

# St Wilfrid's Catholic School

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Headteacher: Michael Ferry BEd (Hons) MA NPQH

Diocese of Arundel & Brighton and West Sussex County Council

10<sup>th</sup> July 2020

Dear Parents/Carers,

I hope you and you families are continuing to stay safe and well.

It is now over 100 days since the country went into “lockdown” and although restrictions have eased more recently, we have yet to return to normal life. This is certainly the case with regard to life at St Wilfrid's although I am extremely optimistic for September.

As you may be aware, the government has produced its latest guidance document regarding schools opening in September with full attendance. There are still some considerable restrictions which present us with some significant logistical issues however, as I write to you now, we are working on plans to overcome these as we await further guidance which we are expecting in mid-August. Once I know the final details of this guidance, I will write to you before September to confirm arrangements, which will allow us to open for all students. In the meantime, I would ask you to do all of the “normal” things in preparation for your son/daughter's return eg check their uniform still fits, ensure they have the correct equipment, that hairstyles conform to expectations, etc, etc. As a school we want to ensure a positive return for all students so ensuring that your child has the necessary equipment and has high standards of uniform and appearance will help considerably.

Coming back to school will be for some (I hope most) an exciting thing to look forward to, for others, there may be some anxieties. You may have heard the government mention that schools will be able to fine parents if their child/children do not return. I want to make this explicitly clear; I will not be fining anyone if their son/daughter does not return to school in September due to anxieties associated with the pandemic. What I would ask of parents who are anxious regarding the return to school (or whose child is), is that once I have written to you in late August to confirm arrangements, please contact your child's Year Leader to discuss any issues and allow us to work with you to address any anxieties that you may have. To help you look forward positively to school re-opening; during the last 5 weeks as we have seen increased numbers in school, the anxieties that existed on day 1, very quickly evaporated as students re-accustomed themselves to school life, albeit a different experience to normal.

Due to the recent government guidance regarding the wider opening of schools for both primary and secondary students, we have been unable to organise the usual transition arrangements this term for both the current Yr 6 students and Yr 11 students who will be joining us in September as Yr 7 and Yr 12 respectively. This, as well as the need to support other year groups who are in their final year before exams (at the time of writing, both will be sitting their exams next year and we have not as yet been given any details of any adjustments to this process), has contributed to me deciding to plan for a phased return in September; one which seeks to make up for any lack of transition, as well as prioritising those year groups who will be taking exams in the summer 2021. The details of the start date for individual year groups are set out below:

Monday 7 <sup>th</sup> September:	Year 7 and Year 12 students only
Tuesday 8 <sup>th</sup> :	Year 11 and Year 13 (plus Years 7 & 12)
Wednesday 9 <sup>th</sup> :	Years 8, 9 and 10 (plus Years 7, 11, 12 & 13)

This will allow us to direct specific support as required to students across all year groups and in doing so serve to reduce any anxieties. Obviously, I am unable to predict what the future holds in terms of the pandemic or any future guidance so any arrangements being made now may need to be adapted, but as I have mentioned, everything will be confirmed in late August.

One final reminder is that Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> July is the last day of term for all students. The timings of the last day are the same as they have been for the last few weeks depending upon which group/block your son/daughter is in.

Once again, I would like to thank you for your patience and your ongoing support as demonstrated by the many positive and affirming messages received by staff over this challenging period. I sincerely hope that we are able to get "back to normal" as soon as possible and hope that you and your families remain safe and well over the school closure. I look forward in earnest to us being open in September.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M. Ferry', written in a cursive style.

Michael Ferry  
Headteacher

Stay alert  
Control the virus  
Save lives