



Longbenton High School

9th October 2020

Dear Parents and Carers,

I am writing with an update on our current arrangements within school. I am pleased to report that our Covid plans and systems continue to work very well: we have not had to close any year group or key stage bubble in these first 6 weeks of term and have to date only one confirmed positive student case in school. (This has enabled our whole school attendance to remain relatively high at 94% given the circumstances). When I wrote to you in July and September regarding our reopening arrangements, we saw these revisions and protocols as a temporary measure to ensure all students and staff could return safely. However, given where we are at present with Covid regionally as an area of local lockdown, **I feel that it would not be right to change current arrangements significantly after half term.**

Therefore, our staggered start and finish times, separate bubbles, split break and lunches etc will continue.

This obviously has an impact on our ability to arrange events and invite parents into school. We are currently putting plans in place to ensure that parents evening contact remains virtual/via telephone after half term. Our Open Evening event which we usually hold in October has also been postponed; we had a team filming in school last week a promotional video which is currently in edit; I hope to be able to share this with the school community soon.

Can I just take this opportunity to remind you of the following:

- Work for students is accessible through **Google Classrooms** during periods of Covid-related absence (eg self-isolating or quarantine) and for accessing homework. All students have been shown how to log in. All of our Covid updates are posted in the parent section of our website here, including a Google Classroom guide for parents: <https://longbenton.org.uk/parents/covid-information-guidance-support>
- **Homework for Years 7-9** is also set through Google Classroom.
- **Students should be arriving** no earlier than 8.15am if they are in KS3 and no earlier than 8.45am in KS4. Students cannot enter the building if they arrive too early as they cannot be supervised. This enables us to staff arrival to school safely through the current separate entrances and ensure everyone uses hand sanitiser/dons masks as they enter the building. Can I also remind parents to avoid driving onto the site to drop off students.

- **Students must arrive with their own face mask.** We unfortunately cannot afford to keep issuing masks to students at considerable cost to us as a school. We may be forced to start issuing bills to families to cover costs for those who continue to ask for face coverings.
- **Students must leave the site promptly and go straight home at the end of the day.** They have been reminded this week of local lockdown regulations requiring that they do not socialise with members of other households. Local residents have raised concerns regarding the conduct of students to and from school in relation to regional Covid guidance and regulations; please remind your child of these requirements.
- **Students must not cross the Benton Dene site on their way to and from school.** This is not our school site and is causing considerable concern for staff there trying to manage their own staggered start and end to the school day.

Can I also take this opportunity to congratulate our KS4 and KS5 exam classes, in particular, with the fantastic start they have made this academic year. I hope parents and carers can understand our current need to focus any additional support and provision for Years 10-13 first, as they have the potential to be hardest hit by the disruption that Covid has caused and are still in a period of uncertainty about summer 2021 exams (on which the government have yet to announce a decision). Year 13 will be sitting mock exams in the next two weeks and Year 11 will be sitting two additional assessments in maths and English on Tuesdays just before and after half term:

- Tuesday 20th October – Year 11 English Language mock exam (finish time: 3.30 pm)
- Tuesday 3rd November – Year 11 Maths mock exam (finish time: 3.30 pm)

Year 11 will also be sitting a full mock exam series between Monday 23rd November and Friday 4th December.

I would like to thank you all on behalf of governors and the whole staff body for your ongoing support and understanding in these challenging times; please continue to stay safe.

Yours faithfully



Kelly Holbrook