

16th July 2020

Higham Lane School September 2020 Re-Opening

Frequently-Asked Questions (FAQs) (1)

Please note- this document accompanies the School's letter to parents/carers on 16/07/20. Please read the letter first and then this document. Thank you.

Why does my child have to enter by a particular gate? Can my child's sibling in a different year group walk onto the site with him/her?

As explained in our letter, we have to keep year groups apart in line with Government guidance. Students must enter only by the gate identified for their year group please. They will leave by the same gate at the end of the day.

Can my child wear personal protective equipment (PPE) such as a face mask and/or gloves?

The guidance says that Public Health England does not (based on current evidence) recommend the use of face coverings in schools. The guidance indicates that the risk of contracting Covid-19 in schools is very low. However, we accept that this is a matter for parents/carers and students to decide for themselves. We do not anticipate that many students will, for example, choose to wear a face mask, but we accept that some might choose to.

We also accept that Government policy on this may change over time, given the recent announcement about it being mandatory to wear face masks in shops from 24th July. The

School will continually review this and respond to any changes to the national guidance for schools.

Will staff be wearing PPE?

See the points above please.

A very small number of support staff who are dealing with sickly children will have PPE available to them, such as at Student Services and the Sixth Form office staff. The School accepts that some other staff may choose to wear PPE. That is a personal choice. The School will continually review this and respond to any changes to the national guidance.

How will hygiene be managed?

We will operate the systems we have operated when the School has been partially open to some students. For example, students will use hand sanitiser in form time at the start of the day, at the start and end of each lesson, at the start and end of break and lunch and at the end of the school day. Hand sanitiser will also be available in appropriate positions around the site, but it is important that students bring their own bottle of hand sanitiser with them so they have it on them at all times.

Students will also have an opportunity to wash their hands in their year group bubble's toilet building. However, given the large numbers of students we have, the limited numbers of toilets, the need to avoid long queues etc, hand sanitiser will be the main source of hand cleaning. Students who use the toilets will obviously be expected to wash their hands thoroughly. We will continue to remind students that hand

washing in the basins in the toilet buildings should be very thorough, using water and soap for at least 20 seconds.

Students will be reminded to follow the 'Catch it, bin it, kill it' method to catch coughs or sneezes and to dispose of tissues safely.

Will my child need to bring any additional items or equipment to school, beyond the normal school items?

At this time, teachers are unable to lend out any item of equipment and students should not borrow any equipment from another student. It is therefore crucial that all students ensure they have all the correct equipment needed for learning, every day. (Full student equipment list is available on the 'Information for September' page of the website).

Students will need to bring their own small bottle of hand sanitiser and a pack of tissues each day. In addition, students will also need a mini whiteboard pen (every student will have a mini whiteboard as part of the Student Organiser) and mini whiteboard rubber/small cloth. Students will also need their own pack of coloured pencils.

Students who have PE will need to come to school in PE kit on that day and wear it for the entire day, as we cannot allow students to use changing rooms. A reminder that as an alternative to shorts, plain, black tracksuit bottoms can be worn by boys or girls and girls can also wear black leggings with the HLS logo if they prefer. Boys are allowed to wear plain black joggers as part of their PE kit.

How will classrooms be set up? What about social distancing?

The guidance refers to 'seating pupils side by side and facing forwards, rather than face to face or side on'. This suits the layout of most of our classrooms.

The guidance says:

'Staff should try to keep their distance from pupils and other staff as much as they can, ideally 2 metres from other adults.... We know this is not always possible....but if adults can do this when circumstances allow, that will help. In particular, they should avoid close face to face contact and minimise time spent within 1 metre of anyone'.

We are not putting distance marks on classroom floors as our classrooms are all different shapes and sizes and the guidance does not require this. Teachers will remain at the front of classrooms and apply common sense. Learning Support Assistants (LSAs) will be at the back or in other parts of the rooms and aim to follow the guidance above, but there is some flexibility within the guidance about this.

We are not proposing to fit screens in IT rooms. Although these students are sometimes face to face, they have 2 computer screens between them and the student they are facing, so they are further away from each other than students seated side by side.

Do students need to socially distance?

In setting our expectations with students and staff on this, we will follow the guidance which says:

‘For children old enough, they should also be supported to maintain distance and not touch staff and their peers where possible. This will not be possible for the youngest children and some children with complex needs and it is not feasible in some schools where space does not allow. Schools doing this where they can, and even doing this some of the time, will help’.

Can staff lend resources to students eg pens?

See earlier question about equipment. We need to avoid situations where staff are handing items to students. The normal Behaviour Policy will apply where students do not bring in the appropriate equipment for school.

Can resources be shared by students?

The guidance says: ‘Classroom based resources, such as books and games, can be used and shared within the bubble; these should be cleaned regularly’ We do not anticipate the need for many resources to be shared by different classes within the year group, but if they are, they will be cleaned in between different classes using them.

How will written work be marked?

Due to the danger of transmission of the virus, we will have to use some different approaches from the traditional approach of taking sets of books in for marking.

Assessments will be done on A4 paper and placed in a container by students as they leave the room. They should not be touched then for 48 hours. They should then be marked and not returned for a further 48 hours. The School's normal Marking and Feedback Policy will apply.

What support will the School be providing for students' wellbeing?

The School fully recognises that students' reactions to the lockdown and the prospect of returning to school will vary. As the guidance notes:

'Pupils may be experiencing a variety of emotions in response to the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak, such as anxiety, stress or low mood. This may particularly be the case for vulnerable children, including those with a social worker and young carers. It is important to contextualise these feelings as normal responses to an abnormal situation. Some may need support to re-adjust to school; others may have enjoyed being at home and be reluctant to return; a few may be showing signs of more severe anxiety or depression. Others will not be experiencing any challenges and will be keen and ready to return to school'.

The School will be fully supporting students in a variety of ways:

- Providing opportunities for students to talk about their feelings to their form tutor and with their peers in form time.
- Sensitively discussing the pandemic and school lockdown situation in assemblies.

- Using suitable specialist educational resources in CPSHEEd lessons.
- Discussing with students strategies for enhancing mental wellbeing and resilience.
- Offering particular students the opportunity to speak to professionals with expertise such as our full-time school counsellor.
- Other specialist support, depending on the needs of the individual student.

How will students with SEND be supported?

Our Support for Learning Department staff will prepare those students with LSA key workers for the changes in routine by talking to students and their parents/carers about these. Our LSAs will still work with specific students within lessons and in small group situations. The guidance accepts that maintaining social distancing is sometimes difficult with particular students with SEND.

What is happening about the break and lunch arrangements for students who wish to buy food?

As mentioned in our letter, unfortunately we are unable to provide food and drink at break but this will be reviewed over time. Students will therefore need to bring their own food and drink in for break.

As regards lunch, we are still in discussions with our catering company about the menu for September and locations of where food will be served. Further information will be provided in the PowerPoint that we will be issuing at the end of August.

Please can parents/carers ensure that you have topped up your ParentPay account. Parents/carers of next year's Year 7 need to refer to the letter which you should have received about setting up a ParentPay account.

What happens about lunch for students on Free School Meals (FSM)?

Arrangements will be put in place to provide these students with a meal at lunchtime.

What about students who are shielding or self-isolating?

We will follow the Government's guidance which clearly says:

'We now know much more about coronavirus (COVID-19) and so in future there will be far fewer children and young people advised to shield whenever community transmission rates are high. Therefore, the majority of pupils will be able to return to school. You should note however that:

- a small number of pupils will still be unable to attend in line with public health advice because they are self-isolating and have had symptoms or a positive test result themselves; or because they are a close contact of someone who has coronavirus (COVID-19)
- shielding advice for all adults and children will pause on 1 August, subject to a continued decline in the rates of community transmission of coronavirus (COVID-19). This means that even the small number of pupils who will remain on the shielded patient list can also return to school, as can those who have family members who are shielding. Read the current advice on shielding

- if rates of the disease rise in local areas, children (or family members) from that area, and that area only, will be advised to shield during the period where rates remain high and therefore they may be temporarily absent (see below).
- some pupils no longer required to shield but who generally remain under the care of a specialist health professional may need to discuss their care with their health professional before returning to school in September (usually at their next planned clinical appointment). You can find more advice from the Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health.

Where a pupil is unable to attend school because they are complying with clinical and/or public health advice, we expect schools to be able to immediately offer them access to remote education. Schools should monitor engagement with this activity (as set out in the section below).'

What about students and families who are anxious about a return to school?

We will follow the guidance which clearly says:

‘All other pupils must attend school. Schools should bear in mind the potential concerns of pupils, parents and households who may be reluctant or anxious about returning and put the right support in place to address this. This may include pupils who have themselves been shielding previously but have been advised that this is no longer necessary, those living in households where someone is clinically vulnerable, or those concerned about the comparatively increased risk from coronavirus (COVID-19),

including those from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) backgrounds or who have certain conditions such as obesity and diabetes.

If parents of pupils with significant risk factors are concerned, we recommend schools discuss their concerns and provide reassurance of the measures they are putting in place to reduce the risk in school. Schools should be clear with parents that pupils of compulsory school age must be in 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)'.

Will Student Services still operate as previously?

The Student Services office will still operate. However, students from different year groups cannot be sent to Student Services or go of their own accord as we need to avoid year group bubbles mixing. We are reviewing alternative arrangements currently such as for the issuing of medicines. Where first aid is required, the first aider will visit the student in their bubble area. Privacy will be respected.

Can the disabled toilets be used?

Yes. Intimate care will also still be administered to these students as appropriate.

What will happen to Progress Leader offices?

We are looking to have Progress Leaders based in their year group's bubble area to prevent students mixing. We will inform students about this at the start of the autumn term.

How will detentions operate?

We may have to combine C3, Pastoral, Subject and School DTs by year group on the same night with appropriate staffing in home base areas for that year group. The Inclusion Room will have a different year group in it each day, rather than students from different year groups. We will update parents/carers about this before the start of the autumn term.

What happens to students withdrawn from particular subjects?

This only applies to a very small number of students. We are looking to create an area in each bubble area for students to be supervised, who are not in subjects eg Year 9 students who have dropped an option.

What happens during a fire evacuation?

We are splitting year groups. Y8, 10, 12 and 13 will evacuate onto the front field. Y7, 9 and 11 will evacuate onto the back playground. These are the closest assembly points to each year group's teaching area. We will practise this with all students early in the autumn term.

Will there be extra bike racks?

Yes. Bike racks will be fitted by Shanklin gate and Higham Lane gate for students whose year groups have to enter by those gates.

Will signage help direct students?

Yes. Signage, barriers and cones will be placed around the site as appropriate. The one way system currently in place in Chine will not operate.

Can certain activities in particular lessons not take place?

Unfortunately yes. We have to follow the guidance on this. Teachers will explain this to students. For example, during these temporary arrangements, we cannot do singing in Music, choral repetition in Modern Languages or physical contact activities in PE.

Is it safe for Year 11 lessons to take place in Science rooms?

Yes. We have based Y11 in Science because they will have to either do or observe practicals as part of their GCSE (the awarding body is yet to confirm which). The water and gas will be switched off during all lessons that are not being led by Science staff.

How will practical subjects be taught to KS3 students to fulfil curriculum requirements if they cannot access specialist areas?

Subject Leaders are adapting their planning and schemes of learning so that practical work can be done later in the year. We have to deal with what is actually possible given what the guidelines are saying re year group bubbles and we have to prioritise key exam year groups for practical work.

How is extra cleaning being organised?

We have increased the hours of our cleaning team and we will receive support from other support staff such as

technicians. We will follow national guidance regarding cleaning to an appropriate standard and with suitable materials. Particular care will be taken in the cleaning of specialist rooms which will be used by different year group bubbles. The whole school will also be thoroughly cleaned before the start of the autumn term.

Will Accelerated Reader lessons operate in Y7 and Y8?

We cannot run Accelerated Reading to begin with because we are having to prioritise the use of IT suites for computer science lessons. However, we are reviewing this to establish if we can find a new system for Accelerated Reader, alongside finding ways to enable students to borrow books in general from the Library. We will notify you about this in September.

Will extra-curricular activities take place?

Yes. These will be phased in. The guidance indicates that these should be organised in single year group bubbles only, unless in exceptional services.

Can parents/carers visit the School site?

The normal school policy is for parents/carers to contact the student's form tutor or Progress Leader if they have a concern. No parent/carer should ever arrive at the School for a meeting without having made an appointment first.

Unfortunately, due to the current Covid-19 situation, no parents/carers or visitors can come onto the school site. We ask therefore the parent/carer to contact the School and the relevant member of staff will phone the parent/carer back.

What about parents/carers who have to drop children off and collect them on the school site?

Parents/Carers who need to drive onto the School site to drop off and collect a student for medical or safeguarding reasons, should contact Student Services to secure a pass please. We will then issue further instructions.

What are the expectations about parents/carers waiting at the School gates?

The guidance makes clear that parents/carers should not gather at the School gates, as this is a danger in terms of social distancing and transmission of the virus. If collecting your child on foot, it would be more appropriate to arrange to meet your child somewhere close to the relevant school gate rather than waiting directly outside the gate.

What about students who travel to and from school on buses?

This is a very small number of students. These students should enter and exit by their year group's designated gate.

What about students who travel to and from school in taxis?

This is a very small number of students. We are currently talking to the taxi companies about arrival and departure times. These students should make their way to their year group's home base area when they arrive at school. At the end of the school day, these students should make their way to their taxi's collection point.

What happens if a student is ill?

As the guidance says:

‘Ensuring that pupils, staff and other adults do not come into the school if they have coronavirus (COVID-19) symptoms, or have tested positive in the last 7 days, and ensuring anyone developing those symptoms during the school day is sent home, are essential actions to reduce the risk in schools and further drive down transmission of coronavirus (COVID-19)’.

We will follow this process and ensure all staff are aware of it.

If anyone in the school becomes unwell with a new, continuous cough or a high temperature, or has a loss of, or change in, their normal sense of taste or smell (anosmia), they will be sent home and advised to follow ‘stay at home: guidance for households with possible or confirmed coronavirus (COVID-19) infection’, which sets out that they must self-isolate for at least 7 days and should arrange to have a test to see if they have coronavirus (COVID-19). Other members of their household (including any siblings) should self-isolate for 14 days from when the symptomatic person first had symptoms.

If a child is awaiting collection, they will be moved, if possible, to a room where they can be isolated behind a closed door, depending on the age and needs of the child, with appropriate adult supervision if required. Ideally, a window will be opened for ventilation. If it is not possible to isolate them, they will be moved to an area which is at least 2 metres away from other people.

What happens if we have a case of Covid-19?

We will remain calm and follow the specialist advice contained in the guidance document and follow local health protection scheme advice. We will engage with the NHS Test and Trace process. In addition, we will inform parents/carers as soon as possible and provide all relevant information about next steps. In the event that the School had to close, we would revert to on-line learning using Google Classroom and send out further instructions about this.

We hope these FAQs have been helpful.

P.Kelly

Headteacher