

21st July 2020

Dear Parents and Carers,

You will be aware that on July 2nd the government announced its plans for a full opening of all schools in September. Along with all school leaders we have been scrutinising the requirements of this guidance and planning how we address these within our own school setting. The guidance is clear that:

“There cannot be a ‘one-size-fits-all’ approach where the system of controls describes every scenario. School leaders will be best placed to understand the needs of their schools and communities, and to make informed judgments about how to balance delivering a broad and balanced curriculum with the measures needed to manage risk”.

It is with these two drivers of minimising risk whilst continuing to offer a broad and balanced curriculum that we have devised a plan that we believe can fulfil both. This letter sets out to initially inform you of the whole school operation plan for September. **We will then follow this up with specific details for your child later in the summer.**

Start and end of day

We have taken the decision not to have staggered start times for different year groups but instead school will start at 8:30 a.m. as normal for all children except in a few specific, individual instances.

The vast majority of our children walk themselves to school from within a small catchment area and as such naturally stagger their entry into school from as early as 7:30 a.m. If we were to keep our gates locked and open up only at specific times for specific year groups we run a greater risk of groups of children gathering together outside the school perimeter. By allowing students to enter the school site across a greater period of time we can direct them into defined year group areas and keep a safer flow of pedestrian traffic around the immediate area.

Each year group will have their own designated entrance to the school. At the end of the day we will coordinate the exit of students through these same locations in order to keep the year groups apart as they leave site. We fully expect that exam year groups in particular will not be leaving the school site until later as after school revision will start for these students very quickly at the beginning of term.

We rely on you to communicate with your children about how they should conduct themselves to and from school including public transport where it is used.

Student groupings

We will accommodate all children within year group zones from September creating whole year group bubbles. The government guidance recognises that, *“In secondary schools, and certainly in the older age groups at key stage 4 and key stage 5, the groups are likely to need*

to be the size of a year group to enable schools to deliver the full range of curriculum subjects and students to receive specialist teaching”.

This means that children will only come into contact with other children from their year group; this will reduce the number of interactions they have and also make any required track and trace easier should there ever be a confirmed case of COVID within the school.

Breaks and lunches

These will be staggered so that the year group bubbles are maintained throughout the day and each year group will also have their own allocated block of toilets. In order to stagger the breaks and lunches we have had to change the duration from a shorter break and longer lunch to two thirty minute breaks instead.

We will still be offering hot and cold food each day together with provision for packed lunches. Please be aware that it will not be possible for students to come home for lunch from September as the lunch break will be 15 min shorter and leaving site to go home will break their year group bubble. If this is of particular concern for you please contact your Head of Year.

Measures within classrooms

A full opening of the school does mean that we will have normal sized classes in September. In order to support this we are putting measures in place within classrooms to reduce risk such as all furniture facing the front of the room, wall mounted hand sanitisers outside EVERY classroom for use on entry and exit and lidded bins in every classroom to observe the ‘catch it, bin it, kill it’ hygiene message.

Equipment and uniform

Students will be unable to share frequently used equipment such as stationery items next year so we urge you to please send your child into school with all the stationery equipment they will need together with highlighters, glue stick and a calculator in a named pencil case.

The normal, full uniform is expected to be worn in September together with full PE kit for those lessons.

The Curriculum

We have not had to reduce the curriculum offer for any child next year as our plans will enable the timetable to continue as normal with a few adjustments.

Teachers will move around classes rather than students moving between faculty areas. The majority of lessons will be delivered within the home zone but some subjects do require specialist facilities especially for KS4 exam classes. The zoning model we have planned does not include any of our specialist Creative Arts and D&T facilities and so these rooms are available for teachers to escort their class to when the timetable requires so that the curriculum requirements can be met. Due to the nature of the equipment used in some of these lessons

there will be a specific cleaning programme in place to cleanse these areas before any other group uses it.

Alongside our whole school risk assessment every faculty area has also completed its own risk assessment that addresses the particular issues within their provision. Details of how PE will operate in respect of changing for lessons will be sent out in the late summer communication.

Welfare and Support

Each year group has a Pastoral Year Manager and an Academic Year Leader available to support with their pastoral care and concerns around their learning. In order to maintain bubbles and offer closer support these teams of two will share an office that will be located either within or close to the year group they support.

We recognise that for many children and families, September will be an anxious time; all staff recognise this and are ready to offer your child their full support. The staff naturally also have anxieties around the full opening. Whilst they have all been working on a rota system in school and at home since March 23rd none of them have experienced a full school since March 20th let alone a full school operating in a very different context.

Everyone's welfare, students and staff relies on every member of the school community playing their part and respecting the safety of others. Every location around the school now has large and clear posters highlighting those infringements of the school behaviour policy that will be dealt with swiftly and seriously. As Headteacher I am responsible for the health and safety of everyone on the school site and therefore you will understand when I say that I will deal with any negative behaviour that I believe puts the health and safety of any individual at risk very strongly indeed.

As I said at the outset, this letter is intended to provide you with an overview of the key operational elements of the September opening; there will be individuals amongst you that have very specific individual questions and I expect most of you will already have had communications with year managers and members of the SEN team.

At the end of the summer we will communicate with you again to inform you of specific details regarding your child such as school entrance to be used, form room to be used etc. Please look out for this. Our full risk assessment for the September opening provides more detail and is available to be viewed on our website.

It just remains for me say a huge and heartfelt thankyou to all of you for the support you have shown the school in the past year and particularly in the last five months; it has made a big difference to us all. I hope you have a peaceful summer and whilst September will continue to be different it will feel wonderful to bring the whole school together again.

Take care, keep safe.

Clare Costello