

Frequently Asked Questions about Returning to School in September

St Michael's - updated

Do I have to send my child back to school when it opens?

We have worked hard to make sure that the school is as safe as it can be. We know that not being in school can be very damaging for children and want to reassure you that our priority is the health and safety of our children and staff.

The government requires that parents send their children back to school full time in September and has said that fines will be issued if parents do not send children back to school.

If you have serious concerns about your child returning to school and need some support, please contact the school. We can put extra support in place to help.

Do children have to wear uniform?

Yes. Children are expected to wear uniform. Look at the school's website for more information. We are understanding that some items may be harder to buy and children may not be able to get full uniform immediately upon return. Your child will not be reprimanded for this.

The government have now advised that clean uniform should be worn and that normal washing processes are acceptable. No other precautions are recommended now.

What is a "bubble"?

The government guidance states that it is preferable to keep children in a class bubble. By keeping children in a consistent group with little mixing across the school, they are more protected against the virus. Staff and children have to keep to small consistent groups or bubbles, but staff can go into other bubbles if they keep their distance.

Each class will have their allocated classroom and a group room for interventions to take place in. There will be no need to move around the school.

When we know that the risks of the virus have reduced significantly, we may increase our bubble size to that of a year group.

Will the school day start and finish at the same time as before?

No, not necessarily. We will need to stagger children's arrival and exit from the school site. We will operate a window between 8.30 and 9.00am for children to arrive.

Year 3 children will be brought outside at the end of the day to the angel carving between 3.05 and 3.10pm.

Other year groups will leave between 3.15 and 3.20pm to ease congestion.

Will Angels' Out of School Club be available for childcare before and / or after school?

We will operate a small before and after school club. If you are a working parent and require the club, please contact the school office who will take some details.

The government says that children don't have to socially distance all the time. How will this work?

Young children may find distancing difficult. Added to that if the government maintained the 2m rule in school, we would need a school 3 times bigger than the one we have! We will set up classrooms to ensure that desks are facing the front as per government guidelines. The adults will distance from the children and will be told not to get close to their teacher. When they're learning or playing outside, social distancing will be very difficult to maintain. However, they will be in the open air and this will help to minimise the risk to them and others. Not all children will be outside at one time so there will be lots of space to play in and this will also reduce the number of other bubbles children come into contact with.

What curriculum will the school be offering?

We know that the children may be a little out of practice with their school work. Don't worry! We are expecting that and will ease them back in to school life again. We will go back to a full, well-balanced curriculum soon, but we will also be focusing on wellbeing, physical activity and keeping ourselves and others safe. Most importantly, we will be reassuring the children that school is ready to reinforce or revisit any aspects of the curriculum they may have forgotten.

Will I be able to take my child into the classroom?

No. Parents will not be able to go into the classroom or come into school.

Will more than one person be able to drop off / pick up?

No. The government guidance is that only one adult should drop off or pick up. We would ask that younger / older siblings aren't brought onto the site unless there is no other option. The government also encourage walking or cycling. You are not permitted to car share or bring other families outside your family bubble to school in the car. You are advised not to travel with other household groups.

What if I have to speak to a member of staff about something?

A member of staff will be waiting outside the school to greet the children. If you need to arrange a meeting or a longer chat, we will try to facilitate this by phone where possible. No unplanned meetings will take place on the school site and no visitors will be allowed in school.

Can my child bring their phone to school in September?

No. Phones are not permitted in school. Any child who has a phone will be asked to hand this in and a parent will need to collect it. This is a change in school policy due to difficulties with some children's behaviour. Please help us by not allowing your child to bring their phone.

What if I have to go to the office?

The office will be open, but the glass shutters will be almost completely shut to help safeguard the office team. There will be a maximum of one person allowed into the enclosed reception area at any one time.

Will I be able to chat to parents on the school site?

Yes for a short time and maintaining social distance. However, we will be encouraging people to leave the site as soon as they've dropped off. Please be aware of current government social distancing advice.

Will my child be able to play around the school site before and after school?

No. Please do not arrive early for drop-off or pick-up and please leave quickly. The site will be locked soon after the end of the school day to minimise the risk of different groups of children coming into contact. We cannot allow for parents congregating at the front of the school without maintaining social distancing.

Will staff be wearing PPE, i.e. face masks, face coverings, eye protection etc.?

Staff will definitely wear PPE to administer first aid and intimate care. They will also wear PPE if a child displays symptoms of Covid-19 and is awaiting collection. In certain circumstances a member of staff may wear a face visor.

Should children wear face coverings in school?

No. According to government guidance, face coverings have to be put on and taken off very carefully. If children don't know how to do this and do it incorrectly, they can actually increase their infection risk. Recently there has been a lot of publicity about high school children wearing face coverings in areas where there are local restrictions. As we do not fall into these groups, you do not need to send your child with a face covering.

How will toilets operate?

Although we have plenty of toilets we will show the children how to use them safely so that they maintain their personal space. Toilets will be cleaned throughout the day.

How will hygiene be maintained?

There will be lots and lots of hand washing. There will be very careful cleaning throughout and at the end of the day. We will be teaching children about good hygiene when coughing and sneezing. School staff will be cleaning touch points and toilets during the day. Playground and PE equipment will also be cleaned after use.

What about cross contamination from the usual classroom equipment?

Children will be provided with their own personal equipment as far as we can. Other equipment will be cleaned thoroughly before anyone else uses it. Children will not be able to share equipment across bubbles unless it is washed/cleaned in between times.

How will school lunches be managed?

At St Michael's children can bring their own lunches. We will also be providing good quality packed lunches or a hot option if we can and these can be ordered in the usual way through Parent Pay. The children will eat either outside or in their classroom depending on the weather. The children will not eat in the school hall as this will go against government guidance on shared spaces and crossing bubbles.

What will happen if children show symptoms of Covid-19 at school?

A child showing symptoms will be immediately taken to a designated room by an adult. That adult will put on full PPE, as per government guidance and wait with the child until they are collected. Government guidance will be subsequently followed to minimise the risk to staff and pupils. Anyone showing symptoms of Covid-19 will be able to be tested. A positive test will mean that child's bubble group may need to self-isolate for 14 days. You will need to engage with the Government's Test, Track and Trace system.

What should we do if our child or a member of our household shows symptoms of Covid-19?

The guidance says that the person showing the symptoms needs to self-isolate for 10 days. The rest of the household has to self-isolate for 14 days. The child must not come to school and you must let the school know that the child has symptoms.

What will happen to the rest of the class if a child has a confirmed case of Covid-19?

The rest of the class, including the adults, may have to self-isolate for 14 days. The school will immediately provide each child with school work to do at home and will make contact with the child daily.

Will all children go out to play at the same time?

Break times and lunchtime play will be staggered to reduce contact. 'Bubbles' of children will play in a designated space as far as possible.

Will reading books be sent home?

Yes, we will introduce a safe system for taking out books and collecting them in again.

Do I have to collect my child from school?

Your normal collection routines are acceptable. We ask parents to decide on a collection point that is socially distanced from others, to avoid congestion. Year 3 parents may come onto the school site between 3.00 and 3.10pm and we ask all other parents to either come onto the school site after that or arrange to meet their child outside of school at an agreed place.

Years 4 and 5 children will leave the school via the gate near the angel carving.

Year 6 children will leave via the side gates alongside the footpath.

Will school events like educational visits and parent-teacher meetings take place as usual?

We will try to organise all the usual events as soon as we are able. We may be able to use Zoom for parent meetings!

Will there be volunteers or visitors in school during the autumn term?

No, not at first. Only essential visitors will be allowed into the building.

What will happen if a child does not behave safely and respectfully?

We have revised our Behaviour and Relationship Policy in order to keep everybody safe. Please support us by talking to your child about the need to behave well, maintain good hygiene, not spit, scratch or do anything else that might threaten the well-being and safety of others. We will need to ask parents to collect children who do not respect this.

My child or someone in our household is considered 'clinically vulnerable' or 'clinically extremely vulnerable'. What do I do?

Please read the government guidance for further information.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/actions-for-schools-during-the-coronavirus-outbreak/guidance-for-full-opening-schools>

I still have unanswered questions. What do I do?

In the first instance, please refer to the DfE guidance for parents and carers:

If your question has not been answered here, email the school office at stmoffice@allangelsfederation.org.uk. We will do our best to help you, but it may take a few days to respond. If your question is one that other parents might have, we will add it to this document along with an answer – if we can!