



July 2020

Dear Parent/Carer

I am writing to give you more details about our plans for September. This information has been sent to all our families in school, but this letter also includes additional information for our new year group in year 7.

We have been developing our plans since the latest Government Guidance was published on 2 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

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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.

All year 7 students should arrive in school between 8.35 and 8.50am each morning. Their school departure time will be 3.15pm.

We have effectively split the school in half so students are based 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.

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 three 30 minute sittings and 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 for all subjects to be delivered to students. Decisions have been taken to minimise the use of rooms and equipment by different year groups. All year groups will not be able to use all rooms as normal. We have had to prioritise students studying for exams when we have planned for the use of specialist rooms.

In Key Stage 3, 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

We are planning for all students 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. This will 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.

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 put in place the arrangements SEND students need to 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 1 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 are given further medical advice that states your child should not attend school. We will then agree a bespoke support package if your child cannot 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. Year 7 will be allocated their school tie on the first day in school. Please ensure that this is paid for by 31 July via your parent pay account. All information about this was posted out to parents a few weeks ago. Students should bring a school bag and their personal equipment to school each day as normal.

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 compared to other areas before the end of the summer holiday.

Start of the academic year

We had planned to start the academic year with two training days (Monday 7 and Tuesday 8 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; 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 9 September with just Year 12.

On Wednesday 9 September, Year 7 should arrive at school by 8.35am. They need to meet at the main school entrance and line up in their tutor group line. Their tutor group is stated at the top of this letter. There will be a number of staff there to support in this. All year 7 should be in full school uniform. Those that are collecting their school tie from school will be allocated this in the first hour.

Students should bring with them their school bag and all equipment as stated in the student guide. A copy of this is on the transition page on the website. Year 7 will not need their PE kit on the first day.

Please ensure that students have money on their parent pay account for use at break and lunchtime, or have a pack lunch with them.

Year 7 will complete a comprehensive induction for the next stage of their education and we will be able to experience our school routine before the rest of the school return. All other year groups will return to school on Thursday 10 September.

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 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 publish more information 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.

A reminder once again that our parents information evening for Year 7 will be held on Tuesday 22 September. Please keep this evening free. We will inform you nearer the time how we plan to organise this evening.

I would like to end this letter by thanking parents and carers for all they have done to support their child's education and school transition since 20 March. This has been a challenging time for all school communities and I am all too aware that many of you have had to juggle working with supporting your child's home learning.

Please do continue to access our transition resources on our website over the summer for reference. We will update our website with any new or supporting information.

Best wishes for the summer holiday.



Mr D Hewitt
Headteacher



Mrs R Clarke
Assistant Headteacher: Key Stage 3 and Transition