**St Albert's Catholic Primary School**

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Headteacher Mrs L McEvoy

*“Walking together with Jesus to Love, Learn and Serve”*

Monday 16th March 2020

Dear Parents/Carers,

This letter aims to update you on our preparations within school in response to the spread of Coronavirus (Covid 19) as of 11.30 am on 16th March 2020 . Updates from the Department for Education, Knowsley Council and Public Health England have been used as a basis for our planning. We recognise that this will be a worrying time for you all and would like to assure you that comprehensive plans are in place in school.

Currently, there are no school closures in Knowsley and the Local Authority will continue to advise schools of actions in line with Government recommendations. St Albert’s is still **OPEN.** Please continue to look at the school website for updates.

Firstly, I would like to thank you all for remaining calm and vigilant during this difficult time and I would ask for your continued help in making sure that our school community keeps safe and calm.

**What is the current situation?**

* The **school remains** **open** – this is the current official guidance that we have been given.
* All school functions continue to run as normal while we have the staff in place to do so – if there are any changes / cancellations relating to Breakfast Club or After-School clubs, a message will be sent out via text.
* We have, however, made the decision (**as of 1pm today**) to cancel any non essential visits to school and staff have been instructed to not attend any non-essential meetings offsite.
* Pupils should attend school unless they feel unwell – if your child has any of the following symptoms they should remain at home for **7 days**:
* **a new, continuous cough and/or**
* **a temperature**
* If your child is unwell, please report this as you would normally by calling the school before the start of the school day.
* If you are self isolating your children, please follow the guidance and ensure that they do not come into contact with others. This should be reported to school and children should not return until the isolation period is over.

**What we have been doing to protect and support pupils and staff**

* All children have had additional lessons about hygiene
* We continue to discuss with the children how to deal with their worries and we will continue to talk to your children about Coronavirus in an age appropriate way in order to minimise their anxiety and avoid misunderstanding.
* All children have been shown how to wash their hands thoroughly using Public Health England recommended videos. We will continue to encourage our children to wash their hands at regular intervals throughout the day for 20 seconds using soap and water.
* You may like to discuss the following child friendly terminology with the children and they should be able to show you how they use it to help them clean their hands thoroughly

(wet, soap, pray, pet the dog, butterfly, milk the cow, church steeple, spider, sleeves, rinse and dry)

* Our standard cleaning processes will continue but are also taking extra precautions within our cleaning arrangements and making sure that frequent contact points such as door handles are cleaned regularly. Our Cleaning Provider has assured us that plans are in place to provide an enhanced or deep clean quickly when required.

**What we need you to do**

* If you’ve recently changed your contact details, please inform the school office **as a matter of urgency**
* Talk to your children about the coronavirus. It is a scary time and we should make sure children feel supported. [BBC Newsround](https://www.bbc.co.uk/newsround#more-stories-2) has regular updates for younger children and [YoungMinds](https://youngminds.org.uk/blog/what-to-do-if-you-re-anxious-about-coronavirus/) has practical steps older children can take to help with anxiety
* Come and collect your child straight away, if we ask you to (we will contact you if they become ill with either a temperature or a new, continuous cough)
* Check that your child has access to any IT programs (Log ins etc) that the school uses from home, and let us know if there are any issues. We need you to do this so we can make sure we are well prepared for remote learning if the school does need to close at some point. We are currently working on this and all information will be on our website within a few days.

**Signs and Symptoms of COVID-19**

* Coronavirus is a virus that is spread through close contact with an infected person. The incubation period for the virus is 2 – 14 days. This means that if a person remains well after 14 days of contact with an infected person it is unlikely they have been infected.
* The following symptoms may develop in the 14 days after contact with someone who has COVID-19 infection:
	+ **new** continuous cough
	+ fever (raised temperature)
* Generally, these infections can cause more severe symptoms in people with weakened immune systems, older people, and those with long-term conditions like diabetes, cancer and chronic lung disease. There is no evidence that children are more affected than other age groups – and it is important to remember that very few cases have been reported in children so far.
* If you or a family member present with these symptoms the advice of health professionals is to self-isolate for 7 days, as far as possible. After 7 days, if anyone is still unwell, then seek medical advice from NHS online https://111.nhs.uk . If you cannot access the online advice, then ring NHS 111. If symptoms worsen during your self-isolation, seek prompt medical advice.
* If children feel better after 7 days and no longer have a temperature, they can return to school. The guidance does say that a cough may persist for several weeks in some people, despite the coronavirus infection having cleared.

**What happens if the school has to close?**

We will only close if we have either officially advised to do so or we do not have enough staff to run the school.

In either case, we will:

* Send out a text to all parent/carers and post on our website (http://stalbertsprimary.co.uk) and Twitter account (@StalbertsRc)
* Set work for pupils via the school website or IT platforms – class teachers will post work appropriate to their pupils via these platforms
* Send home a selection of books / activities
* Send out texts and update our website and Twitter page with all relevant updates to keep you informed of plans to re-open.
* Please keep in mind that we are only sending out this information to help the school community prepare. There are currently **no plans to close**.

**If you have any questions**

Please consult the:

* School office, if you have any questions about the school’s response to this issue
* [NHS](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/), if you want to know more about the symptoms of coronavirus. If you think you or your child may have the symptoms, use [NHS 111 online](https://111.nhs.uk/covid-19) if at all possible before calling 111
* Department for Education’s coronavirus helpline: 0800 046 8687, if you have any questions about the government’s response to coronavirus in relation to schools
* Government’s [travel advice](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/travel-advice-novel-coronavirus), if you want to know whether any upcoming trip or holiday you’re taking abroad should go ahead

We are well aware that this is a challenging time and many of you may be worried or anxious for your children and families and also about the impact this will have on our community. I would ask that you remember that we are all in the same position and that in the days and weeks to come, please remember to stay calm and be kind to each other – you may want to make an extra effort to contact any vulnerable people in our community (particularly the elderly) who may have no other support and may already be feeling isolated.

Thank you, as always, for your support.

Yours sincerely,

**Mrs L McEvoy**

(Headteacher)

