



Mercia School
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Headteacher: Mr Dean Webster
Chair of Governors: Mrs Rhona Dodds

Our ref: DW/GD

27 August 2020

Dear Parents and Carers,

I am delighted that all pupils will be returning to school. Following what has been an extremely difficult period, pupils need to be back in the classroom. I am thrilled that we can re-establish our community whilst welcoming our New Year 7 pupils to the Mercia Family.

Re-instating the full curriculum, whilst maintaining health and safety, are the priorities. To achieve this a number of amendments have been made to our normal operation. However, our unique culture and ethos will remain intact.

Pupil attendance is mandatory as per government guidelines. If you have received Public Health or clinical advice that your child should stay at home please share this with us in earnest.

The timings of the school day are unchanged for all pupils, separate entrances will be employed to keep pupils apart.

Safe Movement.

The aim is to maintain as much distance between year groups as possible, in order to achieve individual year group 'bubbles'. We are fortunate that our huge building allows us to make the most of pupil entrances and external entrances to classrooms. Equally, our orderly corridor routines permit safe travel around the building. Where appropriate one way systems will also be in place to promote safe movement. Therefore, lessons will be taught in normal specialist and departmental rooms. However, there will be a strict seating plan in place.

Safety Measures.

Our thorough hygiene and cleaning measures, already implemented during our reopening in July, will continue. We have also invested in additional products that will make classrooms safer, enabling them to be used by all year groups. To further enhance safety, construction work has taken place on our courtyard, so line-ups can be achieved at distance, whilst providing more outdoor play space for pupils. Year groups will have allocated areas for breaks with pupil lockers also moved to maintain the integrity of bubbles.

We have also purchased more dining furniture to preserve Family Lunch, which will operate on a rotation of sittings. The Main Hall will be in use to separate bubbles and will offer an increased space for breakfast and break time.

Hand washing is crucial to controlling the virus. Hand sanitising stations are available outside every classroom, at external entrance points and at the entrance and exit of the Family Space. Pupils will wash/sanitise their hands regularly, observed by teachers. This is really important at lunchtime and is something we will administer before and after we all eat.

Whilst we have implemented a range of measures following the government guidance, pupils must also take responsibility for social distancing and individual hygiene. Please support us by discussing this with your child. Inevitably, breeches will be sanctioned to maintain safety. We must all be clear and in support of that.

Please note we have an appointments only policy in place. If you need to discuss something with us please call or make an appointment with the administration office.

Anyone with symptoms of COVID-19 must not attend the school and follow the government guidelines for testing and isolation. Equally, if anyone in your household has symptoms of COVID-19, your child must stay at home and follow government guidance also. Anyone with symptoms is entitled to a test and can book this through the gov.uk website.

Practical Lessons.

PE lessons will be as normal, although contact sport will be reduced initially. Pupils will get changed in the changing room. Our timetable has been amended to allow for only 1 year group to be on PE per day. This allows for thorough cleaning of equipment and space before usage by another bubble.

Music lessons will have limited singing and instrument usage initially. In Art, we will limit specialist equipment and use pencil techniques. Drama will be non-contact.

Travel to School.

Where possible pupils should walk or cycle to school. We have plenty of rails to store bicycles. Face coverings must be worn on public transport and also be mindful that bus services are running on a limited capacity, therefore please plan your child's journey in advance.

Parents are welcome to drop pupils off in cars. However, please follow the one way system. Do not perform a 3 point turn in the road. We request that parents remain in their car.

Face Coverings.

The government guidance on face coverings (masks) in schools has been updated. The guidance states that face masks are not mandatory in schools, unless the local area is subject to government intervention.

However, Public Health in Sheffield, as of the 27 August, are recommending that pupils and staff in secondary schools wear face masks in indoor communal areas as a precautionary measure. They are not to be worn in classrooms.

Pupils and staff will wear a mask on the corridor, in the toilet and at the lockers. It is not necessary for pupils to wear masks when outside. We will, of course, oversee pupils to ensure masks are worn at appropriate times.

Please check that your child has a plain black or disposable blue mask every day. Your child will also need a sealable bag so their mask may be stored in their blazer pocket. We will talk pupils through all safety measures at the start of the school year.

We will review this decision regularly and as always adapt quickly to any further guidance changes. Please be assured we are in regular contact with local Public Health officials.

Please remember the new academic year will commence as follows:

Year 7	Wednesday 2 September
Year 8	Monday 7 September
Year 9	Monday 7 September

Year 8 and 9 pupils must have their completed homework ready for submission on their first day back. Library books and locker keys should also be returned.

If government or local guidance changes, we will move swiftly to adapt and keep you updated. Please visit the school website regularly for further updates.

Thank you for your support over recent months, our values remain steadfast. We look forward to welcoming your child to the new academic year.

Yours faithfully



Mr D Webster
Headteacher