



SACRED HEART RC NURSERY AND PRIMARY SCHOOL

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Dear Parents and Carers,

As you are aware, we are at a critical stage of the COVID-19 pandemic with infection and hospitalisation rates increasing nationally. Consequently, the largest teaching union, the NEU along with UNISON endorsing this message today, has advised its members that it is currently unsafe for them to return to work teaching full classes.

I am humbled to write that following communication with all staff last night to ask if they will be invoking their right not to come to work tomorrow, within two hours I had an almost full complement of staff confirming that will be in attendance in the morning. I am immensely proud of the entire staff team. They showed no hesitation in their response despite feeling anxious regarding the unknown. Nationally, the teaching profession continues to be mocked, smeared and criticized in the press and on social media; it is simply scandalous. As no government announcement to partially close schools has been made today, there will now be much disruption to children's education around the country. Some primaries will be fully closed tomorrow, some fully open and all sorts of mixes in between. Whatever position other schools find themselves in tomorrow, it will not have been an easy decision for anyone involved and I remain fiercely passionate about supporting all who are working in the education sector.

The impact on the provision for pupils at Sacred Heart is minimal. We will be FULLY OPEN and my focus is firmly on continuing to make the school as safe as possible for the staff and pupils. The DfE are expecting all pupils in school tomorrow unless they are clinically extremely vulnerable (CEV). Any pupils who are CEV should remain at home. This would apply if we were to have any CEV staff members too, which we fortunately do not.

We have no plans to switch to remote learning tomorrow unless your child is self-isolating due to symptoms or close contact with a positive case, or awaiting test results. We are obliged to follow government directives: pupils not attending will not be authorised. I have no authority to overrule this no matter how I might empathise with individual circumstances.

I have revisited all the risk assessments over the last few days and communicated to all staff. Robust procedures continue to be in place within school but we cannot do it alone. Please may I ask that you are extra vigilant in adhering to the safety procedures that we have put in place.

Staggered starts: arrive within your time slot. If your time slot is 8:45-8:55, you do not have to be waiting outside at 8:40. You will not be late if you arrive at 8:54. Please do not congregate in the road, lane or carpark.

Staggered pickups: arrive within your allocated time slot. Please do not hover outside the gate in the road. This creates multiple problems: the children run to you from their teacher across the playground and straight into the road, there is less space to socially distance and there is increased risk of bubble mixing.

Social distancing: we have multiple markers in the playground to support social distancing, please use them. Please do not congregate.

Childcare and support bubbles: please read the guidance closely and adhere to the rules.

[Making a childcare bubble with another household - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk)

[Making a support bubble with another household - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk)

Face coverings: we have politely asked that all adults entering the school site wear a face mask. This is often ignored. If you are exempt from wearing a face covering, please let us know and then you will not be challenged.

Many parents have spoken to me about parents not wearing face covering in the lane or area surrounding the playground. Whereas I cannot direct this, I am asking if you could please be mindful of others around you, many who are clinically vulnerable. As staff we use the principle that whoever we are near has covid. This helps our mindset in keeping our distance from others.

Mixing outside of school: we are now a Tier 3 area. Please refer to the government guidance.

[Tier 3: Very High alert - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk)

Please be assured that Plymouth CAST officers and school leaders are working closely with school-based staff; trade unions; Torbay local authority and government agencies to ensure that disruption to our children's education is kept to an absolute minimum.

I am sure that many of you are anxious about sending your children back tomorrow but they will be welcomed with open arms (metaphorically speaking), big smiles and quality teaching and learning. We presently have no known positive cases in the school community. However, if you have any concerns or questions, please feel free to email me day@shrcps.org. or telephone the school on 5582

We are sorry for the concern that the current turn of events has caused for our parents, carers and families, and look forward to a return to normality as soon as possible.

Yours sincerely,

Nichola Day

Headteacher