



ST. THOMAS OF CANTERBURY C OF E JUNIOR SCHOOL  
“Realising the potential of every child within a caring, Christian community”

31<sup>st</sup> December 2020

Dear Parents/Carers,

### **RETURN TO SCHOOL - SPRING TERM 2021**

Please accept my apologies for writing to you on New Year's Eve. I am sure like me, many of you will be glad to see the back of 2020 and look forward with growing hope and optimism to a better 2021. This outgoing year has been dominated by the dreadful impact of COVID-19 which has touched us all in many different ways. However, with the news yesterday of a second approved vaccine let us hope and pray that soon coronavirus will be consigned to history and we can start returning to normality.

Yesterday, the Secretary of State for Education, Gavin Williamson, gave a statement in parliament regarding the return of primary and secondary schools in England for the start of the spring term 2021. In his statement he announced that, with case rates rising across the country and in order to help contain the community transmission of coronavirus (COVID-19), some restrictions to primary education settings are required in certain areas. These restrictions are in line with the Government's Contingency Framework for Education and Childcare Settings. The application of the contingency framework will apply to primary schools in areas of the country with very high rates of incidence or transmission of the virus. This includes much of Essex and the following districts and boroughs were specifically highlighted:

- Brentwood
- Epping Forest
- Castle Point
- Basildon
- Rochford
- Harlow
- Chelmsford
- Braintree
- Maldon

**Therefore, for schools in the above areas under the contingency framework, only vulnerable children and the children of critical keyworkers should attend school.** At St Thomas of Canterbury Church of England Junior School these restrictions will be in place from Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> January 2021 (Monday 4<sup>th</sup> January has already been designated as a remote learning day with no children attending school) and local measures will be kept under review and reviewed again by 18<sup>th</sup> January 2021. It is very much hoped that by this date there will be a full return to school for all children if it is safe to do so. This will be communicated to you as the Department for Education (DfE) guidance is updated.



## ST. THOMAS OF CANTERBURY C OF E JUNIOR SCHOOL

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From Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> January 2021 we will only allow children of [critical keyworkers](#) and those defined as [vulnerable](#) to attend school for face-to-face teaching. Please click on the blue hyperlinks for the qualifying criteria and definitions of critical keyworkers and vulnerable children.

Where a critical keyworker parent or carer notifies a school that their child requires full-time on-site provision, the school should make this available.

Vulnerable children are expected to attend full-time on-site provision where it is appropriate for them to do so. This should remain a priority for primary educational providers and local authorities.

**All other children must remain at home and high quality remote education will be provided via Google Classroom.**

### **Next Steps**

To assist us with our planning and provision for children of critical keyworkers and vulnerable children we kindly ask that parents/carers who deem that their children qualify under this category complete the questionnaire via the link below, preferably by **9:00a.m. on Monday 4<sup>th</sup> January 2021**. This will allow us to assess how many children will require on-site provision from Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> January 2021.

You do not need to complete this questionnaire if your child does not qualify.

<https://tinyurl.com/y9cxv4xc>

The timings of the school day for children of critical keyworkers and vulnerable children will remain as they are. Therefore, the staggered start/finish times will apply as below. This is to continue to protect the integrity of class bubbles both now and in preparation for the return of all children.

Year 3	Arrive- 8:30a.m.	Depart – 2:50p.m.
Year 4	Arrive – 8:40a.m.	Depart – 3:00p.m.
Year 5	Arrive – 8:50a.m.	Depart – 3:10p.m.
Year 6	Arrive – 9:00a.m.	Depart – 3:20p.m.

I can fully appreciate that this announcement will cause mixed emotions and a certain amount of difficulty and frustration for all involved. To find this out on 30<sup>th</sup> December and with the start of the new term just around the corner has given us little time to react and plan accordingly. However, I am confident that once again we will be able to rise to this challenge and ensure that both children attending school and those accessing remote learning from home will be very well catered for.

May I take this opportunity to wish you and your family a very Happy New Year!

Yours sincerely,

Mr Dean Moran - Headteacher