



Cardinal Newman Catholic Primary School

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19th June, 2020

Dear Parents

I'd like to start this week with some **thank yous** to some of our "super hero" parents who have supported us so magnificently this week. To save your blushes, you shall remain nameless but you know who you are!

- **The parent who kindly delivered four bales of straw to Mr Philp's drive, to help us prevent a procession of cars being "stuck in the mud" on our field!**
- **The parents who, already being DBS-checked for school, have volunteered to step in and help in our "bubbles" as an additional adult when we are short-staffed**
- **The parent who has sent a generous donation to the school, to support our vulnerable children and families**
- **The very many parents who have kindly sent emails, cards and goodies to staff to show their support in this challenging situation**

We are very grateful for all your kindness and support – it makes a great deal of difference at a difficult time. Thank you!

Our thanks too to all the families whose children are not yet back in school. You are doing a great job. We have received some really fantastic work in school this week from children who are working hard at home with the support of their family. Some of the Year 3 "Troll" writing was particularly impressive and we have published some of these on the website [here](#). Well done to all our children who are working so hard – I have sent out Headteacher's Awards to some of you this week. Keep up the great work!

Nevertheless, every single day this week, I have spoken to several families who are finding things really challenging at home. Every member of staff who is making phone calls is reporting the same. These are not families who usually struggle; these are families who are struggling because of the intolerable burden placed upon them. Many children are missing regular social contact with their friends and that is causing anger, frustration and great stress in the household. Motivation can be difficult without the support of their peer group. If this is a picture of your household, you are not alone! We understand these frustrations and stresses and we have done everything we can to get the maximum number of children into school. Our hands are tied by the guidance we have to operate under at present and that is incredibly frustrating to all of us. There is nothing we would like more than to have all of our children back in school. Thank you for your patience and your persistence in supporting your children while we await that time. Let us pray it will not be too far off!

Planning Ahead

There is a great deal of talk in the media about the possibility of changing the social distancing guidance from 2m to 1m. In principle, this sounds as if it should mean we can have more children into school, but in practice, it doesn't! The guidance for Primary schools states that we can have 15 children in a bubble and should social distance where possible. At Cardinal Newman, as at the other Xavier schools, we already have the maximum number of children in each bubble and we don't have 2m between desks because it isn't possible with our classrooms. Changing the distance to 1m will not enable us to have more children as we are already at the maximum.

We are keen for wider changes: a change in the maximum number in a bubble; or a change in the guidance which currently says that we cannot have rotas; and a change to the rule that we cannot have children sharing places on a part-time basis. Any (or all!) of these changes would make a big difference to our capacity – indeed we had a plan in place to enable all children to return on a part-time basis, prior to the national guidance being finalised and stopping us from supporting more children. Of course, everything we do must be done with the safety of staff and children in mind and so we will wait for a wider change in the guidance. Meanwhile we are pulling out all the stops to enable Year 6 to come back in for the final week of term and I will be writing to Year 6 parents separately next week once all the details have been finalised.

Looking towards September, we are planning for (not promising, but planning for) a full reopening to take all of our children back. We couldn't do this under the current guidance and we hope (but cannot guarantee) that this guidance will change. At present we have very positive staff who are really keen to have our school community back together again and we know from speaking to many parents that there is a great appetite for fuller reopening among our parent body. It would be really helpful for us to be able to put percentages on how many children would come back if we were fully open in September and to that end we are sending out a short survey to ask parents their thoughts. Please do fill it in – the link is here

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1XzBh0f159jltDxdqAhJutZc5wxFwZSsPMoXIPq1io94/edit>

Your opinions will help to inform our position and support our argument for fuller opening in the local and national debate. Thank you for your help with this.

Hall Extension

I am excited to be able to share that we have appointed a contractor to undertake the hall extension project and the first phase of this will begin as soon as school breaks up in July. There will, of course, be complications caused by the current climate, but we are delighted to be able to go ahead despite the difficulties.

Thank you to all of you for your support for the project so far. Our current total for Governor fundraising stands at: £78,093 towards our £150k target and both Governors and the PA will be keen to get fundraising back up and running when it's possible to do so. We know the current financial situation is uncertain for many, but a couple of parents have asked about the Buy a Brick scheme again in recent days, so a form is included in this mailing if you would like to participate.. The tender bids have come in predictably higher than anticipated and we are working hard to reduce the cost as much as possible to deliver the best value. We will keep you posted on the progress of the project!

We wish you all a very happy weekend. All best wishes

Catherine Burnham

Headteacher's Awards for Home Learning:

Well done for all your hard work! Your awards are on their way!

Arianna (Y6), Jack E (Y6), Jemima (Y4), Julietta (Y4), Varshini (Y3), Carlos (Y3), Melodie (Y3), Samuel H (Y3) and Brume (YR)

Headteacher's Awards for children in school:

Joshua (Y4), Alex (Y4), Kuba S (YR), Olivia G (YR)