



17<sup>th</sup> July 2020

Dear Parents and Carers,

### Re: End of Summer Term and Information for September 2020

It is almost impossible to believe that here we are at the end of the official summer term! It has been a very busy one with year 10s back into school, online lessons and assemblies for all year groups, a virtual Day of Sport and Sports Presentation Evening, plus an immense amount of virtual transition work for our brand new year 7s who will be starting with us in September. We have tried to give a flavour of this and share some of the wonderful work that our students have been doing in our [Summer E-newsletter](#).

We have been really fortunate to be able to use Google Classrooms to teach online lessons in all subjects over the past couple of weeks. It has been fantastic to see so many of our students, albeit virtually, to re-engage and support them with their learning and share the summer holiday projects that will help them to 'Get Ahead' ready for September. A link to an overview of the summer holiday work can be found [here](#).

As you are probably aware, the government announced that schools should fully reopen from the start of the upcoming autumn term. They have decided this on the basis of:

- The prevalence of coronavirus decreasing.
- The new NHS test and trace system being in place.
- More clarity about the measures that need to be in place to create safe environments in schools.
- Time out of school being detrimental to children's development.
- The low risk to children of becoming severely ill from coronavirus.

The Department for Education (DfE) recently published guidance for the full reopening of schools and having taken the time to consider the guidance and its implications, we are confident that we will be able to welcome all students back in September.

In our planning for a full return, we are prioritising the health and wellbeing of students and staff, teaching and learning, the curriculum and the routines of the school day. However, to ensure that these priorities can be fulfilled whilst adhering to the guidance, there will be some inevitable changes to school life. In this letter we will give some key information about some of these changes, to help with preparations for the new term, but this will be followed with more detailed, specific guidance over the summer.

### Health and Safety

Every child, and every home, has had a different experience with lockdown and home learning. Whilst we know the majority of families will be delighted that schools are reopening, there may be some parents and carers or students who feel anxious about returning: if this applies to you, please do not suffer in silence. You should contact us by emailing the school at [enquiries@biddenham.beds.sch.uk](mailto:enquiries@biddenham.beds.sch.uk) or call 01234 342521 and someone from the senior leadership team will get back to you as soon as possible.

The government guidance states that students need to be kept together in year group bubbles and aim to minimise interaction and reduce contacts as far as possible. To support this, some areas of the school site will be organised into 'zones' in September with each year group having a designated break time space. Some lessons will take place within the zone; however, wherever necessary and possible, students will be in specialist learning areas. Breaks will also be staggered as far as possible to help keep students separated. There will be clear routines for hygiene, handwashing and sanitising, and students must be prepared for this to become part of normal school life from September.

### **The School Day**

The first day back for our new Year 7 students will be Friday 4th September. All other year groups will return to school on Monday 7th September. There will be some slightly staggered starts to the school day, to allow students time to sanitise their hands on arrival, however, this will be minimal in order to limit the disruption to families. The school day timings will be within the time frame of 7.45am arrival and no later than a 3.00pm finish time. Students need to arrive promptly at their designated time and leave site swiftly at the end of the school day. For the first half term, we do not intend initially to offer after school activities until fuller guidance is in place. We will open extra-curricular support fully as quickly as we can, whilst ensuring we are meeting government guidance and ensuring the safety of students and staff. Specific details for each year group will be shared as soon as possible.

### **Travel to school**

We encourage all students to walk or cycle to school if at all possible. Should students need to travel by public transport they will need to follow the [government guidelines](#) about wearing face masks. We ask that if a parent or carer is bringing their child to school they remain in their cars and if students are walking they must not meet and arrive in friendship groups. Both gates (north and south) will be opened for students to get on and off site within a set period of time.

### **Attendance**

Attendance will be compulsory in September, as the government expects all students to attend school. The usual rules will apply, meaning we will be recording attendance and following up on any absences.

If your children have been staying at home due to the current shielding guidance, the government is due to pause this guidance on 1st August if there is a continued decline in coronavirus transmission rates. That means they should be able to come back to school in September. However, if you have received clinical or public health advice that your children should still remain at home, please let us know and continue to follow that guidance. We will be offering remote education to these students.

### **Uniform**

Students are expected in full school uniform from September, (sixth form stay in non-uniform). Details are available on the school website and a link can be found [here](#). Our basic school uniform items are plain black full length trousers, plain black skirt, plain white shirt/blouse, black or navy blue shalwar kamiz/jalbaab can be purchased relatively cheaply from any high street or supermarket clothes retailer; however, if you are experiencing any difficulty, please contact [enquiries@biddenham.beds.sch.uk](mailto:enquiries@biddenham.beds.sch.uk) or call 01234 342521 and we will assist where we can. The government guidance suggests that uniform does not need to be washed daily, however we would like to encourage students, parents and carers to ensure that uniform is cleaned as regularly as possible.

### **Equipment**

In order to prepare for the new term the following is a list of suggested equipment:

- A school bag - ideally a rucksack.
- Pencil case including pens, colours, pencils, ruler and highlighters.
- Calculator
- Geometry set
- Chromebook - charged and in the protective case.
- Earbuds/phones - to be able to hear sound on chromebooks.

Additionally, for health and safety reasons:

- Water bottle - filled, to reduce the need for using water fountains.
- Winter coat (waterproof with a hood) - breaks and lunches will predominantly be outside and windows will remain open in classrooms.
- Umbrella - in case of wet weather.
- Antibacterial wipes/gels and a pack of tissues - whilst we are providing antibacterial gels at every building entrance, we strongly recommend students have their own for personal use to ensure they stay safe in school.

### **Catering**

Access to our catering facilities will be limited initially in the interest of health and safety. Students should bring a packed lunch to school and enough water for the school day as access to water fountains will be limited. Students eligible for Free School Meals will be provided with a packed lunch at school.

### **Results Days**

We are currently planning for year 11 and year 13 results days to take place in school. This will be done with a number of safety measures in place that have already been implemented this term for our year 10 cohort. Further details will be sent to the parents and carers of year 11 and year 13 students next week.

### **Final Plans for September**

There is still much to organise and prepare for September. We will need to update you further over the summer, to ensure that you have everything needed to support your child's return to school and to share with you our updated risk assessment. We know there will still be many unanswered questions, and we encourage you to please send them through to [enquiries@biddenham.beds.sch.uk](mailto:enquiries@biddenham.beds.sch.uk) or call 01234 342521 and we will aim to address them as swiftly as possible.

We are extremely grateful for all the support we have received from our school community and immensely proud of the way our students and staff have risen to the challenge of a new way of learning over the past few months.

Thank you for your ongoing support and understanding and we will be in touch again very soon.

Warm regards,



Mr D Bailey  
Principal



Ms E Grylls  
Head of School