

Tudor Grange Samworth Academy

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Wednesday 8th July 2020

Dear Parents and Carers,

Parent Consultation (Secondary)

Schools to Reopen Fully in September

We have now had chance to review the DfE guidance published on Thursday the 2nd July. My summary of this guidance is;

- The government has now clarified an expectation for schools to reopen fully in the autumn term.
- Students should be able to access a full curriculum
- We will maintain stringent controls to promote health and safety and minimise the risk of transmission of COVID-19 as much as we are able to do so.

I understand that you would want me to give you precise details about how we are going to re-open in September. We have only just received this guidance and wanted to share with you our initial thoughts, however we will continue to monitor local data and information and plan to follow these processes over the summer.

Phase One:

We need to be completely transparent about what we are considering in response to the guidance and provide time for you and our staff to respond to our proposals. We are setting out our thoughts in this document and we want you to respond by **3pm on Thursday 9th July**. Please use the survey link:

https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=IUVmEPIfGE2U9SfICX2T_YM7dZJiEJ9Kv_IMn3M-ODVUNUw4SDJUuzdMUUZTUIZaOE9KNk1BRIMzNC4u

We will summarise the responses we have had and publish these in a letter to everyone on **Friday 10th July**.

We will then have a period of three weeks from Friday 10th July to Friday 31st July, where everyone will be able to take a break.

Phase Two:

Leaders will return to school on the 5th August and we will review the local data and begin more detailed planning. This will also give us time to finalise detailed plans to ensure we have a timetable for remote delivery, should we need this. As you are aware, we have already been working with all the other schools in the trust, recording video sessions and developing materials aligned to our curriculum for a virtual learning environment that will be ready by the end of September.

After the 5th August, we will consider any outcomes of further government reviews; we will also look at local data and information on transmission rates again. We will then write to staff and parents on the **14th August** with a phase two consultation document.

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Phase Three:

Following the consultation, we will write again on Wednesday 19th August with finalised details for the re-opening of the school.

We are hopeful (subject to the local situation) that the week beginning **24th August** will be a phased return for all pupils.

Phase 1 Options

The DfE guidance is clear that schools must carefully consider the controls that can be put into place whilst ensuring a full curriculum entitlement. The guidance promotes schools to consider organising the school so that students remain in bubbles. It is acknowledged that in secondary schools it is potentially 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. Following consideration of our school, the leadership team have been discussing the student experience and rooming arrangements and our ability to apply the system of controls as part of careful considerations for reopening.

Option 1:

We accept that we will not be able to maintain year group bubbles in the true sense of a bubble that 'protects' a vulnerable group or person from the risk of infection. This is because we accept that we have many children who are siblings and live together and are not in the same year group. We accept that we are not able to guarantee that students from different year groups will not mix on their way to and from school and at weekends.

We have considered a scenario where we operate a normal timetable of lessons, students travel to each specialist teacher and they are taught in their classroom. In this model we need to consider how much we can minimise mixing (minimising any situation where the children are with pupils from another year group and would potentially be face to face and talking to them).

We would not have any large gatherings for students, including assemblies: we will deliver these virtually whilst the students are in their class groups.

We would rearrange vertical college tutor groups into single year tutor groups, within the college.

We would ensure that break and lunchtimes are staggered with pupils given separate areas so that year groups do not 'mix'.

Controls in place during transitions are more important in this model as at times all students are moving and they are moving more frequently. We would need to ensure that movement during transitions is controlled to minimise any possibility of face to face mixing or transmission. We know that where people are singing/shouting/speaking loudly this can increase the creation of droplets and this can increase transmission. Leaders would be required to prioritise supervision and presence in their daily work and support all staff to establish and enforce '**considerate corridors**'.

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Hard surfaces will need to be cleaned more often than usual.

The positives of this scenario seem to be:

- ✓ Teachers assume complete ownership of their teaching space.
- ✓ Time is saved as teachers are logged in to computers and have physical resources to hand.
- ✓ Teachers are able to set the tone at the start of their lesson (i.e. seating plan, starter task).
- ✓ Teachers are likely to establish higher expectations through security in their environment. In a different scenario we would need to leave students unsupervised inside a classroom whilst teachers move between rooms.
- ✓ Teachers having control of their room is even more desirable in the context of COVID-19.
- ✓ Teachers will be able to stay in their defined 'Teacher Zone', this is especially important for teachers who are clinically vulnerable or clinically extremely vulnerable
- ✓ Students will thrive with routine and predictability; this is their established routine and experience of secondary school life.
- ✓ SEND and vulnerable students would have access to appropriate support staff.

As raised above, student movement is increased in this model therefore we need to minimise the risk of transmission during movements:

- We know that where people are singing/shouting/speaking loudly this can increase the creation of droplets and this can increase transmission. Leaders would be required to prioritise supervision and presence in their daily work and support all staff to establish and enforce 'considerate corridors'.
- We know that transitory passing between people is not considered to heighten the risk of transmission. We think that ensuring that we minimise opportunities for pupils to cross face to face will reduce the risk even further. The site team would be required to establish a 'one-way system' to support this.
- The guidance requires the more frequent cleaning of classrooms. We would not be able to have cleaners wipe down desks at the end of every lesson. We want to take our time and consider a scenario where we re-timetable to reduce the movement so that students move less often, we can then model the possibility of employing an extra cleaning team that can use the staggered break and lunches to wipe down surfaces.

Option 2:

Students will be based in one zone for as much time as possible. This means that students would be taught in the same classrooms for most lessons.

The benefits of this scenario are:

- ✓ Students remain at the same desk for most of the day and therefore we are limiting the need for wiping down hard surfaces as often as in model one.
- ✓ Limits the transitions needed/movement of students around the site

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The issues with this scenario are:

- Teachers would be required to teach in as many as five classrooms in one day and therefore would need to be constantly moving across the site.
- Teachers would be required to wipe down the keyboard, the teaching desk and whiteboard touch points at the start of each lesson. They would need to log on to the computer station in each classroom and wait for their account to load. This would cause a delay in beginning the lesson.
- Students would already be in the classroom and would be unsupervised for a period of time before the teacher arrives.
- Students would be unfamiliar with this way of working; it is not their established routine.
- Students may find the experience of being based in one room for most of the school day difficult.

On balance, at the moment senior leaders feel that we would best serve the interests of staff and students by proceeding with Option 1. Our view is that teachers will be more confident and assured if they are able to take ownership of their environment which will, in turn, positively benefit students. The evidence suggests that students will benefit from predictable routines and over the long term we feel that it is better to build their resilience so that they are proactive in their application of hygiene controls and managing their own ability to keep socially distanced whenever they can.

We also feel that the approach outlined in **Option 2** would most prejudice the experience of our most vulnerable children. We have information from wellbeing calls made by our safeguarding team and form tutors regarding the way that some children have struggled without routine in school. We have considered the induction of our largest ever Year 7 cohort (110) who will be new to the school and for whom our expectations must be very high. These children deserve the highest quality instruction and teaching so that they can catch up and start making progress in all areas of the curriculum. We feel that their interests will be best served by being taught by confident teachers with ownership of their class room and full access to the materials for a broad and balanced curriculum. It is for these reasons that we are also reviewing the structure of our school day to enhance access to enrichment and catch up tuition.

We are confident that we can always build the resilience of our students by raising our expectations of their conduct so that transitions are carefully managed and do not cause additional risks. Students and staff have continued to demonstrate adaptability, willingness and readiness to work together since the initial closure of schools in March. We are well placed to deliver a broad curriculum and give our students their entitlement and opportunities toward progression and life chances.

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Phase one response to DfE guidance – How we will implement Control Measures

This is our initial response to the DfE guidance regarding the full reopening of schools published on 2nd July. The government, supported by Public Health England, has highlighted the importance of the following controls which must always be in place to minimise transmission:

1. Minimise contact with individuals who are unwell by ensuring that those who have coronavirus (COVID-19) symptoms, or who have someone in their household who does, do not attend school.
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, using standard products such as detergents and bleach.

If we look back and reflect on our experiences since we opened small school provision on Monday 23rd March, we have learnt a great deal about the management and application of these controls:

- We have developed significant resilience and understanding of the risk management process when focused on infection control, based on the technical expertise from our partners at Bellrock FM through detailed risk assessments.
- We have benefitted from the excellent standards delivered by our Ridgecrest cleaning team who know our site well and have a track record of high standards of work.
- We have an established team of staff in student services who have the capacity to respond to suspected cases of COVID-19 through the use of PPE and a secured isolation room.
- We have included the majority of our staff in either small school or face to face provision with many colleagues having been involved in both. Disappointingly for some staff, this was cut short by the Leicester lockdown at the end of term.
- Students and staff who have taken part in Year 6 and Year 10 face to face provision have reported a high level of confidence in the management of controls.
- We have had positive feedback from parents and carers who have reported confidence in small school provision and on site lessons and the way that this has been managed.
- We have continued to benefit from strong governance. I have been accountable for presenting plans and detailed risk assessments to both Trustees and the Local Governing Body throughout this phased reopening process. We have continued to operate with their full confidence. The quality of our risk assessment application was reflected in a report from Samantha Roach (Executive Principal) on 18th June.

These factors demonstrate that we have the capacity to operate within a controlled environment. All staff have completed statutory online training.

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Full re-opening: Implementing the controls

Controls 1-4 can be implemented to enable the full reopening of the school in the autumn term to all students including all areas of the curriculum. The leadership team is clear that students must have access to a full curriculum entitlement from the start of term in keeping with national expectations. These are the initial, practical steps that are under consideration to implement all controls

1. Minimise contact with individuals who are unwell by ensuring that those who have coronavirus (COVID-19) symptoms, or who have someone in their household who does, do not attend school.
 - Proactive communication before the autumn term to clarify symptoms, updated guidance to ensure that individuals with symptoms will not attend school.
 - Regular communication regarding symptoms will be published and updated accordingly.
 - Continue Verbal and visual triage through structured arrival process.
 - Student induction lessons in PSHE to ensure understanding of symptoms.
 - Visitors to the site will not be permitted without a prearranged appointment authorised by the Principal.
 - Individuals who develop symptoms will be supported in a medical isolation room and they will be sent home.
 - We will maintain accurate registers to ascertain contact tracing.
 - We will promote and adhere to NHS Track and Trace.
 - We will consult with Public Health England where we become aware of suspected symptoms or individuals who have tested positive for coronavirus.
2. Clean hands thoroughly more often than usual.
 - We will continue to ensure that all staff and students sanitise their hands on arrival to our site. (i.e. staff washing hands, students using sanitising stations).
 - We will continue to ensure that students sanitise their hands at the end of each lesson using a sanitising station.
 - We will enhance personal hygiene by ensuring hand sanitising after break times.
 - We will update our behaviour policy and communicate expectations clearly to all stakeholders.
 - We will challenge non-compliance and sanction accordingly.
 - We will ensure enhanced supervision in corridors (i.e. SLT meetings will be done 'on foot').
 - Student induction lessons in tutor time to ensure understanding of hygiene impact.
3. Ensure good respiratory hygiene by promoting the 'catch it, bin it, kill it' approach.
 - We will encourage all students to bring a packet of tissues as part of their equipment.
 - We will ensure good ventilation in all working spaces (i.e. through open doors, windows).
 - We will ensure the safe disposal of any products that are possibly contaminated at the end of each working day.
 - Student induction lessons in tutor time to ensure understanding of 'catch it, bin it, kill it'.
 - We will significantly upgrade sanctions for non-compliance.

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4. Introduce enhanced cleaning, including cleaning frequently touched surfaces often, using standards products such as detergents and bleach.
 - We will ensure an enhanced regime of cleaning of hard contact surfaces to reduce the opportunity for virus transmission at the end of each working day.
 - All internal doors will remain open to limit touch points.
 - We will ensure that additional cleaning capacity and sanitation supplies are in place to maintain a clean site (i.e. hand sanitiser, disposable glove supply).
 - We will ensure the safe disposal of products at the end of each working day with special treatment of any products that are possibly contaminated.
 - We will maintain transparent records of all cleaning schedules.
 - This provision will be professionally managed by Ridgecrest.

There is still much for us to do. Colleagues from across all schools in the trust are re-writing risk assessments for all practical subjects such as music, performing arts and physical education, so that we alter the curriculum we deliver in line with the current guidance. The guidance from the government has made it clear that we will not receive any support for the additional costs we face and so we will need to re-write our budget, with the support of the trust, because it is clear we will be facing high costs for additional cleaning and sanitation.

We hope that outlining our thinking to you does give you some reassurance about what September will look like in that we are ambitious to ensure:

- All students make a full time return to education.
- We will deliver the full timetable and therefore a full and positive educational experience for all.
- Our planning for the possibility of returning to a remote model of delivery will be much more confident.

As is outlined above, please do respond to the survey by 3pm on Thursday. I will then be writing to you again on Friday before we break for the end of term.

Thank you for your continuing support and encouragement, this has been so important to us all and has sustained us throughout this term. I know I can rely on this going forward and this truly makes all the difference.

Yours sincerely

Alan Wilkinson
Principal

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