



25 September 2020

Dear Parent/Carer

Re: Update 25 September 2020 Covid-19

I am writing to update you on recent changes to the guidance from the Department for Education (DfE) and adjustments we have made to our systems in school. I appreciate this is a lengthy letter but one I hope gives reassurance to parents and carers that we are doing all we can within the current advice and guidance to have in place systems and procedures for all aspects of school operational matters within the context of full reopening of school.

I am very much aware that there is a lot of information being produced and notification of our protocols and changes that need to be made and at times this may be confusing or become frustrating to deal with. As far as possible, I like to ensure I explain the rationale behind decisions made or changes that need to be made to systems and procedures. I am conscious that at times, it may be felt that decisions and changes need to be made immediately but my approach has always been to think carefully before we make decisions and put systems and procedures in place. It may also seem that change keeps happening; when change needs to be made we will do this to improve a situation that may need to be addressed as the result of an unintended consequence. Sometimes, change needs to be made as a result of national policy change and as I have discussed previously with Teacher Union Representative and written to you before, I do not want to respond to anything as a "knee-jerk" reaction. Once again, I want to thank you for your continued support in these challenging times.

Face masks

I have had several parents/carers contact me to ask about the systems of control we have in place that apply to members of staff. I wish to stress that all systems of control for pupils apply to all members of staff and include:

- Wearing of a face covering either with or without a face shield whilst on corridors – as with pupils, there are exemptions in place, however members of staff who are exempt from wearing face coverings will wear face shields
- Wearing of a face shield if preferred whilst teaching in a classroom although there is a 2-metre zone around the teacher's desk to ensure compliance with social distancing measures
- Hand sanitiser is in all classroom and social areas
- Office spaces and the staff room have been repurposed as workspaces to ensure social distancing is implemented

For pupils, I need to remind you that it is a requirement that facemasks must be worn when travelling on public and school service buses as well as on trains. It is not the responsibility of the drivers or conductors to enforce the wearing of facemasks however, guidance is clear that the wearing of facemasks is to protect themselves and others using these services.

Pupil Planner

Our planning over the summer break was a focus on how to run the school in a completely changed environment and some of the operational systems were a consideration of how we need to do things

differently. As we go through the day-to-day procedures with pupils and having the pupil planner as a key part of our communication home and working with pupils and their families, we are looking at how we record comments, which up until now has been done through our management information system but this is not communicated home. From next week it is more than likely that comments will be written into pupil planners as the implementation of protective measures includes hand sanitisation when handling books and equipment.

Remote Learning

The school Training Day today is focused on two key aspects:

1. Accelerating Learning: Identifying and addressing gaps in pupils' understanding
2. Practical strategies to accelerate learning

The second point is being addressed through use of Microsoft Teams and with this letter is a document produced by Mrs Atif, Leader of Computing and IT – Microsoft Teams: A Pupil Guide

Year 11 and Year 13 Assessments

I wrote previously that:

At this time, we still have not received confirmation of the curriculum content and examination procedures for 2021. You may be aware that there was a limited period of consultation last year following the decision to put in place Centre Assessed Grades in place of examinations in summer 2020. The consultation was to seek responses to a series of questions on whether curriculum content or examination papers and requirements should be adjusted. A summary report on the consultation has been published by Ofqual but, no statement has been made on what examinations will be like for this academic year. The one piece of guidance is regarding BTEC which is that examinations are to continue.

Linked to our Training Day we know that we need to support our pupils by reinforcing what they know and helping them to identify areas of progress. Over the next few weeks our pupils in Years 11 and 13 will have in-lesson assessments for each of their subjects to help look at what needs to be done in each subject to help pupils achieve further. I wish to reassure our pupils and their parents/carers that these assessments will not be used to determine any Centre Assessed Grade but will be to help us help them to improve.

Extra-curricular programme

We are in the process of organising a programme of extra-curricular activities by year group with the priority being a focus on intervention programmes for Years 11 and 13. A number of Personal Development programmes are also being organised and include in-school activities such as Eco Club and Dance Club alongside virtual clubs for Music. Once the full programme is written it will be published to pupils, parents and carers.

Test and Trace App

Late Wednesday afternoon, the DfE published guidance "Use of the NHS COVID-19 App in schools..." - <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/use-of-the-nhs-covid-19-app-in-schools-and-further-education-colleges/use-of-the-nhs-covid-19-app-in-schools-and-further-education-colleges> which details the required actions by school leaders; this includes the need to inform parents and to amend school policy:

"The app is available to download for anyone aged 16 and over if they choose to do so. For some young people, particularly those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), parents will need to decide whether or not their use of the app is appropriate. This aligns with wider NHS services which are generally offered to those aged 16 and over as routine. This will mean that some students in year 11, and the majority of students in years 12, 13 and in FE colleges will be eligible to use the app and benefit from its features. Staff members will also be able to use the app."

The implication for policy is that for those pupils who have downloaded the app should be allowed to check their phone if they receive a notification – the reason for this will be to allow notification by the pupil to members of staff so action can be taken to isolate the pupil, contact parents and allow them to leave school to go into isolation. We reserve the right to challenge pupils who may misuse their mobile phone in school.

Open Evening

Yesterday afternoon, we launched our online Open School Event as we are unable, at this time, to hold such large events in school. I want to thank both Mrs Peers, Transition Coordinator and Miss Holmes, Progress Mentor (formerly Media and IT Technician) for their hard work in producing the range of videos and presentations. Also, I want to thank members of staff and pupils for their presentations. We hope that parents and carers find the information useful and helpful; there are contact details on our web page if there are any questions from parents/carers of our prospective pupils.

Pupils

I want to once again thank our pupils for working with us and adapting to the many changes that are in place which impact on the day-to-day organisation of school. I ask that you remind your child that when travelling to and from school by foot that they avoid congregating and travelling in large groups.

I wish to thank you for your continued support and understanding as we respond to the advice and guidance published to school.

Yours sincerely



Ian Morrel
Headteacher