

16th July 2020

Dear Parent/Carer,

I write as this exceptional school year draws to a close to thank you for your support, and to outline plans for the return to school in September.

In line with the most recent guidance from the DfE, all students are expected to return to school full-time from the beginning of the autumn term. This is because the prevalence of the Coronavirus (Covid-19) has fallen to low levels and because the Government's Test and Trace system is in place, meaning that we can quickly identify and contain any isolated infections which may occur.

In preparing to welcome the return of all students, we have carried out a detailed risk assessment to identify how we can lower risks to students and staff in all areas so that the school is as safe an environment as possible for all. In this letter we set out a summary of the steps we have taken. There are some new practical arrangements that will impact on students and parents, so we ask that you read this letter carefully and keep a copy of it to refer to in September. A copy is also available on the school website.

Arrival in school:

Taxis will be welcomed by the Keyworkers and students will be directed to enter the school through the atriums. Students will be directed to wash their hands on arrival and then head to their tutor groups.

Taxis have been asked to time their arrival as close to 9am as possible (11am on 3rd September)

Travel to school:

We do not yet know what arrangements each Local Authority will have in place to ensure safe travel to and from school. We expect that each contracted taxi company will have their own measures in place and will inform you of them prior to the beginning of term. Should you have any concerns about the safety measures that taxi companies put in place, please contact the school.

Safety & Hygiene in school:

Whilst it is understood that students in special schools may find it difficult to maintain social distancing, there will be measures in place to support staff and students to maintain social distancing where possible. These will be clearly marked around the school.

Sanitisation stations will be available in all classrooms and hand washing and/or sanitisation will be a routine fixture throughout the school day.

Additional steps are being taken to ensure that hard surfaces, especially those touched by multiple people, are being kept sanitised during the day. Staff are being provided with packs to ensure that they can wipe surfaces that are being touched by different people and the domestic team will also be available in all areas of the school.

Tissues are available in each classroom and will need to be disposed of safely, as directed by staff.

PPE:

Currently, the DfE advice is to not wear a face covering when in school. However, if students feel more comfortable for their own safety to wear PPE a selection will be available. In addition, in rooms where social distancing is not possible all staff and students must wear face coverings.

We will be speaking to all students about the correct usage and disposal of PPE.

Breakfast:

On arrival students will be met by Keyworkers and directed to their tutor rooms. Breakfast will be available in tutor groups and included as part of the morning reading session.

Lunch & Breaks:

Lunch will be at the usual time but will not be held in the dining hall. When the bell rings, students will be directed to return to their tutor rooms where lunch will be brought to them. In the first few weeks these will be served as packed lunches.

Lunchtime and breaktime activities will be running but the previous options may not be available. Keyworkers will be putting together a programme for the student's activities ensuring a range is still available.

Visitors to school:

We will aim to have as few as possible external visitors onto the school site. This is to reduce the risk that anyone could unintentionally bring an infection from outside. Any visitors who do need to be on-site will be asked to observe the same hygiene measures as everyone else and will be asked to keep a full 2 metre social distance from students and staff.

Reviews, PEPs and other professionals meetings will be held virtually using Microsoft Teams until further notice.

Showing symptoms:

We are asking parents to be vigilant for any signs of infection in their children. Should symptoms occur you should **not send your child into school.**

Symptoms to look out for are:

- A new continuous cough
- A high temperature
- A loss or change in sense of taste and/or smell

Should any of these symptoms occur you should keep your child at home and inform the school.

Testing will be available for students or family members who develop these symptoms; we can tell you how to access these if you contact us.

If students develop any of these symptoms while in school, where possible we will transport that student home immediately. You will need to make arrangements for your child to be tested quickly. Your child will not be able to return to school until a negative test has been confirmed.

Positive test:

In the event that someone, either student or staff, tests positive, we will immediately contact our local NHS Public Health Team. We will give them and the Test and Trace service the information they need to identify the risks that others may have become infected, and we will follow their instructions immediately about containing that risk. In some cases, this could mean asking students or adults with whom the person has come into contact to stay at home for a period of time to make sure the infection does not spread further.

School equipment:

Students will be provided with their own pencil case which they will carry around with them. Students may bring their own pencil cases should they prefer and may also bring in a bag to carry with them.

Subjects which require shared resources have their own risk assessments to ensure that there is a methodical cleansing of equipment between uses.

Well-being support:

We are aware that for some of our students these past months may well have been difficult, for a range of reasons. We will be supporting them in readjusting to school life and will, of course, be available to talk with you or with students if there is a need to do so. We will aim to strike a good balance between acknowledging the impact of the events of these past months, but also focusing on getting back to as normal school life as possible.

Online learning:

The school has provisions in place for students to be able to access online learning should they have to stay at home for any reason. Details of how to access this are included in this pack.

We hope that this letter gives you the assurance that we have planned the return to school very carefully. We have followed the guidance we have received closely, and have taken every step to reduce risk for all. We will continue to monitor and review national guidance and local controls and will continue to communicate any changes to you as soon as possible. We look forward to welcoming back all students in September. Please do not hesitate to contact us if there is anything you wish to discuss.

Yours sincerely

Ed Reilly
Principal