



OUR LADY CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

The Diocese of Westminster Academy Trust A Catholic Academy
Old Hale Way, Hitchin, Herts, SG5 1XT

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Tel: 01462 622555

Head Teacher: Ciara Nicholson NPQH

20th May 2020

Staying safe in school during Covid-19

Dear Parents,

The Government has announced that schools should start planning to re-open to certain year groups from 1st June 2020 at the earliest, although this will depend on whether the rate of infection remains under control.

We understand that this is an anxious time for everyone and that our school community wants reassurance about the steps the school is taking to manage risks. The Diocese of Westminster Academy Trust takes its health and safety responsibilities very seriously and has produced a policy called 'Staying safe in school during Covid-19' which explains the approach we intend to take as the school re-opens in phases to our pupils. The policy is currently in its final stages of review and will be available on our website from the end of next week. We will notify you when it goes live.

This policy will be updated in line with our risk assessments and as new guidance is issued by the Government.

In order to reduce the risks of the infection spreading in school and in line with Government guidance, there will be a number of significant changes to school life. These will include the following changes:

- the way pupils are dropped off and collected from school such as staggered opening and closing times;
- smaller class / group sizes so that children are taught in a group of no more than 15;
- where we can keep children in small groups 2 metres away from each other we will do so. The Government's guidance accepts that this will **not always be possible** with younger children and states that they have taken that into account when deciding to bring back more children to early years and schools;
- children will stay in their new group wherever possible;
- classroom resources and equipment will be reduced so that classrooms are easier to clean;
- desks and seats will be separated so that children can distance inside the classroom;
- we will use outdoor space as much as possible and keep classrooms well ventilated.

This is not an exhaustive list but gives you an idea of the planning that is being done in order to re-open the school.

We will all have a role to play in helping to keep our school safe for everyone, which will be known as our 'staying safe' rules. More detail will be contained in our policy and in further communications to parents but some of the key points are explained in the following:





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For parents:



Do not send your child to school if they or anyone in your household is showing symptoms of the coronavirus. Guidance on the symptoms is available [here](#).

Stay at home and follow the self-isolating guidance available [here](#). Report your child's absence to the school.

Make arrangements for testing and notify the school about the outcome of the test/s.



Do not send your child to school if they or anyone in your household tests positive for the coronavirus.

Stay at home and follow the self-isolating guidance available [here](#)

Report test results to the school admin email without delay.



Avoid using public transport to come to school if possible. If this cannot be avoided, read the guidance on using public transport: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-safer-travel-guidance-for-passengers>



Follow the school's procedures for dropping off and collecting your child. These will be communicated to parents / carers separately.

In school:



We will be cleaning hands more often than usual by washing them thoroughly for 20 seconds with running water and soap and drying them thoroughly. If hand washing facilities are not available, we will use an alcohol based hand rub or sanitiser ensuring that all parts of the hands are covered. We will clean hands on arrival at school, before and after eating, and after sneezing or coughing (at a minimum).



Pupils will be encouraged not to touch their mouth, eyes and nose.

Use a tissue or elbow to cough or sneeze and use bins for tissue waste ('catch it, bin it, kill it').



We will be cleaning frequently touched surfaces more regularly. The school will be thoroughly cleaned at the end of each day.



We will minimise contact and mixing by altering, as much as possible, the environment and school life.

There will be many changes for our school community to get used to but I am confident that we can all work together and support one another as we gradually welcome back our pupils to school.

I hope that this letter provides some reassurance about the steps we are taking as we start to re-open our schools. If you have any questions, comments or concerns, please email them to COVID19responses@DOWAT.co.uk so that we can take your feedback into consideration as we continue to develop our plans as a Trust.

Yours faithfully

Tony Gorton

Chair of Governors at Our Lady School on behalf of the Diocese of Westminster Academy Trust

