



26th August 2020
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Dear Parents and Carers

ST JOHN'S MARLBOROUGH – COVID 19 Start of Term 1 2020-21

Following on from all the previous communications, this letter contains further guidance and important information regarding the opening procedures in September for you and your child/children. There is a great deal contained here and a number of useful links so please keep this letter close by. There will be a further letter this week focusing solely on transport arrangements which will add granular detail to what we have included here.

As you will be aware, the Department for Education (DfE) issued guidance to schools confirming that all students, in all year groups, will return to school full-time from the beginning of September. In order for this to happen, we have outlined how St John's Marlborough can do this safely and you can find a link to the agreed Risk Assessment on the COVID-19 area of our school website. We cannot stress enough how much we are looking forward to seeing all the students and the way in which both Year 13 and Year 11 students conducted themselves with all the social distancing arrangements on their recent results days was exemplary – clearly the students want to make this all work too. A link to the Government guidance can be found below along with a link to a parent friendly document written by Wiltshire Council:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/actions-for-schools-during-the-coronavirus-outbreak>
[Wiltshire Council COVID-19 Returning to School Advice for Parents](#)

We can confirm the following September opening procedures:

- Tuesday, 1st September – Staff Development Day as already arranged, and the Academy is closed to students.
- Wednesday, 2nd September – Year 7 in all day and only those Year 12 students who need to enrol and register between 1000 and 1200.
- Thursday, 3rd September – Year 7, 8 and 12 in.
- Friday, 4th September – All students in.

We will have three 'bubbles' or 'groups' of students operating within the school day and there will be as little cross-over between groups as possible. The recommendations are clear that as long as we mitigate against the groups mixing wherever possible, we will be operating within the spirit of the guidance. In essence and in brief, the operational decisions we have made include:

- All classrooms have been configured to ensure we meet the necessary expectations which will allow us to have whole groups of students in a room together. This will ensure that we offer the complete curriculum to all students. The only exception to the offer to begin with will be PE where we may have to limit some sports because of social distancing and hygiene regulations. On days when your child has PE, they should attend school in only their St John's PE kit. This decision will be under review but please be assured that students will not be taking part in a PE activity that could mean they have to spend the rest of their day wet, muddy or cold.
- Cleaning rotas have been increased and expectations around hygiene will remain a very high priority.
- Lunch time will need to be run differently, and the offer may well be temporarily altered to that which was available pre-COVID-19. There will be more sheltered outdoor eating spaces and a new catering pod available to help take pressure off the atrium canteen.



- The one-way system currently in operation will be enforced around the whole school and there will be as much emphasis on social distancing and personal hygiene as possible. **Everyone must adhere to the one-way system, social distancing arrangements and personal hygiene expectations, without exception.**
- Teaching staff will be in rooms from 0830 and students will head straight to their period 1 lesson. There will not be any loitering in shared areas as before and the corridors will not be available for communal gatherings for the foreseeable future.
- Designated areas will be assigned to students in certain year groups during social time and these will be explained during the first day back for each year group.
- Where possible we will endeavour to record how children are sat in classrooms so that the track and trace system can be supported should it be needed. We will also reduce the amount of set changes in Key Stage 3 to reduce the amount of cross-over of students.
- **Students will be outside during social times unless the weather is poor. To that end, we need them to bring an outdoor coat to school in the Autumn and Winter months especially. They will not be able to congregate in corridors as they will have done prior to the COVID-19 restrictions.**
- We will not be having any lunch or afterschool clubs or peripatetic music lessons at least for term 1.
- In light of the Government's most recent announcement, we will expect all students and staff to have a facemask that can be worn when moving around in corridors unless they have a known medical condition which prevents them wearing one. Whilst this is only recommended at the moment in areas of local lockdown, we believe it is wise to introduce it from the start of the term. We will explain to students how best to manage this when we return in September. Please follow the guidance on our COVID-19 webpage for advice on how to wear a mask effectively and we don't want to see students wearing masks with controversial or offensive designs. Thank you for your support with this.

The School Day

This will look a little different too:

0830	Teachers will be in their classrooms so students will come straight in.
0840 - 0940	Period 1
0940 - 1040	Period 2
1040 - 1100	Students have Tutorial or break (Years 7, 8 and the 6 th Form)
1100 - 1120	Students have Tutorial or break (Years 9, 10 and 11)
1120 - 1220	Period 3
1220 - 1310	Students have Period 4 or Lunch 1 (Years 7, 8 and the 6 th Form)
1310 - 1400	Students have Period 4 or lunch 2 (Years 9, 10, 11)
1400 - 1500	Period 5

Finish at 1500 - Students leave for the buses from the sports hall and the atrium to reduce contact between groups at the end of the day.

Curriculum expectations

In terms of provision, we have made decisions that ensure all students receive as broad and balanced a curriculum offer as possible and an experience that enables as much consolidation time and recovery as we can provide. Safety of both students and staff are paramount and decisions around the curriculum are based on the following principles:

- Teaching will be ambitious and the broad curriculum in all subjects from the start of the autumn term will be in place, making use of existing flexibilities to create time to reinforce the most important content.
- Planning to reopen has been on the basis of the educational needs of all pupils. The unique challenges presented by the size of St John's and the fact that more than half of the student body use buses to arrive and depart have been factored in carefully.
- We will continue to develop remote education so that it is integrated into school curriculum planning. St John's would be ready to switch to online learning should any sort of lockdown be required going forwards.

Uniform

St John's has high standards and expectations with regard to uniform as it creates a strong sense of identity for the school. In preparation for the new academic year, this is a very good time to reinforce these expectations so that we can aim to return to normal as soon as possible. It is therefore important that given the other pressures/restrictions in school we would ask for your support to send students to school in their correct uniform.

To be very clear, full school uniform is always expected. If you have any concerns about this, please contact your child's form tutor at the start of the year. Exceptions can be made for PE days as already explained but we do expect students to be wearing school PE kit. Please ensure that all uniform is named correctly and clearly. There is strong debate just now regarding the wearing of face coverings in secondary schools and we would ask pupils to have a face mask with them from the start of term.

We are also asking that all students bring with them a small container of hand sanitiser to use, as this will greatly increase our efficiency at moving students around the school.

Students will need to bring a full water bottle to school at the start of each day.

Equipment

Students should bring the relevant equipment for each day into school from September in their own personal bag. Students will be expected to be prepared for their learning and should have the following in a pencil case: black, blue and green pen (biro or fountain pen), pair of compasses, set of coloured pencils, 30 cm transparent ruler, glue stick, protractor, pencils (HB), pencil sharpener, scientific calculator, eraser, set of felt tip pens (optional), headphones (may be needed for some subjects and will need to be wired, not wireless), reading book and school planner (provided by St John's).

If you are eligible for financial support, we may be able to help you with the acquisition of the equipment listed above so please do get in touch as you would normally.

Attendance

The DfE are clear that all students should return to school in September if they are well enough to do so. Therefore the usual rules and graduated response for attendance will follow. Shielding for most students and families ceased on 1st August, however there may still be a very small number of students who are unable to attend in line with their own health advice. Please inform our school nurse, Jackie Rowberry on: JRowberry@stjohns.excalibur.org.uk if this relates to your child.

If any family has taken a summer holiday to a country that requires self-isolation, please ensure that the holiday has ended 14 days before the start of the academic year so full isolation can take place. A full list of countries we can visit without self-isolation is kept up to date and can be found at the following link - <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-travel-corridors>

Should your child or any member of your household display COVID-19 symptoms then it is important that they stay at home, self-isolate and get tested, in line with the Government guidance. Students will be able to access online learning during this time. If you have concerns because of shielding, BAME background or underlying illness/concerns, please follow the most recent guidelines. As it stands, the law is clear that all pupils must attend school unless *"children are not able to attend school as parents are following clinical and/or public health advice,"* **at this point** *"absence will not be penalised."*

If your child is unwell, please contact the school's absence line 01672 515081 (Years 7 – 11) and 01672 517830 (Years 12&13) on the first day of absence and each subsequent day of absence. Leave a message giving the full name and tutor group of the student with a reason for the absence. If the school does not receive notification of the absence, it will be unauthorised. If students are unwell during the school day, they should alert a member of staff. St John's is fortunate to have a qualified nurse to lead an extensive and well trained medical team. School itself will contact parents if necessary and students should not contact parents/carers directly. We ask that

parents/carers do not arrive at school until a member of the staff team has contacted them. It is also essential that children who are unwell do not return to school until they are fully recovered.

School Transport – School Bus

Those students who use the dedicated school bus service to get to and from school will continue to do so from September. Wiltshire County Council are in the process of confirming their final arrangements and this should be sent to the relevant students and families by the end of this week. The current WCC guidance regarding face coverings on school transport is that they **must** be worn. Please see the 'How to wear a face mask' section on the COVID-19 section of the school website if you need any advice here.

School Transport – Public Bus

The Government guidance is that public transport should only be used where absolutely necessary and this is subject to change. As we plan to return, this guidance is still active and therefore, we are strongly encouraging students to avoid using public transport for their school journeys unless it is not possible to do so. We realise that for many students, they have no real alternative to using the school bus and actively encourage them to adhere to the current guidance which includes physically distancing themselves and using face coverings at all times. Students will not be permitted to use public transport unless they follow this guidance. The guidance will also apply to students who travel to school in taxis. We are in regular contact with Wiltshire County Council and will update with further information when we are provided with this. The Government guidance currently states:

- Encourage parents, staff and pupils to walk or cycle to school if at all possible.
- Students should be reminded of the guidance and procedures for safe travelling on public transport.
- The use of hand sanitiser upon boarding and/or disembarking.
- The expectation on bus companies that vehicles are cleaned more often.
- Queuing and boarding must be safely organised and distancing within vehicles should be maintained in line with guidance.
- The use of face coverings for children over the age of 11.

School Transport – Other

For those students who travel to and from school by car, we would ask that they are dropped off at a distance from school and walk into school from town. This will help us ensure a more efficient arrival on site for all students.

Student Arrival to School

When students enter the site, they will be asked to sanitise on entering the building and make their way directly to their period 1 classroom with their face covering in place. There will be access to hand washing/sanitising stations positions around the school, but we do recommend personal hand sanitiser in addition where possible. Please refer to the school website Covid-19 section for further advice and information.

Break and Lunch Times

We have made amendments to the school timetable and prepared zones for each year group in order to reduce the chances of bubbles mixing during break and lunchtimes. The school day has been outlined already in this letter. Each year group will be allocated spaces for wet and dry breaks and lunches, as well as some access to the school field at these times, weather permitting. A plan for how students will access the canteen is in place and further information will be made available for students on their return in September. We do anticipate some changes to the food that we will be able to provide each day, but there will still be canteen provision on a daily basis. Students in receipt of Free School Meals will continue to have their food provided. Regarding **ParentPay** and the cashless catering system we run, please can I refer you back to the information provided by the school and this can be found on the COVID-19 section of the school website should you need a reminder.

Behaviour for Learning

It is important that when returning to school we try to maintain a sense of normality and high standards. Therefore, we will continue to use the existing Behaviour for Learning Policy as has been previously used. Please speak to your son/daughter about school standards and expectations, as whilst we do appreciate many students will have been out of school for almost six months by the time we return in September, it is essential that students are able to follow school rules and staff requests. Revised behaviour expectations in place for our return can be found [here](#)

Classroom Expectations

As per the DfE guidance, all students will sit in rows facing forwards where possible. Students will be advised on entering the classroom on the expectations regarding taking responsibility for the hygiene in their spaces and for safe movement between lessons where necessary. We expect everyone to comply with these expectations and they will be made very clear when the students arrive next week. Students will be instructed to only bring in what they need for each day and not to share resources. Coats/bags and all belongings are to be kept with the student and placed under the desk in each lesson.

Hygiene

In line with Government guidance, it is important that we all regularly wash our hands and we ask you to emphasise to your son/daughter the importance of regular handwashing or sanitisation. As already explained, sanitiser/hand washing facilities are available when students arrive in school, leave their lessons, and arrive in new learning zones. Please reiterate that they should be washing or sanitising their hands thoroughly and more often than normal. We must also ensure good respiratory hygiene by promoting **“Catch it, bin it, kill it.”** Each classroom will have access to sanitiser and disinfectant sprays and wipes. We will communicate with our dedicated bus services to ensure that necessary hygiene rules are enforced within companies and students will be reminded of the hand hygiene rules daily. We will also continue enhanced cleaning with more staff on site during the day to support with the cleaning of areas that are used by mixed groups e.g. the dining facilities. Our **Risk Assessment** is available on the COVID-19 section of the school website.

If anyone becomes unwell with a new, continuous cough or high temperature, or has a loss of, or change in, their normal sense of taste or smell (anosmia) they **must stay at home** and you are advised to follow ‘Stay at home: guidance for households with possible or confirmed coronavirus (COVID-19) infection’ and should arrange to have a test to see if they have COVID-19. You must inform the school of any positive tests. Other members of the household (including any siblings) should also follow the guidance on self-isolation. Should there be any health concerns, the school, students and staff will be engaging the Track and Trace process and we will seek advice from the relevant Government body.

Thank you once again for your continued support and we do appreciate the length of this letter. We know there will be challenges, but by working together in a flexible way we will be able to ensure that your child has safe access to their education. We cannot wait to see the students soon and please be fully assured that during their first day back in school, all students will be fully trained in all of these changed routines.

In the meantime, please do continue to stay engaged with us and we appreciate hearing from you through the covid-19@stjohns.excalibur.org.uk email. We also continue to keep up to date our dedicated area on the school website which can be found at: <https://www.stjohns.excalibur.org.uk/latest-covid-19-information/>.

As ever, I hope that you and your family continue to keep safe.

With kindest regards



Ian Tucker
Principal