

July 2021

Re: Return in September

Dear Parent/Carer,

I apologise in advance that this will be a lengthy letter, but I think it is essential to communicate as much information as possible in preparation for the new term.

As our school year ends, I wanted to thank you for your continued support and to share with you some updates and key information. As a school community we have all worked incredibly hard to ensure that, despite the many challenges that we have had to overcome, that the children were safe guarded and still received the very best education we could offer, considering the restrictions.

The students are to be commended for their dedication to their learning, and for showing huge amounts of character and resilience to keep going in unprecedented times. The skills and characteristics they have developed will serve them well for the remainder of their school lives and into the workplace where I am confident they will thrive.

The 16<sup>th</sup> July will be our last day and we will close at 12:30 pm. We have ensured that our normal bus service will be available to transport the remaining students' home. Food and refreshments will also be available from 11.10 am on the day.

In September I am determined to provide our students with as normal a school experience as possible, with access to a broad and balanced curriculum whilst ensuring we are following all the guidance that will be updated in the forthcoming weeks.

Following the latest announcement from the education minister last week, where he indicated that all students will need to be tested twice within the first 7 days of returning to school, we are having to amend our arrangements for returning in September. This will now involve a staggered start to ensure that all students re-joining school will do so with a negative test before they are allowed to mix with other students and staff members at school. Below is the programme of how this will be work. I am sure you will appreciate that it is of critical importance to do this in a safe and measured way before we allow all students back fully into school. As previously done last year students must attend school for testing in their full school uniform.

The school bus companies have agreed to work with us and will therefore be conducting appropriate pick up and drop off times as they normally would at the start of the day.

We have information recorded from last time for those who gave consent. If, however, you decided not to give permission for your child to test last time and now wish to do so, please complete the link below. **The link is also to be used for our new Year 7 students as we have not previously taken permission to test on site in school. This needs to be completed by 20 August 2021.**

<https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=uPxKh4zDkkm8tveIS10fLxnQY35Yc5pGpv3L9Yx3Nr1UMzREUzBMMIRZQkMONE5DUko5M0NRWlo3OS4u>

If your year group is not indicated on a day, then you are not in school. Once students have been tested they will leave school immediately allowing other students to enter the site safely. It is therefore important that students in Y7 in particular have arrangements in place.

### W/C 30 August 2021: Student Testing

	<u>Year Group</u>	<u>Timings</u>		<u>In School – all day</u>
Thursday 2 September	Year 11/Year 7	9.00 – 10.00	<b>Y7 &amp; Y11 who come on the school bus only – normal bus pick-up time. The bus will also return students to their pickup points after testing</b>	
	<b>*Y11 and Y7 students who do not use the school bus to arrive at the following times</b>			
		10.00 – 10.30	Form 11A/11B	
		10.30 – 11.00	Form 11C/11D	
		11.00 – 11.30	Form 11E/11F	
		11.30 – 12.30pm	Form 7A/7B	
		1.00 – 2.00pm	Form 7C/7D	
		2.00 – 3.00pm	Form 7E/7F/7G	
Friday 3 September	Year 10/Y9/Y8	9.00 – 10.00	<b>Y10/Y9/Y8 who come on the school bus only – normal bus pick-up time. The bus will also return students to their pickup points after testing</b>	Year 11 & Y7
	<b>*Y10 Y9 and Y8 students who do not use the school bus to arrive at the following times</b>			
		10.00 – 10.30	Form 10A/10B/10C	
		10.30 – 11.00	Form 10D/10E	
		11.00 – 11.30	Form 10F/10G	
		11.30 – 12.00	Form 9A/9B/9C	
		12.30 – 1.00pm	Form 9D/9E	
		1.00 – 1.30pm	Form 9F/9G	
		1.30 – 2.00pm	Form 8A/8B/8C	
		2.00 – 2.30pm	Form 8D/8E	
		2.30 – 3.00pm	Form 8F/8G	
Monday 6 September	<b>All year groups back in school as normal</b>			

### Equipment

Having the right equipment with them when they return in September will be as important as wearing the correct uniform. A full list of what is expected is on the school website.

### Break time & Lunchtime

A full break and lunchtime service will return in September, though we will retain the revised model of students being brought into the hall in year group slots. This change has enabled a calmer and improved dining experience for the students.

### Groups

We have made some changes to the way that we set students in KS3, which will begin from September 2021. These changes are to improve the quality of education that all students receive. Recent educational research has proven that organising students in the following way improves outcomes for a greater proportion of children within the classroom.

In Maths and Science, the students will continue to be placed into two equal bands. We will then merge together students from set 1 and set 2 to form 1U and 1H that will be equal in ability to one another. Similarly, with sets 3 and 4 to form 2U and 2H and with sets 5 and 6 to form 3U and 3H. Set 7 will be rebranded as set 4U but will retain the same students that need the extra support. See the diagram below.

In PE and DT, the students are in two mixed ability bands. There are four classes in each band, which allows for smaller class sizes due to the practical aspects of the subjects. This also allows those students who are practically strong but usually placed in lower sets due to academic ability to work within groups that suit their strengths, giving them a greater opportunity to shine.

All other subjects will move to the same model as Maths and Science where the students will be placed into two equal bands as explained above. The students will notice the change of set name on their timetables in September.

Current Set	New Set
1	1U 1H
2	
3	2U 2H
4	
5	3U 3H
6	
7	4U

### **Behaviour**

Whilst we expect the vast majority of students to make the correct choices in respect of their behaviour, and we will revisit the importance of this before the students depart for summer and again on their return. We are a place of learning and as such, students need to focus on being dedicated to their studies to ensure they progress in the way that we would all expect.

### **Uniform**

September 2021 will see all students return in our new school uniform having transitioned in the last 12 months from the old one. Students will be expected to wear it every day with pride as we move away from the model of students arriving in PE kit. Hair must be of natural colouring and no extreme haircuts, hair shoulder length and below must be tied back; this applies to both girls and boys. We encourage parents to ensure any piercings are done at the beginning of summer so they can be removed on return and that any false nails are removed. The full list of what is expected is on the school website.

### **PE**

Students will return to changing again in the new year and therefore need to come to school fully prepared with all the aspects of the PE uniform they require for the activities and weather requirements. Full list is on the website

### **Gaining Ground Strategy**

As part of the government's 'Catch up' funding, we have purchased 'Century tech', an online learning platform. This forms part of our 'Gaining Ground' strategy in KS3 and KS4 and will enable staff in the core areas of Maths, English and Science to address any gaps in knowledge with a personalised pathway, bespoke to each student.

### **Building updates**

Work has already started on improving the facilities for September. This commitment will be ongoing over the next few years so that we are able to create a learning environment that the students deserve and are proud of. Work for this year includes:

- expansion of smartboard technology across school
- the renovation of the ADT and MFL classrooms
- decoration and restyling of corridors and classrooms
- new fencing to add security to school fields
- a renovated assembly room and dining room floor
- a new dance and performing arts space
- a new fitness and wellbeing centre
- investment in more outdoor seating
- new tables and chairs in all classrooms
- increased car parking at the rear of the site

### Staffing update

The school's increased popularity and growth in numbers has allowed me to recruit some additional high-quality appointments throughout the year and for September, strengthening the teaching and leadership across school.

Mr D Blackledge	Deputy Headteacher
Mr J Messham	History Teacher
Mrs M Tyler	Maths Teacher
Miss K George	Maths Teacher
Mr L Nyklewicz-Betney	Progress Leader for RS/PSHE/Citizenship
Miss D Keen	Science Teacher
Miss K Harrigan	Gaining Ground Teacher
Mrs A Atkinson	Exams/Finance Assistant
Miss L Barrow	Careers Adviser
Mr S Riley	Art, Design & Technology Technician
Mr R McKernan	ICT Apprentice

The following staff have left or will be leaving this year. We thank them for their years of service at the school.

Mrs K McCann	Assistant Head
Mr R Johnston	Science Teacher
Miss C Hindley	Maths Teacher
Mrs C Lucas	Maths Teacher
Mrs I Twist	Teaching Assistant/Cleaner
Mrs K O'Reilly	Teaching Assistant
Miss L Fox	Teaching Assistant

I wish you all well for a happy and healthy summer, confident that the forthcoming year will see school improve still further.

Yours sincerely

Mr Scarborough  
Headteacher