



17th July 2020

Pupils Returning to School in September 2020

Dear Parent/Carer,

You will be aware that the government has announced that all pupils are expected to return to full-time education in schools from September 2020. We are delighted that we can start to return to some kind of normality, but the announcement presents all schools with a range of significant challenges.

The government has provided a Guide for Parents on the return of pupils to school in September which can be accessed through the link below:

[What Parents Need to Know About the Re-opening of Schools](#)

Further information can also be found in the Guidance for Schools through the following link:

[Guidance for Full Opening of Schools](#)

The guidance for secondary schools is that year groups become self-contained 'bubbles' and as a consequence, pupils in each year group are not required to socially distance from their peers (although they are required to maintain a distance of two metres from their teachers, as their teachers will be working across a number of different year group 'bubbles').

Each year group 'bubble' will be socially distanced from the bubbles of other year groups. To achieve this, each year group will – as far as possible - be taught in separate parts of the school. During lunchtime, each year group bubble will purchase their lunch separately and be zoned in a designated part of the school to avoid any social contact with pupils from other bubbles.

Due to our heavy reliance on school buses because of our rural location, it will be impossible for us to initiate staggered start and finish times for our pupils. It will also not be possible to have each year group transported on separate buses – this would require seven different buses (to carry each of our seven year groups) on each of our numerous transport routes. All of our local schools (and the majority of schools nationally) will face similar challenges, and there are not sufficient buses or drivers to facilitate this. **We can confirm that school buses will be running from September on all of our established bus routes and with the capacity to transport all of our pupils.** Please alert Miss Ball in the Finance Office if school bus provision is no longer required next year, as we need to ensure with our bus operators that we have sufficient seats – but no un-necessary excess capacity - on each of our routes.

In line with current Department for Education (DFE) guidance, pupils will be allocated a designated section of the bus for their particular year group. Schools have been advised that further guidance will be issued shortly from the DFE with regard to arrangements for school transport, and we are also awaiting further guidance on these matters from Lincolnshire County Council as they operate many of our bus routes. Should the guidance to schools change, we shall seek to adapt our plans to accommodate any necessary changes and will notify families accordingly before the start of term.

For pupils who are travelling on buses, we would urge all parents to stress the importance of social distancing from pupils in other year groups or members of the public while waiting at the bus stop (and walking between the bus stop and home) and reminding their children of our requirement to travel to school wearing a mask or face-covering on the bus each day. As each bus will contain pupils from a number of year groups, we feel that this is a sensible additional protective measure and is in line with the advice for members of the public travelling on public transport nationally. Pupils should bring a single-use plastic bag in which to store their face-covering during the school day. This should then be kept in their school bag and should not be carried around school separately. The government guidance on making, wearing and removing a face covering can be found through the link below:

[Guidance on Making and Wearing a Face Covering](#)

Parents and carers are of course welcome to transport their own children to school by private car as an alternative to school transport, although multiple families should not car-share as this is contrary to government guidance. If parents are transporting their children to school by car, pupils should be dropped-off in the School Bus Park (or preferably in the lay-by on the A607) and parents should not leave their vehicles or enter the main part of the school site. Pupils who live close to the school are also encouraged to walk or cycle to school where possible.

As I have said in previous letters, parents have quite understandably asked what steps we are taking to minimise the risks of infection from COVID-19 while in school. As the British Medical Association has stated, 'A zero-risk approach is not possible. This is about 'safe' being an acceptable level of risk.' All of our control measures stem directly from our risk assessment which has been developed in conjunction with our external health and safety consultants from Judicium. The list below outlines a range of the protective measures we have introduced, but it is not an exhaustive list of all of the changes we have made:

- Pupils will be briefed on their first morning in school to outline our safe working procedures and to provide a warm welcome, reassurance and encouragement.
- There will be regular handwashing opportunities throughout the day – on arrival, between lessons and at lunchtime. We have purchased and installed a large number of mobile handwashing stations to supplement the usual wash-basins in the school toilets. We would also request that parents/carers send their child to school with a small bottle of hand sanitiser to use throughout the school day to supplement regular hand-washing.
- Each pupil will be assigned a designated seat in each classroom. This is the seat they will use each day in school in that room. Windows and doors will remain open wherever possible to ensure appropriate ventilation. Further wash-stations and hand-sanitisers are located outside classrooms in each of our teaching blocks.
- We have tried to zone year groups in specific areas of the school as far as possible, with movement generally limited to the need to access specialist rooms and resources for certain subjects. We have also tried to timetable an increased number of double-lessons (particularly for practical subjects) to reduce pupil movement around the school site.
- Each classroom will have its own resources for sanitising desks and chairs at the end of each lesson when pupils leave the room and it is to be occupied by another class.
- Cleaners will operate throughout the school day, with a particular focus on frequently touched surfaces – banisters, desks, chairs, light-switches, toilets, etc. Further extensive cleaning will take place at the end of each day.

- Toilets – a single pupil will be allowed in the toilets at any time.
- The canteen will be open, with different queuing and serving times for each year group. Pupils will then leave the dining room to eat their lunch and for outdoor supervised leisure time. For wet lunches, indoor provision will be made for pupils, but the guidance is clear that schools should maximise opportunities for pupils to be outside where possible.
- All school staff have received extensive Zoom-delivered training on our safe working procedures.
- First Aid (if required) will be administered by trained staff wearing appropriate PPE.
- Unfortunately, at the present time, face-to-face meetings with parents will only take place in exceptional circumstances as we are trying to limit the number of visitors to our school site.

Pupils, staff or visitors should not attend school if they – or any member of their household - is displaying any of the symptoms of COVID-19:

- **High temperature** – this means you feel hot to touch on your chest or back (you do not need to measure your temperature)
- **New, continuous cough** – this means coughing a lot for more than an hour, or 3 or more coughing episodes in 24 hours (if you usually have a cough, it may be worse than usual)
- **Loss or change to your sense of smell or taste** – this means you've noticed you cannot smell or taste anything, or things smell or taste different to normal

Anyone who has symptoms of coronavirus - whatever their age - can ask for a test through the NHS website (<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/testing-and-tracing/ask-for-a-test-to-check-if-you-have-coronavirus/>).

It is important that an adult for whom we hold up-to-date contact details (either yourself or another member of your household or 'family bubble', preferably with their own transport) is available throughout the day in case we need to make contact with regard to your child. Please make sure all of your contact details (including home and mobile phone numbers, home address and e-mail address) are kept up-to-date with our School Office.

Pupils **will** be required to wear school uniform and our school day will operate on our usual timings – 8.45am start time, with a 3.10pm finish. The first day of term is **Thursday 3rd September for Year 7 and Year 11 GCSE Food students. For all other year groups, the first day is Friday 4th September.**

All pupils will be expected to attend school with their own basic equipment – pens, pencils, pencil sharpener, rubber, ruler, crayons, glue stick and school-safe (non-pointed) scissors. In addition a compass and protractor will be needed for Maths lessons. Equipment should not be shared between pupils.

We shall be looking carefully at the detail (still to be published) around the government's pledge to commit one billion pounds for schools as part of a COVID-19 recovery package. While this is not all new money - as other government grants to schools such as Year 7 Catch-up Funding have been cut - we hope it will provide some additional resources to help to address gaps in our pupils' learning which may have arisen during the lockdown period.

I should like to reassure all families that safety will be our foremost priority as we resume education within school. Our approach will always be cautious and measured – respecting all appropriate guidance - as we take these first steps to bring all of our pupils back into school.

Thank you once again for your continued support of the school as we try to navigate through these uncertain times.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a series of loops and curves, positioned to the right of the typed name.

Mark Guest
Headteacher