



PROUD TO BE A PART OF



August 2020

Dear Parents / Carers

Introduction

I promised during my webinar in the last week of term that I would write out to you in the holidays with detailed arrangements for the re-opening of school in September once they had been approved by my Governors and Trustees. We have just concluded a Governors / Trustees' meeting and I am pleased to be able to outline our plans now. This letter should be read in conjunction with the detailed risk assessment for re-opening which is available from the front page of the school website. I am sure that you appreciate that the arrangements I am going to outline are based on current government advice which (as the last couple of days have shown) is subject to amendment as local or national conditions change. For the purposes of this letter, I am going to assume that the government's intention remains that all schools should reopen fully for all students in September.

We have taken the opportunity to review the DfE guidance published in July and although this communication is necessarily fairly lengthy, I hope that by outlining the key government requirements and how we propose to implement them at Walton High School, you will be reassured that we are taking our responsibility in this matter seriously. As a parent of two secondary aged children myself, I am keenly aware of the anxieties that many parents and students will be feeling at this time and this is why we have spent so much time attempting to make conditions as safe as we possibly can.

Clearly, we need to strike a balance between providing students our normal, high quality full curriculum offer and maintaining strict controls in order to minimise the possibility of Covid-19 transmission within the school community. The major aim, therefore, behind the following proposals is to keep your children safe whilst allowing them to return to school to access the curriculum that we are so proud of, albeit in a far more controlled fashion.

Finally in this section, I would like to draw your attention to the video that we are producing for your children which will be available to view on the front page of the school website towards the end of the summer holidays. This video will convey many of the same messages contained in this letter in a more "student friendly" manner.

A brief summary of the risk assessment in place (full risk assessment available to view on the school website)

The DfE guidance highlights the importance of the following hierarchy of controls which must be in place in order to minimise the risk of transmission of Covid-19:

1. Students and staff who have coronavirus (COVID-19) symptoms, or who live with someone who has symptoms, **MUST** not attend school.
2. Clean hands thoroughly and 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.
5. Minimise contact between individuals and maintain social distancing wherever possible.

To ensure that Walton High School is able to adhere to the five key controls we have put the following practical steps in place:

1. Students and staff who have Coronavirus (Covid-19) symptoms, or who live with someone who has symptoms, **MUST not attend school.**

- The wellbeing of students and staff will be closely monitored.
- Regular communication regarding COVID-19 symptoms will be published and updated accordingly.
- Students will receive an induction session to ensure they understand the symptoms and know how to keep themselves safe.
- Visitors to the site will not be permitted without a pre-arranged appointment, authorised by the Headteacher. Meetings will be held remotely wherever possible.
- Individuals who develop symptoms will be supported in a Medical Isolation Room and they will be sent home with information about how to book a test and clear advice about their next steps. Individuals presenting with symptoms will not be permitted to return to site without having had a negative COVID test.
- We will maintain accurate registers to assist with contact tracing.
- We will promote and adhere to the NHS Track and Trace system.
- We will consult with Public Health England where we become aware of suspected symptoms or individuals who have tested positive for COVID-19.

2. Clean hands thoroughly and more often than usual.

- We will ensure that all staff and students sanitize their hands on arrival to our site.
- Sanitizing units will be located throughout the site and in all classrooms. This will allow students to sanitize hands at the start and end of every lesson and before and after every break.
- We have updated our Discipline and Behaviour Policy and will be communicating expectations to all parents/carers and students as part of the Home/School Agreement in September.
- We will challenge non-compliance and sanction accordingly if students are putting themselves or others at risk.
- Students will receive an induction session to ensure that they fully understand the importance of effective hand hygiene.

3. Ensure good respiratory hygiene by promoting the 'catch it, bin it, kill it' approach.

- All students will be encouraged to bring a packet of tissues and staff should do the same.
- We will ensure good ventilation in all working spaces (i.e. open-door policy and windows open where possible / appropriate).
- Foot operated bins have been installed across the site, including in all classrooms, to facilitate the safe disposal of tissues.
- Student induction sessions will cover the importance of 'catch it, bin it, kill it'.

4. Introduce enhanced cleaning, including frequently touched surfaces.

- We will ensure a significantly enhanced regime of cleaning of hard contact surfaces to reduce the opportunity for virus transmission.
- Classroom will remain open, where appropriate, to limit touch points, provided that other safety concerns are fully considered.
- We will ensure that additional cleaning capacity and sanitation supplies are in place to maintain a clean site.
- We have a longstanding relationship with our cleaning providers, Chartwells, and we will continue to benefit from the excellent standards delivered by their cleaning team who know our site well. Furthermore, Chartwells have agreed to deploy additional cleaning staff on our site for the foreseeable future.
- We have benefitted from our very committed and loyal Caretaking Team who have made adjustments across our site to ensure we can accommodate one-way systems, visible signage to support social distancing and have made a number of adjustments to the layout of classrooms.
- We will request that Chartwells maintain transparent records of all cleaning schedules.
- This provision will be professionally managed by Chartwells.

5. Minimise contact between individuals and maintain social distancing wherever possible.

Please see section on Year Group “bubbles” below.

The vast majority of our staff have been involved in on-site provision, and will all undergo a thorough induction on the new procedures and understand how and why we have implemented these controls to support the safety and wellbeing of both themselves and the students in their care.

Arrangements for the start of the Autumn Term (all year groups)

The guidance asks schools across England to consider organising the school so that students remain in “bubbles”. It is acknowledged that in secondary schools it is more problematic to zone students and create bubbles; all school sites are very different so it may be more difficult to achieve for some schools than it is for others.

At Walton High School we will be creating year group bubbles and each year group will be given a designated area for their break times. This area will be outside except in cases of extreme bad weather. This means year groups will NOT be allowed any close contact with students from other year groups during this period of restrictions. The entire Sixth Form will be treated as one bubble.

However, students will be permitted to move between classes to allow them to be taught wherever possible in the correct sets by their usual class teachers. This system will also allow students to access specialist facilities for their learning (e.g. computer suites, art rooms, technology areas). We have developed a one-way system which should minimise the opportunity for all but the briefest contact between year groups. This type of passing contact is deemed to be very low risk according to the DfE guidelines.

In addition to the enhanced cleaning protocols highlighted above, students will have the opportunity to use anti-bacterial wipes to clean their own working areas if this would make them feel more comfortable.

We will avoid any large gatherings of students, including assemblies. We will explore alternatives to such gatherings, for example virtual delivery whilst students are in classrooms.

Wider curricular activities involving students from different year groups will not be permitted at this stage. Activities that would normally involve the mixing of students such as our Student Council, Peer Mentors and some of our behaviour procedures such as detentions will be adjusted accordingly.

The school day has been adjusted in order that all year groups are given separate dining and recreational spaces and, therefore, lunchtimes will be staggered so that year groups do not have the opportunity to interact.

Start of the Autumn Term arrangements

School will reopen to Year 7 students from Wednesday 2nd September and from Thursday 3rd September for all other year groups. (See below for separate information for Sixth form students.)

100% attendance from September is really important for ALL students and we will take every precaution necessary to ensure they remain safe and supported throughout.

All new students to Walton will be met by staff on duty who can advise them of where they need to go. Please be reassured, all new students will be given the time and support to settle in and get to know us.

Year 7 – Wednesday, 2nd September

There will be a staggered start on the first day of school, so that we can help students find their way to their new tutor group. Twins can arrive at the same time.

Students **MUST** arrive through the **MAIN SCHOOL GATE**.

The arrival times are as follows:

7.1	Miss Wright	8.40 am
7.2	Mrs Byatt	8.50 am
7.3	Mr James	9.00 am
7.4	Mr Fowler	9.10 am
7.5	Mrs Brown	9.20 am
7.6	Miss White	9.30 am
7.7	Miss Kilford	9.40 am

Arrival and departure times for Year groups 7 – 11 from Thursday 3rd September will be:

Year Group	Time of arrival/departure
7 & 8	8.40 am -Tutor rooms 2.45 pm - Depart the School
9 - 11	8.55 am – Tutor Rooms 2.50 pm - Depart the school

Tutor room details will be made available in SIMS Student during the week before the start of term. Year 8 -11 students should log in to see where they need to go on their first day back. This information will also be made available on the school website. All subsequent arrangements in terms of meeting points for the remainder of the term will be communicated to students during their initial Tutor period.

Sixth Form Students - Arrangements

Wednesday 2nd September

Enrolment and welcome for external applicants (new to Walton students) and returning Y14 students –relevant students will be emailed separately

Thursday 3rd September

Tutor sessions period 1 and 2 for Y12, Y13 and Y14.

Students arrive for 9.00 am and **go straight to their tutor room.**

Friday 4th September - lessons start for Y13 and Y14

Monday 7th September - Lessons start for Y12

Frequently asked questions

1. Will we be required to wear school uniform in September?

Yes, all students will be returning in full school uniform. Blazers are permitted but we understand that some families would prefer not to use them at this time. If this is the case, a plain black V necked jumper or cardigan must be worn instead. We also strongly suggest that students bring waterproof coats / umbrellas as our one-way system will necessitate increased time outside.

2. Eating arrangements for September

All students will require a packed lunch for the first week back (Wednesday 2nd September to Friday 4th September). Our catering providers, Chartwells, are currently developing a system which will allow the pre-ordering of meals and further information will be provided in due course.

3. Compulsory Equipment for Learning

All students are expected to bring their own equipment for learning and this is even more important given recommendations that equipment should not be shared between students.

Please support your child by preparing them accordingly with the following items:

1. Blue/black pen
2. A different colour pen (preferably green)
3. Glue stick

4. Pencil
5. Rubber
6. Ruler
7. Casio scientific calculator
8. A reading book. We strongly recommend you bring your own reading book, as the availability of library books is likely to be restricted at this time.

Additionally, students are requested to bring their own water bottle.

4. *Will we be doing practical lessons such as Drama, Design Technology and PE?*

Yes, we intend to offer as many practical sessions as possible in the current circumstances. Practical equipment will be cleaned before and after use.

5. *Extra-curricular sessions*

We intend to offer as many extra-curricular sessions as possible in the current circumstances. However, they will be restricted to year group bubbles in order to limit the chance of social mixing. A timetable will be distributed in the first couple of weeks in September.

6. *Will students be required to wear face masks in school?*

Our current position is that staff and students will not be required to wear face masks in school (unless government guidance changes) but that it would be their personal preference if they choose to do so.

However, if worn, face masks must be plain and must not contain any overt logos or potentially offensive cartoons/slogans.

I very much hope this detailed letter reassures both you and your child(ren) that a lot of thought and organisation has been given to their safe return to school.

Thank you for your continuing support and encouragement; this has been so important to us all and has sustained us throughout this difficult time. We are delighted to be planning for a full return in September and I look forward to the Autumn Term with positivity about the academic year ahead.

I hope that you and your family enjoy the rest of the summer holidays and stay safe.

Yours sincerely

Neil Finlay
Headteacher