



ST STEPHENS COMMUNITY ACADEMY
Roydon Road, Launceston, Cornwall PL15 8HL
Tel: 01566 772170
E-mail: ststephens@andaras.org
www.ststephenscornwall.co.uk



Head Teacher: Maura Furber

**'Embracing Learning.
Inspiring Ambition.
Celebrating Individuality'**

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Dear Children

Firstly, I wanted to say how truly awesome I think you all are—you have been so amazingly responsible and resilient during these very strange times. I know many of you haven't been able to see people in your family or play with your friends and some of you don't have any gardens to play in and it's been really hard for you. You have been totally fantastic and I know how proud your mums and dads are of you. Please say a huge **thank you** to your families for helping you with all your learning—they have done a brilliant job. I also want to say how proud I am of all your amazing teachers who have kept in touch with you and made sure you are safe. Through all of this our school values of kindness and creativity have held us close. What an inspirational team we are together!

Now I thought it was important to speak with you about what's happening at our wonderful school. I know you've heard lots of things in the news about Coronavirus and I'm also sure you've heard your parents talking about the schools re-opening after this half term for more children. Indeed, having spoken to many parents I know that lots of you have had family meetings about what you think is going to happen and how you feel about returning to school.

When we said farewell to each other on March 20th and closed our school to everyone, except the children who needed day care because their parents are key workers during this time, we didn't know when we would meet again. We all found this very hard but knew it was the right thing to do—it's the grown-up's duty to keep you safe.

The Government who run our country have now decided that it will be safe for certain year groups to return to school: Pre-School, YF, Y1 and Y6 children. We have planned a phased return from the week beginning the 1st June; each group of pupils will be offered 2 days' school provision. They will be doing exactly the same work that your teachers will continue to provide for you at home so you won't be missing out. **You need to know that these year groups are not any more special than the other year groups. You are all equally AMAZING and UNIQUE. This is a decision that has been made for us.** You also need to know that many of the families have decided not to send their children back yet—your grown-ups will make the right decision for you when the time is right. We totally respect that. So in fact many of your friends won't be in school anyway—that is also not for you to worry about. We will all catch up together and make up for this lost time.



We have worked hard to make sure all the health and safety guidelines have been followed to ensure all the children and adults who can come back are safe –we all have to take care of each other and remember important things like washing our hands and cleaning equipment regularly alongside keeping as much space between us –it’s called social distancing.

School might look a little different when you do come back. We’ve had to move some desks and other furniture so we all have a little bit more space to move around and things can be easily cleaned. We also have to make sure we don’t mix between classes (you might have heard these called ‘bubbles’) until the scientists and medical experts tell us it is safe to do so. We will have separate playing areas and equipment to use. We will be having our packed lunch in the classrooms or outside if the weather is nice- there will be no hot school dinners at the beginning of this return. We are such a friendly team of learners at St Stephens so this will be tricky but we will help you.

As I mentioned earlier, if you are remaining at home all the home learning challenges, work set and videos from your teachers will continue to happen- obviously if they are teaching in school they won’t be able to send you messages or mark the on-line learning that day but they will on the days they are not in. What they do in school will be the same as what you are set at home. You have impressed us all so much and don’t forget that special THANK YOU to your wonderful families for helping you so brilliantly.

So I just wanted you all to know that each and every one of you are in our thoughts daily. We miss you, we miss seeing your faces, hearing your ideas and thoughts, watching you learn and investigate and most definitely your laughter that fills our school. We know it will return and I need you to know that St Stephens will be there waiting for you.

Take care, keep safe and remember we may be apart but in the words of the Mini PTFA ... “We are still so close” You know that I believe if anyone can do this Team St Stephens can. The grown-ups will look after your worries until we can all be back together again. We have to be brave for a just a little bit longer.

Mrs. Furber

Mrs Furber

Headteacher

