

Address

16 July 2020

Dear New Year 7 Parent and Student,

I hope you are keeping well. As I said in my last communication to you, we are really looking forward to meeting with our new Year 7 students in September. It is an exciting time when a young person transfers from primary to secondary school. It can also be a time when there is some nervousness and we appreciate that this may be heightened at present due to current circumstances which have meant that the usual transition programme from primary to secondary school has had to be deferred to September.

When a young person is joining a secondary school some of the things that cause a little anxiety is related to not being familiar with a number of practical details and therefore as we progress into the summer holiday period I thought it helpful to share some of the practical arrangements we have put in to manage the start of the new academic year and having all young people back in school from September within the current Covid context. All of these arrangements form part of our risk assessment processes in light of the guidance sent to schools from the Government. I sincerely hope that reading the information below will provide you with the reassurance you need that we have put in place a range of measures to reduce the risk of transmission of the virus. We are absolutely committed to doing our very best to keep all members of our community safe and well. One of the real positives of the experience we have all just had, is that we know that we can successfully negotiate challenges and that we are very resilient. At Beechwood the experience has emphasised once again that we have great community spirit and all have come together exceptionally well in order to support one another. We have a great deal of strength to build upon together and therefore should feel confident that we can achieve a great deal together.

This all said, I am keen now to share with you some of the practical arrangements that have been shared with all our families in all other year groups.

1. Start of term

As shared in my weekly bulletin last week, we will have a phased start to the academic year for all our different year groups. This will enable all to have opportunity to be probably welcomed and have a clear explanation of new routines and their new timetables.

The schedule is as follows.

Years 7 and Year 12 - 3rd September

Year 13 – 4th September

Year 11 – 7th September

Year 10 – 9th September

Year 9 – 10th September

Year 8 - 8th September

Once a year group has returned on their allocated day they are to be in school every day thereafter.

As you can see, our Year 7 students will experience two days in school prior to the majority of other students returning, where they will have great opportunity to get to know one another, get to know members of staff, familiarise themselves with the school building and routines and engage in that all important transition work.

2. Staggered start to the day

To ensure that contacts between our young people are reduced as part of taking positive action to provide infection control, we will be running a staggered start to the day. This means that year groups will have different start times and a slightly different experience first thing in the morning. With regards to these start times, it is absolutely essential that students arrive on time. Failure to do so means that they may come into contact with students from another year group and this is not what the Government guidance or our risk assessment indicates would be most helpful. We intend to keep all year groups in individual 'bubbles'. This means that throughout the school day, from arrival at the school gate/site, students should only have close contact with other students in their Year Group. The arrangement therefore is as follows

Year Group	Arrival From	Tutor Time	Session 1
Years 7 and 11	8:30am	8:40am	9:00am
Year 10 and Sixth Form	8:45am	8:50am	9:00am
Years 8 and 9	8:55am	Tutor time end of session 3	9:00am

When students arrive at school they may only enter the school site via the Long Readings' Lane entrance. For the time being, the Farnham Road entrance will not be open. To ensure the two Year Groups arriving at the same time do not enter the school grounds using the same route we will be closing the vehicle access gate from 8:25 am until 9:10 am and it will become a second pedestrian route. There will be notices on the pedestrian gate and on the vehicle access gate to indicate which gate students should use.

Year Group	Gate access
Year 7	Pedestrian
Year 8	Pedestrian
Year 9	Vehicle access
Year 10	Pedestrian
Year 11	Vehicle access
Year 12	Vehicle access
Year 13	Vehicle access

Students will be met and directed. Students will be supervised by members of staff from the time they arrive at the school gate.

During every day all students will have Tutor Time and then will have three teaching and learning sessions. Some students will have a twenty- minute Tutor Time first thing in the morning. Some students will have a ten minute Tutor Time first thing and then a ten-minute Tutor Time at the end of their day. Some students will have their 20 minutes of Tutor Time at the end of the day.

3. Staggered end to the school day

In light of the staggered start, students will be dismissed at different times as follows.

Years 7 and 11	2:40pm
Years 10 and Sixth form	2:50pm
Years 8 and 9	3:00pm

4. Traveling to and from school

Due to the need to carefully manage access to our school site in order to preserve Year Group 'bubbles' parents are no longer able to come into the school car park. If a student is being dropped off by car then parents/ carers are asked to drop off a suitable distance from the school gate so as to avoid congestion and also to ensure that there is no road hazard and therefore danger for our young people. Students will need to walk from their drop off place in a nearby road to their allocated entrance gate to school. Parents / carers are also advised that collection at the end of the school day will need to follow the same protocol. A 'pick up' spot in a nearby road will need to be identified. There will be no access to the school car parks. It is appreciated that this is less than convenient, and I apologise for this, but I am sure you will appreciate why this is necessary. The majority of our young people arrive on foot or using their bicycles. It is essential that coming to and from school they do not gather in groups or wait for one another and interact in different Year Groups. We know that members of the same households – sibling - will interact, but generally we need all our young people to understand that the more close social contact they have, the more chance there is of the virus being spread. They therefore should get into the habit of traveling to and from school directly and not hanging around waiting for friends in other Year Groups or gathering in local parks / by the shops etc.

To avoid congestion with cars, we encourage our young people to walk to school. If they choose to use bicycles/ scooters, then we ask parents/ carers to discuss with them the normal safety precautions they should take.

A very small number of our young people travel by public transport. All transport companies have now provided guidance on requirements of travel including the use of face coverings.

At the start and end of the day parents are asked not to enter the school grounds unless there is a pre-arranged appointment. At other times of the day, admittance to the school will also be via pre-arrangement. If there is an emergency situation, please contact the school via the telephone and we will deal with the issue immediately if you make us aware of the urgent nature of the matter and, as appropriate, will admit you to the school site.

5. The Structure of the school day

We will be running a two-week timetable. Each day, students will experience lessons in three separate subjects. In week one, the lessons experienced each day will be different to the subjects that they will have in week two. This forthcoming academic year we made a decision that we would move to a five-period day and have longer lessons to enable best delivery of our new curriculum. We are continuing to pursue our revised curriculum offer and the principle of a five period day but to minimise the occasions that there needs to be movement around the school, we are running this timetable over a two week period. What this means for our young people is the following.

Week 1	Each day Monday - Friday
Session 1	They will experience the subject they have as period 1 on their timetable
Session 2	They will experience the subject they have as period 3 on their timetable
Session 3	They will experience the subject they have as period 5 on their timetable

Session 3 (period 5) will last fifty minutes. Some students will be dismissed to go home at 2:40 pm. These students will have had Tutor Time at the start of the day for twenty minutes commencing at 8:40 am. Some students will experience a ten-minute Tutor Time. These students will have had Tutor Time at the beginning of the day for ten minutes and therefore this means they will have twenty minutes Tutor Time every day. Some students will have twenty minutes with their Tutor. These students will have gone straight to session one after arrival in school. Every third week students will have a PSHCE lesson with their Tutor during Session 3 (period 5). During the school day students will have two breaktimes. On both these occasions the Restaurant will be open and students receiving free school meals will be able to receive this at either of the breaktimes (not both).

We will be staggering the breaktimes as well so, like the start and end of the day, only two Year groups will be experiencing a break from lessons at any given time. The schedule for breaktimes is as follows.

Year Group	Session 1 9:00 - 11:20am	Session 2 11:20 - 1:50pm	Outdoor area	Indoor area
Year 7	Break1 10:00 - 10:20am	Break 2 11:50 - 12:20pm	Behind green wing / tennis court	Restaurant / hall
Year 8	Break1 10:40 - 11:00am	Break 2 12:50 - 1:20pm	Behind green wing / tennis court	Restaurant / hall / ALC
Year 9	Break 1 10:40 - 11:00am	Break 2 12:50 - 13:20pm	Between blue / purple wing	Restaurant / hall
Year 10	Break 1 10:20 – 10:40am	Break 2 12:20-12:50pm	Between blue/purple wing / basket ball courts	Restaurant / hall / drama room C2
Year 11	Break 1 10:00 - 10:20am	Break 2 11:50 - 12:20pm	Front school Muga Areas	Restaurant / hall / ALC
Sixth Form	Break 1 10:20 – 10:40am	Break 2 12:20-12:50pm	Courtyard	Sixth form study area

In terms of using the Restaurant, will be running a totally cashless system. Parents / Carers will need to use the ParentPay system and set up an account. Cash loaders will be removed. If you need a Parent Pay activation letter in order to activate an account please contact our Finance Office on finance@beechwood.slough.sch.uk. Emails will be responded to regularly over the summer holidays.

6. Where lessons will take place to ensure that Year groups do not mix.

Every effort will be made to ensure that Year groups do not mix in line with the guidance provided by the Government. We need our young people to understand the absolute importance of minimising risk. They must remain in their Year group ‘bubble’. To enable this, apart from what has already been described in terms of staggered start and end times to the day and staggered breaktimes, Year groups will be assigned to specific areas / zones in the school for their lesson and in terms of places to be at breaktimes. All this will be explained to students on their first day back, but for information now, the arrangements are as follows.

Year Groups	Lesson areas
Year 7	Lower Green Wing G2 - G7
Year 8	Upper Purple Wing P16 - P20, P22
Year 9	Lower Purple Wing P1, P2, P4, P6, & Lower Blue Wing B2 & B3
Year 10	Upper Blue Wing B7 - B12
Year 11	Upper Green Wing G9 - G16
Sixth Form	Sixth form rooms CRC4 - CRC7, CRC9, CP1, CR1, SC4

For at least the first two / three weeks of term there will no practical lessons taking place. We are awaiting some further guidance from the Government on teaching and learning in practical lessons/subjects and this information will be shared in September. At the start of term theory lessons will take place in the designated area/ zone in the school as highlighted above. Teachers in all subjects will go to the lesson areas, students will not have to move. This means that for the time being, until advice changes, students will have learning bases in a specific area of the school and will move amongst these classrooms only as necessary, they will not be going to subject areas as they have been used to/may be expecting.

7. Infection control and new requirements of us all in terms of behaviour

You will be aware, I am sure, from the media that in Year Group 'bubbles' there is no requirement for young people to maintain a specific length of social distance from one another. Keeping as separate as possible is advised. Not having close physical contact – hugging, kissing etc – is absolutely required. We know that young people have a tendency to greet one another by hugging each other but, even in Year Group 'bubbles', this is not to happen. Whenever it is possible, we will be encouraging our young people to keep a distance of one metre from one another.

Students must however keep two metres away from members of staff wherever possible. This is stipulated in the DfE's / Government's guidance to schools. All our young people must adhere to this out of respect for themselves and members of staff. Deliberate infringement will be treated as a disciplinary matter. This should illustrate to all our young people how serious this matter is.

In terms of other key protocols / rules / behaviour habits that are now required in this new context, I overview the following.

- Every student is encouraged to take his/her temperature before school each day.
- They should not come to school under any circumstances if they have coronavirus symptoms or someone in their household does.
- Parents are expected to access and follow the Gov.UK advice for households with possible coronavirus infection.
- Parents must ensure that they will be available to collect their child should they become unwell or show symptoms whilst at school.
- Parents should be aware that all children attending the school, and members of their household, will have access to a test if they display symptoms of coronavirus and they are asked to get tested in this scenario in line with the track and trace national protocol.
- If any member of the household is undergoing a test, parents/carers are required to let us know and your child should not return to school, under any circumstances, until the result of the test is known. If the test is negative, then they may return.
- Parents/Carers are expected to have accessed and read the guidelines. Coronavirus (COVID-19): getting tested: Guidance on coronavirus testing, including who is eligible for a test and how to get tested.
- If any member of the household tests positive we will take advice and the whole group a young person is in may have to self-isolate at home. For the safety and wellbeing of all it is of the utmost importance that parents/carers keep us informed. The guidance is clear that "Where the child or staff member tests negative, they can return to their setting and the fellow household members can end their self-isolation. If the child or staff member tests positive, the rest of their immediate group within their setting should be sent home and advised to self-isolate for 14 days." (GOV.UK). Dependent on circumstances this could be a class size group or a whole year group 'bubble' or indeed a number of students and staff.
- The advice is that to reduce risk of transmission, students should attend school each day in freshly washed school uniform. On arriving home after the end of the school day, they are advised to immediately remove their uniform and launder it if at all possible. They may not have any other item of clothing with them in school, however. No hoodies, sweatshirts etc. They are to wear their school uniform and their school blazer should be worn as their outer garment if the weather is warm enough to permit this. If we were to find ourselves in a situation where the weather is unseasonably cold or wet, then we would advise that an appropriate outer garment could be worn in addition. Full school uniform is required including appropriate footwear. The uniform list has been shared and is available on our school website. We ask that all purchases over the summer are totally in line with this uniform list and we look forward to seeing students turning up looking smart and showing that they are proud to be a Beechwood student. Ties are to be worn. Until practical lessons commence, students will not need to carry with them their PE kit.

- The advice about reducing transmission also requires that students take particular care with their personal hygiene. It is really important that they wash their hands thoroughly as they leave home, that they are mindful of contact on the way to school and that when they arrive in school that they wash their hands (sanitise their hands thoroughly).
- Students may bring a bag to school but this should only contain school work that they need to bring in to school. They should only bring the books and paper that teachers ask them to bring. They should bring in their own equipment for their own exclusive use. There can be no sharing of pens, pencils, rulers, etc. There should be no toiletries or makeup or any other personal products brought to school other than essential feminine hygiene products for our young women. Mobile phones can be in the bag but should not be visible on arriving in school. Mobile devices of any nature should not be used during the time a young person is in school. A school bag should have very little in it therefore other than essential resources, school work, a mobile phone if necessary and, if needed, a snack and drink or packed lunch – see below.
- Students may bring a snack or packed lunch to school in disposable wrappings and for their own personal consumption only. They may also bring a drink in a disposable bottle. Our water fountains and taps are not to be used for refilling used bottles so drinks can be brought to school in a school bag but should be in a disposable bottle. No food or drink should be shared with others. Fizzy drinks/energy drinks are not to be brought into school.
- Students will be required to sanitise their hands upon entering and leaving school and at the start and end of each break/session in the day. They are to wash hands regularly with soap and water during the day and use sanitiser. If a member of staff requests them to do so at any time, they are to follow this instruction. When hands are washed they need to be properly washed using soap and water thoroughly across the hands and for a period of no less than 20 seconds.
- There must be no physical contact of any type at any time. This includes horseplay, hugging, handshakes etc.
- It continues to be the case that if someone coughs or sneezes, then they need to follow the advice that has been widely shared over a period of time. They must ensure that they ‘catch it, bin it, kill it’ and they should avoid touching their mouth, nose and eyes.
- There must be absolutely no coughing or spitting at, or towards, any other person.
- When students are in a session in a classroom with a member of staff there will be a strict seating plan and this is non-negotiable. This plan is in place for the safety of each pupil. Sticking to the seating plan is vital in terms of reducing transmission and also in terms of track and trace should there be the need.
- Students should therefore not move tables or chairs and should not leave their seat without speaking to a member of staff and without having the permission of that member of staff.
- Students must stay in their Year ‘bubble’ designated areas. They may not go anywhere else in the school unless they are escorted by a member of staff.
- At this time, computers will be used in a limited way within ‘bubbles’ and when they are used going forward, it may be necessary for students to wipe the keyboard and mouse at the start of the session with appropriate cleaning fluid as instructed by the member of staff. All such instructions must be followed. If a student has allergies and is not able to use a cleaning wipe, we need to be advised of this in terms of medical need.
- If, during the time that a young person is in school, they feel unwell, they must tell an adult immediately and describe their symptoms. They must be aware of the significance of suffering from a high temperature, a new continuous cough or loss or change to sense of smell or taste.
- All parents are reminded of the need to social distance if they are collecting their child.
- Parents are not allowed to enter the school building to use the toilet.

Please note that, as all of the above measures are being put in place to reduce the risk of transmission of the virus it therefore will be viewed as a breach of our agreed revised code of conduct and consequently a disciplinary matter should any of our young people not co-operate and behave in line with these really important safety guidelines. We absolutely do not expect this to be the case but thought it most helpful to share this so that all members of our community are aware of how vitally important this is.

I am aware that there may be queries about face masks/face coverings. At present the Government advice is that they should not be worn in schools but as we all know, advice changes. I am also very keen that everyone is as comfortable and feeling as secure as possible in September. In light of this, we will review this issue of face masks being worn in school over the summer holiday and provide some advice to you on this closer to the start of the new academic year. The DfE is being asked to provide a greater clarity on this. If any young person is medically advised by their Doctor that they should wear a mask due to an underlying health issue, then this is, of course absolutely appropriate and encouraged. We simply need to be advised of this specific need.

It is certainly appreciated that there is lot of information here. I thought however, that our new students and families would appreciate knowing the detail that has been shared with current families. I know that parents/carers will look closely at this information and decide what is best to share and at what stage of the summer holiday with their child. All of this information will be reviewed with students in an appropriate way in September once term starts. All of the information shared is as a result of comprehensive risk assessment. Rather than feeling overwhelmed by the amount of information, I hope the detail provides you with clear reassurance that we have analysed carefully the DfE / Government guidance and requirements and have risk assessed and put appropriate mitigation measures in place to reduce risk as much as it appears possible to do so at the moment.

As more information or advice becomes available we will review our plans and provision. We will also review on a daily and weekly basis. We are all aware that what we are focusing upon is of critical importance. We do not want any member of our school community to become desperately poorly as a consequence of Covid 19 transmission. If this is to be the reality for all of us ease further from lockdown and resume daily attendance for all at school, then we all – staff, students and parent / carer's - have a vitally important role to play. I know I can rely on you and your support on this.

Also, in terms of support, the Government require that I make it clear that attendance at school in September is mandatory. If there is a legitimate reason why a young person is unable to attend, then the usual procedures need to be pursued in terms of calling our Attendance Officer, Mrs Walker. If there are any concerns and anxieties, then please communicate with us.

To conclude, I reiterate that we are all very much looking forward to a more normal experience in September. Together, we will make the new academic year and the return in September a really positive experience which will enable our young people to go from strength-to-strength. Prior to further engagement in September with our new Year 7 students you will hopefully feel very encouraged and reassured by this. I wish you all a really good summer holiday period.

My very best wishes to you all,



Kathleen Higgins
Executive Headteacher