

20 August 2020

Dear Parents and Carers

Return to College – September 2020

I do hope you are all well and that you have had an enjoyable summer, however different it has inevitably been for us all.

As you are aware, we intend to fully open the College sites at the beginning of this academic year. This full reopening is in-line with Government guidance and expectation. We feel particularly well positioned to do this safely and effectively. We have already modelled many of our site modifications and adjustments to our practice through the reintroduction of year-groups before the summer holidays; Junior School pupils returned in tranches of time throughout the Trinity Term, and we have hosted cohorts of Year 10 and Year 12 students on site, for pastoral and academic support, and to allow them to undertake their examinations.

We have learnt from these experiences and believe we now have a good grasp of what is possible on the sites of St Dunstan's, as well as what is not. The College Leadership Team have met frequently across the summer and the plans that I am outlining to you today are born from significant thought and consideration of all the options that are available to us.

Intrinsic to our planning have been two guiding principles:

1. We want to do everything we can to ensure that we maintain the broad, ambitious and forward-thinking education we are known for. We do not want to curtail subjects, stop our co-curricular programme or limit our pastoral care.
2. We want to do this whilst keeping the site as safe as practicable and doing everything within our power to prevent the transmission of Covid-19 in our setting.

These principles are not mutually exclusive. It can be done. And I hope that this letter gives you some reassurance of this.

Today I am giving you an outline of this. Far more detailed planning documents will be with you by next Friday 28 August, and will likely come with covering notes from your child's relevant pastoral team. A modified 'Guide to Reopening the College' will be sent to parents (adjusted from the one circulated before the summer), alongside pupil guides, relevant to the different sections of the College. What this letter does, I hope, is provide you with the key changes and developments that have been put in place, and for which you will likely want advanced warning.

Lastly, you will be aware that our robust and extensive remote learning programme has been refined and developed over many months to represent something that is genuinely sector-

leading. We keep this firmly in our ‘back pocket’, so to speak, and will roll it back out again, in whole or in part, should we need to, for individuals, bubbles or the whole community.

I will split this letter into 6 categories, outlining our aims as we seek to reopen within the parameters of the principles already stated.

1. Maintaining the integrity of year-group bubbles wherever possible

It is clearly essential that wherever possible we will maintain the integrity of year-group bubbles. We are aware that this will not always be possible and there are occasions where we will need to risk-assess mixing bubble groups, but we believe the following measures will help preserve the integrity of them. All pupils will be fully briefed on the importance of bubbles, and pupils will be encouraged to keep their distance from pupils in different bubbles and within bubbles, whenever possible.

- The structure of the day will be changed for the College. Appendix A shows you an overview of this change for the Senior School and Appendix B shows you an overview of changes to the Junior School. You will note the later start for Middle School and Sixth Form students, which not only allows less congestion but also has potential educational benefits for adolescents, who have been shown to learn better, later in the day.
- We will be extending the window for serving lunch to accommodate staggered lunchtimes, with zoned areas for bubble groups and table service, to reduce queuing times and out-of-bubble contact.
- Specific entry and exit points will be used across the buildings for specific bubbles.
- The Forder programme will be modified to preserve bubbles wherever possible.
- Internal and external recreational space will be zoned, as shown in the attached Covid Secure site plan.
- There will be no assemblies for multiple bubble groups.

2. Maintaining a broad, ambitious and forward-thinking education

We must balance site safety against the unashamed commitment we have to offering a broad, ambitious and forward-thinking education, across the academic, pastoral and co-curricular life of the College. As such we are committed to the following:

- Full teaching contact time will be maintained, despite the structural changes to the timetable. No pupil will have less teaching time.
- Full services will be maintained in the Wellness Centre, with extra infrastructural precautions being put in place, as well as isolation facilities.
- A full range of subjects will continue to be offered throughout the College and in specialist classrooms or laboratories (albeit with enhanced cleaning in place). No subject will be lost from the curriculum in order for us to make life easier. This being said, there will be some modifications to classroom layout and to schemes of learning and assessment, so that these subjects will be able to be run safely.

- A full co-curricular programme will run, but it will be modified to be based in bubbles where possible, or risk-assessed as appropriate. The first two weeks of term will not have the Forder Programme in place, as we seek to adjust back to our new routines, and offer additional pastoral support to pupils.
- Instrumental music lessons will happen when parents are happy to have them on the College site. If parents wish to have them delivered remotely, in their own time, then this is something that should be discussed with your child's music teacher.
- For the Junior School, we will be running a modified before and after school care service.

3. Enhancing general site health and hygiene

Although we largely accommodate a Victorian building, which comes with additional challenges, we have put in place a number of measures to enhance the health and hygiene of the sites:

- A one-way system will be enacted for the 1888 building, where the layout of the building allows it.
- A large number of internal and external hand-washing stations will be in place, including a specific area in the entrance to the Refectory.
- Enhanced cleaning and sterilising will be in operation, including two additional full-time cleaners, who will focus only on high touch point areas and toilets, throughout the day.
- In the Senior School, no lockers will be used for next term (except for Sixth Form). This means that all children will need to bring in a school bag and carry it with them throughout the day. To aid this, no text books will be expected to be brought to school. Text books should be stored at home and we will stagger the distribution of new text books to your children.
- No onsite changing will be required, as we will show flexibility in allowing pupils to wear school sports kit whenever they have sporting or physical activity on any one day. When they do not have sporting or physical activity, all pupils are required to wear school uniform.
- There are significant modifications to lunch arrangements. The Refectory seating capacity has been reduced by three quarters, to ensure adequate spacing between children during their bubble lunch sittings. Meals will be served to children at their tables.
- Allocated WCs will be introduced, with maximum limits on numbers.
- Modifications to bus routines have already been circulated to those affected by these. Children will sit with their year group peers on all College transport and face coverings must be worn on all transport.
- Water fountains have been replaced with drinking water taps, where children can fill their water bottles during the day. These are located directly adjacent to hand washing stations, so hands can be washed before and after refilling (pupils must bring their own bottles).
- Physical distancing is expected within bubbles, wherever possible.

- Classrooms and communal spaces will have good ventilation with open windows and doors.
- Regular and thorough hand washing will be encouraged at all times.
- Perspex screens and PPE will be used in areas where risks are more difficult to control, or where staff may be vulnerable.
- Children do not have to wear face coverings in College but can do so if they wish.
- From Year 3 up, no stationery will be distributed in lessons and so pupils will require a full pencil case of equipment that is owned only by them.

4. Providing clear guidance for teachers

- Teachers will maintain distance between themselves of 2 metres wherever possible.
- Modifications to staff rooms will be in place, with limited numbers and strict social distancing measures.
- All staff will be supported with PPE and other measures, should they need to do so.

5. Ensuring flexibility of provision in the event of escalation or outbreak

- We will run a two-way system for live lessons, going from school to home and vice versa, so that we can respond to any isolation required for groups of staff or pupils.

6. Communication in a time of change

- Weekly communication from me to you will be maintained through the Friday bulletin.
- Detailed risk assessments are being written for all elements of our site operation, including specific risk assessments for areas of operation that are of higher risk.
- A PA system is being installed to help communication across the community.
- Covid-secure leaflets and site plans for staff, pupils and parents are being finalised and will be distributed on Friday 28 August

I hope this outline gives you some reassurance of all the measures we are taking and answers some of your immediate questions for purposes of planning. As already stated, full guides for parents and pupils will be circulated next Friday 28 August. In the meantime, I have asked Mrs Davies, who is the member of our College Leadership Team with children at the College, to put her parent-hat on and give you some top tips on things to think about now, when planning for the return to school:

- Make sure you have all the necessary uniform and PE kit for your child, that it all fits well and is labelled.

- Make sure your child's pencil case is fully stocked, with all items labelled and that they have all necessary equipment.
- You might like to arrange or encourage your child to arrange either a remote or in-person, socially distanced meet-up with a friend from school.
- If your child already has a Firefly and Microsoft 365/Teams account, make sure they have the password and can remember how to use the software, it may be helpful to log-on and check e-mails and Firefly tasks to clear anything before the new academic year.
- Consider the journey to and from school and any adjustments to timings or routes that you and/or your child might need to make and discuss this with them or consider taking them on a trial run.
- If your child is over the age of 11, and will travel on public transport or the school coach, make sure they have sufficient face coverings and that they know how to wear and use them safely.
- If your child's sleep routine has changed over the summer, try to help them gradually get back into the usual sleep, bedtime and morning routines that they will need for the school day.
- Talk to your child about how life at school may be different from what they are used to, but also that many things will be the same. Talk about new routines and the importance of measures such as bubbles and hand washing.
- Talk to your child about how they are feeling and any concerns or worries they may have about the return to school.
- Contact the relevant pastoral team if you have any concerns about how your child is feeling about the return to school and settling-in to the new academic year.
- Encourage your child to focus on the positives and all the good things that will come with the return to school, such as being with friends or doing their favourite subject or co-curricular activity.
- Encourage your child to enjoy the final weeks of the holiday by doing the things that they really love, or plan some time to do things you enjoy together as a family.
- Look after yourself. Lockdown and remote learning were really challenging for children and their parents. Make time for yourself, so that you will be in a strong place to be able to support your child through the return to school.

My thanks to Mrs Davies!

I look forward to being in touch again in due course.

Yours sincerely



Mr N P Hewlett
Headmaster

Appendix A: Senior School Arrival and Departure Times and Locations

	Arrival Time	Departure Time	Location
Year 7	0800 – 0810	1600	Main Entrance
Year 8	0810 – 0820	1615	Bridge Entrance
Year 9	0800 – 0810	1610	West Entrance
Year 10	0840 – 0850	1625	Bridge Entrance
Year 11	0840 – 0850	1630	West Entrance
Year 12	0940 – 0950	1625	Sixth Form Entrance
Year 13	0940 – 0950	1630	Sixth Form Entrance

Appendix B – Junior School Arrival and Departure Times and Locations

Nursery

- Nursery (Group 1 only) will start school on Wednesday 9 September, 0900-1300. Drop off and collection will be from the East Gate. Group 1 will be required to stay at home on Thursday 10 September.
- Nursery (Group 2 only) will start school on Thursday 10 September 0900-1300. Drop off and collection will be from the East Gate.
- Miss Jackson has emailed all parents with their group allocation, starting date and time. The purpose of the smaller group and shorter first day is to introduce pupils to school life and help them settle into their new environment.
- The timings below will be for all Nursery pupils, starting on Friday 11 September.

Reception

- The first day of school for Reception pupils is Wednesday 9 September, with the later drop off time of 0915 at the East Gate. Collection time will be from the West Gate 1520-1530.
- From Thursday 10 September onwards, Reception pupils should follow the drop off and collection arrangements below.

Years 1-6

- Drop off and collection arrangements for Years 1-6 are listed below, until further notice. The first day of term is Monday 7 September.

For parents who have children in multiple year groups, more information will be provided to you in a letter to be sent next week as to how one drop-off/collection will be facilitated.

Year Group	Drop Off Time	Drop Off Location	Collection Time	Collection Location
Nursery	0835-0850	East Gate	1520-1530	West Gate
Reception	0835-0850	East Gate	1520-1530	West Gate
Year 1	0820-0835	East Gate	1510-1520	East Gate
Year 2	0820-0835	East Gate	1520-1530	East Gate
Year 3	0835-0850	West Gate	1550-1600	East Gate
Year 4	0820-0835	West Gate	1530-1540	West Gate
Year 5	0835-0850	West Gate	1550-1600	West Gate
Year 6	0820-0835	West Gate	1540-1550	West Gate