



7th July 2020

Dear Parents/Carers,

As you are probably aware, the government published new guidance last Thursday for schools for the autumn term. The headline that you have probably picked up is that all children are expected to return to school **full time** in the autumn term and that attendance will be **compulsory**. The full guidance is available from the following link <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/actions-for-schools-during-the-coronavirus-outbreak/guidance-for-full-opening-schools>

At St. Mary's we will be continuing to take careful steps in expanding our provision with the safety of our children, staff and all their families as our highest priority. The guidance is very long and detailed and it will take time for school leaders to read through it and decide how best to apply it. Schools have been instructed to review and update their risk assessments to take account of the new guidance. They also have a legal duty to consult in a timely and meaningful way with staff about any changes which will impact on their working conditions. Further guidance on cleaning is expected to be published next week and this will also need to be included in the revised risk assessments and management procedures.

Schools in Leicestershire close for the summer on Friday 10th July. This means that the time available for us to carry out all of this work before the summer break is very limited. Leicestershire County Council has informed schools that they may delay children's return to school until 1st September in order to ensure that preparations for the new term are fully implemented. Whilst we have no intention of delaying the start, we would like to stagger it.

We learned from our experience in the summer term that bringing children back in a staged way proved valuable in helping them to adapt to new expectations and safety routines. It also meant staff could ensure safety procedures were working effectively and make any changes necessary before more children arrived.

The staggered start will begin on August 26th and all children apart from Foundation Stage will be full-time by Friday 28th August.

Any staggered return will be done alphabetically by surname across classes to ensure siblings can attend on the same days.

I hope to give you more information before school finishes on Friday.

Thank you for your continued patience and support during these very challenging times. It has been much appreciated.

Yours sincerely

Mrs R Ayres
Head Teacher