

**7<sup>th</sup> September 2020**

Dear Parents and Carers

I am writing at the beginning of our first full week back at school to thank you all for your support in getting us to a point which seemed a long way distant in the dark days of the Spring and early Summer.

Last week's attendance surpassed our expectations. Friday was the first day when we were open for all of our students and the attendance was excellent:

Year 7	98.2%
Year 8	92.2%
Year 9	98.3%
Year 10	95.0%
Year 11	93.4%
Total	95.3%

If those students who are known to be in quarantine following a holiday or self-isolating because someone in their family is waiting for a test result are added in, almost all of our students are accounted for as attending or intending to attend as soon as possible. Thank you to you all for everything you have done to make this possible.

I also want to pay tribute to everything that our teaching and support staff have done over the summer and at the start of term to prepare for re-opening. It has been a magnificent effort and the changes to the site, to the curriculum and to our approaches to teaching and learning as well as to our organisation and routines are an eloquent testimony to the contributions of all concerned. Doubtless we will need to make adjustments as the term goes on but the commitment from our whole staff team fills me with confidence that we will take these in our stride as well.

Our students, too, have been magnificent. Almost without exception, they have been on time, well equipped and have worked well with us to implement innovations such as staggered breaks and the one way system around the school.

There are a few points that I would like to make at this early stage:

1. We understand that the staggered start creates challenges for some families, particularly if you also have children with different start times at other schools. Wherever possible, it would help us enormously if students in Year 7-9 did not arrive before 0830 and those in Years 10-11 did not arrive before 0850. Where this is unavoidable, in particular for Year 10-11 students with younger siblings, we will make provision for them so that, as winter draws in, they are not left outside in the cold and the rain. However, I am sure you will appreciate that the need to stagger breaks and lunchtimes means that our resources for student supervision and cleaning are very highly stretched and the fewer students who arrive early, the easier it will be to ensure that they are safe and comfortable.
2. Traffic on the Learning Zone has been higher than usual and I am concerned for the safety of our students. While I quite understand that our Year 7 students are still unfamiliar with the area and that it is reassuring to them to be driven onto the Zone and that the additional needs of some of our other students also makes this desirable, could I please ask all parents not to drive onto the Zone unless it is absolutely necessary. In any event, if you need to park

(rather than just drop off), please use one of the visitors' parking spaces. In particular, please do not park on the double yellow lines.

3. Please remember the items of equipment that we have asked all of our students to bring to school. In addition to the usual items of stationery, all students should have a glue stick. This is because assessed work will be completed on paper, marked and then stuck in to books. Normal practice would be for students to share glue sticks around the class but that is clearly impossible in the current circumstances.
4. Please also remember that students should have with them a pack of tissues and a pack of anti-bacterial wipes. A couple of parents have raised a concern over the impact of the use of the wipes on children who are prone to asthma. If you are worried about your child in this respect, please let their tutor or a member of the pastoral team know and we will make individual arrangements for them to wait outside while the room is being sanitised.
5. I have been very pleased with the level of responsibility shown by the relatively small numbers of students who are wearing masks in the corridors. They are taking good care taking them on and off and, in the main, are storing them safely. Please remember that such students do need a sealable plastic bag to store their mask when it is not in use.
6. I have been monitoring the infection rates in the local area. As you may know, the rate in Cheshire East has risen slightly over the last few weeks (although, as I write, the rate of new infections over the last 7 days is still less than 9 per 100 000 of the population). This emphasises the importance of continued vigilance both within the Academy but also around home and the community where our students spend most of their time. Please ensure that our students are continuing to comply with the current rules on social distancing when they are not in school.

As the implementation of our safety measures becomes embedded over the next few days and weeks, we will finalise two other important elements of our re-opening plan: our learning recovery plan to assess and meet students' catch up needs and our contingency plan against the possibility of another partial or total lockdown. Over the next few weeks we will be assessing all of our students to identify any gaps in their knowledge and understanding or any important skills they seem to have lost. Our catch up plans will then ensure that we do all that we can to support them in making up lost ground. Once again, I cannot stress too highly the importance of making sure that all of our students are reading at home. I will write again with details on both these plans over the next couple of weeks.

For now, though, thank you all, once again, for your support in securing such a positive start to the new term. Most of all, it is great to be back and to see our students return with (in almost every case) such big smiles on their faces.

With every best wish



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