



# St Mary's and St John's CE School

*"With God, all things are possible" (Matthew 19:26)*

Telephone: 020 8202 0026

Email: [office@smsj.london](mailto:office@smsj.london)

Website: [www.smsj.london](http://www.smsj.london)

Wisdom Service Hope

Principal: Martin Serrão BA, MEd (Camb)

22<sup>nd</sup> May 2020

Dear Parents / Carers,

As we draw towards the half-term break, we hope and pray that you and your families are all safe and well.

I would like to reiterate that our entire staff body at SMSJ have a genuine desire to see our children return to their classes as soon as it is safe to do so. We acknowledge the difference we make in the lives of our young people through our enthusiasm, caring attitudes, and love of learning. We also acknowledge that this difference is most effective when delivered when we are together with our children in school.

We have always accepted that teaching is one of the most complicated jobs but could not foresee just how complicated it could get and what would be asked of us.

Further to our previous letter of 14<sup>th</sup> May, we are preparing to welcome back some of our students in June.

Our Post Lock Down Plan is ready to facilitate a phased return for the recommended year groups and I am confident that we will be able to reduce risks to wellbeing, health and safety. However, I believe that we share a frustration around clarification on timescales, year groups and the measures which need to be in place. I hope to be able to provide this detail following the expected Government review due on 28<sup>th</sup> May.

***Our absolute priority is to keep students, staff and the community safe and to that end there will be no significant changes immediately after the half-term break.***

The week beginning 1<sup>st</sup> June we will be surveying parents and carers with children in the recommended year groups in order to assess how many of you are happy for your children to return to school. This information together with our staff survey, DfE and Union guidance will inform our risk assessment.

We will then make any necessary adjustment to the physical environment and class sizes required to further mitigate any risk. We hope to be ready to receive children in the specified year groups week beginning 15<sup>th</sup> June. We have currently spent in excess of £3,000.00 on PPE in preparation of re-opening which I hope will reassure you of the steps we are taking to make the environment as safe as possible.

You will have many questions that, as yet, we are not able to answer. We would urge parents/carers to read the latest government advice relating to schools ([click here](#)) including the overview of scientific advice ([click here](#)).

We wanted to reiterate our thanks to you for the amazing job you are doing to support your children with home learning during the lockdown. We know it is not easy balancing this with your own work and the rest of the everyday family activities so we cannot praise you enough for enabling our students to learn the best they can at home. Thank you also for the feedback you have provided which has enabled us to adjust home learning to allow a better work / life balance. We will continue to work with you to achieve this goal. We are also very grateful to our staff who remain fully committed to providing learning activities, supporting our most vulnerable students and sustaining relationships during social distancing.

If you are worried that your child is struggling with home learning at times (and you're struggling with it too) please remember this is to be expected. As teachers we know we will need to work doubly hard when everything is back to normal to help our children to catch up. We know that you are not teachers, you may not have access to enough devices for your children, that you all have different situations and may be juggling home learning with worrying about your own work. Even as teachers, we are struggling with home learning for our own children! It is also normal for your children to be getting upset, angry, or defiant. They will miss their friends, and the routines of school life.

Our advice would be:

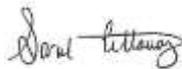
- Talk to each other and to us about your worries. We might not have the answers but we can listen to each other and support.
- If you have time, try doing open ended projects or activities like baking, or arts and crafts.
- Remember, your child's wellbeing is the most important thing. The children coming back to us happy and secure, with a sense of routine, is more important to us – and to their ongoing education – than them having done any particular piece of home learning.
- You may find it helpful to try emotion coaching. Barnet is providing free training for parents/carers and school staff to enable us all to learn more about how we can support the Social, Emotional and Mental Health of our children and young people. Please [click here](#) to reserve a place on the session which is taking place on 2<sup>nd</sup> June between 2pm and 3.30pm.
- We will be in touch again after half term as our plans for June become clearer. In the meantime, stay safe and well. If you need anything, please don't hesitate to get in touch via the office email.

Thank you as always for your patience and support which makes all the difference to us and we look forward to meeting as many of you as possible at the school gates when we re-open.

Yours faithfully,



Mr Serrão  
Principal



Mrs Pittaway  
(Acting Head of Secondary)



Mr Atkinson  
Head of Primary