

20 July 2020

Dear Parent/Guardian

### **Opening in September 2020**

Once again, I would like to thank you for your continued support of your child and the school during these unprecedented times. I am incredibly proud to be Headteacher of this school community and the way in which we have all reacted only emphasises this fact further. During this period there have been steep learning curves for everyone and we have had to adapt quickly and effectively to ensure that we continue to provide the very best education for our students, something that I feel we have all risen to.

However, we are now in a position to look ahead to September and to what will hopefully be a significant step towards normality. Whilst things will be slightly different still, I am pleased to be able to share our plans with you which allow us to bring all students back onsite safely whilst providing a full range of subjects delivered by specialists in school.

In this letter, which is lengthy due to me wishing to provide you with as much information as possible, you will be updated on various aspects of our plan for reopening, all of which has been fully risk assessed and follow the Government guidance for reopening schools in September. Our plans have been consulted on with school staff and the Trust, as well as discussed with parents through the Headteacher's Q and A sessions last week. Our plans have now been finalised and will be reviewed regularly, and we are asking for your support in implementing these. We are, however, fully aware that six weeks is a long period of time in the UK's battle against Covid-19 and should the situation change I will update you on any amended plans. Please note, new Year 7 parents and sixth form parents will receive an additional letter with further information about September.

### **Testing, Hygiene and Cleaning**

Firstly, it is crucial that if a student or someone in the household displays symptoms of Covid-19 they must remain at home and immediately book a test. We also ask that you inform the school, and if the test is positive you fully engage with the NHS track and trace process. As a school we will work with our local Health Protection Team should there be an outbreak.

One of the biggest barriers to preventing the spread of Covid-19 is good hand and respiratory hygiene. We have invested heavily in hand sanitiser products including wall dispensers to be installed at entry and exit points and outside toilets to ensure students are able to sanitise their hands easily and regularly. There will also be regular reminders in the form of posters and tutor messages about this important barrier to infection. Respiratory hygiene is also crucial in minimising any risk and we are asking students to follow the catch it, bin it, kill it message but to do this we need your support in providing students with packs of tissues should they require them. Bins will be available in every classroom and around the school for the disposal of used tissues.

We will have added further cleaning regimes throughout the day to ensure that the most touched areas, such as door handles, are cleaned more often than normal.

### **Daily Logistics**

The main change to the normal school day will be the generation of year group 'bubbles'. This entails timetabling lessons in blocks or areas of the school to reduce the contact with other year groups.

From September the majority of lessons will take place in the blocks below for each year group:

Year 7 – Lower School  
Year 8 – N and P block  
Year 9 – G Corridor  
Year 10 – H Corridor  
Year 11 – L Corridor

Year 12 – F Corridor  
 Year 13 – B, S and C Block

It is important to note that whilst most lessons are in these areas, there may be some overspill into other areas and when this does occur, there is a strict one-way system in place to minimise close contact during these transition times. This will also allow students to still access practical subjects, such as PE, music, science, etc.

At break time students will be expected to stay in their assigned area and at lunch the students will eat in the following places:

Year 7 – Lower School Hall (over 3 snack breaks)  
 Year 8 – Dining Room 1 (over 3 snack breaks)  
 Years 9, 10 & 11 – Dining Room 2 (1 snack break per year group)  
 Year 12 & 13 – see separate letter

Whilst hot food will be available in these areas, we are encouraging students to bring a packed lunch to help us manage the queues, which will help to maintain the safety of students and staff.

Arrival times will be staggered to ensure a safe arrival to school by minimising the contact with other year groups. The times below are when we expect students to arrive at school and in addition we are asking students to use different entrances which are also laid out below (for 6<sup>th</sup> form please refer to specific letter):

Arrival Time	Year Group	Entrance	Year Group	Entrance
8.30am	7	Silverdale Road Entrance	Sixth Form Tutor Week	Maiden Erlegh Drive Entrance
8.35am	8	Silverdale Road Entrance	10	Maiden Erlegh Drive Entrance
8.40am	9	Silverdale Road Entrance	11	Maiden Erlegh Drive Entrance
5 minutes before their 1 <sup>st</sup> scheduled lesson			Sixth Form Non-Tutor Week	Maiden Erlegh Drive Entrance

If students are scheduled to enter via the Silverdale Road entrance, we are asking that they do not walk down Maiden Erlegh Drive but instead walk around to the front of school and enter from Silverdale Road. However, if this is not possible they must walk along the top car park by Aldryngton and enter via the Silverdale Road main gate. Likewise, if a student is due to enter via the Maiden Erlegh Drive gate, we are asking that they do not enter via Silverdale Road but enter via Maiden Erlegh Drive. However, if this is not possible they must walk along the top car park and enter via the back gate. This will allow the flow of students to be more controlled, prevent bunching and therefore minimise the risk. We accept that this may add time to the journey of some students, but to meet Government guidance, we must manage the flow of nearly 1900 students and with only two gates this is the best way to do so.

Departure from school will also be staggered to ensure bubbles do not mix. The timetable for departure is laid out below (times in brackets are for Fridays):

Departure Time	Year Group	Exit	Year Group	Exit
2.55pm (2.20pm)	7	Silverdale Road Entrance	Year 11	Maiden Erlegh Drive Entrance
3.00pm (2.25pm)	8	Silverdale Road Entrance	10	Maiden Erlegh Drive Entrance
3.05pm (2.30pm)	9	Silverdale Road Entrance	12 (when a period 5 (4) is in place)	Maiden Erlegh Drive Entrance
3.10pm (2.35pm)			Year 13 (when a period 5 (4) is in place)	Maiden Erlegh Drive Entrance

I am aware that some students may see this as unfair and as a result we will review the exit times at half term. The exit gates are compulsory and once again we ask for your support on the use of Maiden Erlegh Drive and the Silverdale Road Entrance, but where this is not possible we ask that the top car park is used.

### **In lessons**

In lessons, students will be in normal class sizes and all chairs will face the front. The arrangement of rooms into rows means the time spent facing each other is minimised and thus the risk is reduced. The teacher will deliver lessons from the front of the room and there will be a gap of 2 metres between them and the students on the front row, again to minimise any risk to both the student and staff member. Should a student need individual support, this will be given from the side or behind.

Where lesson resources need to be given out, these will be shared by the teacher to minimise the number of people touching them. The member of staff will also sanitise their hands before touching the resources each time. Homework will predominantly be submitted via Google Classroom and marked via this platform also. Where work cannot be handed in in this way, there will be a 48 hour window before the member of staff takes them home (if they have to) and a 48 hour window to return the work to minimise the risk.

In practical subjects there have been risk assessments carried out to ensure that activities follow the guidance and as a result some of our normal delivery may be slightly altered to ensure we maintain safety. Examples may include:

- Some experiments being demonstrated via a visualiser rather than students completing it.
- Scheduled PE rotas may incorporate different sports and activities to the normal.
- Singing may be removed from the Music curriculum in the short term.
- Some tools in Design and Technology may not be used.

However, our aim is to offer the broadest curriculum we possibly can to ensure students get the best from their time in school. Whilst doing this, we must balance that desire with the requirement to keep everyone safe.

There will be no shared tools for learning and so it is vital that students bring what is required for school. A letter has been sent out and we appreciate your support in ensuring your child is fully equipped for school.

### **PPE and uniform**

PPE is not required in schools according to the DfE and we will be following this guidance. If a student wears PPE to school, they will be asked to safely remove it at the school gates. Public Health England's position is that face coverings are not required in schools as pupils and staff are mixing in consistent groups (unlike shops), and because misuse may inadvertently increase the risk of transmission.

Students will be expected to wear full school uniform, as outlined in my previous letter, and the guidance from the Department for Education clearly states that there is no requirement to clean this any more often than normal nor in a different way to normal. The exception to our normal school policy on uniform is that on days where students have practical PE lessons they will be able to wear their PE kit to and from school to prevent the requirement from getting changed in the changing rooms which are small and therefore maintaining a safe position would be difficult. PE are mindful of personal hygiene and activities will reflect this. We ask that students only wear the specified PE kit and do not add additional hoodies, etc. to this. If your child does not have a PE jumper then they should wear their blazer on top of their PE kit. Details of our PE kit can be found [here](#).

### **Academic and wellbeing support**

Our Heads of Department and teachers have been working tirelessly to prepare the curriculum for September and our 'revival' curriculum is ready for the students. This builds on using assessment and PLCs completed in lockdown to guide how the lessons will be sequenced, and areas which still need to be revisited have been plotted in to the academic year. We work on a spiral curriculum model where what students learn previously is revisited through other topics and areas to ensure students know more and remember more. We are extremely confident that none of our students will be disadvantaged academically by the lockdown period.

We are also aware that some students may be struggling mentally from this period of lockdown and we have planned to do some work with students on how to cope with the change in routine of coming back to school, and staff will also be trained on spotting signs in students which suggest they may not be ok. We will then

triage the student and put appropriate support in place, where possible, and communicate with you on this. Please remember we are here to help if you feel you or your child needs support.

I also want to inform you that, from September 1 2020, Mrs J Bhadye will be our Designated Safeguarding Lead and should you have any queries or concerns relating to this area, please contact her via the school office.

### **Attendance**

Finally, it is important to note that in March when the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak was increasing, the government made clear that no parent would be penalised or sanctioned for their child's non-attendance at school. Now the circumstances have changed and it is vital for all children to return to school to minimise as far as possible the longer-term impact of the pandemic on children's education, wellbeing and wider development. Missing out on more time in the classroom risks students falling further behind. Those with higher overall absence tend to achieve less well in both primary and secondary school. School attendance will therefore be mandatory again from the beginning of the autumn term.

This means from the start of term in September, the usual rules on school attendance will apply, namely that parents have a duty to ensure that their child attends school regularly and schools have a duty to follow up absences which includes the issuing of sanctions, including fixed penalty notices.

Where a pupil/student is unable to attend school because they are complying with clinical and/or public health advice, we will offer them access to remote education and their absence will not be penalised. We expect there to be very few children in this category, however.

All other pupils must attend school unless a statutory reason applies (for example, the pupil has been granted a leave of absence, is unable to attend because of sickness, is absent for a necessary religious observance etc).

We understand that for some parents this will be a worrying and anxious time. If you are anxious about your child returning to school, you should contact the school office as soon as possible in order to discuss your concerns.

Finally, I want to remind you that Years 7 and 12 will return for induction on Thursday 3 September and the other year groups on Friday 4 September. Entry to school on Friday 4 should follow the arrangements above.

We hope this letter reassures you that we have a secure plan in place to both keep the students safe and deliver a broad and balanced curriculum at the same time.

I hope you have a restful summer break and stay safe.

Yours sincerely



Mr P Gibson  
Headteacher