

17 July 2020

Dear Parents and Carers,

I trust this letter finds you and your families well. These past few months have been incredibly challenging times for all, and I am sure you are looking forward to a summer break in which you can enjoy some family time and relaxation together. I know that Mrs Crossman and our transition team have been in touch with you over the past weeks with information for you and your children about starting at Central. Whilst there will undoubtedly be anxiety around returning to school, I would like to reassure you that we are working hard and will continue to work hard over the summer to make sure school is as safe as it possibly can be for our return in September.

As you will be aware, the government has recently released guidance on how it would like schools to organise their return in September. Our planning will continue throughout the summer months and we will have to remain adaptable to deal with any changes in the local or national situation during July and August. I will therefore contact you with full details of our reopening week beginning 24<sup>th</sup> August and I will use our school website for any general updates over the break. However, as the academic year draws to a close, I wanted to write to give you some general information about our plans for September. I hope you will understand that these remain subject to change should there be further outbreaks of the virus either locally or nationally that require alternative measures.

Current government guidance asks us to organise for all pupils to return to school in September and that attendance should be compulsory. Within its guidance, the DfE considers 5 main actions which school should take to prevent the spread of COVID-19. These are as follows:

- 1) minimise contact with individuals who are unwell
- 2) clean hands thoroughly more often than usual
- 3) ensure good respiratory hygiene by promoting the 'catch it, bin it, kill it' approach
- 4) introduce enhanced cleaning, including cleaning frequently touched surfaces often
- 5) minimise contact between individuals and maintain social distancing wherever possible

The risk assessment I have prepared to address these points has been scrutinised by Compliance Education (the Bay Learning Trust's Health and Safety advisors), the Trust's Board of Trustees, Central's school governors and union representatives. My priorities in developing a return to school plan have been the safety and security of pupils and staff, and the sustainable delivery of a full curriculum wherever possible. With this in mind, here are the main points to note for how we propose to reopen the school in September:

#### **Minimising contact and cleaning**

- All pupils will return to school on Wednesday 2nd September as planned;
- On the first day only, pupils will return with staggered start times. Year 7 will arrive first at 8.30;
- Pupils will be accommodated in year group 'bubbles' of zoned rooms in school where the majority of their lessons will be taught;
- Pupils will only move rooms within their 'bubbles' or to specialist rooms for science, computing etc.;
- Movement to these specialist rooms will be overseen and marshalled by staff;
- Additional cleaning routines will be established during the day to clean any shared areas or frequently touched surfaces;
- Tissues and lidded bins will be available in all classrooms;

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- Pupils will be fully and regularly briefed on safety procedures and routines;
- Cleaning materials and hand sanitiser will be available on corridors and in all classrooms;
- Basic equipment will be assigned to every room to minimise sharing;
- Hand sanitising will become a regular routine in school and hand washing will be encouraged at every opportunity;
- If pupils wish to wear face coverings or gloves whilst in or around school, this is fine;
- Outdoor space at break and lunchtime will also be zoned to maintain the separation of 'bubbles';
- Detailed plans are in place for the safeguarding and collection of any pupil who presents as ill on-site during the school day;
- Should we require it, school has an adequate supply of PPE for use in emergency situations;

### **Catering**

Our dining facilities at Central are limited given the measures for 'bubble' separation and social distancing which we are required to put in place. For this reason, I regret that we will be unable to provide hot food in our canteen and will offer predominantly a packed lunch service at lunch times. We will also have take-away pasta pots available on some days. Both these options will be available to order on a day-to-day basis during morning form time. These will be charged to children's dinner accounts. Families with children in receipt of free school meals will receive their entitlement through this service also. We are looking for ways to expand this catering offer and will update you as soon as we are able with any additional plans. In order to minimise pressure on our catering facilities, I would encourage you to provide a packed lunch for your child to bring into school wherever possible.

### **Transport**

With regard to transport arrangements to and from school, we wish to advise you of the following:

- The government guidance on the opening schools in September encourages parents, staff and pupils to walk or cycle to school if at all possible. At CLHS we only encourage our pupils to cycle if they are confident and safe cyclists, use protective head gear and wear a high visibility vest;
- Dedicated school buses will be operating systems that mean that their usage is limited to Year 7 & 8 students only. Those using the dedicated buses will need to wear face coverings, use hand sanitizer upon boarding and disembarking and maintain social distancing whilst on board;
- The government wishes to depress the demand for public transport and therefore discourages the use of public buses as a means of transport to school;
- The Lancashire Local Authority has stopped the dedicated school bus from the Marsh housing estate to school. The LA took this decision prior to the pandemic outbreak as a cost saving measure. Whilst we expressed our concern about the cancellation of this service on behalf of our pupils and parents, the decision was final;
- We are currently in discussion with the Local Authority as to the level of service it will provide in September – we will keep you posted.

We therefore urge pupils to walk to school where possible. If parents wish to drive their children to school, we ask them to access the school via Lyth Road, then Lowther Road and drop their child off in the bus bay outside of school. We ask parents not to enter the school grounds either in their car or on foot. If you need to contact the school when you drop off or pick up your child, please ring 0152432636. The car park gates will be closed between 8.30-9.00 am. Any appointments with CLHS staff will be made out of the restricted access times.

Parents and carers of pupils who are eligible for free transport due to their SEND or LAC status should contact their Local Authority Transport Provider to ensure that they follow their systems during this period.

If you wish your child to use a public bus, you will need to provide them with a face covering.

Transition into Year 7 is always a time of mixed emotions. Parents and children alike are often excited and anxious in equal measure and these are perfectly normal feelings to have. I hope that, despite the additional concerns that everyone has around the ongoing situation, you are confident that we will do all we need to to make the school a safe place to be and to make the process of starting Central as worry-free and enjoyable as possible. We will use the

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first day to settle our new students in and they will spend the first half of the day with their new form teachers. I will also meet them on their first day and check that they are settled. If you have any questions whatsoever over the summer months, please contact school using [transition@lancasterhigh.lancs.sch.uk](mailto:transition@lancasterhigh.lancs.sch.uk) or call the school office and leave us a message. Someone will get back to you. We will text you when we update any information on our website.

I hope this letter gives you enough information for initial conversations with your child about what September will be like at Central. It only remains for me to wish you a restful and relaxing summer and I look forward to meeting you and beginning your child's secondary school journey with you in a few weeks' time.

With best wishes,

Dr N Walmsley  
**Principal**

