



1 September 2020

Dear Families,

Re-opening Plans at the High Weald Academy

We are very much looking forward to welcoming students back to school over the next few days. It has been a pleasure to spend the day with all staff back in the academy building today – the first time in nearly 6 months. We have spent much time preparing for students' return and today that has included finalising some of the health and safety plans in place to keep everyone well protected.

Over the break some families have been in touch about arrangements for our return and have also expressed concerns around transport. Attached to this communication is the latest guidance we have had from local transport providers regarding safe use of buses and also trains. We are aware that some timings have changed and we continue to communicate with transport providers in order that they can provide the best service where possible.

Mrs Barker wrote to you at the end of last term with details around our re-opening plans. A copy of this letter is [here](#). You may find it useful to refresh your memory of some of the detail now that your child's return to school is imminent.

There will be a 'bubble' approach to lesson delivery whereby students will be taught in their year group bubbles only and in designated parts of the building with specific entrance routines to ensure bubbles do not mix. This will also be the principle of how break and lunchtimes and toilet facilities will run and also how students will leave the academy building at the end of the day. To support this the academy building has been furnished with clear and additional signage both in buildings and externally around the site. Wall-mounted hand sanitiser units have been placed in all learning areas as well as key communal spaces. You will also remember that seating plans will be in place in each lesson to ensure our own 'track and trace' system if we need it. Assemblies will also be delivered on-line for the time being. Please join us in reminding students of the start times of the school day. Students should not arrive significantly earlier as they will not be able to enter their allocated spaces in order for us to maintain social distancing between 'bubbles' at the start of each day.

Face coverings

You may be aware that the government updated guidance for the re-opening of schools late on Friday evening. As well as a 5 tier response to an increase in the infection rate, this included guidance on the use of face coverings in schools and so I want to be clear about our position on the use of face coverings which will include government advice but also take account of the views of some of our academy community.

The use of face coverings will not be mandatory when in school. Face coverings must be worn however when travelling to and from school on public transport (this now includes dedicated school buses). In the event of local intervention as a result of an increase in the infection rate we will follow government guidance. We know that some students and staff may feel more comfortable wearing a face covering in school when moving around the buildings and we will leave this to their discretion. We do not expect that face coverings will be worn in the classroom. However in the event that this presents an individual concern for example if a student or someone in the family home is clinically vulnerable then we would not want them to feel they could not come to school. If this affects your child please get in touch with their Head of Year as soon as possible so that we can make individual arrangements to support you and your family. When students remove their face covering this should be stowed hygienically in a bag within their school bag.

You will have noticed that there are now a wide variety of face coverings available and we have 'trends' and 'fashions' emerging as with many other accessories. All face coverings worn to school should be as plain as possible and without offensive or extreme designs. We reserve the right to ask you to change your child's face covering if necessary.

We would really appreciate your time in making sure students are aware of the details shared in this letter and Mrs Barker's letter, before they arrive at the academy this week as it will assist their induction.

We will be adapting the academy behaviour for learning policy to reflect expectations around health and safety and social distancing to the transmission of coronavirus. It is important that students and families understand that the deliberate defiance of these expectations and compromising the health and safety of members of the academy will be taken extremely seriously.

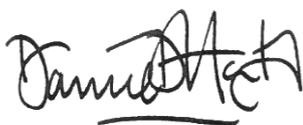
Please also see below a link of a walkthrough of the school site to familiarise your son/daughter with the areas they will now be taught within, and further information and guidance on what they will expect to see on their return to school.

<https://www.highwealdacademy.kent.sch.uk/returntoschool>

Thank you for your ongoing support as we all venture in to new territory. We will continue to review the arrangements we have put in place as they go 'live' and will communicate any amendments we need to make. In turn we would also like your feedback if you think we might be able to support students in an even better way.

If you have any questions or comments please contact Mrs Barker, Head of School in the first instance.

Yours sincerely,



Daniel Hatley
Executive Principal