

Our ref: PRC/JUE

1 September 2020

Dear Parents/Students

Much work has gone on this summer to ensure our school is as safe as possible and we are very excited to have all students back. Some of the work which has taken place this summer includes installation of wall hand sanitisers and hand washing troughs, re-rooming a full timetable into year group bubbles/zones, enhanced cleaning of all areas, increased signage and much more.

From an academic point of view our curriculum leaders have been re-designing their curriculum taking into account the Ofqual changes to assessment in 2021 which were only published in August. This involves rearranging the sequencing and content of lessons taking into account what has already been covered, what may have been removed, what must be covered face to face and what could be covered in the event of groups of students self-isolating or lockdown. Of course, these plans will be shared with students in the first few weeks.

I would like to take this opportunity to simplify things so you know where to find information quickly.

1. First day and start times:

Year 9-Tuesday 8th September-10am-2:40pm

Year 10-Thursday 10th September- 8:50am- 3:20pm

Year 11-Wednesday 9th September-8:45am-3:30pm

Year 12- Thursday 10th September-induction (see letter from Mrs Blackburn, Director of Sixth Form regarding exact timings)

Lessons start Friday 11th September

(note: Year 12 **external students only** will be required in from 2pm-3pm on Tuesday 8th September)

Year 13-Thursday 10th September- as per individual student timetables from lesson 3

Students will be met on the gate on the first day and be guided in via the correct entrance.

Preit Chahal Principal

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2. A summary table of timings of the school day, zones, entrances **after the first day** is available on our website following this link:

<https://www.gosforthacademy.org.uk/article/2020/8/25/return-to-school-in-september-for-all-students>

3. A Covid-19 student handbook will be placed on the website this week - there will be separate ones for Main School and Sixth Form. Students will get hard copies on their first day but please have a thorough read of this in advance.

Two final hygiene and safety points we would like your support on:

Hand sanitisers

Whilst several wall hand sanitisers have been installed and there will be hand sanitiser in every classroom we encourage students to bring their own small bottle for personal use only. This will avoid overcrowding at sanitisation stations and at the end of lessons and maximise teaching time.

Face coverings

As you may be aware, the World Health Organisation (WHO) published a new statement on the 21st August, advising “children aged 12 and over should wear a mask under the same conditions as adults, in particular when they cannot guarantee at least a 1-metre distance from others and there is widespread transmission in the area”.

In response to this announcement, on 26th August, the following update was released by Government <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/face-coverings-in-education/face-coverings-in-education>

“Nationwide, the government is not recommending face coverings are necessary in education settings generally because a system of control, applicable to all education environments, provides additional mitigating measures. Schools and colleges will have the discretion to require face coverings in communal areas where social distancing cannot be safely managed, if they believe that it is right in their particular circumstances.”

The document goes on to say –

“On the basis of current evidence, in light of the mitigating measures education settings are taking, and the negative impact on communication, face coverings will not generally be necessary in the classroom even where social distancing is not possible. . . Face coverings can have a negative impact on learning and teaching and so their use in the classroom should be avoided.”

Having carefully considered this latest guidance and the layout of our school premises, including areas where it will be particularly challenging for staff and students to maintain social distancing, we have today taken the following decisions:

- Students and staff are to wear face coverings in corridors and stairwells as they go to registration, move between lessons and as they move to and from break. Once students have arrived at their lesson or break area, face coverings can be removed. Students should put their face coverings on as soon as they enter school buildings.
- This approach means students will only be required to wear face coverings for a short period of time each day.
- Those students and staff who are medically exempt from wearing face coverings are not required to wear them and should inform their tutor on the first day.
- Students do not need to wear face coverings in lessons as the control measures in our risk assessment reduce the risk of transmission. However, if students would prefer to keep face coverings on during lessons, this is permissible and at their discretion.
- This use of face coverings will be required from the first day onwards.
- **Face coverings should preferably be of a plain colour with no logos or offensive markings.** We reserve the right to ask a student to remove a face covering that is deemed inappropriate; this will be replaced by a school disposable mask until a more appropriate one is sourced.

This decision has not been taken lightly, bearing in mind that our local area is not currently identified as one where transmission of the virus is high. We do feel, however, that the use of face coverings during key times within the school day, will provide staff, students and parents with additional confidence with full-reopening of the school from September and is a prudent, pragmatic and future proof arrangement to keep transmission rates low. It is also an approach supported by Public Health England and one that many North East Schools are adopting.

It is important that face coverings are worn correctly in order to avoid inadvertently increasing the risk of transmission. This requires cleaning of hands before and after touching face coverings, whether removing or putting them on, and safe storage within individual, sealable plastic bags between use. Single use face coverings must be disposed of responsibly, using the general waste bins provided.

Please ensure your child is provided with a face covering and appropriate bag for safe storage (if reusable) when they return to school in September. Advice and guidance regarding face coverings, including how to make a face covering, can be found at


<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/how-to-wear-and-make-a-cloth-face-covering/how-to-wear-and-make-a-cloth-face-covering>

Students will receive information during their first day regarding responsible and effective use of face coverings.

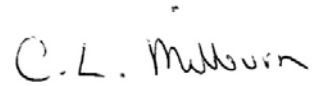
We very much look forward to welcoming you back to school in September.



Preit Chahal
Principal



Karen Blackburn
Director of Sixth Form



Carol Milburn
Acting Director of Main School