



# Cottesmore St. Mary Catholic Primary School

THE DIOCESE OF ARUNDEL AND BRIGHTON



Headteacher: Rachel Breen B.A. Hons.

27<sup>th</sup> April 2020

Dear parents / carers

I hope you, and your child, is well. As we begin what would have been Year 6 children's last term of primary school, I can imagine that the children might be finding the current situation particularly challenging.

I wanted to write to you mainly to reassure you that we will do all we can to help with a smooth transition from primary to secondary. We do not know when schools will reopen, nor in what capacity. We also don't know when larger groups can congregate for events such as those that we would have held eg as the Leavers' Mass and Leavers' Disco. Please reassure your child that we will hold a Leavers' Mass and provide them with a Leavers' Disco, we just don't know when this will be.

We have discussed the option of doing something in smaller groups eg groups of 20 children plus their parents, as and when lockdown restrictions are lifted more so (we are assuming this will be slow and gradual), but we feel that it is important to celebrate their time at Cottesmore with something as a unified cohort. We still have our provisional dates in the diary, that are Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup> July for the Leavers' Disco, 5pm, and Wednesday 22<sup>nd</sup> July for the Leavers' Mass, 9.15am, followed by picnic. However, as we are uncertain of what lies ahead, it is hard to predict if larger gatherings such as this, would be permitted (my feeling at this moment in time is that this will be unlikely). With this in mind, schools across the city, have been liaising and it has been suggested that one date, TBC but between 22<sup>nd</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> September, could be held as a potential day when all current Year 6 children, then Year 7, will return to their primary schools for Leaving Ceremonies, in whatever form. For our school, that would be a Leavers' Mass followed by a picnic / fun and games on the school field. Not to mention the Leavers' Disco the night before!

Should we not return to school fully before the end of term (22<sup>nd</sup> July), weather permitting, we will hold a field based picnic and games so that the children still get a chance to be together at Cottesmore, before their official start date at secondary school in early September. The date for this would be, Government guideline permitting, Saturday 22<sup>nd</sup> August, 11.30am – 2.30pm. The formal Leavers' Disco and Mass will then follow in September as mentioned above.

Teachers have also begun to liaise with the children, via Seesaw, regarding their Leavers' Year Book content so please do ensure that blurbs and photographs are submitted. Also, thank you to Lisa, Gabriella's mum, who organised the hoodies before this all began.

I haven't heard from other secondary schools yet, but Cardinal Newman have been in touch with regards to transition. Newman have identified that, due to the current circumstances, the transition process will of course need to be managed differently. They are planning to contact all new parents/ carers by email or post to keep you informed.

Feeder schools have been asked to supply information regarding any students who should NOT be placed together. We have not yet been asked anything about grouping children together in friendships but we will keep you posted as and when we do. I am sure that this will happen so please reassure your children. As per usual practice, we imagine that we will include the children and ask them to write down the names of three children who they hope to be in a form group with. If we are asked for this information, and we are not back at school, we can do this confidentially via Seesaw or parents can email the information to the teachers directly. Please note that, organising form groups isn't something the primary schools get involved in. We supply the names, as per the children's suggestions, and Newman do the rest.

If your child has had ongoing issues with a child from this year, or in previous years, and you really would like for them NOT to be together, please email their class teacher and I by Friday 8<sup>th</sup> May latest. We can then potentially discuss this matter with you further.

I imagine that some of the children may also have mixed feelings toward the cancellation of their SATS. Whilst test scores don't always show a child's full potential, the children might see it as a shame that they can't celebrate how much they have learnt through achieving whatever their results would have been. The important thing is to remind them that they know they've done their best and worked their hardest. We know the children well and we know within what level they were working. When asked, we will be able to pass accurate teacher assessment judgements to their secondary schools. I also imagine that secondary schools will carry out some form of assessment in order to ensure they have a clear picture of the children's knowledge and potential gaps post this period of time away from school.

We are missing the children and we are hopeful that we will get a change to reconvene as a year group before the term ends, albeit it only when guided that it is safe to do so. This Year 6 cohort has been a particularly special one. They have been a delight to teach and watch grow, throughout their whole seven years at Cottesmore. They will always be remembered as being a cohort full of caring, thoughtful, considerate individuals who are brave, talented, determined and incredibly supportive of one another, not to mention the world in which they live. They really are a special bunch of children and please rest assured that we will work with you, and them, to make sure that they leave with the fanfare with which they deserve.

Wishing you, and them, all the best and hopefully see you again soon.

Rachel Breen

