

17 July 2020

Dear Parent/Carer

Arrangements for September 2020

I hope you are all safe and well.

The great news is that we will be open in September to ALL students!

We have been open to vulnerable students and essential workers' children every day (apart from the three bank holidays) since the lockdown began. We have welcomed back our Year 10 over recent weeks. On any one day now, there are over 80 students and 30 members of staff on site.

Since March not one person, student or staff, has contracted the virus in school.

As this extraordinary academic year draws to a close, I wanted to thank all of our parents, carers and students who have attended their face to face consultations this past fortnight. These meetings have been instrumental in supporting the next phase of the planning process.

We have spent a great deal of time ensuring that we have followed the government's guidance about the full reopening of schools in September, which can be found [here](#). Whilst the threat of spreading COVID-19 still exists, we have put in place a number of new arrangements to ensure we minimise this risk whilst delivering a full curriculum for our students.

We feel certain that school is as safe as it can possibly be and we want to welcome back every single one of our students in September, including those with certain medical needs who may have been classified as clinically vulnerable or clinically extremely vulnerable during the lockdown. If you have any queries regarding your child's medical needs, please contact info@dartonacademy.org.uk for the attention of Mr Smith, Vice Principal or SENCO, Mrs Travis.

There is a lot to communicate, so I will be brief.

Firstly, we have added an extra tab on the front page of our website called September Opening [here](#) and we will continue to add further updates over the summer. As you will see, for the first half-term school will operate quite differently to normal. Students will have to take greater responsibility for their conduct than ever before. We will be working together to ensure that the school is a safe place to work and study, and that we minimise the risk of spreading the virus so that we can remain open.

I have bullet-pointed the key points below and then given greater detail in the main section of the letter:

- All students will be back in school in September and online provision will cease.
- Students will follow their normal timetable, within the normal classes for each subject.
- We will create Year Group bubbles in five separate areas of the school building.
- The five Year Group bubbles will be kept separate upon entering the school site, throughout the school day, and when leaving the site.
- Staff will be able to move between the Year Group bubbles so that we can have the right teachers in front of the right classes at the right time.
- There will be slight changes to the timings of the school day, with a staggered start.
- There will be minimal practical work.

- There will be limited extra-curricular activities.
- There will be a greatly reduced menu at lunch time; packed lunches can be brought in.
- Current transport guidance states that buses will pick up students from different Year Groups; this means that on the way to school if your child is travelling by bus your child could be sitting on a bus with students outside their bubble.

IMPORTANT: Students showing signs of illness

The [main symptoms of COVID-19](#) are:

- **a high temperature** – this means you feel hot to touch on your chest or back (you do not need to measure your temperature)
- **a new, continuous cough** – this means coughing a lot for more than an hour, or 3 or more coughing episodes in 24 hours (if you usually have a cough, it may be worse than usual)
- **a loss or change to your sense of smell or taste** – this means you've noticed you cannot smell or taste anything, or things smell or taste different to normal.

To help us keep the school safe and open, please do not send your child into school if they are feeling ill and especially if they have even just one of the symptoms listed above. If students are poorly and show any of these symptoms, we will contact their parents to come into school to collect them from our Covid-19 isolation room. You will also receive a letter if we have to send your child home because they are symptomatic. Students who are symptomatic will not be allowed back into school until they have been tested for Covid-19 and school has been able to verify the result of the test.

Students who show any of the main symptoms of Covid-19 must be tested for the virus. Details of how to be tested can be found [here](#). If in any doubt, please keep your child at home.

Preventing the spread of the virus

There are five major steps we must take to prevent the spread of the virus and students will be expected to cooperate fully to help us ensure those five major steps are implemented every single day of school:

1. Minimise contact with individuals who are unwell by ensuring that those who have 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.
5. Minimise contact between individuals and maintain social distancing wherever possible.

We are not expected to implement strict social distancing between students, but are being asked to put in place structures to reduce the likelihood and scale of any transmission of Covid-19. Students should maintain a social distance from each other where they can; furthermore, **touching other people in school is prohibited**. Where possible, we want to ensure that adults in the school maintain 2 metre social distancing from other adults and students.

Behaviour standards

In these extraordinary circumstances, we expect our students to behave responsibly and to help us run school safely. We have faith in them to step up to our high standards and help us run school safely and effectively.

It follows, then, that poor behaviour will not be tolerated. Parental support for our high standards and expectations will be crucial, and I would like to thank you in advance for your help in emphasising to your children how important it is that they play their part in the full reopening of school.

Arrangements for the first week of term

The school term begins on Tuesday 1 September 2020. The details for that week are as follows:

- Tuesday 1 September 2020: Staff training day – school closed to students.
- Wednesday 2 September 2020: School open to Year 7 and Year 11 students only and buses will run for Year 7 and 11 both morning and afternoon.
- Thursday 3 September 2020 onwards: School open to Year 7, 8, 9 and 11 students only.
- Friday 4 September: School open to all students.

Travelling to school

We strongly encourage students to walk or cycle to school. For further information on cycling and walking please see <http://www.activebarnsley.com/bikeability.asp>:

We have been in contact with Globe, our bus provider throughout this time and we will continue to do so over the summer. Further updates to transport guidance are being released mid-August and we will finalise arrangements over the summer once these have been updated.

If your child is travelling by bus it will help if individual students can sit in roughly the same seat every time s/he uses the school bus. This will help us track and trace any students who may be affected if one student tests positive for Covid-19. When a bus arrives at the school, students must remain seated on the bus until a member of staff tells them to get off. It is essential that students remain in their seats until told otherwise.

Whether students cycle to school or walk, to help us contain any spread of the virus, they should not mix with students from outside their Year Group.

If you are dropping your child off at school, please ensure you only use the student drop off point as you enter the school site. Please do not drive into the staff carpark or where the bus bays are as we will be operating a Covid-19 safe bus system that will rely upon students remaining on buses until each bus has disembarked. Please do not stop in the school entrance and exit areas as the buses will need access throughout the 8.10 am-8.30 am period. There are many safe areas to drop your child off in the vicinity of school and we ask you politely to help us manage drop-off time securely.

Bike racks will be available at each Year Group bubble area across the site, so that students will be able to keep their bicycles safe throughout the day.

Entering the school site

There is a separate entrance to the building for each Year Group. Students should not gather in large groups around the site, but make their way immediately to their Year Group entrance and clean their hands, before making their way to lesson 1. We will be posting virtual tours for each year group on our website soon to show all students where they enter school and what their zones consist of.

Please note the school site will not open to students until 8.05am.

It will take some time to ensure that all students clean their hands thoroughly at the beginning of the day. We need a steady stream of students coming into school between 8.05am and 8.40am. With hand sanitising stations at each entrance we think we will be able to have every student in their first lesson, hands washed and sanitised, by 8.40am. All students should aim to be on site, by 8.15am (Years 7, 10 and 11) and 8.35am (Years 8 and 9). Students will be marked as late if they arrive after the start of their lesson 1.

On the first morning, we will inform students of their timetable during lesson 1.

Information about the entrance procedures for each Year Group is detailed below:

Year Group	Start time	Path	Entrance to School	Waiting Area	Year bubble location
7	8:20am	left hand side	East	MUGA	Level 3 – West and Atrium
8	8:40am	left hand side	Bike Shed Admin	Astroturf	Level 2 – South, pavilion and East
9	8:40am	right hand side	Main	Main	Level 3 – North and West
10	8:20am	middle	Main	Outside main entrance	Level 1
11	8:20am	right hand side	North	Can go directly to zone	Level 2 North and East

The School Day

We will have slightly different timings to the school day as break has been staggered over lesson 2 so that each year group has their own break time. Years 7, 10 and 11 will end their day at 2.25pm and Years 8 and 9 end their day at 2.40pm. This will allow students to leave the site in a steady stream; our bus company is aware of this. The time table of the day can be found on our website in the Autumn Opening 2020 section.

Students catching buses home will be directed to their buses in year group bubbles. Students who have walked or cycled to school should leave the site immediately and avoid mixing across Year Groups. If students are late for school, they should report to reception and a member of staff will ensure they get to their teaching room safely.

Toilets and drinking water

Following the advice of Public Health England, we are focusing some of our increased hygiene practices around toilets, which need, for obvious reasons, to be kept extremely clean. Consequently, we are expecting students to manage the day so that they do not have to go to the toilet during lessons. At break and lunch only one student is allowed in a toilet at a time. Any students found hanging around in toilets unnecessarily will face disciplinary consequences. Drinking water fountains have been turned off as they are a potential site for spreading the virus. If your child wants to drink water during the school day, he or she must bring their own full drinking bottle with enough water to last for the day.

Lunchtimes

We have designated lunchtime areas for students within their bubbles. There will be a limited menu of available during the first half term. Packed lunches may be brought in. For students who usually receive free school meals, we will provide a packed lunch. For the first half-term there will be toast available at the start of the day only; this will be served in zones. We will review the situation regarding both of these aspects of our provision on a weekly basis.

School Uniform, coats and mobile devices

School uniform (and staff business dress) will revert to normal standards. Unfortunately, we cannot hold our pop up shops this year and everything must be ordered on line; please see our website [here](#). Trainers may be brought in to change into when your child has a PE lesson. Rules around mobile phones ipods, earphones and other electronic devices such as wireless earphones remain unchanged and should not be seen once a student crosses the blue line. No rings or jewellery should be worn.

Students should bring a coat as indoor spaces may be colder than normal due to us having to ensure good ventilation. If it is cold in class, teachers will allow students to wear coats if necessary; hooded jumpers or tracksuit tops will not be allowed past the blue line.

Equipment including masks and hand sanitiser

Students will be given a resource pack containing basic equipment and their planner. Students cannot share equipment and staff will not be able to give students spare equipment due to the threat of spreading the virus. A full list of required equipment and stationery will be published on the school website. Hand sanitiser will be located outside each classroom. Students may bring their own however, this must not be shared with other students.

The current guidance from Public Health England has specified that students and school staff do not need to wear face coverings or masks; this advice will be kept under review. If students arrive to school wearing a face covering or mask, they will need to remove it safely before they enter the building. Disposable masks will need to be placed in specific waste bins on arrival and students must wash their hands before going to class. Students with reusable face coverings will need to securely place these in a plastic bag they can take home with them and this must happen before they enter the building; they will then need to wash their hands before going to class. Students who choose to wear masks/face coverings will need to make allowances for the additional time that safe removal and hand washing will take.

Detentions

When we return to school in September, we will continue to have the highest expectations of our students in the same way that you should have the highest expectations of us. We expect students to arrive on time, in the correct uniform and with an ambition to do well, aspire and aim higher. Our Year 10 students have been phenomenal – arriving punctually, working incredibly hard whilst remaining polite at all times. They have been a great credit to you. All students are expected to be kind and considerate to everyone in our school. In line with this, we will still hold after school detentions for lateness, incorrect uniform and on call-C4/C5. After school detentions will be given and parents and carers will be alerted by phone call or text message. Please remember, it is the responsibility of parents and carers to ensure we have your correct contact details. If there are any updates to contact details please contact info@dartonacademy.org.uk

Break and lunch

Students will spend their break and lunch outside unless it is raining hard, so please make sure your child has a good coat for the winter. Limited food will be available so where possible students should bring in their own snacks.

Year Group arrangements

Form tutors will remain the main point of contact for families even though form period will be spent with the lesson 1 or lesson 5 teacher.

Extended Learning

We will not be setting extended learning for the first week of the autumn term. Extended learning will be set from the second week, and we will continue to use Microsoft Teams when setting some work.

Practical Work and PE

There will be very little practical work in the first half-term as access to specialist rooms, like our technology room, will be very limited. PE will be undertaken as double lessons and students have their own set of changing rooms. Full PE kit must be brought when students have PE even if they are injured and cannot fully participate.

Lockers

There will be no student lockers available and no access to them. Hopefully, due to the lack of practical work, students will not need to use lockers. If your child needs to retrieve something from their lockers please contact info@dartonacademy.org.uk and we will organise a specific time for this to be collected.

Cash/payments

To further reduce the risks, from September we are not going to allow cash into the academy and will solely use parent pay. To set up your account please use <https://app.parentpay.com/public/client/security/>

For support please contact the academy finance department on finance@dartonacademy.org.uk We will be putting some videos together to support you with this which will be available on our website.

Communication

All communication from the academy will be via 'school gateway' please ensure we have an up to date email address and telephone number for you. The app can be downloaded from <https://apps.apple.com/ae/app/school-gateway/id596039615> and <https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.schoolcomms.sga&hl=en>

Visitors to Darton Academy

In line with our risk assessment, please can we ask that if you would like speak with a member of staff that you call or email the school in advance to make a virtual appointment. The majority of staff in the Academy will be involved in ensuring that students are fully supported during the day and will be unlikely to speak to parents /carers unless an appointment has been made.

Finally, the government will be sending schools further guidance on 11 August 2020. As you will be aware, things can change quickly. We will be sending further information to parents over the summer, as things progress. We feel confident that our students will rise to the considerable challenge and play their part in ensuring a successful full reopening of school.

If you have any queries over the coming weeks, please contact info@dartonacademy.org.uk, Mr Smith, Vice Principal, at smithg15@dartonacademy.org.uk or myself at briggse@dartonacademy.org.uk.

To finish, I would like to thank all the students, staff, parents, carers and governors who have worked so hard together to keep our school open and to keep our students studying, in school or remotely, throughout the pandemic. We will hit the ground running in September and, with a bit of luck, we will soon be able to return to some kind of normality.

I hope you have a lovely summer and that the sun shines upon us all!

With kindest regards and warmest best wishes,



Mrs Elaine Briggs

Principal