



January 4<sup>th</sup> 2021

## January 5<sup>th</sup> Return to school

Dear Parents/Guardians,

I will start by wishing all within our school community a happy new year. Whilst these are challenging times, it is with hope that I look optimistically at what 2021 will look like as we go into the Spring and Summer. However, it is with an equal sense of realism that I recognise the huge challenges ahead of us during these winter months. With the media coverage throughout the Christmas holidays, we are sure that there is a heightened sense of anxiety amongst all parts of our community about returning to school this term. However, it is our intention to open as planned for the return of all pupils from Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> January. Below is an extract sent to all head teachers, from Mr Julian Wooster, the Director of Children's Services in Somerset.

**'To be clear there is no current scientific evidence that school transmission between children of the new variant is happening in Primary Schools, the risk remains the transmission between and from adults. The current rates of infection in Somerset do not as yet require this last resort measure'.**

### Reopening Plans and Risk Assessments

In order to maintain that our school is as safe as possible we continue to ensure the following essential control measures:

#### Prevention

1. Minimise contact with individuals who are unwell by ensuring that **those who have coronavirus symptoms**, or who have someone in their household who does, **do not attend school**;
2. The **use of face coverings** in school, where appropriate and necessary;
3. **Clean hands** thoroughly and more often than usual;
4. Ensure **good respiratory hygiene** by promoting the 'catch it, bin it, kill it' approach;
5. Maintain **enhanced cleaning regime**, including cleaning frequently touched surfaces often, using standard products such as detergents;
6. Minimise contact between individuals and **maintain social distancing** wherever possible;
7. Where necessary, wear **appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE)**;
8. Always keeping occupied **spaces well ventilated**

#### Response to any infection

9. Engage with **NHS Test and Trace** process;
10. **Manage confirmed cases** of coronavirus amongst the school community;
11. **Contain any outbreak** by following local health and protection team advice.

The details of how these control measures are applied and can be found in the plans and risk assessments on the website.

As well as embracing and moving forward with new control measures, we will all need to embrace control measures that have always existed with renewed rigour and stringency.

Headteacher	Matt Vella
Deputy Head	Cara Compton-Foster
Chair of Governors	Ed Pyke
Business Manager	Sharon Whatmore



These measures are in place with the aim of maintaining a safe school environment in order to remain open, however this will mean that school is likely to look different for this Spring Term, with even less movement than in the Autumn Term.

## **Responsibility of the Whole School Community**

It is also important to remind you of the part, as parents/guardians, you play in keeping our schools as safe as possible.

### **What to do if your child develops symptoms of COVID 19**

If your child develops symptoms of COVID-19, **you should organise for your child to be tested** via the [NHS online portal](#) or by calling 119. Your household should isolate until you receive the test results giving the all clear.

### **Symptoms of COVID 19**

The most common symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19) are recent onset of:

- new continuous cough and/or
- high temperature and/or
- a loss of, or change in, normal sense of taste or smell (anosmia)

**For most people, coronavirus (COVID-19) will be a mild illness.**

### **How to stop COVID-19 spreading**

There are things you can do to help reduce the risk of you and anyone you live with getting ill with COVID-19

Do:

- wash your hands with soap and water often – do this for at least 20 seconds
- use hand sanitiser gel if soap and water are not available
- wash your hands as soon as you get home
- cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or your sleeve (not your hands) when you cough or sneeze
- put used tissues in the bin immediately and wash your hands afterwards

It is obviously important to re-double efforts to **maintain COVID-secure environments as we are now in Tier 4**, including excellent hygiene practice, social distancing and face coverings at key times such as pick up and drop off. Please ensure that you are following **ALL TIER 4** guidelines when picking up and waiting for your children at the end of the day. I would also encourage you to take your child straight home once they have been dismissed from school. Whilst public parks are open, given the large amounts of pupils leaving the school, I do not consider this a safe and practical time for your child to use the park.



# St Michael's Academy

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Unfortunately we will have no school crossing patrol in place for the foreseeable future so please take extra care during the mornings and at the end of the day and speak to your child/ren if they currently walk to school alone.

The safety of the children and the staff at St Michael's remains paramount and we will continue to do all that we can to ensure that the risk of COVID-19 is reduced as much as possible. To date, we have had no confirmed cases of any pupils with COVID-19. However, one member of staff tested positive over the Christmas holidays and they are currently recovering at home. To reduce the risk even further, we have decided to reduce the numbers of pupils currently attending breakfast club and will not be operating any after school clubs. A member of the school office will contact you regarding the changes to breakfast club.

I am aware that many of you will have secondary age children who will not be returning to their school for a further few weeks. I must stress that the guidelines for older pupils is significantly different to that of younger ones.

Whilst we are expecting all pupils to return tomorrow, I am aware of many that will not. It is vital that we protect the most vulnerable and if someone in your household is considered clinically extremely vulnerable then I completely understand your decision to keep your child away from school at this current time. If you have decided to keep your child off for another reason other than the one stated above, then whilst your child's class teacher will upload work remotely, unfortunately we do not have the capacity for this to be monitored. We will not be able to provide any work packs for these pupils either. Please contact your child's class teacher via Class Dojo should you need to find out your child's password or login details.

I am aware that the current situation is an ever changing one and should our plans to open have to be altered at any point then I assure you that I will communicate this with you as efficiently as possible.

It is with sadness that I have to announce that Miss Molly McWilliams will be leaving St Michael's at the end of this week. Molly has secured a position at Evercreech Nursery and we wish her the best of luck for the future.

Wishing you all a safe and healthy 2021.

Yours sincerely

Mr M Vella  
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