



Tuesday 25th August 2020

Dear Parents and Carers,

RE: Covid-19 Secure Arrangements for September

I hope that this letter finds you all well and that you and your family have enjoyed the summer.

As you would expect, we have gone to great lengths to ensure that our risk assessments provide the highest levels of reassurance to students, parents and staff – all of our new measures and processes are compliant with the latest guidance from the government, Public Health England, teaching unions and professional associations. Below is a summary of the work already undertaken and the measures that will be in place from the start of term.

I am reliant on the support of the entire Emmbrook Family to ensure that we all play our part in helping control the risks from Covid-19. In particular, anyone with the symptoms of Covid-19 or who is confirmed to have the virus must not attend the school site; we will rely on your support with this and, if necessary, to engage with NHS testing. As always, good communication between us will be crucially important.

At the start of term we will hold extended assemblies with all students to ensure that everyone understands our safety measures.

If Your Child Has Symptoms

If a child shows any symptoms of the coronavirus at home, we would ask that you keep the child off and request a test. Please notify the school immediately if they have symptoms. We will follow Public Health England advice regarding who at school will need to self-isolate. If an adult shows symptoms, the same procedures apply. We expect all members of the school community to engage with these processes and further guidance regarding NHS Test & Trace is available here: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/testing-and-tracing/what-your-test-result-means/>

If a Student Becomes Unwell During the Day

The student will be assessed by a first aider, who will use personal protective equipment (PPE). If the student is showing signs of Covid-19 they will be kept in an isolated room until they are collected. The process above then applies:

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/testing-and-tracing/what-your-test-result-means/>

Site Preparations & Cleaning

Over the summer all areas of the site have undergone a full deep clean. All clutter has been removed and unsuitable items (soft furnishings, difficult to clean items, etc.) have been removed to safe storage. The site has never looked cleaner or tidier!



In all classrooms, except those with fixed furniture (e.g. computer rooms), the rooms have been arranged into rows with desks facing forward, as this limits the opportunity for coronavirus transmission.

Posters have been placed around the school reminding staff and students of our key safety measures. Signage is also in place to manage the safe flow of people around the site.

Mental Health and Wellbeing

We recognise that this situation will have affected the mental health and wellbeing of many students 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 a PSHE recovery curriculum delivered by form tutors. We are here to support, if you feel you or your child needs it, so please contact your child's Year Leader if this is something that you would like to discuss further.

Attendance

From the start of term the government expects every child to attend school every day, as would usually be the case. If there are problems relating to attendance then liaise with the form tutor in the first instance. Should you anticipate significant problems with attendance then please contact your child's Year Leader to discuss this with us as a priority.

Year Group 'Bubbles'

From September, a bubble will be a consistent group of students who will avoid mixing with other bubbles wherever possible. Due to the nature of secondary schools, our bubbles will be year group based and we will therefore have 6 bubbles:

- Year 7
- Year 8
- Year 9
- Year 10
- Year 11
- Sixth Form

Given the constraints of the site, classrooms and class sizes, **students will not be expected to maintain social distancing within their bubbles**, i.e. students in the same year group (though other measures do always apply, such as classrooms arranged with desks facing the front, personal hygiene, enhanced cleaning, etc.).

Students are required to maintain social distancing from students in other bubbles (i.e. students from other years) at 2 metres wherever possible.

As staff move between bubbles, students are required to maintain social distancing from all adults at 2 metres wherever possible. Classrooms have been arranged so that teachers can teach from the front of the room while being 2 metres away from students.

Where students work with staff on a one-to-one basis, this support will be provided by staff sitting side-by-side or behind students and additional measures will be in place to protect individuals as required (such as use of PPE).



Adults will, as much as possible, be required to maintain social distancing from all other adults at 2 metres.

For further information regarding how interaction between students in different bubbles will be minimised, see following sections: Arrival at School, Movement Around the Site, Breaks and Lunches, Departing the School Site.

Uniform & Equipment

We return to full school uniform from the start of the new term. This includes: suitable school shoes, black school trousers or skirt, white school shirt and school tie. A number of parents have contacted me regarding their desire to wash all school uniform daily; I understand this perfectly natural desire and have therefore taken the decision to make wearing of the blazer optional for the first half-term. This decision will be kept under constant review. Students may wear the school jumper, which has always been optional. I feel that this is a sensible concession and therefore ask for your support by ensuring that your child **does not wear any other items in place of the blazer (particularly hoodies or non-school branded jumpers)**. I want to support anxious families but I cannot allow a deterioration in uniform compliance; I feel this is a very reasonable compromise and I expect your support in maintaining our high uniform standards and therefore avoiding any unnecessary conflict with students at the start of term.

We are aware that some parents have experienced delays with the uniform supplier (M&S). If you have had issues and as a result your child does not have complete uniform, please contact your child's Year Leader so that we understand the situation.

As advised before the end of last term, students need to bring all of their own equipment (as sharing equipment is a potential source of coronavirus transmission and will, therefore, not be permitted). This includes all of the standard items including pen, pencil, ruler, rubber, sharpener, maths equipment set and calculator and has been expanded to include glue stick, suitable school scissors, colouring pencils.

Where required by the needs of the curriculum, we will issue equipment (e.g. PE, science practicals, etc.) and the safe cleaning and storage of such equipment will be managed by school staff.

Personal Hygiene

We will promote positive hygiene behaviours. There will be soap in all toilets and hand sanitiser in every classroom, the hall, library, canteen and at wall mounted dispensers in corridors and at building entrances. Students will be expected to sanitise whenever they arrive in or leave a room (including if they leave for only a short time, e.g. to visit the toilet).

To improve ventilation, we will open classroom windows and doors (where possible, we will not prop open fire doors).

At the beginning and end of each lesson students will be given anti-bacterial wipes to clean down their own desk.

All classrooms will have tissues and the 'catch it, bin it, kill it' approach will be reinforced at all times.



Following a very generous donation from a member of the public, we will issue all students with their own 150ml bottle of hand sanitiser at the start of term.

Personal Protective Equipment

Guidelines for schools indicate that PPE is not required for students or staff (unless staff members are assisting an individual showing Covid-19 symptoms).

We will support any student or member of staff who wants to wear their own PPE while on the school site.

Safe storage or disposal of used PPE is crucial, therefore anyone who brings PPE on site must have with them a suitable re-sealable plastic bag for safe storage or disposal when not in use.

Curriculum Impact

Every effort has been made to maintain the full breadth and depth of the curriculum experience. The measures that we have taken mean that students will continue to be taught by specialist teachers and, where required, in specialist teaching rooms. The nature of some subjects does require specific measures to reduce the risk of transmission, notably in practical subjects such as PE, Music and DT.

Subject teachers will manage the use of practical equipment between bubbles, either ensuring that equipment is cleaned or left for 72 hours between uses. Some additional resources have been purchased so that equipment can be kept for the exclusive use of a particular bubble.

PE lessons will utilise the space available to keep bubbles apart (including careful management of changing rooms to ensure that only students from a single bubble use them at any one time). When entering and leaving the changing rooms students will use hand sanitiser. Use of outdoor teaching spaces will always be prioritised. The sharing of equipment within bubbles will be kept to a minimum and will only be used by different bubbles following cleaning or leaving equipment unused for 72 hours. Activities will be selected to avoid physical contact between students.

For the time being some activities, such as singing, are not suitable. We will restructure the curriculum to revisit any missed activities at a later date, once the situation has changed locally or nationally.

Using School Transport

School transport remains the responsibility of Wokingham Borough Council. Guidelines for school transport (e.g. EMM01, EMM02, etc.) are clear, as members of the public do not use the services they can be considered a bubble. Students must wear a face mask for their journey, safe storage or disposal of used PPE is crucial, therefore anyone who brings PPE on site must have with them a suitable re-sealable plastic bag for safe storage or disposal when not in use.

Using Public Transport

As much as possible, we encourage students not to use public transport to make the journey to or from school. In line with national rules, we expect students using public transport to be wearing a face mask, safe storage or disposal of used PPE is crucial, therefore anyone who brings PPE on site must have with them a suitable re-sealable plastic bag for safe storage or disposal when not in use.



Arrival at School

The arrival of students, via the front and back gates, on foot and school buses naturally spreads the flow onto the site, therefore we are not operating staggered start times and school begins at 8.20am for all students.

As students arrive on site they must all use the hand sanitising stations now located at entrances.

Students who arrive by bike will be directed to wait at the double red line so that only one student at a time is in the bike shed – all students must observe this 'one at a time' rule.

Students on site must maintain social distancing from students in other bubbles. To support this, as students arrive on site they must report to their designated area:

- Years 7, 8, 12 & 13: go directly to form rooms
- Years 9 & 10: go directly to designated seating areas in the hall
- Year 11: go directly to the library or form room

Parents must not come onto the school site at the beginning of the day.

Movement Around the Site

Government guidelines indicate that passing in corridors is low risk. Therefore, to manage the safe flow of staff and students around the site we will operate three simple principles for all:

1. Keep left, single file
2. Stop and give way at double red lines
3. Keep moving

Staff will enforce these rules at all lesson changes.

Breaks and Lunches

To maintain the integrity of the year group bubbles, break and lunch will be staggered for different year groups. The site will be zoned to keep students within their bubbles. Each year group will only have one time a day when they can purchase hot/cold food and drinks in the canteen (Years 7-10) or library (Year 11 only).

Break Years 8 & 10: 9.50 – 10.15am Only Year 8 can purchase food in the canteen

Years 7, 9 & 11: 10.55 – 11.20am Only Year 7 can purchase food in the canteen
Year 11 can purchase food in the library

Lunch Years 8 & 10: 12.20 – 12.50pm Only Year 10 can purchase food in the canteen

Years 7, 9 & 11: 1.25 – 1.55pm Only Year 9 can purchase food in the canteen

By staggering breaks and lunches we can limit the risk of students from different bubbles interacting. This will also give time to clean the canteen between uses by different year groups.



The canteen will only offer a limited menu for the foreseeable future and, regrettably, there will be no breakfast service at this time. Food can be paid for using the fingerprint system, students will need to hand sanitise for using the fingerprint scanner. Students will not be able to add money to their accounts using the paying-in machine located in the canteen; therefore, please ensure that you add funds to your child's account online (this service can take time to update, so please plan ahead):

<https://www.scopay.com/emmbrook?redirect=true>

Years 7-10 will have designated areas in the hall and on top playground to use at break and lunch. Year 11 will have the library and a new outdoor seating area. All other parts of the school are out of bounds at break and lunch.

The Sixth Form will have access to the Common Room throughout the day and they will be able to purchase food/drinks.

Toilets

Toilets will be open to all students. If a toilet visit is during a lesson then students should use hand sanitiser before and after their visit. Toilets will be subject to enhanced cleaning.

Departing the School Site

In order to help avoid a rush of students leaving the school site we will introduce a small change: 2.50pm – non-school transport students (e.g. pedestrians, cyclists) will be dismissed. Students collecting their bike must wait at the double red line so that there is only ever one person in the bike shed at a time – all students must observe this 'one at a time' rule.

2.55pm – school transport students will be dismissed.

Students must quickly leave the school site, maintaining social distance from students in other year groups.

Students must not visit the local shops before and after school. There must not be groups of students gathering outside the school gates or local shops. Students should make their way home following national social distancing guidelines.

Parents must not come onto the school site at the end of the day.

Behaviour Policy

Temporary revisions to our Behaviour Protocols have been implemented to ensure that students observe our safety measures. Any students failing to observe safety measures will be placed 'on call' – these cases will be resolved by Mr Bhambra (Deputy Headteacher) and may result in the need for personalised risk assessments for individuals who demonstrate risky behaviours. In the first instance this will require parents to attend a meeting with Mr Bhambra.

Visitors

We ask that parents avoid visiting the school site unless requested to attend a meeting or to collect your child. In the first instance, contact us on the telephone via reception or email staff directly.

Risk assessments and mitigating measures will be implemented to allow peripatetic teachers and other visiting professionals to attend the site in order to work with specific students.



Library

As the library will be the base for Year 11, this means that students in other year groups will not have access to the library before and after school nor during break and lunch. At present students will not be able to borrow books from the library.

Extra-Curricular Clubs & Trips

We will endeavour to continue to provide extra-curricular opportunities. Any clubs, events or trips would be subject to risk assessment and would most likely need to take place within year group bubbles.

Contingency Planning

We have developed contingency plans for a range of scenarios to ensure high quality educational provision via remote learning. This may include having to isolate specific bubbles or responding to local or national lockdowns.

First Day of Term

In order to manage the start of year and ensure compliance with our safety protocols we will be welcoming bubbles back over the first three days of term as follows:

- Thursday 3rd September: Years 7 & 12
- Friday 4th September: Years 9, 11 & 13
- Monday 7th September: Years 8 & 10

On their first morning, each year group will go directly to an assembly to receive their safety briefing. Students will then go to their form rooms.

We will continue to review and update these procedures and processes based on developments in school, locally and nationally. Should there be any changes in the future, I will ensure that you remain fully informed. As always, and particularly at this time, please do contact me should you have any thoughts or queries regarding our safety measures. All of our preparations over the summer are for your reassurance.

Best wishes,

Nick McSweeney

Headteacher

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