



SUMMERHILL SCHOOL

25 August 2020

Dear Parents/Carers

School Reopening – September 2020

I wanted to write to all parents before the start of the new term to reiterate our revised working practices moving forward. This follows the letter sent in July which outlined the way we will welcome students back. It is fundamentally important that we all work together to ensure that everyone is protected as much as they can be.

As you are aware, 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 with some minor changes to certain practical activities. In addition, all students will receive their usual tutor time which will aid their mental/emotional well-being and progress.

Face Coverings

In line with the national picture and the increasing use of face coverings, we are implementing a rigorous policy regarding the use of these moving forward for ALL students and staff. **We are asking everyone to wear these when entering and moving around the school, in any meetings and during social times apart from when eating (or outside). As such, they will become part of school uniform requirements when we return.** 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, I believe it is something we should do to protect each other, particularly where social distancing will be difficult.

Students will be able to wear masks in lessons if they wish. This will not be restricted to medical or vulnerable students. The wearing of masks in lessons won't be compulsory at present unless guidance changes but we will monitor this. In some lessons, wearing them will be compulsory depending upon the activities being undertaken and all of this will be at teacher's discretion. Any visitors to school, for whatever reason, will need to wear a face covering. 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.

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 several months ago. 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/summerhillkingwinford (please like the page) and also on our Twitter account at @summerhillsch

Tutor Groups

To support the 'year group bubble' principle, we have changed our previous 'vertical' house tutor groups into tutor groups where all of the students come from the same year group (and also the same House). These amended groups will be in place for the foreseeable future throughout 2020/21. Notification of new form tutors for Y8-11 students will be communicated in the next day or so via an individual email to their school email address and the school email addresses we have for parental contacts. Student groupings have been arranged to limit cross-class contact wherever possible.

House Offices

The large team of staff based in the House office (behind reception) have been dispersed around the building. Each House has their own separate office with the Head of House and House Officer. Ursa will be located on the ground floor by MFL and DT; Orion and Pegasus will be located on the first floor between Maths and ICT2; Draco will be located on the first floor opposite the staffroom and 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, one for each year group. 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 and safe management of 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, including those who are clinically extremely vulnerable, was paused 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. 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 will be emailed a weekly web-link to pre-order food. This will be sent to their normal school email address. The first web-link will be included with the email about their tutor group. Orders must be placed by Tuesday 1 September 2020 at 9am for pre-ordered food on Thursday 3 and Friday 4 September. In subsequent weeks, orders must be received by 11am on the Thursday for food the following week. Payment instructions will be sent to the email address once the

order is placed on 1 September. It is important to note that it will not be possible to add to, change or cancel pre-orders once they have been placed. You will still be charged if your child does not collect food or drink that has 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. This ensures that we do not have social distancing issues in changing rooms. Plain black/navy tracksuit bottoms must be worn to cover kit. Please note that shorts/skorts/ leggings are not permitted to be worn around the building during the day. This is done to protect the modesty of our girls both on site and whilst walking to and from school.

The uniform code states clearly that plain black polishable shoes must be worn – strictly no logos and no canvas/fabric shoes are allowed. Any metal tags must be removed. Shoes which have a substantial amount of rubber on the toe area are not permitted. 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. Facial piercings, extreme hairstyles (tramlines etc.), extreme hair dyes (non-natural colours or patterns) or extreme/excessive makeup are not permitted.

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 phones, iPods, jewellery etc and 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. This will be reviewed as we move forward. 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 at first 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 (including regularly washed clothes) 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.** 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. Staff and students will be wearing face coverings as they move around the building.

Equipment

Locker access will be limited for the foreseeable future to ensure no cross mixing of students so 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.

All students will be provided with a small white board, pen and cloth in September which they may be asked to use in every lesson to write answers to show to their teacher. 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 face covering
- A small bottle of hand sanitiser
- A pack of tissues
- A plastic food bag to dispose of used tissues
- Bottle(s) of fresh water (no fizzy drinks) to last all day
- A snack for break time (unless food has been pre-ordered)
- A packed lunch (unless food has been pre-ordered)

Blended Learning

We are currently revising 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 resources. 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.

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 1st 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 2nd 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.

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, the non-negotiables are:

- All students keep at a 2-metre distance from all staff including their subject teachers 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 do not turn up at school unannounced
- All students follow the behaviour code of conduct and help to protect themselves, their peers and the staff

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 Weduc notifications, 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. We will do our best to support you with this.

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

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.

Thank you for your continued support.

Yours sincerely

Martyn Palfreyman
Headteacher