



The St. Bart's Multi-Academy Trust  
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### **St. Bart's Schools Covid response update**

Dear Parent / Carer

#### **Key Note:**

**St. Bart's Schools will continue to provide FSM for those who wish to take them throughout the summer holidays. We had already planned to deliver this ourselves but are pleased the government eventually saw common sense and will now fund the programme. Thanks to everyone who supported the campaign to reverse the decision. Further details will come from your school.**

I wrote to you a short time ago to make you aware that our schools would reopen for Reception, Y1 and Y6 pupils from the first of June. These groups, together with the children of vulnerable families and key workers have now been successfully operating in our schools for over two weeks and I wish to pay tribute to our Principals and staff for all their efforts in making this transition as safe and smooth as possible. I know from the many kind responses from parents and families that you appreciate all the hard work and organisation that has gone on to make this happen. The challenges have been significant but we have met them head on and found solutions to make things work for you and your children.

As we move forward we recognise that some challenges remain and that there is much more to do. However, I thought I'd highlight some successes where they have stood out. Our schools have gone the extra mile in the following ways:

- Our schools have worked tirelessly to provide free school meals and vouchers for our families, despite sometimes chaotic government guidance and management of the process. We will continue to do this throughout the summer.
- All schools have remained open throughout the pandemic for vulnerable children and children of key workers. This includes the traditional holiday periods and bank holidays.
- Home learning has taken on a whole new dimension, with on-line and other provision being maintained to the very best of our ability and resources. In this we have used and developed whole new systems of communicating with children and families, maintained regular contact and juggled the varied demands of keeping the schools physically open whilst developing the learning support for the home at the same time. With the additional demands of extra staffing

for the “bubbles” in school this has put a huge additional pressure on staff and I want to pay testimony to the fabulous teamwork seen across the Trust.

- The monumental effort to reorganise spaces, put in additional health and safety measures and co-ordinate the return itself has been fantastic. This is particularly so when put into the context of local and national uncertainty and indecision. Our “can do” approach has been incredibly impressive.

### **So, what next?**

Many of you are asking about whether your children can return to school and many are still concerned about safety. In answer to the former, we can only take as many children as our Risk Assessment allows. The government have set clear guidelines and that effectively caps the number of children because we only have so many spaces and so many staff. Many of these staff are tied up with maintaining home learning provision as well and this creates an increasing strain on our ability to manage these conflicting priorities. With numbers rising we will soon not be able to readmit any more children even if they are in groups who can “officially” come back as we will run out of space. As such, it is unlikely, if things remain unchanged, that other year groups will return before September. I apologise if this is a disappointment. It is certainly not our wish.

Our current provision has worked exceptionally well and we believe our children and staff are as safe as we can make them. Going forward government restrictions are likely to ease and when that is the case we will review provision. Many are speculating on what will happen in September, as yet we do not know. However, at some point all children will need to come back to school and I think all of us would want our lives to return to as near as normal as possible as soon as possible. Our children need to come to school, they deserve a first class education. However, it is grossly unfair of the government to suggest that the decision to open more widely is for individual school leaders to make on their own. We will continue to operate within the guidance as best we can. If the government wants this to change then they need to change the guidance and state clearly their intent.

Out of interest only I include a link below which shares the Dutch experience of bringing all their children back to school. I believe that if they can do this in Holland, we can do it too. As soon as the government gives the go ahead St. Bart’s schools will be fully open for your children. I also include the link to on line learning from the National Academy.

In the meantime, keep in contact, stay safe and keep in good spirits.

<https://www.tes.com/news/all-dutch-primary-pupils-are-back-school-heres-how>

<https://www.thenational.academy/>



With very best wishes,

Chris Brislen  
Chief Executive Office