



Friday 2nd October 2020

Dear Parents and Carers,

RE: Changes to Sixth Form Provision from Monday 5th October

This week we had our first confirmed case of Covid-19 within the school population. This resulted in a number of staff and students being required to self-isolate as they were a 'close contact' of the individual.

Now that we have practical experience with the internal track and trace process that we are required to undertake (so that we can identify who has had close contact), the single 'bubble' for Years 12 and 13 presents the risk that if a case were to be confirmed within the Sixth Form then all students may be required to self-isolate for 14 days. This would largely be the result of students sharing the use of the common room and study area. Therefore, we need to change the way that the Sixth Form operates. These changes are to reduce the probability that your child might be asked to self-isolate if we had a confirmed case in the Sixth Form.

I do not make these changes lightly and recognise that this significantly changes the experience of being a Sixth Former in our school. My duty is to keep students safe and prioritise their learning.

All of these changes will come into effect from Monday 5th October.

Year 12 and 13 to form separate bubbles

Year 12 and 13 will become independent bubbles. Therefore, all Year 12 and 13 students must maintain social distancing at 2 metres with all students not in their year group (as they currently do with all other students in Years 7-11).

Sixth Form Common Room & Study Area

- The common room will be converted into the Year 12 study area. Only Year 12 students may enter this room.
- The current study area will be for the exclusive use of Year 13 students.

These areas will be for students to study, with students sitting at desks. This will minimise the opportunity for face-to-face contact.

We have very deliberately taken the decision to give Year 13 the current study area. Although they are the smaller year group, their exams are that much closer and many of them are engaged with the UCAS application process. This decision will be kept under review, particularly once we see how students use the two rooms in practice. We have added computers to the area outside the common room and these will be reserved for Year 12. Students are welcome to bring their own IT devices and we will happily work with them to enable access to our Wi-Fi.

Students are now permitted to attend school for lessons only

Sixth Form students are only required to attend school for their lessons. They are only required to attend registration if they have a period 1 lesson.



Students are encouraged to work from home during free periods

We strongly encourage students to leave the school site when not in lessons, though we recognise that this may not be possible due to transport reasons. I am particularly conscious that some students live a distance from the school and that it is impractical for those students to leave the site for a single free period or may rely on transport and are therefore compelled to be on site all day. I would like to reassure you that students are welcome to remain on site and our changes to the common room and study area are designed to allow them to do so safely.

Students need to sign in and out

When students do leave the school site they must follow the standard signing out protocol. When they return to site they must sign in. Students who arrive and go directly to a lesson do not need to sign in as they will receive a registration mark from the lesson.

In the mornings, students arriving in time for registration should go directly to their form room.

The commitment to make further improvements in the Sixth Form

We are actively looking at other ways of improving the Year 12 and 13 experience. Some of our ideas present significant logistical challenges that require time to be properly planned. I did not however feel that we could delay splitting the Sixth Form into two bubbles. Therefore, we will continue to work on these ideas and I hope that we will be in touch shortly.

Mr Constable and I will be explaining these changes in person to the students today. We owe it to them to explain why we have taken these steps to protect the community.

By taking these steps now we significantly reduce the prospect of your child being asked to self-isolate at a future date. I hope you can understand the intent behind these changes and I ask you to support our efforts. If you have any further questions or comments then please do contact me.

Best wishes,

Nick McSweeney
Headteacher

nmcsweeney@emmbrook.wokingham.sch.uk