



Cottesmore St. Mary Catholic Primary School

THE DIOCESE OF ARUNDEL AND BRIGHTON



Headteacher: Rachel Breen B.A. Hons.

1st May 2020

A huge welcome to Cottesmore St Mary Catholic Primary School

Dear Parents / Carers

We are delighted to confirm that a place is reserved for your child to attend Cottesmore St Mary in September 2020. If you haven't already, please ensure that you have confirmed this place with us.

We value the importance of welcoming you and your child to our school family and we are looking forward to meeting you soon. As we are currently in differing circumstances, we are proposing alternative welcome events to hopefully cover all eventualities and to ensure a smooth transition for you and your child. At this time, we are unsure as to which will go ahead but we thought it better to plan a range, in the hope that you, and your child, will be able to receive a robust welcome experience. Apologies if this seems a little confusing.

We would usually invite all sixty families to a group evening meeting, here at school, in early June. During this meeting, we would introduce you to the Foundation Stage staff and let you know which class your child would be in. There would also have been information from a range of adults plus refreshments provided by the school PTA. You would have been able to visit the Reception classrooms again and there would have been the opportunity to ask any questions. At the meeting you would have been given a pack of information which would have included the school Welcome Booklet, All About Me Book, information about Teddy Bear's picnic and story afternoons, plus an induction timetable for September.

As with the rest of the country, we await Government guidance regarding when schools will reopen and when group meetings can safely resume. We do not have a crystal ball nor are we privy to any more information than is currently in the public domain. Therefore, we are making the following suggestions based on our own estimations. These may be sensible suggestions, or not, so please bear with us as we are trying to cover a range of eventualities.

If schools do reopen, and group gatherings are possible, before the end of the academic year (22nd July), we will offer the usual welcome meeting format, with suggested social distancing, but over three evenings. As there are sixty families accepting places, and we allow space for two adults per family, if we split the meetings over three nights, that would mean twenty families per evening so, at max, forty adults getting together, if two per family attend. At this time, we feel that it is better to prepare for as few to meet together as possible and suggest a date that is as late in the term as possible. Whilst these proposed dates are more than a month later than we would usually hold a welcome meeting, we feel it is better to do so, in the hope that they might actually be able to go ahead. Each meeting will begin at 7pm, will be held in the school hall. Each meeting will contain the same content as the one described at the start of this letter.

The new scheduled meetings are for Monday 6th July (for families with surnames A - G), Tuesday 7th July (for families with surnames H - M) and Wednesday 8th July (for families with surnames N - Z).

Should schools not reopen fully, or group gatherings not be permitted, until after the end of term, we would do the same eg hold three differing meetings, but do so during the school holiday period. The proposed dates for these would then be Monday 10th August (for families A - G), Tuesday 11th August (for families H - M) and Monday 17th August (for families N - Z). Again, each meeting would begin at 7pm and would be held in the school hall. Each would also contain the same content as above. These meetings won't take place if the ones in July go ahead.

If, the Government guidance is that, prior to September, smaller group gatherings are still unable to take place, we will provide you with a video link code and deliver the welcome meeting virtually although we hope that this provision won't be needed, it's just organised as back up, just in case.

We have created new links on the Admissions page of our school website so that we can upload the welcome documents that you would have received at the June welcome meeting, rather than have to wait until meetings in July or August. These will be finalised over the few weeks, and will be uploaded by the start of June, so that you can begin to have some of your questions answered before you attend our meeting in either July or August. Documents included will be our Welcome and Information Booklet, a link to our school uniform shop, a child's guide to getting to know your class and an All About Me booklet for you and your child to complete.

Over the next few months, please do keep checking this page as we will also post updates regarding any changes to meeting dates and any other changes or information that you need to know. Until all families are set up on our school liaison system, called PING, this the

easiest way to keep in touch so please do make sure that you visit it a week or so in advance of any proposed events, in case of any changes. I would also suggest taking time to read the Current Updates section on the school website so you can see the type of liaison that is currently taking place with all the existing families within our school at this time. The link for this is on the main homepage and is an icon under the main photograph. Whilst not directly relevant to you, some of these documents might help you as you support your child at home.

Please rest assured that our welcome meetings will take place, in one form or another, and you will receive all the information you need and you will have the opportunity to ask questions.

Further dates for your diary

Again, should schools be open, and gatherings permitted, before the end of the school term, your child will be invited to a Story Afternoon on either Tuesday 14th July / Friday 17th July at 1.30pm. Depending on class organisation, we will confirm which of these sessions they are invited to at our welcome meeting in July (if this goes ahead). This will be an opportunity for you and your child to come and meet the teacher, share a story and familiarise yourself with the classroom. Please keep both dates free at present.

The Teddy Bear's Picnic is currently scheduled to take place on Monday 13th July at 1.45pm but obviously also may not go ahead so, as with all other events, please check the website in advance. This is another opportunity for children and parents to meet.

Should schools not reopen, and gatherings not be permitted, before the end of the academic term (22nd July), as soon as Government guidance permits, we will then offer a drop in session, during the summer holidays, where you and your child can visit the school for an hour or two to look around the classroom, play on the field, meet other parents and of course meet the staff. Families could drop in any time between 9am and 11am. This is scheduled for Saturday 22nd August (post the potential August welcome meeting) but will only take place should the Story Afternoon and Teddy Bear's Picnic not be possible in July.

We hope that we will also be able to hold our Welcome Disco, for Reception children and parents, on Friday 23rd October or Friday 13th November, 4.30pm – 5.45pm. More information will follow regarding this event, but please do put the date in your diary. This is free event for families, organised by the PTA, and allows the children a chance to party together whilst offering the parents a chance to chat and get to know each other further. Parents will also be invited to a group, Meet the Teacher session a couple of weeks into the start of term, in addition to October 1:1 parent / teacher meetings – dates to follow.

Please rest assured that we will do everything possible to ensure that the children, and you, are familiar with their new school, their new classroom and their new class teachers before they start. We will also liaise with every nursery to find out a little more about your child. That said, if there is anything important that you think we should know, please do get in touch via email. We will also begin to formulate classes.

Forms to complete

We enclose a number of forms for you to complete and return to the school, as soon as possible. These can be completed and scanned back to us via email although we ideally prefer hard copies which could be sent via the post or dropped into the school office. The school is currently open for the children of key workers every Monday to Thursday, 8.30am until 3pm. Please ring the doorbell, if dropping off forms, and deposit by the office window. Someone will come to collect them as soon as you have left. Please only do this if part of already scheduled essential travel or your daily exercise. Completion of these forms is essential, so, if you are missing any please visit the Admissions page of the school website as all are available there. The sooner we can get these returned, the sooner we can set families up on our school PING facility which allows group emails and texts to be sent.

Keep in touch

If you have any questions at all, please do not hesitate to get in touch. My email address can be found on the school website or you can email me directly rachelbreen@cottesmore.brighton-hove.sch.uk. In some instances, I might not reply to your email directly but pass it to the relevant team member who will be sure to help. If your child has any specific educational or medical needs, please visit the Inclusion section on the school website and get in touch with our Inclusion Lead, Anna Mullans, annamullans@cottesmore.brighton-hove.sch.uk

We look forward to meeting you again and are thrilled to welcome you, and your child, to Cottesmore. Stay safe and take care. Rachel Breen

