



3rd September 2020

Dear Parents and Carers,

I am writing as we approach the beginning of the school year and following the various sets of guidance provided by the Government during the school summer holidays.

Firstly, as I am sure you are aware, the Government are keen that all pupils return to school as promptly as possible at the beginning of the school year – their advice is that, “School attendance will be mandatory from the beginning of the autumn term and the usual rules on school attendance will apply”. For this reason, we have decided not to phase the start of the school term, as we had originally planned but will offer a school place full time for every pupil from Wednesday September 9th 2020. We have liaised with transport, who agree this is possible, and they will be in contact with you in due course.

Secondly, we have heeded the recent changes in advice about the use of face coverings in school. We will be conducting further risk assessment work over this week, but are likely to suggest that staff and pupils can choose to wear a face covering should they wish. We understand that as pupils begin to go further afield, into the public and use services, this could well be seen as a life skill and therefore we will support this being ‘taught’ where it can be. We do not intend pupils being made to put on a face covering, if they cannot do so themselves, or if they find this difficult or distressing. Adults in school will not place face coverings on pupils.

Risk Assessments: all pupils in school have an individual risk assessment. Please let us know if there is anything which you feel should be included in this. This should relate to your own child’s health or well-being regarding the recent pandemic.

Wider school procedures: The senior team and myself will be meeting regularly this week to absorb the latest DfE guidance and will make decisions about how we will run school following full re-opening. It is therefore likely that there will be further email communication and I would ask that you look out for this.

Some changes we are clear about already:

- School lunch will be in the classrooms not the lunch hall.
- Arrival and departure from the site will NOT be through reception. Please note all pupils and staff will come in the external entrances to classrooms. For most, this is off the playground or through the Sixth Form gate.
- All visits to the building will initially be minimised to prevent extra ‘traffic’ through school. This includes visiting professionals such as speech and language therapists, nurses, orthotists, social workers, music therapists and volunteers. Where there are essential visitors in person, we will have a track and trace register.

- Pupils will be in bubble groups with little or no staff movement outside of these larger bubbles. We intend having a main school bubble comprising of Primary and Secondary and a Sixth Form bubble. Administration Staff and the Senior Team will minimise their direct contact with the bubbles. Where possible, meetings and discussions will take place by Skype or Teams.
- Any member of the school community who has Covid symptoms must isolate immediately and request a test. If a pupil becomes symptomatic in school we will isolate them immediately – with one staff member supervising them whilst we wait for a parent or carer to collect them. You must then get them a test as soon as possible. Please let us know the outcome as this is essential information for keeping both pupils and staff safe. We will work with Public Health England if a test is positive, and are likely to be very cautious initially. We will close your child's bubble at times and may be requested to close other parts of school, or go into a higher tier of lock down. Please ensure that you have provided up to date and accurate contact information so that we can alert you about closures and your child's health. Often this will have to be done at very short notice in order to keep the wider school community safe.
- We are reviewing when to resume visits off site to cafes, shops and public amenities. Initially we will be cautious and have not booked a minibus to support these visits at this time.
- We will not gather groups together for activities like assembly. It is likely that there will be implications for events like fayres, parents' evenings, bakery, productions and so on, but we will keep you informed about this. As you might expect we will not run bakery for now.
- All pupils will be encouraged to be active and to get some fresh air daily. We will use some local outdoor facilities to extend what we offer on site, such as visits to the park.
- The curriculum will be a Recovery Curriculum and more information about this can be found on the school website. This will take place for at least a half term. The focus is on settling pupils back into school, supporting their physical and emotional wellbeing and re-developing their social skills.

Whilst we support your son or daughter during the initial weeks we ask that you also provide reassurance and routine to them. It will take time to re-establish both your home life and their school life and it is understandable that this might be a nervous time for you and your family. Please be reassured that we will work for the very best outcomes for the whole school community at this unusual time and do contact us should you need to discuss any of the back to school arrangements. We have your child and your family's safety at the forefront of our thoughts as we plan their return.

Staff changes:

Meanwhile I am pleased to let you know about the following staff changes which will take effect at the beginning of term:

Heather Newton: Heather has accepted a new job role within the admin team and will be responsible for all the HR and staff well being matters in school. She will also be the Personal Assistant to the Leadership Team.

Yvonne Heys: formally our school bursar, Yvonne has accepted a new job role as Business Manager and will assume responsibility for the wider admin team in school. She will be on site three days a week.

Angela Neal and Lex Bowyer: Angie and Lex will be responsible for the reception area and all other administration in school – they will take it in turns to work on the desk and at other times will work in the Admin Hub.

Sandra Searle: Sandra has worked with us for several years on an ad hoc basis and I am delighted that she has now been appointed to the role of finance assistant permanently.

Hayley Coutts: Hayley is a new appointment to school and joins from the Children's and Families Service. She will take on a role new to school: Assessment and Review Officer, and will be responsible for organising and administering reviews, multi-disciplinary meetings and responding to consultations for pupil places.

Emma Gibson: Emma has been promoted to the position of Behaviour Support Assistant and will work with pupils and families where additional support advice and guidance is needed for behaviour. She will work in all areas of school and part of her remit is to liaise closely with families where this level of support is required.

Kristina Carr: Kristina has been promoted to the position of Advanced Teaching Assistant and will work closely with the Sixth Form and older Secondary pupils advising and supporting their progression into the world of work. She will be the school Job Coach. She will also work closely with families particularly for older pupils.

Kelly Simpson and Tina Potts have both been appointed to work closely with individual pupils to offer bespoke support and personalised programmes to two individuals. They will be liaising closely with the families and professionals involved.

Sydney Thomas has been appointed to the role of Advanced Teaching Assistant on a permanent basis having undertaken this role temporarily over the years, on several occasions.

Susan Capel has been promoted to a General Teaching Assistant position after working as a Personal Support Assistant for a number of years.

We have aimed to reduce lots of change in school within teams and classes, as we feel that there will be a great deal for pupils to get used to once they return. We hope that your sons and daughters find this helpful. All pupils will be coming back to a familiar room, or familiar staff if their room has changed.

The work on the Admin Hub and Sixth Form College came to a halt during the holiday for a range of reasons, however we are optimistic that work will begin again soon once a further inspection of the building has taken place at the beginning of term. For now, all classes will be on the main school site and the Admin Team will work in a range of temporary spaces, and/or from home.

Best wishes, yours sincerely

Sarah

Sarah Edwards – Head Teacher