



St. Michael's Church of England Primary School



Carlisle Road, Dalston, Carlisle, Cumbria CA5 7LN · Tel: 01228 711544 · Headteacher: Mrs J Paisley
Our school values: Respect · Kindness · Challenge · Forgiveness · Perseverance

Dear Parents

4 January 2021

I suspect most of you, like us, have been closely following reports in the media of the rapidly unfolding situation with primary schools and whether or not they will open, particularly in the light of announcements from Cumbria County Council on the worsening Covid-19 situation as well as the advice from SAGE, the government's scientific advisors. Yesterday afternoon at 16:30 we received our answer. The UK government, despite the advice of the Local Public Health professionals, expects primary schools in Cumbria to open as planned.

This leaves health and safety considerations to individual schools to consider.

Understandably, our dedicated school team of staff have been put in a difficult predicament. All staff want to be able to teach our children, but we are having to consider the even more important issue of safety of the whole school community.

Currently, we do not have sufficient staffing to open fully to pupils this week. As a result, St. Michael's will not be fully reopening for two weeks. We will instead focus on providing remote learning for the majority of pupils, and in-school provision for children of critical key workers and those children deemed vulnerable, providing sufficient staff are available to accommodate this safely. Remote learning will be available on our website and through Seesaw. We will contact you via email on Tuesday with further information.

Vulnerable Pupils: We are carrying out a full review of current pupil needs, using national guidance. We will contact you later today if we feel that your child needs to be offered a place on this basis.

Critical Key Workers: Critical Workers are defined as those who work in:

- Health and social care
- Education and childcare
- Key public services
- Local and national government
- Food and other necessary goods
- Public safety and national security
- Transport and border services
- Utilities, communication and financial services.

If you are a critical key worker and have no available childcare, please let us know by completing the attached form by 3pm today. We will endeavour to organise in-school provision from Tuesday. Following completion of the form, we will email you further details including start times and days by 5.30pm on Tuesday. We understand for a number of families that it is vital that their child attends school. At the same time, we do need to limit numbers, both for safety reasons and to ensure that we have sufficient staff and that staff can also manage home-learning for pupils not in school. As a result, we would encourage you to support the children at home with their online learning rather than sending them into school, if at all possible.

Children Receiving Free School Meals: School will be in touch with those families in receipt of FSM to make further arrangements.

Breakfast Club and After School Club: Unfortunately, these facilities will be closed until school has fully reopened.

We apologise for the last minute nature of this decision and communication. Advice and communication from the Government and our Local Authority has been rapidly changing over the last 48 hours and it has left us in a position where we have had to take action at the 11th hour. Thank you for understanding with what has been a very difficult decision to arrive at. We wish you and all your loved ones good health and well-being.

Yours sincerely



Mrs J Paisley
Headteacher



Mrs K Somerville
Joint Chair of Governors



Miss R Hogarth
Joint Chair of Governors