27th August 2020

Dear Parent/Carer

I do hope you have been able to enjoy the summer holiday with your child despite the on-going restrictions in place. As we come towards the end of the summer holidays, I would like to take this opportunity to re-iterate our opening arrangements for September.

As we start our new school year, you will notice that there are many changes in how we are going to operate as a school. It goes without saying that the Academy day will not be as the students remember it but we are confident that our plans will allow our students to engage fully with school life once more. Collectively, we must keep clearly in their minds is that whilst it is not ‘normal school-life’ it is in their best interests to be in school. This is especially the case in terms of socialisation, friendship and personal development. It is also imperative that they return to their studies, consolidating any missed learning so that we can support them in making good academic progress.

We are following government guidance and putting in several controls to minimise the risk of transmission of Covid-19. I have worked closely with the leadership team to ensure all our plans are in place to ensure a secure start to the academic year. Full re-opening plans, including risk assessment, are available to view on our website (Important information on Academy Opening).

The government guidance indicates that, as far as possible, year groups should be kept together with a separate outside space for break and lunch times. The guidance focuses on: good and regular hygiene; student bubbles to limit contact; diligent reporting of illness and staying away from school where there is any suspicion of illness.

Within the bubbles, there is no requirement for social distancing. You will see all of these actions reflected in our plans. Please find below a summary of the main details for your child’s year group.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Year 11: Blue Bubble** | | |
| **Orientation Day(s)** | Thursday 3rd September  Monday 7th September | **Start/Finish Time:** 8.40am – 14.40pm |
| **Full-time start date:** | Wednesday 9th September | |
| **Daily Start/Finish Time:** | 8.40am – 14.30pm | |
| **Break/Lunch Time:** | 10.40am-11.00am and 13.00pm-13.30pm | |
| **Entrance:** | Side Gate | |
| **Outdoor space:** | Outside Zone 1/ MUGA | |
| **Learning Zone** | 3rd Floor | |
| Full academy uniform to be worn. PE kit to be worn on days when PE is timetabled. Staff will be available to direct students to the correct entrance and learning zone for Year 11. | | |

All outdoor spaces will be **fully** supervised during break and lunchtime.

**Year Group Bubbles and timetable structure**

The main alteration to school life is that each year group has been designated a zone in school where the majority of their lessons will take place. In essence, the students will remain in their zone and the teachers will move, which is the opposite to our normal routine. Movement around school has been mapped out so that year groups will not (in the normal course of events) meet other year groups in moving around school. Each year group will form a bubble and have been designated individual learning bases as indicated above. In addition, in order to minimise movement, we have adapted our timetable for September and each day will be split into three lessons rather than five. The first two lessons will be 120 minutes each followed by a 60-minute period.

**Equipment**

Students will require the following items each day: black pen, green pen, pencil, ruler, rubber, pencil sharpener, scientific calculator. Scientific calculators are available to purchase in school. Students are **not** allowed to share equipment. We have a limited number of equipment packs in school.

**Packed lunch or ‘grab bag’**

As previously advised, during the initial opening phase we will not have a full catering service. If you wish, you can provide your child with a packed lunch or they can purchase a ‘grab bag’, which will contain a sandwich and a drink etc. If your child is in receipt of Free School Meals, they will be provided with a grab bag each day. Please note that there will be no break time provision therefore your child will need to bring a snack if required. What can be offered will be reviewed on a regular basis as the situation evolves.

**ParentPay**

We need all parents, as far as possible, to use this system for adding lunch money funds. It will be very difficult to facilitate students bringing in cash each day to put into the machines, as we cannot mix year groups or have multiple students use the keypad or biometric fingerprint system. Therefore, so that your child does not have to wait unnecessarily, can you please upload funds via ParentPay.

**School Transport and end of school day arrangements**

All students, unless medically exempt, are required to wear masks on school and public transport. We encourage students, where possible, to walk or cycle to school. We politely ask that students leave the Academy site as soon as they have finished ensuring that gates are clear for the next year group to exit the site. We appreciate that some students will be walking home with older siblings and advise them to arrange a suitable meeting point.

Parents are not permitted to access to the Academy site or car park for the purpose of dropping-off and collecting their children. Please make suitable alternative arrangements.

**Face coverings/masks**

Since I last wrote to you, the guidance for face coverings in schools has been updated. Face masks will now be compulsory in secondary schools where there is a local lock-down. However, schools and colleges not in those restricted areas will have the discretion as to whether students are required to wear face masks/coverings.

We are therefore going to require students to wear face masks in indoor communal areas such as corridors, staircases and the canteen areas in order to add an additional layer of protection to students and staff. Students will be required to store their face covering in a plastic bag when it is not in use.

It is vital, however, that that face coverings are worn correctly and that students follow the instructions on how to put on, remove, store and dispose of face coverings in all of the circumstances, to avoid inadvertently increasing the risks of transmission. Safe wearing of face coverings requires cleaning of hands before and after touching – including to remove or put them on – and the safe storage of them in individual, sealable plastic bags between uses. Where a face covering becomes damp, it should not be worn and the face covering should be replaced carefully.

Face coverings will not be necessary in the classroom even where social distancing is not possible as students will only be mixing in their bubble. Face coverings can have a negative impact on learning and teaching and so their use in the classroom is to be avoided.

**Please see our website Important information on Academy Opening/Prevention and Management of Covid 19 for the Government Guidance for Safe Use of Face Masks**

Students will see staff wearing visors in various locations and at various times throughout the Academy where social distancing advice cannot be followed.  This should not frighten or worry your child. Although students are in year group bubbles without social distancing, there are staff in school who need to take extra care when they cannot be 2 metres from one another or students.

Since the lockdown started in March, each of us will have had different experiences and we ask that everyone in our school community is respectful of each other and their individual feelings.  If you are dropping off or picking your child up from school, we ask that you respect other people and comply with social distancing guidance.  We ask if it is possible that you walk your child to school to reduce congestion at the school gate.

It is important that outside of school we all follow the government guidance around Covid-19, particularly the Stay at Home guidance below and do not bring your child into school.

[www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance/stay-at-home-guidance-for-households-with-possible-coronavirus-covid-19-infection](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance/stay-at-home-guidance-for-households-with-possible-coronavirus-covid-19-infection)

If you do keep your child off school due to Covid-19 symptoms please ensure that you let us know this when you register your child’s absence. As a school if your child is absent we will provide school work, so they can keep up their studies.

If your child presents Covid-19 symptoms in school, we will take your child to a safe area and contact you immediately to pick them up. Please make sure that your emergency contact details are up to date and correct.

If your child does develop symptoms, you can seek advice from NHS 111 at <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/check-if-you-have-coronavirus-symptoms/>or by phoning 111.

**For further information on the prevention of Covid-19 and what to do if you or a member of your household are symptomatic, please see the section of our website entitled Symptoms of COVID 19 (Important information on Academy Opening).**

**Student Full Re-Opening Return to school Guide**

We have also created a comprehensive pictorial return to school guide for each year group as well as a step-by-step walk through for their first day arrival. All of these guides can be accessed, on our website in the **(Important information on Academy Opening).**

I would like to close by reminding all of us that we have a role to play to ensure that our children and school community remain safe.

We are very much looking forward to welcoming the Class of 2025 to The Academy of St. Nicholas.

Thank you for your continued support.

Yours faithfully



Mrs J Sing

Head of School