



## FAB Notes: Issue 6

Information from

Mrs Boucher

W/B Monday 22 June 2020

### INTRODUCTION

As well as keeping in touch via the Friday bulletin, from time-to-time I am penning some FAB notes (- this title refers to my initials, you realise...) so that I have another opportunity to communicate regularly with you all.

### KEEPING IN TOUCH (KiT)

We continue to distribute our Friday bulletins, occasional additional letters and weekly homework sheets from teachers throughout the partial school closure and wider school opening periods. Remember that, should you feel you have not received something that others talk/ text/ WhatsApp about, all this information is on the school website. This is the default place to look if you ever need any school information. The only exception to this will be when we have year or group specific information, such as letters targeting a year group or information purely for the groups in school currently.

### WIDER OPENNING

We are getting into our stride with the wider opening of St Mary's! We now have 108 children attending in some form, though not at the same time. Children have mainly been excited about coming back to school: we are building in plenty of time for nurture activities and reflecting, which we are terming our 'recovery curriculum'. Alongside this, many children seem keen to get on with their 'proper work' again!

Our staggered start/ finish each day is a mixed blessing: on the one hand, we are successfully minimising the numbers gathering together at each end of the day, but at the same time it is tricky to coordinate the bubbles for families with more than one child in school and also trying to time the working hours for staff. Bear with us as we review this aspect.

Please also be aware that, under our current plans, we are unable to receive a bubble into school if we have a staff absence. While we aim to be reliable to our parents, we have no ability to cover if a member of staff is unable to come to school – and I don't mean just due to Covid reasons: we would usually find ways on a 'normal' school day to cover a staff appointment, lateness due to unforeseen circumstances etc – but we are not able to do this at the moment. I wanted to flag this as I want parents to understand that they could receive a last-minute message from school asking for an early pick up for one bubble of children.

### PLANS FOR PHASE 3

We have a growing list of pupils who have shown interest in coming back to school in July, should phase 3 allow us to open even more widely. We will continue to review and keep parents informed of any possibilities of making such changes. In the meantime, some questions for you:

- **If** we can reserve a half day visit for Y2, Y3 and Y4 pupils not currently in school, would parents be keen to accept?
- Would parents be receptive to term finishing a week early for N, R and Y1 eligible pupils in order to facilitate time for transition exclusively for our Y5 and Y6 pupils in the last week?

We cannot promise either of the above options: should we be able to follow through on these ideas, remember that we would do so for the benefit of the wider school family. Any changes may understandably be shared at short notice, so please keep an eye on school messages.

### PLANS FOR SEPTEMBER

Each week I receive lots of useful information to review and use for forward planning. Within this, I get a daily digest of the latest guidance from the DfE. This is taken from today's update:

*Over the weekend, both Gavin Williamson and Boris Johnson have said that all pupils will return in September. Williamson said school is 'vital', and*

as a result, 'all children, in all year groups, will go back to school in September'. (He did not say full-time, but Johnson did.)

He promised that the government will publish further guidance in the next two weeks so 'schools have the maximum amount of time to prepare for the next phase of welcoming children back.'

He talked about expanding the current bubbles of 15 to bubbles of 30, which implies that any sort of social distancing within bubbles would have to cease.

It is hard to make a firm plan about September at this stage, but I think it may help parents to see the above points and know that considerations for different possible scenarios are taking place at our school: at the moment I have ideas about what we would do if in September we:

- 'go back to usual business'
- 'go back to usual business', but retain elements of social distancing – e.g. keep some staggering within the school day
- have all children back to school, but not fulltime, so that we continue with part-time attendance/ home learning – either through a 2-day on, 3-day off OR an alternate week in/ out of school model for pupils
- are not able to have all pupils back to school and need to continue with something similar to the current system

The first couple of bullet points are, however, among my preferred options! I'll keep you informed.

## NEW INTAKES

We are delighted to be looking forward to having our new Nursery and Reception pupils joining us in the new school year. Our current Y4 and Y5 pupils will no doubt be watching with interest, as these cohorts will become their Special Friends in the future! We are preparing videos to replicate visits into the classroom; we have written to the families and begun to supply information about our Early Years approach and practices.

## CHARITY SPONSORSHIP

Our support for the children's hospice, Bluebell Wood, comes to a close soon after a 2-year partnership. Thank you for all your contributions to date. We have a final push until the end of June! Whether at home or at school, we are hoping for a £1 donation from pupils to run/ walk up to a kilometre: across the trust, we are covering the distance between Rome and Roodsley, Derbyshire (the birthplace of St Ralph Sherwin). Thank you in advance for helping us with this.

## A THOUGHT...

Our individual experiences may be different. When discussing issues such as the easing of Lockdown, whether to return to school, to open up restaurants or keep the 2-metre (or 1+m) social distance rule it can be useful to remember that ...



## GOOD WISHES

We continue to keep everyone in our thoughts and prayers.

*Fionuala Boucher*

