

1 September 2020

Dear Parent and Student

WELCOME TO THE ACADEMIC YEAR 2020 – 2021

I sincerely hope that you have had an enjoyable summer and you and your family have kept safe and well. As we get close to the start of the new academic for students I wanted to communicate with you once more and share a few reminders about the arrangements that are in place to welcome all our young people back to school.

We are so looking forward to welcoming back all our existing students and also to welcoming new members of our school community. It will be excellent to come together to have the opportunity to work with one another, focusing on the achievement, well-being and advancement of all of our young people. Our most senior students from last academic year enjoyed great public examinations success and we are so looking forward to ensuring that this is the future reality for all our young people. Our school goes from strength-to-strength and therefore there is a great deal to look forward to and be positive about. We have a great deal to celebrate and I trust that knowing this and having really positive plans and aspirations for the future will support our young people as they return to the routine of coming into school on a regular basis.

So, in readiness for this return to school, I share again the following information

1. Start of term

As previously shared, 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 properly welcomed and receive 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.

8. The Wearing of Face Masks

Although the current guidance from the DfE does not suggest it should be compulsory for students to wear face masks at all times, I am content to allow members of our school community to wear masks if this gives them comfort and if these masks are worn in the correct way for the right reasons – ie to protect others from infection. Please see the information below on the wearing of face masks/coverings. Additionally, and in line with Government guidance, I advise that all students must bring a face mask to school everyday and must be prepared to put the mask on, at the direction of a member of staff, should it be the case that use of communal areas and corridors means that it would be beneficial to do so. The layout of our school building and the organisation of our school day should result in year group bubbles of students staying together and not coming into close contact with one another but, even within a year group bubble, in narrower corridor areas staff may deem it appropriate on health and safety grounds to ask students to wear their face coverings for a period of time. If for a specific medical reason a young person can not wear their face covering, then parents are asked to provide a doctor's note to explain this.

Guidance on the Wearing of Face Marks Provided by the Government

Evidence suggests that wearing a face covering does not protect you. However, if you are infected but have not yet developed symptoms, it may provide some protection for others you come into close contact with.

Face coverings do not replace social distancing. If you have symptoms of COVID-19 (cough, and/or high temperature, and/or loss of, or change in, your normal sense of smell or taste - anosmia), you and your household must isolate at home: wearing a face covering does not change this.

The Government guidance in relation to wearing face coverings is as follows:

- wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water for 20 seconds or use hand sanitiser before putting a face covering on, and before and after removing it;
- when wearing a face covering, avoid touching your face or face covering, as you could contaminate them with germs from your hands;
- change your face covering if it becomes damp or if you've touched it;
- continue to wash your hands regularly;
- change and wash your face covering daily;
- if the material is washable, wash in line with manufacturer's instructions. If it's not washable, dispose of it carefully in your usual waste;
- practise social distancing wherever possible

Please be mindful that the wearing of a face covering may inhibit communication with people who rely on lip reading, facial expressions and clear sound.

9. Sixth Form Going Off Site During the School Day

At present, we will not be allowing Sixth Form students to leave the site to go to the local shops etc during their breaktimes. Although this is a Sixth Form privilege that we wish to honour, for the time being we ask our senior men and women to remain on site and therefore reduce additional contacts during the school day. We will review these arrangements within 4 weeks and keep our young people and families updated.

To conclude, I reiterate that we are very much looking forward to the new academic year and to welcoming all our young people back to school. I anticipate that all will adhere well to our required new way of operating and some of the new rules we have had to implement as I know they will appreciate how necessary and vital these are to ensure everyone stays safe and well. As always, I thank our parents for their support in this as well. If

any student or parent has any query or concern then please do not hesitate to be in contact. I will continue with my regular Weekly Bulletins home. This will provide opportunity to share new information, keep everyone updated and also share details of the achievements and successes of our young people. I am so proud of our Year 11 and Sixth Form young men and women on what they achieved in their summer examinations and I know I will be able to share similar achievements with you in relation to our young people in this forthcoming academic year.

My very best wishes

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Kathleen Higgins". The signature is written in black ink on a light-colored background.

Kathleen Higgins
Executive Headteacher