

# St. Catherine of Siena Catholic Primary School

Headteacher: Ms Nicola Kane LLB.PgDip, PgCert.

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Email: [admin@st-catherine.herts.sch.uk](mailto:admin@st-catherine.herts.sch.uk)

[www.stcatherinescatholicprimaryschool.co.uk](http://www.stcatherinescatholicprimaryschool.co.uk)

Horseshoe Lane  
Garston  
Watford  
Hertfordshire  
WD25 7HP

5<sup>th</sup> May 2020

Dear Parents/Guardians,

## Coronavirus Update

### *St Catherine of Siena Feast Day*

A big thank you to those who were able to join us to celebrate our special Feast Day Mass last Wednesday and to all those who completed work in honour of St. Catherine. I was really inspired by the variety of different pieces produced – the children had clearly put so much time and effort into them. I look forward to displaying each and every one when we return to school.

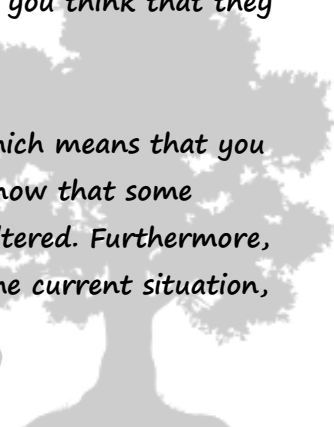
### School Return

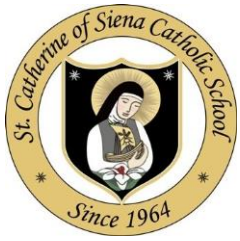
Despite press rumours, we have received no further guidance on school reopening. However, as a leadership we are trying to make provisional plans. If there is anything you think I might need to know in advance of any return to school (e.g. bereavement, severe anxiety, family breakdown, financial concerns), please do let me know by emailing [head@st-catherine.herts.sch.uk](mailto:head@st-catherine.herts.sch.uk). Please leave a telephone number if you would rather a call back. This will be kept completely confidential, unless you wish to share with individual staff, as well as myself.

### Home-Life

I am very conscious that this will have been an extremely challenging situation for a lot of families. The novelty of being at home has well and truly worn off, cabin-fever has set in, tempers are fraying... and that's just in my home! Under normal circumstances, I regularly have parents come in to speak to me about challenges at home – whether they are around finances, relationships or the children themselves. Please know that I am still here for you and your family. My role is primarily to support our children, but also their family, in a completely independent, non-judgemental way. It really does help to have a 'heads-up' if there have been specific issues at home. I am also very happy to speak to children directly if you think that they would benefit from that.

Please also let me know if there has been a change in your circumstances which means that you require child-care. The advice is still that pupils are safest at home, but I know that some families may have undergone changes that mean their situation may have altered. Furthermore, if you are experiencing financial hardship, we may be able to help you. In the current situation, *there but for the Grace of God go any of us.* If we can help, we will.





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## Home Learning

Home Learning is a somewhat controversial issue at the moment. There is a fine line between providing guidance and support to parents who are trying to home-school, and putting pressure and unreasonable expectations on those who are struggling to balance other demands on their time. My view on this is clear and remains unchanged:

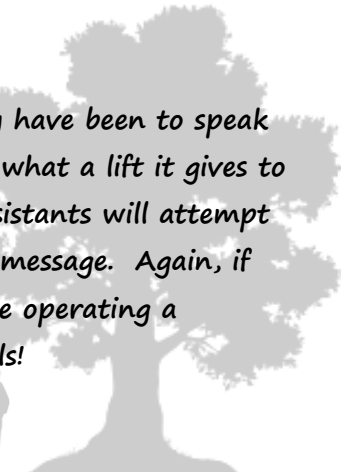
- children feeling safe and happy is the most important thing
- family life should be a priority
- life-skills are as important as anything learnt in a book
- all home-learning is optional
- our job is to try to catch pupils up knowledge/understanding once they return to school

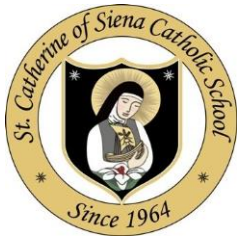
Our current HL guides cover all areas of the curriculum and should provide a good basis for structuring work at home. However, I am conscious that some families would like more guidance/specific work to do with their children. I am currently investigating Google Classroom with a view to introducing this for those families who want to take part. Please be aware that we need to balance parents' desire to have more structure, with the pressures on staff who are either in school looking after children, or at home often with one computer between two adults and their own children to home-school! I will do my best to find the right balance for the whole school community. In the meantime, I again commend BBC Bitesize and Oak National Academy to you. We are awaiting the Prime Minister's briefing on Sunday before making any concrete plans regarding future Home Learning and will update you as soon as possible after his updates.

## Communication

This continues to be a brilliant way of keeping in touch! I absolutely love seeing our children on Twitter, as they share some of the things they have been up to. I'm always afraid that I will miss a child's work or a marvellous example of practical life-skills in action. Please know that I do my best to see and 'like' or comment on every one, but you can also email me. It really does make my day to see their faces.

Yesterday staff started their phone calls. I cannot tell you how excited they have been to speak to the kids! Having spoken to some children in the past few weeks, I know what a lift it gives to hear their voices. Over the rest of the week, class teachers and teaching assistants will attempt to get hold of every child. We will make three attempts and try to leave a message. Again, if there are any issues with this, do let me know. Mrs Taylor and I will also be operating a 'lollipop' system and calling random numbers, in addition to the regular calls!





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*Stay safe. Stay healthy. Stay in good humour. Stay sane.*

*God bless,*

*Nikki Kane*



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