



St. Margaret's
Preparatory School

BACK TO SCHOOL

A guide to a smooth and safe transition





MESSAGE FROM MRS MOSS

Dear Parent,

Thank you for your support since our return from the Easter break, during which time we have transitioned fully to online teaching and learning. I am very proud of how well our children have adapted quickly to this unfamiliar approach to learning. I am also very proud of the way our staff have risen to the challenge and for their commitment and creativity in delivering such excellent provision at such short notice.

As you will know, the Government has requested that we reopen our school to Nursery, Reception, Year 1 and Year 6 from 1st June. We are very pleased to reopen for these classes as we believe that children need their friends and the nurturing St Margaret's environment, and the classroom is definitely the best place for their education. We have given great consideration to opening other classes in addition to these but unfortunately, we are not permitted to deviate from the Government's directive. We are following the Department for Education's guidance closely as we prepare for reopening. These measures include teaching small classes or clusters of pupils (often referred to as 'bubbles'), social distancing in the school buildings as much as possible and an enhanced cleaning regime both at the end of the day and during the day – as well as regular and careful handwashing. We are currently making preparations to ensure that this is in place and I would like to assure you that we shall only reopen after completing a thorough risk assessment.

Although we understand it is not possible to eliminate all risk, schools that put the right precautions in place are considered to be very low risk environments for the coronavirus. Furthermore, we are also of the opinion that children's mental health and wellbeing can suffer in isolation so there are risks in children continuing to stay at home by themselves away from their peers for prolonged periods of time.

We have been working hard on our reopening plans and have decided it is prudent to have a shortened first day to ease the children back and show them the new classroom rules and systems. This is so that we can really ensure the safety of the children, gain confidence that all measures are working efficiently and that the children are introduced into this new way of working. The most important aspect of each day will be the social and emotional wellbeing of the children and that stands before the delivery of new curriculum. We are aware that the cognitive load for the children will be much higher in this new way of working and their overall mental health is our first consideration.

Consequently, the teaching and learning structure will not mirror a standard St Margaret's day at first. We understand there may be some children who cannot return to join their friends at school immediately, and we will work hard to provide online activities through Seesaw and Tapestry. These children, will, however, notice a difference in the structure of the tasks and the level of face-to-face provision, as we strive to care for the children in school.

We are really pleased to report that, following our recent survey, a large number of our parents in the year groups in question have indicated that they are keen to return their children to school. We would like to invite you to an online Q&A next week where we are very happy to answer any of your questions about our return.

Some of our sister schools in Switzerland and Vietnam have reopened recently. They report the joyful return of their young charges and we anticipate celebrating at the doors when our own pupils return. We look forward to a time when all our children can come back to St Margaret's; in the meantime, other year groups will continue with their current online learning programme.

Finally, I would like to clarify the school's position on fees for the rest of the Summer Term. Although we did communicate previously that once schools re-open we would revert to normal fees, we have decided to waive this for the remainder of the Summer Term for all pupils. The exceptional circumstances, the economic situation, and the value we place on our relationship with you – our St Margaret's community – means we have decided the existing discount will continue for this academic year. We hope that this, combined with the freezing of tuition fees for next year, will go some way to assisting you.

Thank you once again for your support of St Margaret's this Summer Term, and for your encouragement and feedback. As ever, please let me know if you have any questions.

Warmest wishes,

Mrs Carolyn Moss
Acting Headteacher

RE-OPENING

APPROACH & TIMELINE

In developing the plan for our return to school we have followed Government guidelines, listened to your views through our Parent Survey and built on learnings from other Cognita schools across the world.

The staggered return by year groups helps us to welcome the school community back through our doors in a safe, orderly and effective manner. The schedule for return is set out clearly below, together with new timings for the school day.

Monday 1st June will be a settling in day for the pupils as we welcome them back to school, familiarise them with the new procedures in school and ensure we are able to seamlessly provide for their needs.

Timings for Monday 1st June

Year	School Day	Drop Off	Pick up
Nursery	0945-1345	9030-0945	1345-1400
Reception	0930-1400	0915-0930	1400-1415
Year 1	0915-1400	0900-0915	1400-1415
Year 6	0930-1415	0915-0930	1415-1430
Key Worker	0900-1430	0845-0900	1430-1445 * (to be individually discussed)

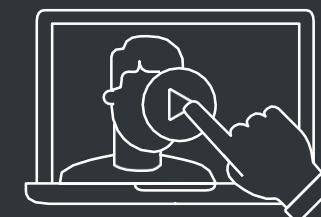
Years	Date of return	School day	Drop off	Pick up
Nursery	Tuesday 2nd June	0930 – 1445	0915 - 0930	1445 - 1500
Reception	Tuesday 2nd June	0915 - 1500	0900 - 0915	1500 - 1515
Year 1	Tuesday 2nd June	0900 - 1500	0845 - 0900	1500 - 1515
Year 6	Tuesday 2nd June	0915 - 1515	0900 - 0915	1515 - 1530
Key Worker children	Tuesday 2nd June	0845 - 1530	0830 - 0845	1530 - 1545
Years 2-5	TBC	TBC		

A COMBINED TRANSITION TO TEACHING & LEARNING

As a school we are committed to balancing the needs of both the students in our physical classrooms and also those who remain in our virtual classrooms.

To do this we will:

- Continue the online educational provision for students who are not yet in the 'returning' year groups
- Provide online resources and support for those students who are unable to return to school for the time being despite being in the 'returning' year groups
- Please note this will be on a 'best endeavours' basis. Our teachers are now focused on caring for and teaching the children in school as well as considering the needs of the whole class, so their capacity to also provide online teaching for these year groups is limited.



NEW GUIDANCE DURING THE SCHOOL DAY

We will all have to adapt our behaviour during the school day to ensure everyone's safety.

SOCIAL DISTANCING IN THE CLASSROOM

We are following the government advice: ...*early years and primary age children cannot be expected to remain 2 metres apart from each other and staff.*

We know young children will not stay apart whilst playing, especially after not seeing each other for such a long time. To mitigate the risk we are following the advice that students are split into 'micro-classes' or 'bubbles'.

We have set a maximum of 15 in line with Government guidance, but some classes will, of course, be smaller. This means that students will stay within their class group for the whole day, including at lunch and breaks and will not use the Science Lab, Music Room etc nor mix with the other parallel class.

We are aiming for children to be with their normal class teacher in their normal room, with the exception of Year 6. They will have a newly designed curriculum and be split into two new groups based on their friendship preferences.

BREAK TIMES

Break times will be carefully managed to avoid classes mixing both in terms of moving out to play and whilst outside. It's not something we do happily as playtime is a key part of learning, but it is a significant risk mitigation.

MOVING AROUND SCHOOL

We will be operating a one-way system to manage the flow of people around the building. We have added signage and floor markings to help everyone maintain social distancing.

PERSONAL HYGIENE

We will continue to urge children to regularly wash hands just as we did pre-lockdown. We have enough bathrooms to support this. Extra supplies of soap and paper towels have been purchased. You can help by reminding your children of the need to regularly wash their hands for 20 seconds by singing happy birthday twice.

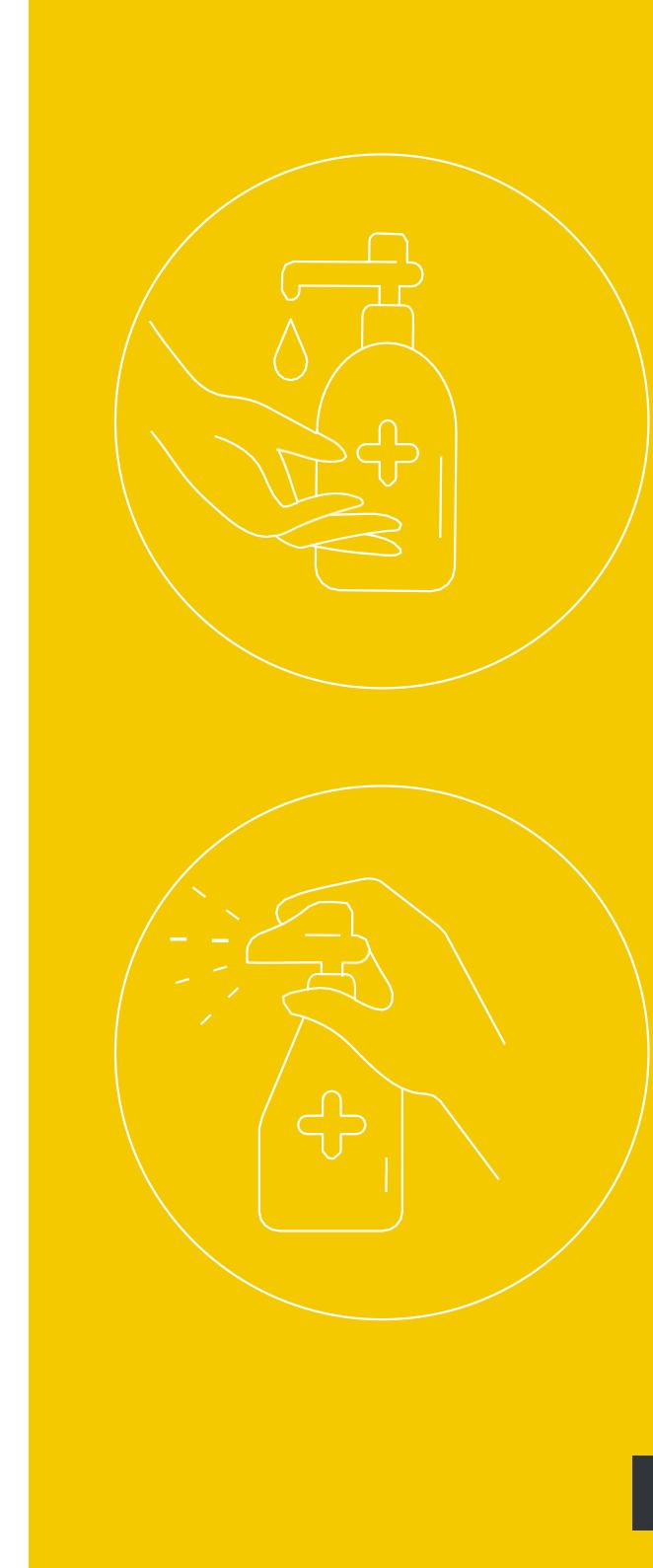
OTHER GUIDANCE

We are aware that you may wish to increase the washing frequency of your child's clothes. To assist, we are asking for the children to wear:

- their school uniform on Mondays and Wednesdays
- PE kit on Tuesdays and Thursdays
- Friday will be a non-uniform day.

We do not wish to have blazers, hats or puffer jackets in school as these are hard to wash items.

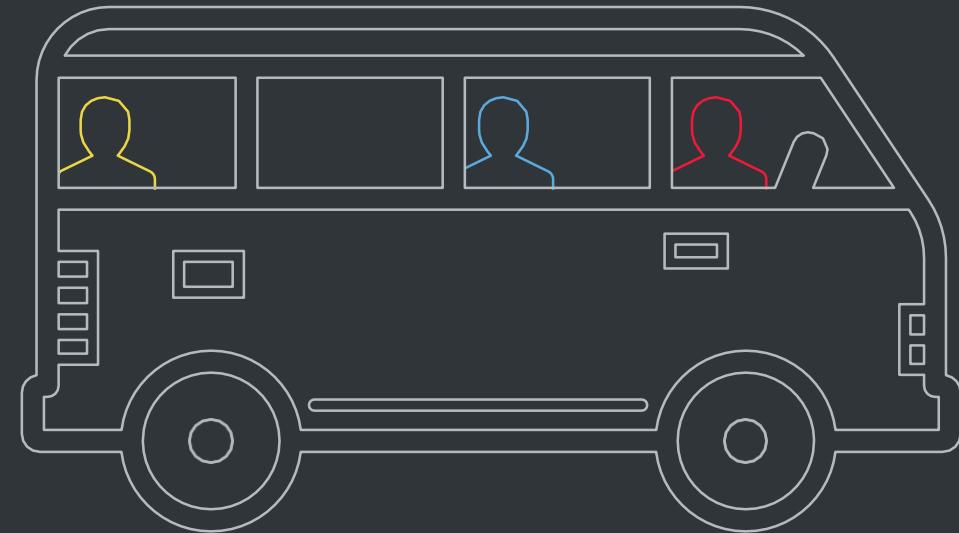
The children will be provided with stationery and writing paper in school (individual supplies, not shared) and reading books will not go home. As a consequence, homework will be a practical task such as cooking or playing with Lego at home, in order to reduce any potential infection.



SCHOOL SERVICES

Transport

- Please follow drop off and pick up times carefully. They are designed to avoid congestion.
- We have introduced the following system to limit social contact during these times: Year 6 and Key Worker parents should operate a "kiss and drop" in the Staff Car Park and the pupils will need enter through the clearly marked doors.
- Y1, Reception and Nursery parents are asked to park in the first car parks at their allocated time and follow the clear "in and out" paths to the classrooms.
- At no time will any parents be permitted to enter the school building.
- We would ask that only one parent does the drop off and pick up, and that you kindly leave the site as soon as possible.
- School buses will run to an amended schedule - and those families will be contacted separately. Buses will run with an 'empty seat' policy and be cleaned before and after use.



Catering:

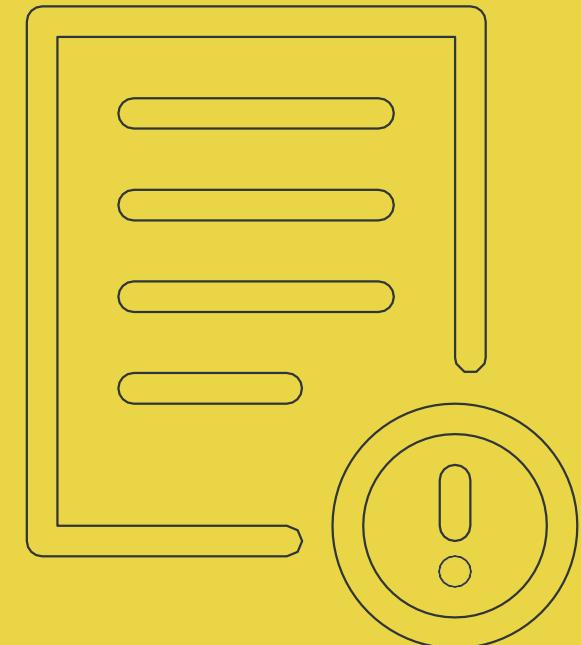
- We request that all children bring in packed lunches and water bottles.
- Lunch will be consumed in classrooms in their 'bubbles' or outside if the weather is fine.
- Please consider the allergies of other children and avoid packing nuts or seeds into the lunches, no fizzy or energy drinks are allowed but treats are encouraged!
- Please continue to provide snacks for breaktime and a named water bottle and ensure your child has enough water for the whole day.

Extra-Curricular:

- We will not be offering before and after school care for the time being, although we are eager to offer this service as soon as is feasible
- There will be no extra-curricular clubs or events such as sports fixtures
- Extra-curricular activity is an important part of the educational experience and we hope to return to a normal schedule as soon as Government guidance allows

PARENT GUIDE AT A GLANCE

1. Talk to your child about the new measures in this guide
2. Take note of any changes to the timings of the school day for your child
3. Please provide a packed lunch for your child until further notice
4. We will survey you in the middle of half term to ascertain your decision for June 1st.



FAQS



WHAT IS YOUR CLEANING REGIME?

We have always delivered robust daily cleaning regimes during early morning and evening times and will now be adopting additional cleaning during the school day with particular focus on bathrooms and high-touch common areas. On Friday evenings we will carry out a weekly enhanced clean of the school.

In the instance of a confirmed COVID19 case we do a deep clean which includes all surface areas. In all cases we use coronavirus approved disinfectant products and our cleaners have ordered sufficient stock.

WHAT'S YOUR POLICY ON VISITORS?

Visitors are welcome to the school but are required to book in advance and we will be following social distancing guidelines.

Visitors will need to park in the Courtyard and wait to be admitted to the Office.

As parents you are always welcome to contact us and arrange a (socially distanced) face to face meeting. Please do not enter the school building but use email and phone the Office if you would like to talk to your child's teacher.

WHAT IF I CHOOSE NOT TO SEND MY CHILD BACK TO SCHOOL?

We understand that some parents and students may be wary about physically returning to school and we will do our best to deliver a suitable level of online provision for these students. We will be delivering a cross-curricular timetable for Year 6 pupils and this will look significantly different to usual. Resources will be placed on Seesaw for the pupils to access each day.

This has to be on a 'best endeavours' basis as we look to balance a lower number of staff across an increased number of classes as a result of limiting the number of students in each class.

HOW ARE YOU RECORDING ABSENCE OF PUPILS WHEN SCHOOL RE-OPENS?

If you choose not to send your child back to school for the time being, for those in the 'returning' year groups, this will be recorded as an 'Authorised Absence'.

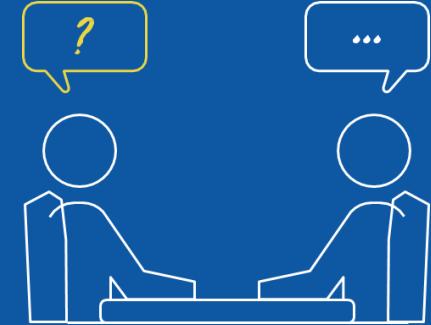
WILL CHILDREN AND STAFF BE EXPECTED TO WEAR FACE COVERINGS ON SITE?

No. This is the Government advice: *Wearing a face covering or face mask in schools or other education settings is not recommended.*

Face coverings are primarily worn to prevent the wearer from spreading the virus rather than catching it. Primary age children are likely to be distracted and discomforted by the wearing of such an item and cannot be expected to do so safely.

If a student or member of staff wishes to wear a face covering, then they will be allowed to do so. We request they follow guidance on the safe method of using and when removing it should be placed carefully into a sealed plastic bag.

FAQS



WHAT IS THE EMPHASIS OF EACH DAY?

The most important aspect of each day is to ensure the mental wellbeing and safety of the children whilst reintroducing them to their school friends. We will take plenty of time to talk to, and listen to, the children as they express how they feel about the current situation.

As a result, the curriculum will be adapted accordingly and, at least at first, educational progress will take second place to wellbeing and care,

WHAT'S YOUR POLICY ON PARENTS COMING INTO SCHOOL?

At this time, parents are not permitted to enter the school buildings by the routes used by the pupils. We would strongly encourage you to phone or email any queries to the relevant staff.

HOW WILL YOU ENSURE APPROPRIATE BEHAVIOUR?

The induction day (1st June) will be used to ensure the pupils are aware of appropriate behaviour and this will be modelled through role play and discussion. If a pupil is not able to engage with this in an age appropriate way, we will discuss next steps with parents in order to protect the safety of our whole school community. All children will have to understand the importance of social distancing in older years and that you are sure parents will work with us to make sure that all children adhere to the guidance as safety cannot be compromised.

WHAT IF I DECIDE I WANT MY CHILD TO RETURN AFTER 1ST JUNE?

When you are surveyed next week (see What Next? below) we ask that, if you have indicated your child will not return, you keep to that decision for the first week back. We will contact you by phone on Thursday 4th or Friday 5th June to ascertain your intentions for the week commencing Monday 8th June.

WILL THE SCHOOL FEES DISCOUNT BE REMOVED?

No. Although we did communicate previously that once schools re-open we would revert to normal fees we have decided to waive this for the remainder of the Summer Term.

The exceptional circumstances, the economic situation, and the value we place on our relationship with you – our parent community – means we have decided the existing discount continues for this academic year. The fee freeze for next year remains too.

WHAT DOES MY CHILD BRING IN EACH DAY?

- Packed lunch, water bottles snack in a washable or disposable bag.
- Any feminine hygiene products in a zip bag as needed.
- Glasses and any medication (to the Office).
- A raincoat only if the weather forecast is poor.
- 8-hour suncream applied before school and sunhat (named) brought in.
- PE kit is not needed on uniform / home clothes days.

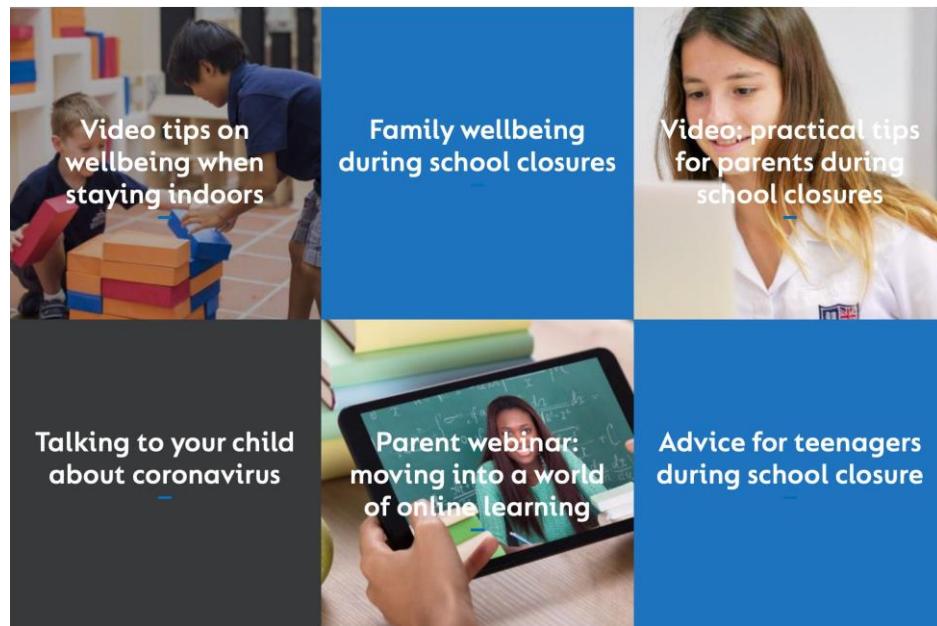
WHAT NEXT?

- You will receive an email inviting you to an online Q&A session with Mrs Moss and the staff where we can further outline the work we are doing to prepare for the return.
- The children will receive a video next week showing them how school looks now.
- You will be asked to complete a survey giving your intentions for June 1st so that we can make final plans.
- We will be available to answer any final queries.
- We look forward to welcoming you back on June 1st.

WELLBEING

The transition back to school will still be a challenge for all of us trying to adjust to a new way of 'being', coping with fear of the unknown and in some cases balancing a mix of online and face to face learning. The wellbeing of our students, parents and teaching staff is our highest priority and we are lucky to be part of Cognita who have been able to provide lots of resources to support our school communities since the start of the lockdown.

This includes live webinars with our education experts, podcasts, and a series of videos and resources on wellbeing in these strange times for both students and parents. Members of our parent community have even shared how they have coped with lockdown. This evolving set of content can all be found at www.cognita.com



POSITIVE FEEDBACK

It was great to hear some of your feedback about how the school responded during lockdown. **Here are a few of the comments that make us feel proud.**

"I am really happy with the level of support my child is getting, it is an ideal and achievable balance of online/ live interaction and video tutorials so we can complete his learning tasks around the timetable if we need to!"

"My daughter has enjoyed schooling online and the structure to her day. She misses her teachers and school life but enjoys the work and adds her own tasks to stretch her day."

"I think the teachers are doing an amazing job at providing our children with continuity in their learning. It is clear they are all working really hard through these challenging times."

"Really pleased with how children are being taught and supported. This is not home schooling but remote learning at its best."

"I'd like to thank all of the teachers - you are doing a fantastic job in these very unusual circumstances."