

# St. Catherine of Siena Catholic Primary School

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Horseshoe Lane  
Garston  
Watford  
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WD25 7HP

8<sup>th</sup> June 2020

Dear Parents/Guardians,

## Weekly Update

### School Return

This time last week we were in the process of two staff Covid-19 training Inset days. On Tuesday we welcomed back more of our Key Worker children and Wednesday saw the return of EYFS. Although initially slightly apprehensive, it was wonderful to see the children skipping into school on Thursday, with massive smiles on their faces! We are currently operating with five bubbles in school – three Key Workers and two EYFS.

I'd like to take the opportunity to thank staff for their hard work in preparing the school for increased opening. They have gone above and beyond to ensure that we provided a Covid-19 safe, but also nurturing environment for our pupils.

I know that many of you have struggled with the decision of whether or not to send your children back. Whatever the outcome of that has been, I fully support you – there is no right answer, only the right answer for your family and your unique circumstances.

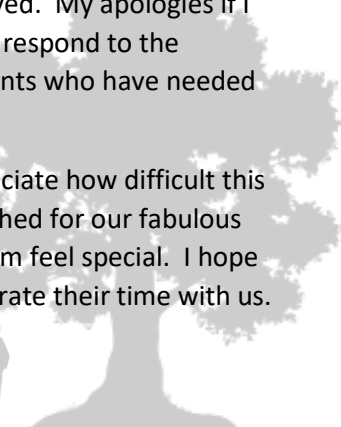
To those who have sent their children back, we have been delighted to see them and are actively working to make the strange situation a positive experience. To those in EYFS who have felt it is too big a step for their child, or who have decided the health risk is too great, we know that you have taken the decision in their best interests.

We will be looking to open up to Year 1 from next week, provided we have sufficient staff to maintain our bubbles. I appreciate that some EYFS parents may also now chose to accept their child's place. If so, we will need to prioritise that year group, in accordance with the Government Guidance.

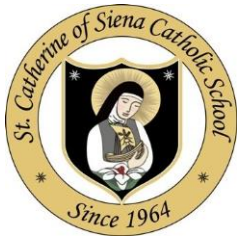
If you have a child in EYFS or Year 1, who you would like to return to school from next Monday, please email me directly using [head@st-catherine.herts.sch.uk](mailto:head@st-catherine.herts.sch.uk). Please note that you only need to email me if you wish your child to return to school. Legally, we need to sort staffing ratios and allocate bubbles; if I do not hear from you by 12pm on Friday, your child will not be able to attend next week. I will send further information once I have definite numbers.

Many Year 6 parents emailed me to say that they have taken the difficult decision not to send their child back for the remainder of the year. I was also overwhelmed by the lovely messages I received. My apologies if I have not responded to you yet – I promise I will do so, but wanted to take the time to respond to the messages properly. I have prioritised and replied to those Key Workers and EYFS parents who have needed me to coordinate the return to school.

To those Year 6 parents who will definitely not be sending their child back, I can appreciate how difficult this must be for you and them. It is not the end to their time at St Catherine's that we wished for our fabulous Bosco and Alphonsa classes. We will, however, do everything we can to still make them feel special. I hope that there will be a day when we can come together as a school community and celebrate their time with us.



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We are liaising with our Secondary schools behind the scenes, to support a smooth transition. Staff are also working on transition documents and will hold zoom meetings to try to answer any questions that the children might have.

## Black Lives Matter

Along with so many others, we were absolutely horrified by the unlawful killing of George Floyd. Although we have always striven to be a fully-inclusive school, the recent protests have caused a deep reflection on what that truly means. As a Leadership Team, we completely support the #BlackLivesMatter movement and stand in solidarity with the struggle for truth, humanity and justice. We want all black people and people of colour to know not just that their lives matter, but that they are truly valued. However, we are increasingly aware that we are not doing anywhere near enough. The disparity between the treatment of the BAME community has been highlighted through the disproportionate impact of austerity, the Grenfell fire and the fact that BAME people are so much more likely to die of Covid-19.

We are aware that racism takes many forms, including societal structures and unconscious bias. We have also come to an appreciation of the truth of the 'white silence is violence' motto. We also realise as a SLT comprised of three white women, we are not able to understand the struggles of the BAME community and would not pretend to. This matter is a key School Development Priority for next year. We are currently auditing our books to ensure they are reflective of our community and looking at any other actions we can take to raise the awareness of such an important issue. We would like to invite you to help us by emailing any suggestions or ideas to [head@st-catherine.herts.sch.uk](mailto:head@st-catherine.herts.sch.uk), or by volunteering to be part of a working party.

Finally, thank you again for your continued support.

God bless,

Nikki Kane



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