July 2020

Dear Family

I write to you at the end of the first year of our Academy. It has had tremendous highs as well as enormous challenges as we have had to struggle with issues around Covid-19 in the last three months.

Regardless of this we are really looking forward to having the students join us in September. Although things may be a bit different to make sure we are keeping to the government guidelines. Our staff are working really hard to make sure the experience will be the exciting, joyful experience we want to deliver.

On the first two days back, students will be with their form teachers all day taking part in a mini induction. This means you will not need to worry about bringing a PE kit. Students will be given their new timetable on that day and introduced to all of the things they need to know about the Academy.

School resumes on **Thursday, 3 September 2020 at 8:45am for Year 7 students.**

It was fantastic to see and hear from so many students on our induction days. If you have been unable to access the induction so far it is being left open all summer and you can access it with the password that was sent to you at:  
  
<https://shireland.sharepoint.com/sites/SummerSchool>

The Government has recently announced an update to the reopening guidance for schools. In light of this, there will be some significant changes to the day-to-day processes within the Academy.

This letter will give you an overview of our plans although some minor details may be subject to change. They will adapt as and when the Government guidance changes in line with the national picture but we aim to keep you informed at all times.

We fully intend to open in September to all students, though there will be changes to ensure everyone’s safety. We wish you all a restful and above all, safe summer and look forward to seeing you all next term.

Yours sincerely

George Faux

**Principal**

**Changes in September 2020**

The new academic year begins for students on Thursday, 3 September 2020 for all students.

In light of the updated Government advice, we will be making several changes to our practices to ensure the safety of our staff and students. The main changes are summarised below, please read them carefully. Students will be taken through all the changes on the first two days back where they will be with their form tutor for the full day.

This is a constantly changing situation and if the guidance changes or things look better or worse nationally, things could change from the below. We will let you know if there are any changes.

**Student Bubbles**

It is the intention to form two Year Group Bubbles: Year 7 and Year 8. We are forming Year Group Bubbles so that if a student tests positive for COVID-19 or we are directed by Public Health England or NHS Track and Trace to put students into isolation it will only affect a single student bubble.

Bubbles require us to reduce the contact between students wherever possible. This includes start and end of the day, moving round the Academy, breaks and lunchtimes. We also are restricting students to areas of the school as follows.

* The Year 7 bubble will consist of the Year 7 corridor and L4L classrooms, ground floor toilets and small library.
* The Year 8 bubble will consist of the Year 8 corridor and classrooms and the first floor toilets.
* All other areas are to be considered shared spaces and will be outlined below.

As per the guidance, staff are permitted to move between bubbles but will practice social distancing between staff and students.

**Uniform Expectations for September**

Quoted from the updated Government Guidance:

*“It is for the governing body of a school (or the academy trust, in the case of academies) to make decisions regarding school uniform. Some schools may have relaxed their uniform policy while only certain categories of pupils were attending. We would, however, encourage all schools to return to their usual uniform policies in the autumn term. Uniform can play a valuable role in contributing to the ethos of a school and setting an appropriate tone.*

*Uniforms do not need to be cleaned any more often than usual, nor do they need to be cleaned using methods which are different from normal.”*

In light of this, all students are expected to wear the correct Academy uniform every day in September. The Academy Uniform Policy is attached to the back of this letter for your reference.

**Timings of the Day**

The timings of the day will alter to enable distancing to be maintained between Year Group Bubbles.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Year 7 |  |  | Year 8 |  |
| Arrival | 08:30 |  | Arrival | 08:50 |
| Reg | 08:45 |  | Reg | 09:00 |
| P1 | 09:10 |  | P1 | 09:25 |
| Break | 10:10 |  | P2 | 10:25 |
| P2 | 10:25 |  | Break | 11:25 |
| P3A | 11:25 |  | P3 | 11:40 |
| Lunch | 12:00 |  | Lunch | 12:40 |
| P3B | 12:35 |  | P4 | 01:15 |
| P4 | 01:05 |  | P5 | 02:15 |
| P5 | 02:05 |  | Form | 03:15 |
| Form | 03:05 |  | Dismissal | 03:25 |
| Dismissal | 03:10 |  |  |  |

Year 8, rather than Year 7 students have been chosen for the offset as they are older and more able to make independent journeys to the Academy. We know that this is difficult for families where there are multiple drop offs but we have no option to keep to the guidance.

**Travel to and from the Academy and Student Arrivals**

* We encourage students to walk or cycle to the Academy where possible.
* All three student gates will remain open and be supervised by staff at the beginning and end of the Academy day.
* Students arriving by public transport must wear a mask and will be asked to dispose of it before entering the Academy site. If the mask is reusable they must store it safely and hygienically in their school bag (a sealable plastic bag to store mask in).
* Students arriving by car must be dropped off at the drop-off area on the car park.
* There will be a Gate Warden in place as part of our building contract with Willmott Dixon who will help to direct traffic – please cooperate with staff instructions to ensure safety for all.
* Family members are not permitted to gather or wait at the student gates or reception. This will include not taking photos on the first day by the gate. Please wait in cars to collect students.
* Students will wait in the playground before entry to the Academy. They will line up with Form Teachers to ensure a safe and orderly entrance to the building.
* Breakfast club will not be available as Year Group Bubbles are unable to mix.
* At the end of the Academy day, students will be directed to leave the site and not gather at the gates.

**Movement Around the Academy**

* The one-way system around the Academy will be altered to reduce the possibility of Year 7 and 8 students mixing. When entering the building from the playground:
* Year 7 will use the main doors by the gate and the staircase directly inside (when necessary).
* Year 8 will only use the entrance and staircase by the canteen.
* To reduce movement, in subjects where specialist rooms and facilities are not required (Maths, English, German), students will remain in their L4L rooms and teachers will move to them.

**Shared Spaces**

* Shared spaces (Science lab, Art room, Inclusion, Music Room, Canteen) will be subject to enhanced cleaning between Year Group Bubbles.
* The timetable has been adjusted slightly to make this possible.
* There will be a separate set of equipment for each Year Group Bubble or where this is not possible, the equipment will be cleaned between bubbles.

**Changes to Subjects and Events**

*Assemblies and year group events*

* Assemblies will be delivered via Teams Live Events – students will not gather as a year group in the theatre. Large events involving all students or a whole year group will not take place until the guidance changes.

*Drama*

* Group drama performances will be restricted until the change of guidance. This also includes the Theatre School, Drama Club and Hippodrome-run Drama sessions.

*PE*

* There will be no visits to the Leisure Centre in the first half term.
* Swimming lessons will not take place.
* PE lessons will take place in the studio or MUGA. In case of inclement weather, PE lessons will be theory based and delivered in classrooms.
* Your child must wear their PE to the Academy on the one day per week that they have PE on their timetable. This will remove the need to use the changing rooms. This is only permitted on the day that they have PE.

*Music*

* Students will be able to undertake Music theory lessons and use instruments if they are disinfected between Year Group Bubbles.
* Wind instruments and singing lessons will not be allowed.
* Pop Choir will be cancelled until the guidance changes.
* Peripatetic (private) Music Lessons can only take place where students have their own instrument.

**Breaks and Lunch times**

* Breaks and lunchtimes will be staggered so that Year Group Bubbles do not mix.
* Students must wash or sanitise their hands before break and lunchtime.
* Breaktime snacks served in the canteen will be limited to pre-packaged snacks.
* Lunches will be pre-portioned in disposable containers with disposable cutlery.
* Students must queue with 1m between students, in line with the signs that will be present. They must follow all staff instructions.
* There will be enhanced cleaning between lunch sittings.

**Evacuation Arrangements**

* The fire assembly points and evacuation procedure will be adjusted to account for the building work that has started and social distancing between Year Group Bubbles.
* Students will be informed of the evacuation procedures on the first day of term and a drill will be carried out.

**Student Hygiene**

* Students must sanitise their hands when they arrive at the Academy and as they leave each day.
* They must wash their hands after using the toilet.
* Students must sanitise their hands before and after lunchtimes.
* Additional hand sanitiser points will be installed throughout the Academy.

**PPE and Masks**

* The wearing of masks and PPE in schools is only recommended in two circumstances.
  + For staff when they have suspicions that a student is showing symptoms of Covid-19
  + For students when arriving at the Academy after using public transport.
* PPE is available within the Academy for staff involved in first aid issues.
* Students are not permitted to wear masks or gloves on the Academy site; they must be disposed of in the bins provided at the gates.
* Washing hands is more effective than use of gloves.

**Visitors to the Academy Site**

* Parents and families must not gather at the school gates at any time.
* The number of visitors on site must be kept to a minimum and all visitors must maintain the Academy hygiene and social distancing policies at all times.
* Reception will have a maximum occupancy and we would ask you to please call in advance if looking to meet a member of staff so we can arrange a socially distant meeting area or have the call by phone if possible.
* Parents and families will be instructed to contact the Academy to make an appointment in advance of any meetings.

**Additional Information**

* The Academy will be subjected to more regular cleaning throughout the day, particularly in high traffic areas such as toilets, handrails and the canteen.
* Within classrooms, students will be seated at their usual class tables.
* Students must use their own stationery. Where possible, please provide your child with their own personal set of equipment to use in the Academy. We will ensure there is no use of shared equipment.
* Students must not share laptop devices.
* Marking of work will be completed online or within school – staff will not remove books from the Academy for marking.
* In the case of a second lockdown or a Year Group Bubble is sent home due to Public Health England or NHS advice, the Academy will resume online lessons.

If your contact details (address, phone number, email address) change over the summer period please contact the Academy so that we can update our records. It is vital that we have two contacts with accurate information for all students.

**Academy Uniform Policy**

We maintain a simple yet consistent uniform policy.

**Compulsory items:**

* WBCA blazer
* WBCA tie with logo
* White blouse or shirt, top button fastened, tucked into waistband
* Plain black smart trousers (no jeggings, leggings or jeans) or plain black knee or ankle length skirt (tailored style, no tube skirts, mini-skirts or jersey material)
* Plain black socks (ankle or knee length) or plain black tights
* Plain black polishable leather-type smart shoes, NOT trainers
* A sensible school bag large enough to contain an A4-sized folder and the correct equipment needed for the day

**Additional information:**

* Blazers should be worn at all times
* Outdoor coats may be a variety of colours but should be smart, ideally waterproof and not covered in lettering. Hoodies are not permitted
* Ankle boots may be worn underneath trousers but should be smart and polishable
* Shoes and boots must have a flat sole or have a low heel. These should be smart, not NOT trainers or trainer-style. They should be plain and not have coloured trims

**Optional items:**

* Plain black v-neck jumper (no logos), no cardigans
* Salwar Kameez and headscarves may be worn and should be plain black. Students are still required to wear the Academy blazer and white shirt and tie

**PE uniform:**

* Academy sports top with logo
* Black shorts or black tracksuit bottoms made from shell suit-type material with single white piping
* Black sports socks
* Trainers (can be any colour)

**For Health and Safety reasons, we also ask students to observe these rules:**

One pair of small stud earrings may be worn. If the Academy considers that a student’s earrings present a Health and Safety risk, the student will be required to remove them.

* No earrings should be worn in PE lessons
* One nose stud may be worn. Multiple studs and nose rings are not allowed. Nose stud must be removed for PE lessons. No other facial piercings

**Prohibited items:**

* Caps are not permitted on the Academy site. Hats must be removed before entering the Academy buildings
* Hoodies or sport jackets
* Nail extensions, false nails and/or brightly coloured nail varnish
* Extreme haircuts or styles (e.g. dyed bright unnatural colours, patterns or lines shaved in hair)

**Equipment list**

Essential

Pencil case containing:

* Black or blue pen
* Pencil
* Ruler
* Rubber
* Green pen

Desirable

* Pencil crayons or felt pens
* Highlighter pens
* Glue stick
* Safety scissors
* Geometry set