

15 July 2020

Dear Parent / Carer

Further to my Headteacher update on Friday 10 July I am writing to give you more details about our plans for September.

We have been developing our plans since the latest Government Guidance was published on 2nd July. During this time I have worked closely with colleagues from City of York Council and shared and compared ideas with Headteachers of other secondary schools in York to ensure our plans are the best ones for our school. We have also compared our plans to those created by schools nationally.

Whilst reading this information I would ask you to be mindful of the guidance we are following. This guidance puts considerable constraints on what we can do and has significant implications for how we will run the school from September. The Governing Body have been briefed about our plans and are fully supportive of them.

The guidance from the Government asks us to do the following:

1. Bring all students back to school full time without using rotas. We are not expected to implement social distancing between students but are being asked to put in place systems to reduce the likelihood and scale of any transmission of COVID 19. Where possible, we are being asked to make sure that adults in the school maintain 2 metre social distancing from others
2. React quickly and robustly to any confirmed cases of COVID 19. We will follow advice from the Public Health Team at CYC if any of our students or staff have a positive test for COVID 19
3. 'Bubble' students by year groups and do everything possible to minimise contacts between different year groups
4. Limit the sharing of rooms and resources between year groups and implement comprehensive cleaning in between different year groups using the same room or resources
5. Avoid letting students from different year groups pass each other on busy corridors
6. Use staggered breaks and lunchtimes to keep year groups separate and allow time for cleaning of surfaces in dining areas between groups
7. Stagger arrival and departure times to keep year groups separate
8. Limit the number of people who access the site

To meet this guidance we will be doing the following things:

Create 'Bubbles' in Year Groups

To effectively bubble year groups and minimise mixing between year groups, we have allocated year groups to different cluster areas in the school. Students will be taught in these areas for all or the vast majority of their lessons. Year 12 and Year 13 will be counted as one bubble but will be taught by year group as usual. Teachers will move between rooms rather than students moving and students will be closely supervised during these transition times to maintain a purposeful working atmosphere. We have decided to take this approach to minimise the use of rooms and equipment by different year groups and limit how often students from different year groups come into contact with each other.

Timings of the school day

We are staggering the arrival and departure of year groups to minimise mixing between year group bubbles and to ensure that all students wash their hands thoroughly upon arrival at school. Details of timings for each year group are in the table below

Year Group	Arrival Window	Students must be in school no later than	Departure Time
8	8.20 – 8.35	8.35	15.00
9	8.20 – 8.35	8.35	15.00
7	8.35 – 8.50	8.50	15.15
10	8.35 – 8.50	8.50	15.15
11	8.50 – 9.05	9.05	15.30
12 and 13	8.50 – 9.05	9.05	15.30

We have split the school in half based on where students are in their bubbles. Two year groups are able to arrive in each arrival window as they will enter the building through different doors and use different hand washing facilities.

As students in Year 12 and 13 have non-contact periods in their timetable, there will be other arrival times for these students to allow them to enter the building later in the morning, if they don't have lessons earlier in the day. More information will follow about these arrangements.

I am aware that staggering arrival and departure times may place some families in a difficult situation if they drop their children off together or older siblings travel with younger siblings on public transport. We are considering how we can support families who face this challenge and will update you on our plans for this before the start of term.

Year groups will have their break and lunchtimes at staggered times throughout the day to minimise mixing of different year groups. Food will be served at two different serving points with dedicated eating and social spaces. Each of these will be accessed by one year group at a time to allow two bubbles to be on break and lunch at the same time. Tables and chairs will be cleaned before another year group uses an area.

Each year group will have 20 minutes for break and 30 minutes for lunch. These will be staggered against lessons 2 and 4 respectively. This means that some year groups will have a split lesson with their break or lunch halfway through their lesson 2 or 4. Lesson times will also vary with this arrangement. This allows for us to have separate sittings and a 10 minute cleaning period between each sitting.

Curriculum and timetable

We will run the normal timetable for all year groups and have maintained curriculum time so that all subjects are delivered to students. Decisions have been taken to minimise the use of rooms and equipment by different year groups. We have had to prioritise students studying for exams when we have planned for the use of specialist rooms.

Years 7-9

Students will be taught within their cluster apart from when they are doing PE. Whilst all subjects will be delivered these will not be in specialist teaching rooms in the weekly timetable. We are exploring the possibility of having days when year groups will complete activities in specialist rooms but decisions about this will not be confirmed until during the next academic year.

Years 10-11

Students will be taught within their cluster apart from when they are doing PE or their option subjects. Where possible, they will access specialist rooms for their option subjects, but this may not be for every lesson. Science practical sessions will mainly involve demonstrations by teachers rather than students completing experiments. IT equipment will be available for those subjects that are reliant on them for their delivery

Years 12-13

Students only study 3 or 4 subjects so will be able to access specialist rooms in most cases. Some of their teaching will be in generic classrooms but colleagues are carefully planning delivery of theory and practical lessons to ensure that there are no gaps in content. IT equipment will be available for those subjects that are reliant on them for their delivery

We are awaiting further information from Ofqual and the exam boards about any potential changes to course content or exam processes. These potential changes are still at the consultation stage at this moment in time. We have plans in place to ensure that all content will be covered for exam subjects but will amend these once we know the outcome of the consultation.

We are planning for students in all year groups to complete their PE lessons given the importance of promoting healthy lifestyles. We will have to amend PE lessons to reduce pressure on changing rooms but more detail will follow about this.

Pastoral support for students

As we have developed our plans it has become increasingly clear that pastoral support needs to be offered through year group systems rather than through the House system. This will allow for more effective pastoral support in each bubble.

From September pastoral teams will be allocated to year groups. Each year group will have a Progress Leader and a Year Manager allocated to them. This new system means that students will benefit from a pastoral team that is based with them at all times, and is working with fewer students (one fifth of Year 7 – 11 students compared to one quarter under the current system).

The pastoral team are working together to make sure that information about students is shared with colleagues and that students will be well supported from the start of term. We are finalising the pastoral staffing for these year group teams and I will confirm these before the start of term. We will maintain the House system for competitions to enable us to continue to develop leadership opportunities in addition to new student leadership roles which will be opened up within Year teams, to enable students to engage in House competitions and rewards, and to build on the fantastic community spirit which is at the heart of our school community.

Years 12 and 13 will continue to be supported by the existing Post 16 team.

Support for SEND students

Teaching Assistants will continue to work with students who need their support. They will be working closely with Year group teams to ensure SEND students access learning effectively. We are also planning for how Enhanced Resource Provision students in Wiltshire will be closely supported. Further information will follow about this.

Expectations of Behaviour

We have amended our Behaviour Policy since March 20 to take account of the risk of COVID 19 transmission. We will share this updated policy with all parents and carers before the start of the academic year. The changes are to ensure that students are aware of their responsibilities to adhere to our new systems and do not put others at risk. We will be taking a very strict line with any students who do not meet our expectations and try to undermine the important work we are doing to keep all students and members of staff safe at this time.

Attendance

All students will be expected to attend school every day from the start of term. Shielding advice for all adults and children is expected to pause on 01 August, subject to a continued decline in the rates of community transmission of COVID 19. This means that even students who remain on the shielded patient list can return to school.

Please contact school if you have are given further medical advice that states your child should not attend school. We will then agree a bespoke support package if your child is unable to attend school.

Uniform

All students will be expected to attend school in full uniform and meet our expectations about hair colouring and jewellery. Get Branded, our school uniform shop, is open and orders can be placed online or at the shop itself. If you have any questions about uniform or would like advice about the suitability of any item of uniform, please do not hesitate to get in contact or see the uniform section on our website.

Students should bring a school bag and their personal equipment to school each day as normal. We ask that students are equipped with a black pen, green pen, pencil, rubber, ruler, calculator, dictionary, their student planner (this will be provided), and a reading book (essential for Years 7, 8 and 9 and recommended for other years).

Health and Safety

We have completed a lot of work to make sure the school site is as risk free as possible. It is impossible to eliminate all risks entirely but all students and members of staff will follow strict hygiene procedures and there will be much more regular cleaning throughout the school day. Our plans allow us to minimise mixing of students from different year groups and maintain the 'bubble' approach to reduce the risk of transmission of COVID 19. We are updating our Risk Assessment and procedures with the support of the Health and Safety team at City of York Council.

The most recent guidance from the Government states that face masks should not be worn in the school building but I am conscious that their advice on the wearing of face masks in shops has recently changed. I am hopeful that we will receive further clarity about the use of face masks in school before the end of the summer holiday.

To minimise the number of people who are on site we will be exploring how we can make effective use of technology to hold meetings with parents and carers remotely. Face to face meetings with parents and carers will be by prior appointment only to ensure we have a suitable space to meet in, whilst maintaining social distancing.

Start of the academic year

We had planned to start the academic year with two training days (Monday 07 and Tuesday 08 September) and we are continuing with this plan to ensure we are fully prepared for the start of term.

Students from different year groups will return to school on a staggered basis after the two training days.

Year 7 students have had very limited transition arrangements with a much disrupted end to primary school and have not been in our building since the Open Evening in October. To allow them to make the best possible start to secondary school they will be in school on Wednesday 09 September with just Year 12. We will confirm arrival times and arrangements for the day in a separate communication to the parents and carers of students in these year groups.

Both year groups will complete a comprehensive induction for the next stage of their education and we will be able to test our new systems before the rest of the school return.

All other year groups will return to school on Thursday 10 September and should arrive during their new arrival window times. Students will be involved in form activities for the first hour and will be in lessons from lesson 2 onwards.

I sincerely hope this information clearly explains our plans and reassures you that we will be fully prepared for all students to return to school in September. We have carefully considered the possible implications of our decisions and believe our plan is well thought out and robust. We are confident that our plans meet the guidance from the Government and allow us to continue to offer a broad and balanced curriculum and excellent pastoral care to all our students.

The Government have indicated that they will review the guidance for schools on 11 August. This information may result in us having to change our plans further. I will write to you to provide final details about the start of term before the end of the summer holiday.

I would like to end this letter by thanking parents and carers for all they have done to support their child's education since 20 March. This has been a challenging time for the whole school community, and I am all too aware that many of you have had to juggle working with supporting your child's home learning. The staff and Governing Body are very appreciative of all you have done. I am confident that as a strong community we can successfully overcome any challenges we may face in the next academic year.

Best wishes for the summer holiday.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Dave Hewitt', written in a cursive style.

Dave Hewitt
Headteacher