

July 16th 2020

Dear Parent(s) and Carer(s),

I hope that you and your families are well. Thank you for your continuing support and feedback during recent months at a time when school has had to operate in a very different fashion.

It has been a challenging time both for society and education, but in recent days, it has been great to finally be looking forward to Hobart being full of students and learning come September. I hope this will become a reality, but we will continue to be advised by the government to ensure that it is as safe as it can be to return.

The purpose of this letter is to share a range of key information related to September opening. I appreciate that there is a lot to take in, and have made a video (Loom presentation) version for those who would prefer the information in that format. It is over 35 minutes long so I advise having a drink to hand! The video covers the same information as that detailed below, and can be accessed from this link:

<https://www.loom.com/share/cd7aba6790644bcc9448769c7d166915>

The government guidance outlines that schools should provide a broad curriculum whilst putting in place measures to reduce contact between groups (often referred to as bubbles) of students. We are defining a bubble as a year group due to the nature of our setting.

Key Safety Measures and Actions

There are measures that all students, families and staff can take to reduce risk. This features in government guidance on school reopening and we must all take these actions in September. Students who have been able to attend school in recent months will be familiar with these actions from routines in the summer term. The measures include:

- minimising contact with individuals who are unwell by ensuring that those who have coronavirus (COVID-19) symptoms, or who have someone in their household who does, do not attend school
- cleaning hands thoroughly more often than usual using sanitiser or wash basins
- ensuring good respiratory hygiene is practised by using the 'catch it, bin it, kill it' approach
- minimising contact between individuals (see 'school day' section below and our use of year group bubbles)
- socially distancing where it is possible to do so (eg maintaining distance between students and teachers)
- avoiding using our hands to touch our mouth, nose and eyes

Students will be reminded of these actions through use of signage around the school, and staff continuing to issue instructions and advice. I would appreciate your support in discussing and reminding your child(ren) of the actions they can take. I am sure you will have been doing this for some time now, but it is important that we call continue to reinforce the right messages.

Possible cases of COVID-19 in school

It is important that there are clear procedures and actions in place should there be a suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19 in our school community. This includes for any student or adult that displays symptoms. We have a new medical room in operation that will allow for social distancing. If your child showed any symptoms of COVID-19, you would be contacted to pick them up. Please park at the back of the school in the sports hall car park and if possible, call school reception from your mobile. The new medical room is close to this car park, and we would accompany your child to where you are parked. We would expect you to organise a test through the NHS, and let us know of the test results once you have received them.

The school day – timings, routines and year group ‘bubbles’

Our school day will have very similar timings to what students are used to. However, we have made some small changes, and these feature on the ‘school day’ document attached. The changes have been made so that arrival / departure times for students are managed to lessen crowding. Key points to be aware of:

- All students should go straight to their form rooms when they arrive at school. These room have changed and will be communicated to students on their return in September.
- Buses will arrive at the same time as always
- Those walking, cycling or getting lifts to school should arrive between 8.40am and 8.50am (and go straight to their form room)
- Those walking or cycling to school or getting lifts will be allowed to leave the school site at 3.10pm (lesson time is not reduced) and those on buses will leave after 3.15pm.

Each year group will form its own ‘bubble’ – large groups that we will aim to keep apart from each other. This follows government advice and will lower the risk of possible transmission were there to be a case of the virus in school.

The year group bubbles will have their majority of lessons in specified areas / zones of the school to limit mixing and contact between them (see maps attached). They may have to change classroom within their zone, for example, when they are in a different set or teaching group for a certain subject or key stage 4 options. Where a change of room is required, there will be set routes for students to follow so movement is as safe as possible and contact between groups is minimised.

Transport to and from school

One important piece of advice linked to transport is that students should not be sent to school if they have COVID-19 (C19) symptoms (a high temperature, a new, continuous cough and / or a loss or change to your sense of smell or taste).

Personal hygiene is important to lessen the risk of spread, so please advise and encourage your child to wash / cleanse their hands before they travel. All students will be expected to cleanse their hands again when they first arrive at their classrooms. If you are picking up your child in your own vehicle, please do not gather in car parks and remain in your vehicle. Drop off and pick up using vehicles driven by family members need to use the sports hall car park.

Government advice states that all public transport users should wear face coverings. The vast majority of our buses are arranged by Norfolk County Council, and it is not currently statutory to wear face coverings on school buses. However, coverings can of course be worn if any individual or family wishes to take this precaution, and they should certainly be considered where social distancing on buses / transport is not possible, particularly with students outside an individual's year group bubble. We will be boarding students in year group order with the aim of maintaining bubbles when they are sat on the bus. However, school staff will not be on buses when students journey to and from school.

Disposable masks worn on the journey to school should be placed in bins on arrival. Reusable masks / coverings should be placed in plastic bags once removed. Students must not touch the front of their face covering / mask during use or when removing them. All students removing face coverings / masks should wash or cleanse their hands immediately after they have done so. We will set up what is needed for this to take place at the bus drop off zone, and duty staff will advise students.

Parents / carers who are dropping off or picking up their children are encouraged to continue using places away from the school site where this is possible. If there is a need to be on the school site to pick up or drop off your child, please use the sports hall car park.

Curriculum, lessons, teaching and learning

My intention is to ensure the curriculum offer for students is as broad as possible, and so students will continue to study all their subjects. We have been able to arrange the 'bubble' zones so that a range of specialist rooms are still available for use by any year group. For example, in the arrangements we have made, students will be able to leave their zones to access ICT based lessons or specialist technology rooms for food / product design. Where these lessons are delivered, this will be with safety in relation to C19 in mind. For example, whilst government guidance asks schools to ensure there are front facing desks in use, practical lessons may make more use of demonstrations by staff rather than participation in practical activities or be theory based.

The DfE guidance is clear that staff need to socially distance (2m) from both students and other adults. Classrooms will be set up with a staff zone that is clearly marked at the front of the room to support distancing. Guidance has been issued to teaching staff on how to approach learning in the current situation, and is based on the latest educational research.

Attendance and behaviour

If you have concerns regarding the health of your child that you wish to discuss please contact your child's head of year in the first instance, and seek advice from your GP or a specialist medical practitioner. The guidance makes it clear that students are expected to attend school from September. As is always the case, actions taken by the school in cases of persistent non-attendance are at the discretion of the Head of School, and any cases will be examined on an individual basis.

Our behaviour policy (available via our website) remains in place in September, and currently features an appendix specific to behaviour expectations in light of the COVID-19 situation. This appendix will be updated over the course of the summer break, and key points will be relayed to students at the start of term. Behaviour that puts other students at risk will be treated extremely seriously. For example, a student deliberately coughing or spitting over another individual is likely to result in a fixed term exclusion, and repeat offences will result in escalating sanctions.

School meals

The range of school meals on offer will be reduced in September – a menu of the options available will be issued in due course. This is due to a combination of social distancing for staff in the school kitchens, and the new eating arrangements being put in place to maintain year group bubbles. Students will collect their meals and eat in their form rooms to help maintain year group bubbles.

Meals will be pre-ordered in advance on a week by week basis, so if your child is intending to purchase school food, please ensure you have uploaded funds to your WisePay account. Please consider the week ahead when doing this. Any children eligible for free school meals can continue to order food within their allocated funds. If you have any queries regarding the use of WisePay, please email: finance@clarionacademytrust.org.uk

Please add noreply@wisePAY.co.uk to your safe senders list so any emails sent to you do not end up in your spam or junk folders.

Parents and carers of our new year 7 students will receive a separate letter containing the login details for their child, and information on how to access WisePay via the school website.

School equipment and school uniform

Please support us in ensuring that your child arrives at school with the correct equipment – pens (black and green), pencils, a ruler, eraser, glue stick, highlighter and a calculator are the main items required. Not only will this support their learning, it will also lessen contact with others and therefore reduce risk.

Students should not lend equipment to each other during the current time to lower any risk of transmission.

PE changing rooms present a challenge for us, both in terms of avoiding students being face to face for periods of time and in being able to clean surfaces when there is use in back to back lessons. We have made the decision that on days when students have PE, they should come to school dressed in their PE kit to remove the risks linked to changing room use. Students should wear their school uniform on the first day back (September 7th). After this date, students should wear PE kit to school on days they have the subject. We would appreciate your support on monitoring this at home where this may help your child. This arrangement will be kept under review.

In addition to the PE uniform, we are requesting that plain black leggings / plain tracksuit bottoms are worn over shorts / skirts when PE is not taking place and students are in other lessons. Other

than these items, students **should not** be wearing other sports items that are not part of PE kit (eg coloured hoodies or leggings / tracksuit bottoms that are not black).

Visiting school

Whilst the virus is still present in our community, it is important that we continue to keep visits to the school to a minimum. We appreciate that there might be times when you feel you need to visit the school, but I am requesting that you contact the school via phone or email in the first instance. This will ensure we keep contacts to a minimum and therefore lower any risk. If you do visit the school, please ensure you use hand sanitiser / a washbasin on arrival, and make arrangements so the visit is from one household member only (where possible).

Please **do not** visit the school if you have symptoms of COVID-19 (a temperature, a new persistent cough and/or a loss of taste or smell), or if you are self-isolating / in quarantine. We also advise that any adults avoid visiting the school if you are in a clinically vulnerable group.

Other changes

- No ball games are currently allowed whilst we use different social spaces for each year group to maintain bubbles.
- Students should avoid waiting outside classrooms and should wait sensibly in their designated places for their teacher to arrive.
- Lockers will not be in use in the immediate future so there are less touch points that could cause transmission.
- **Mobile phones** will not need to be handed in to reception until further notice. This is to lessen a contact point between staff and students, and removes a situation in which bubbles would be broken. It remains the case that mobile phones and other valuables are brought in at students own risk.

I appreciate there is a lot of content within this email. It is reflective of the detailed planning that has taken place, and the range of factors that need to be taken in to consideration. Please do email the school if you have any questions, and if a discussion is preferred, we can arrange for a call to be made. An email will be sent before the end of term with our revised risk assessment attached. This will also be available on our website.

Thank you again for your support and patience. There are obviously a number of new routines and organisational aspects we are putting in place. We will monitor how these operate, making changes where they are needed based on feedback and observations. Take care, have a lovely summer, and I look forward to working with you again in the new academic year.

Kind regards,

Mr Ross Li-Rocchi
Head of School
Twitter: @Hobart_Head