



SUMMERHILL SCHOOL

13 July 2020

Dear Parents/Carers

Planning for September

We are finally reaching the end of a very tumultuous and unusual academic year and I want to express my gratitude for your support during the coronavirus pandemic so far. It has been a truly challenging year for all of us and your support has been very much appreciated. We have done the best that we can, in the circumstances we have faced and we are so proud of our students and the resilience they have shown. Our students are a true credit to our school community and the fact that every day over 700 have been logged into our systems completing their work is testament to their dedication and commitment. We have really missed the students and genuinely can't wait to see them again. We are blessed with such vibrant students and it will be a joy for them to return to school.

This is a rather long letter but contains a lot of information. Please ensure you read, digest it and share it with your children so that our students are absolutely clear on expectations and procedures. Further information will follow over the weeks ahead. Some of this information will be sent via email, so please make sure you we have an up-to-date email address for you (especially if you have not received an email from us in recent weeks about options or Zoom meetings).

As you will be aware the government has released official guidance stating that all students must return to school full time in September. This is not without its challenges and I know that many of you will be anxious about your child's return. As always, the safety and welfare of our students and staff will be at the heart of every decision we make and we will do all we can to mitigate against the continued risks of the coronavirus outbreak.

It is clear from the guidance and scientific knowledge that we cannot create a totally risk-free school environment. However, the plans we have already put in place for when Year 10 students returned from Monday 15 June makes us confident that we can balance and minimise any risks from coronavirus whilst trying to return to as much normality as possible. School life is going to be very different for all of us and it is absolutely crucial that we work as a team to support and protect each other.

In welcoming all students back in September, we have been asked to minimise the contact that a student has during the school day to reduce the risk of transmission. This will be achieved through keeping year groups separate (in 'bubbles') and through maintaining distance between individuals. Scientific evidence suggests that consistent groups reduce the risk of transmission by limiting the number of students in contact with each individual to only those within their year group.

All students will be studying the full curriculum from September in normal classes with some minor changes to certain practical activities. In addition, all students will receive their usual tutor time which will aid their mental/emotional development and progress.

Form Groups

To support the 'year group bubble' theory, we have changed our current 'vertical' house form groups into year group form groups. All students will now be of the same year group for the foreseeable future throughout 2020/21. Form tutors will be taken from the current house tutors and new members of staff who have joined each house. Notification of your child's new form tutor will be communicated in the weeks ahead over the summer holiday.

House Offices

The large House office (behind reception) has now been disbanded and each House has their own separate office with the Head of House and House Officer. Ursa will be located in Mr Cresswell's former officer on the ground floor by MFL and DT, Orion and Pegasus will be located on the first floor near to the nurse's office by maths and general teaching and Draco will be located on the first floor opposite the staffroom near to Science.

Arrival

School will start for all students at 8.45am promptly. We are however, changing the way in which students will enter the building at the start of the day. The expanse of our site allows us to spread the students out and limit the number congregating by main reception. There will be 5 entrance doors. Please ensure your child adheres to these entrance points at all times. It is likely they will have a different entrance point depending upon their timetable on a given day. Whilst siblings from the same household may arrive at school together, they must enter through their designated entrance.

Students will be required to thoroughly sanitise their hands on arrival to school at the door where they enter. Senior staff will supervise this procedure. Students will then go straight to their period one lesson. Tutor time will take place later in the day. Students must understand that they are not able to walk around the school site and mix with other year groups and must go directly to their teaching room. The Senior Leadership Team will be on duty to help support and direct students on their arrival.

Students will be unable to enter the site before 8.35am and must be in their timetabled room, ready to start lessons at 8:45am. Whilst we appreciate this may cause inconvenience to families, it is a necessary part of our re-opening, without which we can safely manage the school site. Students must not congregate in large groups and must adhere to social distancing at all times.

We politely remind parents/carers that all students travelling via public transport (including taxis) must wear a face mask for the entire duration of the journey to and from school. This is statutory legislation now across the country and must be adhered to.

I do ask for your support in ensuring that your child makes their way to school as safely as possible by avoiding travelling and walking in large groups, maintaining social distancing and travelling straight home after school rather than remaining in the local area to help reduce the risk of community transmission.

Attendance

The government guidance states that all students must return to school in the autumn to minimise as far as possible the longer-term impact of the pandemic on their education, wider development and well-being. Shielding advice for all students will currently end on 1st August, subject to a continued decline in the rates of community transmission, and this means that all students can return to school. You can find more advice at “COVID-19 – shielding guidance for students and young people” on the gov.uk website. Please be advised that we will operate our usual attendance policy and that students will be expected to return in September. The government have made it clear that schools are expected to follow the normal processes with immediate effect, which will include penalty notices and court proceedings for non-attendance.

Please use the normal absence line to inform school if your son/daughter is unable to attend school. Please note that if your son/daughter is absent due to displaying COVID-19 symptoms, we must be made aware of this immediately so that we can trigger the Track and Trace system.

Catering Provision

From September, and until government guidelines are relaxed, the school will be providing a streamlined catering offer to students and staff. We are still working with our catering provider to confirm details and more information will be provided in due course with regards to this. There will be a requirement to pre-order any food that is on offer. There will be ‘grab and go’ stations where students will be able to collect food and drinks which have been pre-ordered.

Students who are joining us in Year 7 in September should bring a break time snack and packed lunch for the first week, to allow time for our systems to be updated.

Students will not be able to use the water fountains in school; water will only be available for emergencies. Students must, therefore, bring sufficient water for each day. We recommend at least one litre equivalent per day. Fizzy drinks are not permitted.

Year groups will be allocated specific areas for break and lunchtime and students must remain in these locations at all times. Students are not permitted to walk around the school. It is vitally important that students follow these instructions to protect both themselves and their peers.

Uniform

Full school uniform must be worn at all times with no exceptions. The government guidance states that there is no need for further arrangements other than normal personal hygiene and washing of clothes following a day in a school. Uniforms do not need to be cleaned any more often or differently than usual.

When your child has PE, they should attend school in their kit on that day. Plain black/navy tracksuit bottoms must be worn to cover kit. Please note that shorts/skorts and leggings are not permitted to be worn around the building during the day.

The uniform code states clearly that plain black polishable shoes must be worn – strictly no logos and no canvas/fabric shoes are allowed. Skirts must be of a suitable length on or just above the knee. Jewellery is restricted to a watch and one small stud earring in each ear and facial piercings or extreme hairstyles (no tramlines etc.), extreme hair dyes or extreme or excessive makeup are not permitted.

Whilst PPE is not a requirement of the guidelines, we are happy for students to wear face coverings whilst moving around the school and at lunchtime and break time. In line with government guidance, students will not wear masks in lessons. Re-usable masks must be washed daily.

Mobile Phones

Once students are in the building mobile phones must be NOT SEEN and NOT HEARD. Students are permitted to check their phones OUTSIDE at breaks and lunchtimes. We encourage students to leave all expensive personal items at home. We cannot take responsibility for everyone's phones, iPods, jewellery etc. All losses are at the owner's own risk.

First Aid

Students displaying COVID-19 symptoms will be held in a separate, well-ventilated room, away from all other students and staff. Parents/carers are required to collect their son/daughter and siblings within 30 minutes of the school phoning home so please ensure that we have up to date contact details. Students with other medical needs will continue to use the medical room by Main Reception as required.

Breakfast Club & After School Extra-Curricular Clubs

We are unable to offer any breakfast/before school provision during the Autumn term due to the importance of keeping year groups apart. School will open to all students ten minutes before the allocated start time. Unfortunately, we will not be in a position to hold any PE fixtures or extra-curricular clubs due to the 'crossover' between year groups but we will continue to review this. The Learning Centre and Homework Club will not be available at the end of the school day.

Music lessons provided by our peripatetic staff through Dudley Performing Arts will continue online via Zoom. DPA will manage this process and provide information and online booking in due course.

Year 11 Revision

We will be developing and sharing a Year 11 Catch Up and Revision Plan in due course. This will involve some after school provision and other opportunities to allow students to maximise their knowledge. We recognise that students who are studying GCSE or equivalent courses and are due to take exams in Summer 2021, will have experienced disruption to their education this year. We are monitoring announcements from Ofqual and the exam boards to develop our approach to next year's exams in the light of this and will keep you updated.

Behaviour

We have amended our Behaviour Policy in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Clearly, personal hygiene and respecting social distancing are now hugely important to the safety of both students and staff. For this reason, the school will reserve the right to use the most serious of sanctions for behaviour which endangers others or threatens to endanger others. We will take a zero-tolerance approach to any misconduct. Our conduct policy will continue to operate and this will include detentions. However, students will remain in their year group bubbles for detentions.

Movement around school

Realistically, we cannot stop student or staff movement around the building, but we can ensure this is done in a sensible way. All students must adhere to the new 'Keep Left' system, walking in single file, at least 1 metre away from anyone in front. There will be NO congregating, waiting or overtaking and any students who do not obey this will be subject to our usual disciplinary procedures.

Equipment

It is vital that all students have a bag/rucksack big enough for their exercise books. They will be bringing their books home every night and must remember to bring the correct ones back in the morning. School bags must be placed underneath the table where the student is working to ensure that health and safety procedures are followed. There can be no sharing or borrowing of equipment so it is essential that students have their own with them at all times. Locker access will be limited for the foreseeable future to ensure no cross mixing of students.

All students will be provided with a small white board, pen and cloth in September which they should use in every lesson. This forms part of their main equipment and should be brought into school every day.

The standard equipment list for school can be found on the school website. We would also like you to ensure that ALL students bring in the following additional items:

- A small bottle of hand sanitiser for use at break/ lunchtime (sanitiser will be provided at each lesson)
- A pack of tissues
- A plastic food bag to dispose of used tissues
- A water bottle(s) of fresh water (no fizzy drinks) to last all day
- A snack for break time
- A packed lunch (unless food has been pre-ordered)
- A face mask for public transport or school transport and for moving around school if desired

Blended Learning

We are currently evaluating our home learning plan for implementation from September should we find ourselves in a position whereby students cannot return to school, such as where a local lockdown be imposed. We will aim to continue to follow our school curriculum with as little deviation as possible, as we did during this lockdown. The Oak Academy, set up by the Department for Education, has been asked to continue to provide teaching resources for the next academic year and we will continue to use these resources to supplement our own curriculum. We will continue to use SatchelOne (the new name for Show My Homework) in school and in the event of a further school closure, we will set, mark and assess work via SatchelOne as we have previously.

Career's Evening

The Key Stage 4 Careers Evening in the autumn term will now take place online. Further details will follow at the start of the new term.

Parent's Evenings

Parent's Evenings for the 2020/21 academic year will take place online via conference call. Further details will follow at the end of the autumn term.

Summer Work

There will be a range of non-compulsory tasks and activities available on Show My Homework throughout the coming weeks in partnership with Collins publishers. Students can access these as and when they wish.

When does each year group return to school?

- Tuesday 1st September - Staff Training Day – No students in school
- Wednesday 2nd September - Year 7 students will return to school, entering via main school reception. The day will start at 8.45am and finish at 3.00pm. Students will leave via the main school reception. Students must bring a packed lunch and water bottle with them.
- Thursday 3rd September – All students return to school at 8.45am (doors open at 8:35am – students will be notified which entrance to use).

We will continue to use Tuesday 1 September as a training day to ensure that staff are confident with the new systems and procedures in place as they are crucial in helping us to ensure the safe implementations of plans when our students return. We will also invite just Year 7 into school on Wednesday 2 September for their Induction Day. As we have been unable to offer face-to-face transition meetings or other on-site induction activities, it is important that we can integrate them into school in a calm and caring manner.

Weduc/Facebook/Parent Pay

From September 2020, our main communication tool will be through the Weduc Parent App. You should have received a login email for this. If you are struggling to access this, please email info@summerhill.dudley.sch.uk with Weduc in the subject line and we will ensure a new link is sent. In addition, our latest information is posted on our Facebook Page at www.facebook.com/summerhillkingswinford (please like the page) and also on our Twitter account at @summerhillsch

Team Summerhill – Stronger Together

Finally, we know that many families will be apprehensive about a return to school, but the safety of our students and staff is at the forefront of all that we are doing. By working together, we can make this transition back into school as calm, sensible and organised as possible. This is important for everyone. Therefore, we ask that:

- All students keep at a 2-metre distance from all staff including their teacher AT ALL TIMES
- Students maintain good hygiene and wash their hands/sanitise them regularly
- Students adopt good respiratory hygiene: catch it, bin it, kill it
- Students do not attend school if someone in the household has a confirmed case of COVID 19 or is showing symptoms
- Parents or other visitors should not visit the school or enter the school building at any time unless previously agreed with the Senior Leadership Team. Any face to face meetings are likely to be held outside at the front of school. If you need to speak to a member of staff, please email info@summerhill.dudley.sch.uk with your query or phone the school reception on 01384 816165.

Please be assured that in addition to the measures stated above we have:

- A dedicated health and safety risk assessment for COVID
- Enhanced cleaning including cleaning frequently touched surfaces
- A quarantine area for those displaying symptoms of COVID
- Plans to fully engage with the NHS Test and Trace process. (Please ensure your contact details are up to date. If your child shows symptoms, we MUST be able to contact you at all times). If your child displays symptoms then test kits will be issued, where available, or families will be instructed how to get a test completed. The school must also contact local health protection officers.

We all appreciate that these are unique times and that September will be a very different start to the new academic year. It will be a challenge for all of us and our ability to work together will define our success. Please keep up to date by checking your emails and text messages from the school.

We do understand that some students, parents and carers will be anxious about a full return to school, especially where they or their families have been shielding for a long time. Our experience to date has shown that taking a cautious approach and prioritising time for conversations and support is critical.

If you are concerned about anything please contact us via studentsupport@summerhill.dudley.sch.uk and one of our Senior Leaders will respond accordingly.

Please be assured that we will continue to monitor the advice and guidance we receive from Public Health England, Dudley MBC and central government, including the Department for Education. We will continue to take a cautious approach and at any point where the situation deteriorates we may be forced to move back to home learning until we can be assured that there is no risk of significant transmission across our school. The health and safety of our students and staff will remain our first and foremost priority.

Additional information will be released during the summer break so that you can support your son/daughter with their awareness of the details of the new arrangements before they attend at the start of September.

Thank you for your continued support.

Yours sincerely
Martyn Palfreyman
Headteacher