

# St. Augustine of Canterbury Catholic Primary School

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*“Created by God to love and learn”*

Thursday, 14<sup>th</sup> January 2021

Dear Parents and Carers

I hope you are all well, and that 2021 will be a good year for you and your loved one.

We find ourselves in another national lockdown, with COVID cases across the UK reaching a staggering 3 million (on average 60,000 new confirmed cases each day). While our figures in South Gloucestershire are lower by comparison, with 1,283 lab-confirmed cases in the last 7 days (date 06 01 2021), the message from Government is clear: stay at home.

All of us now know someone who has tested positive for COVID, and for some of us, this has resulted in the loss of loved ones and family members. While the thought of another national lockdown is definitely a bitter pill to swallow, it is necessary.

You will have seen from Mr Hilliam’s email on Friday 8 January that at St Augustine’s, we have had a substantial increase in requests for places for critical workers’ children and vulnerable pupils in our school during this lockdown. We are faced with the unenviable task of scrutinising these requests to ensure that the places available are allocated to those with the most need. As Mr Hilliam noted in his email, ‘we have been asked to limit the numbers of children in school to those where it is **absolutely essential.**’

The purpose of my letter today is to ask those of you sending your children to school to consider very carefully whether that is absolutely essential.

A place in school should be used as a **last resort.**

We are required to provide home schooling material. With the best intentions, our teachers are already stretched and requiring them to provide home schooling material and maintaining the necessary health and safety measures for large bubbles of children in the school is not sustainable.

If you are working from home, we ask that you keep your child at home for you and your child’s safety as well as our staff’s safety and the community of Downend as a whole. The safest place for our children to be is at home at this time. Mixing with other children increases the chances of the virus spreading and should be avoided unless there are no other options.

If we do not see a reduction in the requests for placing at the school, Mr Hilliam and the Leadership team of the school, with the support of the Governors, will start prioritising places as laid out in the letter from Mr Hilliam.

We fully appreciate what we are asking here. It is very difficult to home school while working from home and caring for our children. This situation is far from ideal; we all feel like we have been here before, we know the sacrifices required and we are all surely asking ourselves if we can do it again.



As a faith based school, we are here to support you in every way we can with our home schooling provision as well as with parental support through our parent link worker, Mrs Chris Cranney, whom Mr Hilliam references in his letter.

May God Bless us all and keep us and our loved ones safe at this time.

Jenefer Morgan

Chair of Governors

St Augustine of Canterbury Catholic Primary School

