

September 1st 2020

Dear Parents and Carers

As we are all aware, this has certainly been a very different and strange year for everyone! However, it is so important that we now move towards a safe and full return to school. It has been over five months since lockdown started but, by following Government guidance, we can once again look forward to children learning, having fun and being with their friends in school.

At the moment, there are of course restrictions which are in place and it is important that everyone who is part of our school community knows what is planned is within the Government's Guidance for the Full Opening of Schools, published on 28th August 2020 (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/actions-for-schools-during-the-coronavirus-outbreak/guidance-for-full-opening-schools>). We have worked towards creating a practical and measured model, supported by robust hygiene procedures to ensure the safety of all the students and staff.

In conjunction with this, we have endeavoured to ensure that when our students come in, they get the best possible support in returning to school life and their learning.

Of course, we will be flexible and adaptable and regularly review our Risk Assessment Version 4, which will be available on the school website very shortly. We will make adjustments where necessary based on further Government guidance as well as staff and student feedback on what can be improved.

Following the Government's guidance, our aims are to ensure that:

- all students return to school in September for face to face learning
- students' well-being is a priority when returning in September
- the face to face learning provided supports the Government guidance, for the safety and welfare of students, staff and their families
- remote learning could be returned to should there be a requirement from Government
- the school site is well managed in providing the necessary safety requirements

Face Masks

Following Government guidance, the wearing of face coverings for staff and students is **optional** at Testwood School at the current time. We are keen to encourage children to feel safe and secure as they come to school after such a lengthy period away from the classroom. We want parents and carers to understand the protocols we have put in place to safeguard children and staff. We do not want face coverings to be a barrier to returning to school and thus they are not compulsory but permitted at present. If the guidance or local conditions change, we will follow.

Reminder: September 2020: start of term

We very much look forward to welcoming back all of our students. Our new Year 7 students have not yet had the opportunity to visit Testwood and so they will have time on their own on Monday 7th September. Also, as the majority of our students have not been in school since March 2020, we will have staggered “Welcome Back” sessions on the following days for each Year Group, in the afternoon, to calm any concerns and to explain the new timetables and break time routines. All students in Years 8-10 must attend their “Welcome back” sessions at the time and date specified below.

September 2020	Monday 7 th morning	Tuesday 8 th morning	Wednesday 9 th morning	Thursday 10 th	Friday 11 th
Year groups in school	Year 7 only	Year 7 and 11 only	Year 7, 9 and 11 only	All year groups in for whole day with staggered start and finish times	All year groups in for whole day with staggered start and finish times
Arrival times	8.15	Year 7: 8.15 Year 11: 8.35	Year 7: 8.15 Year 9: 8.25 Year 11: 8.35		
Departure times	13.35	Year 7: 13.05 Year 11: 13.10	Year 7: 13.05 Year 9: 13.10 Year 11: 13.15		
September 2020	Monday 7 th Afternoon	Tuesday 8 th Afternoon	Wednesday 9 th Afternoon		
Compulsory “Welcome back” briefing	Year 11 only in	Year 9 only in	Year 8 and 10 only in		
Arrival times	13.55	13.55	Year 8: 13.45 Year 10: 13.55		
Departure times	14.55	14.55	Year 8: 14.45 Year 10: 14.55		

Following the Government guidelines, which have been issued to support the safe return to school for all children, there will of course be a significant impact on the usual organisation of the school day. In order for our school to operate safely and avoid congestion, we will have staggered start and finish times for each year group, roughly in line with the usual school day. It is extremely important that students arrive only at the time stated in order to reduce the amount of mixing between year groups. Your support in achieving these

arrival times would be very much appreciated. Children from families who travel to school together will be given instructions when they arrive.

<i>From 10th September 2020 these arrival and departure times apply</i>					
	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10	Year 11
Arrival time (at the gate)	8.15	8.20	8.25	8.30	8.35
Tutor time starts	8.20	8.25	8.30	8.35	8.40
Departure time	14.35	14.40	14.45	14.50	14.55

Student Entrance to school

There will be separate entrances for each year group to come into school. Year 7, 9 and 11 will be able to enter the school site through the gates by the Sports Hall, also known as the ‘Student Entrance’. Years 8 and 10 will be able to come through the main gates by reception, also known as the ‘Main Entrance’.

For safety reasons we will be using two entrances, so our school gates will be closed for vehicular access at 8.15 so that students can enter the school site safely. The school gates will also be closed to vehicles between 14.30 and 15.00 for the same reason. Also, as a result of the staggered starts, we will not be able to run the Breakfast Club as normal. We will be keeping visitors to the school site during the day to a minimum. Please could you support us with this by not coming on to the school site unless you have arranged an appointment beforehand or have been asked to collect your child.

Students’ Well-Being

“Pupils may be experiencing a variety of emotions in response to the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak, such as anxiety, stress or low-mood. It is important to contextualise these feelings as normal responses to an abnormal situation.”

(Government’s Guidance for the Full Opening of Schools, published on 28th August 2020)

We are very aware of the potential concerns of children and parents who may be anxious or reluctant to return school.

It is important for children to be able to process the experience that they have had and be able to reflect on how they feel. On the first day back to school, each Tutor Group will be given information regarding well-being, with information about support available, plus the practicalities of returning to school including how to move around the school site and break/lunchtime expectations and fire evacuation etc.

Attendance

“Returning to school is vital for children’s education and for their well-being. Time out of school is detrimental for children’s cognitive and academic development”

(Government's Guidance for the Full Opening of Schools, published on 28th August 2020)

We are strongly encouraging all parents and carers to send their children back to school in order that they now do not miss out on any more class time. This will be an important move back towards normal life for many children and families.

The Government's expectation is that school attendance will be mandatory **from the beginning of the autumn term**. This means that the usual rules for school attendance will apply, including:

- Parents' duty to secure that their child attends school regularly
- Our responsibility to record attendance and follow up absence
- The availability to issue sanctions, including fixed penalty notices, in extreme circumstances

The Government advice is that "the risk to children themselves of becoming seriously ill from coronavirus (Covid-19) is very low and there are negative health impacts of being out of school". The risks are very low and we will be taking further steps to reduce the risk still further, such as:

- Hand sanitiser in every classroom. Students will be expected to hand sanitise their hands as they enter and when they exit each classroom. They are also encouraged to bring in their own hand sanitiser.
- Staff and students will be reminded to wash their hands and practice good respiratory hygiene 'catch it, bin it, kill it' throughout the day.
- Teachers will have the option to open windows and doors, where regulations allow, provide natural ventilation within the room
- The school has a regular and vigorous cleaning rota to ensure all touch points, such as door handles, and toilets are cleaned and checked throughout the day
- Zones for each year group during break and lunch times
- "Keep Left" in corridors are further reinforced by the addition of tape as a reminder.
- Staff will be expected to maintain distance from their students and other adults
- All classrooms will be organised with seating students side by side and facing forwards
- Large gatherings such as an assembly are at the moment cancelled and assemblies will take place remotely in tutor bases.
- Every class will have a seating plan and all students will need to sit in this seat at all times.
- If it is raining, students will eat in their tutor rooms, supervised by their tutors

(The full Risk Assessment is available on the school website)

If there is a concern about attendance or if your child is still unable to attend in line with public health advice because they are self-isolating or because they have had close contact with someone who has Covid-19, please contact your child's Year Leader. We are aiming to meet every child's educational needs and, if necessary, we will provide them with access to remote education. If they do not attend for another reason, we will not provide them with remote education.

Equipment

We must avoid as much cross-contamination as possible and therefore we would ask you to please support us by providing your child with:

- All necessary school equipment, including black pen, green pen, pencil, sharpener, eraser, scientific calculator and a glue stick, as well as a reading book
- Their own headphones (3.5mm mini-jack adapter)
- Their own apron for use in Art, Technology and Science lessons

- Their own, small personal bottle of hand sanitiser to carry with them and use for themselves. Hand sanitiser will also be available at the entrance of every classroom and there will be additional cleaning of ‘touch points’ such as door handles and tables throughout the day
- Their own water bottle
- Their own face coverings (should you wish them to wear one)

Uniform

‘We would, however, encourage all schools to return to their usual uniform policies in the autumn term. Uniforms do not need to be cleaned any more often than usual, nor do they need to be cleaned using methods which are different from normal.’

(Government’s Guidance for the Full Opening of Schools, published on 28th August 2020)

It is our expectation that students return to school in full uniform. However, students who have PE/Dance on their timetable can wear their PE/Dance kit into school for that whole day as changing facilities are closed at this time.

Also, with the variable British weather, please could you strongly encourage your children to wear a coat when necessary!

School Meals

Our canteen will need to be managed in a different way to normal. Children who require lunches will have to book their lunch on line in advanced. Details of how to do so will be sent out as soon as possible. In addition, Year Groups will collect any pre-ordered food from separate venues during either break or lunch time. However, to avoid congestion in these areas, please could you, if at all possible, provide your child with a packed lunch and break time snack every day. Students entitled to Free School Meals will collect them at lunch time or break time according to what they order.

When your child attends for the first time next week, although it is just for part of the day, they will be entitled to a Free School Meal which will be provided for them to collect. Instructions will be given out when they are with their tutor.

Behaviour

“The disciplinary powers that schools currently have, including exclusion, remain in place”

(Government’s Guidance for the Full Opening of Schools, published on 28th August 2020)

There have been some adaptations to the behaviour procedures to take into account the guidance on returning to school to ensure that we can maintain the high standards of behaviour we expect. Please refer to the Addendum to Behaviour Policy during COVID-19 on our school website.

Of course, we believe that all students need to be in lessons as much as possible and need to adhere to school rules, and safety of students and staff is of the utmost importance. In the event where there are incidents which pose a risk to the safety of students and staff, the student will be removed from the class or, if necessary, parents/ carers will be contacted and their child will be collected from school to ensure the safety of themselves and others.

Spitting, physical attacks, persistent refusal to comply with Health and Safety or social distancing requirements that could heighten the risk of harm to others are completely unacceptable and will result in exclusion.

If you have any concerns about your child's return to school, please contact your child's Year Leader.

Year 7 – Mr C. Jenkins

Year 8 – Mrs M. Holmes

Year 9 – Miss G. Mabey

Year 10 – Mr C. Manning

Year 11 – Miss J. Marlio

They will be in school on Thursday if you need to get in touch. Remember the email addresses are in the following format: c.jenkins@testwood.hants.sch.uk

Curriculum Adjustment

We have endeavoured to run the timetable and curriculum offer as closely to normal for all year groups however certain subjects will have a slightly different method of delivery in the first few weeks. Subjects like Music, Drama, Dance and PE as well as Science and Technology will be adjusted to ensure they are safe for students to enjoy and teachers to teach. An updated curriculum booklet will be coming out to you in the next couple of weeks to explain the changes. We have not removed any subjects from the curriculum.

Remote learning

In the event of a need to return to remote learning, we would ask that if it is possible for you to secure a laptop or chrome book with wifi capability for your son or daughter to use. We will be setting homework tasks using Google Classroom in September because we want to maintain the skills many of our children learned whilst away from school. It would be advantageous if your child / children could be provided with remote learning capability for the benefit of their education in the months to come.

New look Website

Over the last few months we have been working on a new, more modern website. Although this site is not currently live as the main school website we welcome your input on the new site. The temporary link for the new website is www.testsite.testwoodsportscollege.co.uk. Please have a look at it and I would appreciate any feedback you can give.

Finally, may I thank you for ploughing through this lengthy letter. I hope you are reassured by our plans and that you can pass this onto your children who I am looking forward to meeting again next week.

Warm regards,



Mrs Pitman