

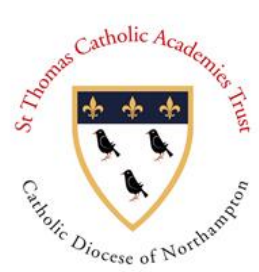


Learning, Growing  
And Living with Jesus

# St. ANTHONY'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL & NURSERY

In the Diocese of Northampton

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"The glory of God is  
a human being fully alive"

14<sup>th</sup> January 2021

Dear Parents and Carers,

We are very pleased that we have begun to settle into a routine over the past week, offering in-school provision for certain groups of children, including those from our critical worker families, whilst providing online remote teaching to all of our pupils at home. We have been able to reach this point thanks to the tireless efforts of staff in preparing and improving our systems whilst, adapting to ever-changing circumstances.

What is clear from last week, however, is that the number of pupils eligible to attend school under the critical worker provision is much higher than during the first lockdown. Our Strategic Executive Lead for the Trust, Joe Richardson, has advised all Head Teachers within our Trust to review the current numbers of pupils in our primary schools. The number of pupils at St. Anthony's is very high and we would be failing in our duty of care to pupils, staff and the wider community if we did not take steps to reduce numbers, if we can. We know the instruction from government:

- Stay at home
- Protect the NHS
- Save lives

We need to ensure that we can accommodate those most in need, whilst recognising that we must continue to do everything that we can to keep staff and pupils as safe as possible when in school, in light of the recent developments, relating to the new strain and the rising infection rates within Slough.

As I am sure you will understand, running a dual system of educating and supervising children in school, whilst providing good quality live lessons and remote learning to children at home, places an additional logistical staffing burden on the school. The rapid rate of transmission of the virus means that we must do everything possible to protect our school community: pupils, families and staff alike.

The guidance from the Department for Education has reiterated that, whilst children with at least one parent or carer who is a critical worker can go to school if required, parents and carers who are critical workers should keep their children at home if they possibly can.

I'm afraid we must stress that places in school for critical worker children are finite and we ask that you only take up a place if absolutely necessary. As a community we must ensure that there is space for our healthcare workers' children and other vital roles that are actively helping to fight the pandemic.

We are now asking critical workers to review their need and consider only sending children to school **if it is absolutely necessary**, in order to carry out your critical worker role. Parents should discuss any continuing difficulties with their own employer's HR department.

St Anthony's Catholic Primary School & Nursery has a commitment to safeguarding, and the welfare and wellbeing of children.

St Thomas Catholic Academies Trust; Registered Company Number: 9660515  
Registered office: St Joseph's Catholic High School, Shaggy Calf Lane, Slough, Berkshire, SL2 5HW



We want to accommodate parents' needs as far as possible, whilst keeping children and staff in school safe but, just like other schools, we are balancing difficult priorities. If our staffing levels change, please be aware that we will have to tighten our criteria with very little notice, to ensure that we can still operate our school for those most in need of our care.

Please take some time to review your own situation and consider where you can reduce your need.

We would ask parents, where possible, to:

- Contact both employers to determine whether it is possible to work from home or work different shift patterns.
- Establish a support bubble with one other household that may allow you to continue working.

If we can reduce numbers, we will be successful in significantly diminishing the number of contacts between members of the community and manage the risk that schools are 'vectors of transmission' as described by the Prime Minister. The guidance from the government states that schools must provide a place for children if required. Clearly, it is not required if there is another adult at home who is not a critical worker and can therefore look after the child and supervise home learning.

We will keep this situation under constant review and will aim to increase numbers when we see clear evidence that the risk is diminishing.

Thank you for your ongoing support and consideration with this matter.

Yours sincerely,



Mrs S Oppé