

From the Principal

17th July 2020

Re: September 2020 University of Birmingham School

Dear Parents/Carers,

Following very different ways of working and learning since March, you will be aware that from September all schools and educational settings are being asked to prepare for the return to onsite education for all pupils and students. We have been carefully considering our plans and arrangements to do this, and I outline some of the core details in this communication. As we proceed across the summer holiday period, there will be several further sets of information to provide additional operational details. This will include, once we have collected queries and views, any FAQ (frequently asked questions) document(s) to further support induction.

Our response for September is different to that put in place to this point. Naturally, the safety and welfare of pupils, students, and staff remains central, and to achieve this we have assessed risk and put in place a system of controls. This is alongside providing a curriculum which is as broad and ambitious as possible. In returning to school, we recognise that opportunities for social engagement and the rebuilding of friendships face-to-face are important.

In relation to our curriculum there will necessarily be some compromise in our offer. I would stress my and our hopes that the amendments I outline in this letter are temporary and relatively short-term, but at this stage we anticipate that amendments will be in place at least from September to December. As we journey across the autumn term, we shall keep all plans under review – including remaining agile to any national developments.

Induction and the start of the School term in September

We plan to amend the use of the first four days at the start of the term, in order to support the induction of new routines for staff, returning pupils and students, and pupils and students joining our School. Please therefore note the dates and arrangements below:

- Tuesday 1st September 2020 – **staff development only** (no pupils and students)
- Wednesday 2nd September 2020 – **staff development only** (no pupils and students)
- Thursday 3rd September 2020 – **new year 7 pupils and new year 12 students only** (910am arrival for year 7 pupils and 940am arrival for year 12 students)
- Friday 4th September 2020 – **year 8, 9, 10, 11 pupils and year 13 students only** (910am arrival for years 8/9 pupils and 940am arrival for years 10/11/13)
- Monday 7th September 2020 – **onsite schooling for all year groups** (For staggered arrival times see the details that follow in the next section)

Proposed timetable model

Proposed September Plan

Y7-9			Y10-13	
Arrive	9.15-9.20			
Line up & entry	9.20-9.30		Arrive	9.45-9.50
Reading	9.30-10.00		Line up & entry	9.50-10.00
P1	10.00-11.00		P1	10.00-11.00
Break at desk	11.00-11.10		Break at desk	11.00-11.10
P2	11.10-12.10		P2	11.10-12.10
P3	12.10-1.10		P3	12.10-1.10
Lunch	1.10-1.40		Form	1.10-1.40
Form	1.40-2.10		Lunch	1.40-2.10
P4	2.10-3.10		P4	2.10-3.10
P5 ¹	3.10-4.05		P5 ²	3.10-4.15

¹55 minute lesson ²65 minute lesson

- Please note that the finish time for all pupils and students on a Friday each week is at the end of Lesson-4 (P4) at 310pm.

Prevention: a Covid-Secure environment

In planning for a Covid-Secure working and learning environment from September we will implement the following measures as a part of a system of controls:

- We intend for pupils in years 7 to 11 to be located at all times in one zone of the school building, and sixth form students will occupy other classrooms fitted around the zones. Pupils will be escorted to their zone. The concept of these 'year group bubbles' is to minimise mixing beyond a contained and known group – either a class, or the year group.
- We ask that year groups arrive for school at times outlined above, which are different to those usually in place. We shall organise that each year group enters the building from one of three planned entry routes, making their way to their allocated zone. The times are staggered and either 915am or 945am in order that we restrict year group mixing. Pupils and students will line up outside the building in an allocated area before entering.
- We have chosen the slightly later times to normal to recognise our across-city catchment and the fact that many pupils and students will use public transport. We aim to limit the impact of travel at peak times. Where possible, walking and cycling is encouraged.
- PE will still be timetabled, but will be reduced in frequency – not least because of restrictions around certain sports and activities at this time. Pupils will be permitted to wear their PE kit as school uniform for the entire day when PE is timetabled, to avoid the need for changing clothing during the day.
- If a pupil or student, or anyone in your household is exhibiting Covid-19 symptoms, self-isolation and testing must be undertaken. Please do not attend school in those circumstances. A reminder as presently guided by Public Health England about Covid-19 symptoms, is attached to the information provided with this letter.

- Pupils, students, and staff will be asked to sanitise their hands as a part of routines for entering the building – there will be gel provided. Good hand hygiene remains one of the control measures in place and hand washing or sanitising is to be undertaken throughout the day, including as a part of toilet visits.
- We recognise that many of our children are siblings. We would ask where possible that if they are scheduled to arrive at school at different times, that is arranged by you. However, we also recognise that it may be impractical if sibling children are travelling to school in the same car to organise different arrival times, and in that eventuality we shall set aside waiting zones for pupils restricted to their year group bubble.
- We have arranged for enhanced cleaning around the building throughout the day.
- We have created three lunch spaces so that each year group will not mix with a different year group during time for a break and eating.
- We shall deliver virtual assemblies within classrooms rather than physical gatherings, in order to restrict the time when larger numbers of pupils are collected in the same space.
- Teachers will travel to classrooms and will maintain a distance of 2m at the front of the teaching space.
- Our pupils with SEND in receipt of additional support through an EHCP will remain supported by TIAs on a 1-2-1 basis. This is very important but also direct and limited in the number of interactions so risk can be contained and controlled.
- For our pupils in receipt of transport arranged through the Local Authority, the drop-off will be arranged for the rear of the site, and pupils will be met there by support-colleagues.
- Face coverings used on the way to and from school, especially on public transport, should be put away before accessing the school grounds. Based on current standing evidence, Public Health England does not recommend the use of face coverings in schools. This evidence is being kept under review, at a national level.
- PPE will be used in school by staff in the event of needing to directly support a person who falls ill during the school day, or to support pupils who require routine personal care.

Enrichment and catch-up

- Enrichment as a part of weekly core provision is going to be suspended from the timetable under this adjusted model. There are many practical, logistical, and safety related reasons why we have taken this decision – one being that enrichment sessions frequently involve and benefit from guest and outside speakers and organisations. We must restrict this at this time. We are presently considering options around ‘experience days’ within bubbles, whereby extended learning and opportunities can be put in place.
- We recognise that we will receive many pupils and students back to onsite education with potential gaps in learning as a result of remote learning over recent months – notwithstanding everyone’s very best efforts. We shall in the first instance use gained enrichment time as a part of planned learning recovery. We await further details and guidance from the Government around proposals for tutoring – in line with provision that has been announced nationally.

Response to a Covid-positive case

- We are finalising the exact details of our response procedure should a member of our School community test positive with coronavirus moving forward. This would involve actions for isolation for pupils and students in affected classes or year group bubbles – and subsequently testing for any further people who develop symptoms whilst then isolating.
- In the event of a positive coronavirus case as Principal I shall be supported by the local health protection team at Public Health England, and we would issue clear, individualised communication and guidance to pupils, students, families, and staff affected.
- We shall as a part of protocols established include intelligence received from the national ‘test and trace’ system.

Lunch and food

- Pupils and students will take lunch in their year-groups onsite. At this time, this applies to members of the sixth form also.
- We shall have three lunch spaces within the building, for separate year groups to avoid mixing.
- They will be expected to remain seated whilst everyone eats, and any pupils who then want to have 10 minutes of structured safe exercise will be able to do so. For some year groups this will be outside (weather permitting), for others this will be in the sports hall.
- Pupils can bring in a healthy packed lunch, or can order for a fortnight in advance from a new ‘take away’ menu which will be delivered to the three spaces. The options will be:
 - Cheese or tuna packed lunch, with a different snack, fruit option and drink every day
 - A vegetarian hot lunch changing daily with drink
 - A meat (halal) hot lunch changing daily with drink
 - A jacket potato with topping with drink
- Pupils will sign up for one of the options and have this all week. They cannot change options mid-week, but can change options at the end of each week. As we can no longer accept cash in school, we will ask families to pay in advance and cash will be deducted each day from your School Gateway account. Pupils who are eligible for free school meals will also be able to choose these options. Our caterers will be able to provide changes where pupils have known allergies or specific dietary requirements.
- All pupils should bring a water bottle to school. They can refill these at the water fountain in their allocated zone. No drinks are for sale at the moment during school time. The school ordinarily does not allow energy drinks or fizzy drinks except flavoured water.
- AIP, our catering partners, have a rigorous and robust health and safety policy to ensure all food is prepared and served in a hygienic way and meets Covid-19 Government guidance. This includes wearing PPE for handing out food, a no cash policy, pre-packing takeaway bags with cutlery and a napkin and extensive cleaning during service.

- Please note that for the 3rd and 4th September (the first days back):
A limited food choice will be available to order on the day of veggie burger and wedges and a hot meat option (halal). If you would like this please ensure your School Gateway account is topped up beforehand unless your child receives free school meals. Pupils can also bring in a healthy packed lunch if they prefer.
- If you are new to the School in September you will receive details about how to access and set up a School Gateway account as a new user, by separate communication in August.

Behaviour, conduct, and expectations

- As we re-group as a community and settle into new routines, it will be even more important that everyone acts in a considerate manner. This is to allow that we keep each other safe by respecting the measures put in place to be Covid-Secure – and to allow everyone to learn. I am sure our young people will recognise the need for this shared responsibility responding appropriately, and we shall uphold the highest expectations.
- Our core behaviour policy remains in place. To recognise the extraordinary circumstances which arise from Covid-19 I would ask that your family engage with the additional details outlined in the Home School Agreement, Code of Conduct, and PREP documents attached with this letter.
- In a vast majority of cases our children will show good character and continue to make the right choice, at the right time, for the right reason. If behaviour and conduct should fall below our expected standards, a detention system will be in place.

Attendance

- The Secretary of State for Education has been clear that from September all pupils and students are required to return to schools full time, and parents and carers are respectfully reminded that this is a legal duty.
- Whilst this statutory position must of course be upheld, we shall remain keen to work with our families where there may be individual concerns or anxieties around returning to school, and I encourage open conversation and communication with us so that we may provide support where we can. The usual channels of liaison with Pupil Pastoral Managers should be followed should this be the case.

Uniform and dress code

- Pupils and students are required to attend school in line with full uniform and dress code expectations. Please find a reminder of this attached. These are also accessible via our school website.
- As September approaches, if you find you are faced with an individual challenge around uniform and business wear, please communicate with us in advance so that we can understand the circumstances and support where we can. In this eventuality please email either r.tigue@uobschool.org.uk or g.walker@uobschool.org.uk to raise awareness.

Further information, feedback, and queries

It is our intention to 'drip feed' additional information to pupils, students, and families over the summer break.

To help us in the next stage of planning and information sharing, I ask that you complete the brief survey via the link below. This will ask you to acknowledge your receipt of this communication, so that we know we have reached you. Additionally, you will find free-text boxes to raise questions with us – and we shall use this feedback to issue a FAQ document during August where there are any common queries or points.

<https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=YJyIC4whk2GVDf2uLW5HV8G4EgNjc9Pqc-H-ZWnvBxUMEU3QjFKQ1FMSjdVMUg2VENNTUIGTThQMC4u>

I would be grateful if this return could reach us by **9am on Monday 27th July 2020**.

Whilst still in unusual circumstances, we now formally start our summer break, and I wish our pupils and students an enjoyable and relaxing holiday period, to the extent that this is possible.

With my continued wishes for the well-being of your family,

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Colin Townsend', written in a cursive style.

Colin Townsend
Principal
University of Birmingham School