



Diocese of St. Albans



August 2020

Dear Parents/Carers

I hope this letter finds you well. We are all really excited to be welcoming your child back to school and starting to return to normality (albeit quite an adjusted normality at this stage). This return to school is very important for education, but also for mental health and normal teenage socialisation.

Please remember Y7 are in school on 3 and 4 September. Y12 and Y13 are in for part days on Friday 4 September and all students are back on Monday 7 September, full time.

This letter gives details of how we plan to re-open in September. The new routines require every one of us (staff and students) to follow these routines, for everyone's safety. I would like you to talk through these with your son/daughter, and impress on them the importance of following them. It is imperative that every student follows one-way signs (even when there is a shorter route!), queues in the correct place, takes their break/lunch in the correct place at the correct time etc. I do not expect (or want) to be sanctioning students for not following the routines that are there to help us. I will take you through a typical day at school with the new routines indicated.

Attendance to school becomes obligatory again from 1 September 2020. However, you **must not** send your child in if they (or any member of your household) have symptoms of COVID-19, or if they (or any member of your household) has tested positive within the last 14 days. Parents/carers and students should follow all Government guidance, including Track and Trace. You are under obligation to inform the school of the date and outcome of any COVID-19 test.

The latest guidance on symptoms of COVID-19 are: high temperature (37.8 degrees C or more), a new continuous cough, or a loss of, or change, in normal sense of taste or smell.

• **Arrival at school:**

- All students will wear full school uniform, following the existing policy (except on days where they have PE – see below).
- Students will arrive at the normal school time of 8:15am, in time for morning form time at 8:25am. Your child should not be in school before 7:30am, and we would prefer arrival between 7:30 and 8:15am.
- If you drop your child off, please **do not** leave your vehicle, or talk with others in vehicles. Please **do not** approach staff on duty, but phone or email the school to communicate in that way.
- Y7 and Y8 students will enter via the Humanities block door on the Student Entrance side of the school. Other years will use the Student Entrance as before.
- Following Government guidance, students and staff should not wear face masks in school, but are expected to on public transport. Social distancing is not required on school buses, so our service will run as it did previously, before lockdown. For those who have booked a place on the Golden Boy Coach I would say that, although face coverings are not compulsory on school (as opposed to

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- public) transport, it may be advisable for your child to wear a face covering while on the coach. However, the wearing of masks in school is a hot topic in the news and, with Scotland's announcement on 24 August, guidance may change before 1 September.
- Once at school students may have the opportunity to get breakfast **from the Dining Room**. Based on experience prior to closure, there are few enough using this service for us to host one student per table. Students are welcome to use outside spaces (or be indoors if the weather is poor), but **must** be respectful of others' space.
 - For added security, the school vehicle and pedestrian gates will be shut from 8:45- 14:30. They are automated, and if you arrive during this time you will need to press the buzzer to speak to reception to enter the school site. When you leave during this time, approach the exit gate to the yellow line and the gates will open for you automatically. This is a permanent change and not linked to Covid-19.
- **Once in school students will be in Year Group Bubbles:**
 - **Years 7&8** will follow a normal timetable but be predominantly in 'zones' to reduce the amount of student movement around school. These year groups will be taught in their form groups for a large majority of their lessons and two other 'bubble's for a number of lessons like languages and technology.
 - **Year 9-13** will follow a normal timetable, transitioning between lessons and specialist classrooms (where possible) for teaching. This will enable them to follow a personalised timetable, preparing them for examination courses and upcoming exams and assessments
 - Students will be expected to follow hand-washing routines whenever they use the toilets, and will use hand sanitiser every time they enter and leave a classroom (or the eating areas). Whilst we are providing plenty of hand-sanitiser, I would actively encourage you to equip your child with a small bottle of appropriate sanitiser to use.
 - There will be one-way systems in place indoors, with free flow movement outside in the open air. More external doors will be in use to take students into the fresh air more often than before, and there will be signage up, showing which doors are 'no-entry' from certain directions as well as arrows and signs inside to show which way a corridor is moving.
 - Water fountains will remain turned off to prevent cross-contamination between the year group bubbles. This means you should send your child in with plenty of water (although bottles will be available for purchase from the eating areas at break and lunchtime).
 - **Curriculum:**
 - We all want to ensure that students catch up and much planning into the curriculum has happened to do this. However, this needs to be done in a way that is mindful that students have not been in the school routine for 6 months. We are following advice in keeping testing to a minimum in the first few months (although staff will conduct low stakes knowledge tests to support students' retention of information and make links to past learning), and will be working to welcome the students back and settle them to engage them quickly in learning.
 - Practical subjects have adapted their curriculum where possible to reduce sharing of equipment, and will be cleaning equipment between use if it is to be used by different groups in less than 72 hours. You will be able to review the curriculum your child will follow by reading the Curriculum Booklets that will be on the website by 1 September – these booklets contain not only the topics students will study but also strategies to support their child's learning.
 - For Y11, exam boards are making changes to exam specifications for next year, but not all details have been published at time of writing so I will not share more here but we will do so at a later date.

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• **Breaks and lunches:**

- These will be staggered to reduce the number of students using the dining facilities at any one time. With the exception of Y7 and Y11, every year group will have either period 2 or period 4 split by break or lunch to enable us to have staggered breaks and maintain social distancing at these times. Students with packed lunches will eat at the same time and in the same place as those buying food on site. It is easier to see the plan on a diagram (below) rather than write it down, however as an example:
- Y7 break will be from 09:50-10:20 and lunch from 12:20-13:10. Food will be served in the Main Hall (students will start queuing for food at 12:20 and will need to be out of the Hall by 12:50 to allow for cleaning).

	8.25-8.50	8.50-9.50	9.50- 11.20		11.20-12.20	12.20-14.10		14.10-15.20	15.10-16.10	
	Tutorial	Period 1	*Period 2 and Break time		Period 3	Period 4 and Lunchtime**		Period 5***	Period 6	
7			B	P2		L	P4	15.00 finish		
8			P2	B	P2	P4		15.15 finish		
9			P2		B	P4	L	P4	15.20 finish	
10			P2	B	P2	P4		15.05 finish	Triple Science	
11			B	P2		L	P4		15.10 finish	Triple Science
P16			P2		B	P4	L	P4	15.20 finish	P6 Lessons
Break/Lunch start times			9.50	10.20	10.50	12.20	13.00	13.40		

* Lesson 2 - 90 mins in total, 60min lesson, 30 minute break

** Lesson 4 - 110 minutes total, 60 mins lesson, 50 minutes lunch (30 minute eating time, 20 minute 'play/socialise', see below)

*** Staggered finish, lesson time 50-70 minutes

****Period 4/Lunch timings and rotations**

	12.20	12.30	12.40	12.50	13.00	13.10	13.20	13.30	13.40	13.50	14.00
7	Eat (MH)	Eat (MH)	Eat (MH)	Out	Out	P4					
8	P4					Out	Out	Eat (MH)	Eat (MH)	Eat (MH)	
9	P4			Out	Eat (DR)	Eat (DR)	Eat (DR)	Out	P4		
10	P4					Out	Out	Eat (DR)	Eat (DR)	Eat (DR)	
11	Eat (DR)	Eat (DR)	Eat (DR)	Out	Out	P4					

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P16	P4	Out	Eat (MH)	Eat (MH)	Eat (MH)	Out	P4
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Eat = eating time (in the Main Hall (MH) or Dining Room (DR) as indicated on the plan).
Out = outside or wet-weather areas.

- **Break and Lunchtime cont.**
 - We will explain to the students where they will need to queue, and the food will be 'grab-and-go' (a mixture of hot and cold food, but it will not require plates or cutlery). Please see the other letter about the details of the food.
 - Students cannot take their break or lunch at times other than those indicated to maintain their 'bubble'. If your child has a medical need (e.g. diabetes) that could be affected by this, please email admin@st-maryshigh.herts.sch.uk and mark 'FAO Mrs K Senturk – Urgent' and we will support your child in this respect.
 - Students in different year groups may not mix at social time; therefore they will have their own designated 'play space' which will be shared with the students.
- **Toilets :**
 - Different year groups will have their own toilets, but these may be different to the ones they had previously to enable Y7 and Y8 toilets to be close to their teaching base.
- **Lockers:**
 - These will not be in use. They are in areas that are fine during regular school opening but are too crowded at the current time to use. Students will need to bring and carry what they need for the day, requiring them to get their bag organised before they come to school.
 - Any items left in lockers on March 20 are now in named bags ready for collection by students.
- **Mobile phones:**
 - These will obviously not be kept in lockers, but in bags. However, I stress that **the usual policy will apply if a student is using their mobile phone on site and it will be confiscated in the usual way and for the usual length of time. Students MUST keep their phones turned off and away all day.**
- **PE kit:**
 - To avoid using the changing rooms, students must wear their PE kit to school on the days that they have PE.
 - On the first day in school, students must wear their school uniform until they have their timetable and know which day they are in PE.
 - They must wear the **correct** PE kit and **only** on days that they have PE.
- **The end of the day:**
 - This will be staggered for a finish between 15:00 and 15:20
 - Most clubs will not run. The only after-school 'clubs' that will run are those directly linked to exams (i.e. Period 6 for 6th formers, Triple Science for Y10/11 and interventions as notified to parents/carers when they are put on).
 - The LRC will not be open for homework club. We are currently looking at providing a service for younger students (Y7 and Y8) who are picked up significantly later than the end of the school day, but other students will need to leave the school site directly, or wait for collection in the car park.

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In drawing up the Risk Assessment that these changes are based on, we have followed the Hertfordshire County Council model risk assessment, and therefore will be in line with other Hertfordshire schools.

Please keep this letter safe so you can refer to it over the coming weeks. There is a lot to take in here in one reading, and it would be a useful reference for you in future.

We all understand what a difficult time it has been for society, you and our young people. If you or your child is concerned about anything that has happened during lockdown, or are worried about returning to school, then please alert your child's Head of Year and Student Manager in the first instance.

It only remains for me to wish you well and I look forward to seeing you at some point next year.

Yours faithfully



Nicholas Simms
Headteacher

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