their time:  Mon/Tues or Thurs/Frid. We will split the children into families to assist with childcare and transport. According to government guidance Wednesday is for cleaning and for staff to manage online learning.  Mon/Tues Group1  Thurs/Frid Group 2 | Should social distancing regulations be removed by the end of August….  ALL CHILDREN WILL BE IN SCHOOL EVERY DAY!  They will remain in their whole class ‘’bubble’’ for EVERYTHING! More details to follow when required. |