



7 September 2020

Dear Parents/Carers

Reopening Update – September 2020

Last week we welcomed back our school community for the first time in six months. This has been no mean feat and it has been an apprehensive few days for many people. We have had 98% of students in school and I would like to thank all parents for their support with this fantastic level of attendance. I appreciate that many parents are rightly concerned about how safe the current situation is but have entrusted us to restart the education their children rightly desire and deserve. As a parent of two secondary aged students who returned last week, I totally understand the apprehensions we are facing.

Behaviour around the building has been exemplary and lessons have been calm and well-ordered with students happy to be back in class with their friends and teachers. We would like to say a massive thank you to all staff and students who have relentlessly followed the guidance, continually sanitising hands and worn face coverings in and around the building. This has helped with the sense of safety for all concerned whilst inside.

As with everything else at present, we will continue to evaluate how things work and based on our experiences, we will continue to make changes moving forward. We would ask that you bear with us during this time as we have to maintain safety at the forefront of our operations. **Whilst it's difficult, we must keep reiterating the need for social distancing at all times. This is very challenging at times, but it is for everyone's protection, particularly when travelling to and arriving at school.** This is easily forgotten and it is fundamentally important that we drive home the message of how important it is.

Start Times

It is important that students are not on site till 8.35am. We are asking students to start putting on their face coverings as they get to the school gates. An influx of early students on Thursday 3 September made the site very crowded and proved to be a challenge in terms of social distancing. We tweaked a few things on Friday and this was much better with students well spaced out and observing the requirements to wear face coverings and be at least 1m from their peers. All students are expected to continue to wear a face covering while they queue to enter the building. Once students enter the site at 8.35am they should move to their entrance door where they will be met by a senior member of staff, who will help them to form an orderly queue and sanitise their hands.

Change to School Day – Finish Times

To aid the movement of students away from the site and in the interest of local amenity, we are making a slight change to the timings of the day **from Tuesday 8 September**. Key Stage 3 (Years 7, 8 and 9) will now finish at 2.45pm and Key Stage 4 (Years 10 and 11) will now finish at 2.55pm. This is to help alleviate the number of students walking along Lodge Lane towards Kingswinford at any one time. We must reiterate that students should not be waiting for friends or congregating on pavements. Quite simply, once they have left the site, they must keep walking!

Drop Off and Pick Up

If you are dropping your child off at school on the car park, can I ask that you drop them at the far end of the site near to the exit gates/overflow car park and do not obstruct the disabled parking bays. When collecting your child from school, if you are parking on the car park, please move along as far as possible towards the exit gates. If parking on the road, can you arrange to meet them away a short distance from the school site and not immediately near to the entrance or exit gates. This caused a significant amount of congestion on the main road outside school last week.

Face Coverings

In line with the national picture of increasing cases, I cannot overemphasise the importance of face coverings. We are implementing a demanding policy regarding the use of these for ALL students and staff and to date, the majority of our school community are adhering to this requirement. The World Health Organisation are clear that there is much evidence to suggest that the use of face coverings does help to prevent the spread of Covid 19 (including in children of secondary school age) and therefore, it is now part of what we will do for the foreseeable future. Your support in this is critical. We have added some 'Breach of Covid Regulations' to our behaviour policy to ensure that students are absolutely clear about the expectations. In line with the published exemptions, students who meet the exemption criteria will not be required to wear them but we will ask parents to provide evidence of the reason for their exemption. They will then be issued with a recognisable badge to carry. In line with the published exemptions, students who meet the exemption criteria will not be required to wear them but we will ask parents to provide evidence of the reason for their exemption. They will then be issued with a recognisable badge to carry. Any visitors to school, for whatever reason, will need to wear a face covering.

Weduc App/Facebook/Parent Pay

All payments should now be made through the Weduc app as Parent Pay has been discontinued. Please follow the payment tabs and make payments in the usual way. Parent Pay should not be used. If you have any questions, please email info@summerhill.dudley.sch.uk with Weduc in the subject line. Parents in Y7 will now have access to Weduc.

Meals

Students have the opportunity to pre-order food if they wish. An email for this purpose is sent every Monday morning to their school email address. To order food, students should reply to this email. The deadline for orders is 8.45am on Thursday for food the following week. Any pre-ordered food will be pre-packed and available for collection from designated space for each year group at lunchtime (Y7 Hall, Y8 cafe, Y9 Cafe, Y10 Kisok, Y11 Hall).

Thank You

We all appreciate that these are unique times and that this is different start to the new academic year. That however, doesn't mean to say that it can't be a great start to the year! It will continue to be a challenge for all of us and our ability to work together will define our success.

I am so indebted to all the parents who have sent in messages of thanks, goodwill and support at this time. It has been overwhelming at times acknowledging the understanding you have for what we are trying to achieve. This was never going to be easy! My staff are a fantastic team who have risen to the challenge brilliantly and I really cannot thank them enough. We will continue to update our procedures to ensure things remain as slick as they can be.

Your support is much appreciated. We must work together to ensure we are doing all we can to keep everyone safe and avoid another lockdown.

Yours sincerely

Martyn Palfreyman
Headteacher