

20<sup>th</sup> July 2021



*Success nothing less*

Dear Parent/Carer,

### September 2021

I am sure you will all agree that this has been a year like no other. Whilst the previous academic year contained the 1<sup>st</sup> lockdown, this year we have had to co-ordinate the school day very differently than we do in normal times. We've had staggered starts/finishes, different entrances/exits, bubble classrooms, minimal movement around the building, the dreaded masks in lessons and communal spaces, remote learning for isolating students/classes and of course, lashings of hand sanitiser.

I am very proud of how we have managed the pandemic as a school and would like to pay tribute to all of our students and staff who have shown great resilience, adaptability and courage in the face of adversity and challenge. I would also like to thank you, as parents and carers, for your continued support during these extremely trying times.

So, after the year like no other we look forward to September and an opportunity to get back to a more normal way of working. The reset button, if you like, is being pressed and we will be reintroducing some of things that we have had to pause during the last year whilst building on what we have learned over the course of the last 18months.

### Testing in September

In September we are required to test, via Lateral Flow devices, all children prior to their return to school. They then have to have a second test within 3-5 days of the original test. These tests have to be carried out in a controlled, on site testing centre as per Government guidelines. This unfortunately, will require us to have a slightly staggered start to our return in September. Please see the timetable below: -

Date	Year group	Information
Thursday 2 <sup>nd</sup> September	7	Arrive in the morning in staggered fashion one form at a time to be tested before going to class.
	11	Arrive in the afternoon in staggered fashion one form at a time before going straight home to return to class on Friday 3 <sup>rd</sup> at the normal time
Friday 3 <sup>rd</sup> September	8, 9, 10	Arrive throughout the day in staggered fashion to be tested before going straight home to return at the normal start time on Monday 6 <sup>th</sup>

All families will receive a text message confirming their child's new form and the exact time they should arrive for their test. The second test will be carried out in school for all year's w/b 6<sup>th</sup> September.

## Uniform

During the course of the last year we have supported many families with specific items of uniform. We spent our council funded winter grant on PE hoodies for identified students, for example. However, for a multitude of reasons the standard of uniform has fallen since the end of the last lockdown. Please visit the school website view the uniform expectations of Aspire.

<https://www.blackpoolaspireacademy.co.uk/information/uniform>

Please take particular note of the expectations around PE kit, shoes, and jewellery as these are the main infringements we have had to deal with in recent months.

Over the last year we have allowed students to attend school in PE kit on the days they have it. The benefits of this have been clear: -

- Greater levels of participation in PE lessons
- Longer PE lessons due to not having to get changed before and after class

With this in mind I intend to keep this policy in place to be reviewed at October Half Term. The positive impact is clear; however, it has also highlighted the students that do not have full PE kit. This must be rectified for September so that all students have the full PE kit with trainers only being worn on PE days.

## The School Day

One of the key priorities at Aspire is reading. Despite the lockdowns we have made huge strides in improving the reading ages of our students, however, many still lag behind that of their chronological age. With this in mind we have changed the structure of the school day to accommodate our dedicated reading lesson. During the reading lesson students will follow our newly established Literary Canon – a set of books specifically chosen to support reading and understanding across all year groups. I hope all parents and carers will share in my enthusiasm for this development as I know the impact that it could have on student progress whilst helping to instil a love of reading.

The new school day is as follows: -

Timings	Event
8.35-8.40am	Student line up
8.40-9.00am	Form time
9.00-9.55am	Period 1
9.55pm-10.50am	Period 2
10.50-11.10am	Break
11.10-12.05pm	Period 3
12.05-1.00pm	Period 4
1.00-1.30pm	Lunch 1: Yr 7/11 Reading: Yr 8/9/10
1.30-1.35pm	Lunch transition
1.35-2.05pm	Lunch 2: Yr 8/9/10 Reading: Yr 7/11
2.05-3.00pm	Period 5

Please note that the start and finish times for the school days have returned to their pre-COVID times. All year groups will follow the same timings and will move around the building going from class to class as opposed to remaining in the same bubble class all day.

## **Punctuality and Attendance**

Punctuality and attendance are key as we recover from the lost learning that has occurred over the course of the pandemic. The 1 minute late, 1-hour detention will be reinstated in September to replace the lunchtime version that has existed this year. This is a consequence that we clearly do not wish to have to use and it is easily avoidable by your child arriving on time.

## **Examinations**

The current rhetoric from the Department for Education is that examinations for year 11 students will return next summer. Whether there will be any changes to the level of content students have to learn for each subject remains to be seen but it is vital that year 11 in September get off to a positive start in terms of attendance, punctuality and attitude to learning. A Year 11 Launch Evening is planned for parents and carers where we will take you through the expectations and events planned throughout the year to support outcomes in 2022.

## **The Golden Knowledge Organiser**

The Golden Knowledge Organiser, which has been used exclusively in classrooms this year will once again become portable and all students in every year will be required to take it home each day to use it to complete Prep. During lessons the Golden Knowledge Organiser will be used to support learning and the acquisition of knowledge to ensure all students make rapid progress.

## **Daily Prep**

From September we will be reintroducing Prep. Prep is the completion of one side of A4 per night. Students, following a tried and tested methodology, produce a piece of writing each night based around a specific subject. Students hand in their Prep every morning to their form tutor, where it is then collated by the Office staff. This is an Aspire Non-negotiable and failure to complete the work will result in a 1-hour same day 'correction' after school where they complete the previous nights missed Prep and that day's work too, to ensure completion for the following morning.

At Aspire, we are really excited about returning in September and being able to work in a more normal way. It's a fantastic opportunity to build on what we have achieved over the course of this academic year and we are fully committed to ensuring that every child makes outstanding progress in all areas of the curriculum. Personal development is also a key facet of our school life and we have invested in this area for September with the addition of a school counsellor, trained in child and adolescent mental health.

This coupled with a new Director of Personal Development in school to co-ordinate this area, I feel that alongside our academic ambition for your child we are also supporting them as a whole person, which is vital particularly in a post-COVID landscape.

Please accept my warmest best wishes for a lovely summer,

Kind regards,

John Woods  
Headteacher