

FAQs for Parents

Why is the school not opening for wider year groups?

There is nothing we would like more than to welcome more children back to the school from all year groups but this is simply not possible due to the guidance from the government. This states that all educational settings should offer a return to children in Nursery, Reception, Year 1 and Year 6 alongside priority groups such as vulnerable children and children of keyworkers. These children should be offered a full-time place and schools should not plan on the basis of a rota system as they do not provide the consistency of education and care for children. Achieving for Children (AfC) have confirmed this with the school in that we must establish an almost full time offer for children in Year N, R, 1 and 6 and then focus on expanding our provision for vulnerable children.

At St Luke's, we are currently using every classroom and every available staff member to teach the children in the year groups that were specified by the government, in a way that is consistent with the social distancing guidance for educational settings. This includes having no more than 15 children in a bubble and staff not teaching across different bubbles. Therefore, unless there is a revision of these guidelines, we do not anticipate that we will have the capacity to admit other year groups to school before the summer holidays.

How can other schools open for other year groups?

Every educational setting is different and the capacity of schools will be vastly different. For this reason, parents should not compare schools.

We are puzzled as to how other schools can open to more year groups and it probably means that they are not following the guidance fully. Their children in Nursery, Reception, Year 1 and Year 6 are likely to not receive a full-time place and school staff are likely to be shared across multiple bubbles / groups. Also, the additional children in the school will make it even more difficult to comply with social distancing.

Under the current guidelines, we wouldn't be comfortable with children being taught by staff who have taught other groups of children in the same day or week.

What distance learning are you offering now my child is away from school for longer?

The leadership team at St Luke's continue to review and monitor our distance learning for all year groups and we believe that we offer a huge variety of education for children at home giving parents the right amount of flexibility to decide what to teach their children. We have consulted with the local authority and our School Improvement Partner and they both agree that our distance learning provision is highly effective.

We have learning projects for each week, split up into activities for each day centred around a general theme. Staff also set challenges within Purple Mash and Google Classroom, where staff upload activities for English and foundation subjects.

In Google classrooms, you will also find a link to daily maths lessons provided by White Rose Maths which include a virtual lesson video for each day. There is also a creative classroom where children can take part in several art challenges. Within these Classrooms, children can 'hand in' their learning from the learning projects or from Classroom assignments to the teachers and receive feedback.

We also have links to other links on our website for resources recommended by the Department for Education. Please let us know if you have any problems in accessing any of our distance learning mentioned.

We know that it is a big ask of all parents to take an active role in supporting the education of their children at home and we are striving to provide all the support we can to help parents to do this.

Why aren't you offering virtual or live lessons?

We took the decision very early into the lockdown to not provide live or recorded virtual lessons and we continue to have the same opinion since schools reopened on 1st June. Below are the reasons why we believe this:

- It would not replicate a typical lesson and would be an ineffective pursuit of time and effort.
- It would be problematic to marshal children of varying levels of engagement.
- Staff do not have capacity. They are all either teaching in school, calling children in their class or planning / maintaining distance learning.
- Concerns for teachers' online safety.
- Teaching unions have blocked the use of livestream lessons.
- Not all staff are currently available so some year groups would not have access.
- The Local Authority has advised against it.

What is going to happen over the summer holidays?

There has been little guidance for schools regarding the summer holidays. Contrary to what has been published in some media, all staff have worked extremely hard since the school went into lockdown on Friday 20th March.

Despite the school remaining open during the Easter Holidays and May half term holiday, the government has confirmed that all schools will not remain open for children of frontline workers over the summer holidays. However, the Prime Minister has pledged a 'big summer of catch-up' for primary school children.

St Luke's plans to run the popular Holiday Club for the first three weeks of the summer holidays
- book now to avoid disappointment.

What is going to happen in September?

Currently, there is no guidance for schools for September. The leadership team is currently working on plans on what the beginning of the academic year will look like. We have planned two versions, one is a fresh start with all children returning to school with 30 children in a class and the second (a worst case scenario) where children come back to school for two whole days with half the class on Mondays and Tuesdays and the other on Thursdays and Fridays with Wednesdays being a cleaning day between the groups and PPA time for the teaching staff. We really hope it is the former plan that we can implement but it depends on decisions made by the government.