

The Harefield Academy

Achievement through Active Learning



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Headteacher: Tash Hurtado BA PGCE

2nd July 2020

Dear Parents/Carers,

I hope you are all keeping well and looking forward to the summer break.

I am sure you will be aware that the Government recently announced an intention for all schools to return in September for all students. We have been holding fire on contacting you until receiving more details on this in order to adapt our September plan accordingly. Today we have received full guidance from the Education Secretary Gavin Williamson which can be found [here](#).

In advance of this guidance we have been working hard to ensure the school environment is 'Covid-secure' as per my previous correspondence and in line with communication you have been receiving from Mrs Timmins and Mrs Carey. We have been able to put all of our measures and our detailed risk assessment to the test in welcoming year 10 and 12 back in the last 2 weeks. I am delighted to report that our hygiene and health and safety measures are working very effectively and that our students have been able to align to expectations seamlessly and with the positivity we have come to expect of them.

Additionally we had been working on multiple plans for September such that we would be ready to open our doors to our students. Our planning was modelled on 3 scenarios:

- 1) Strict adherence to 2m social distancing which would allow class sizes of 15
- 2) Strict adherence to 1m+ social distancing which would allow class sizes of 20
- 3) Full classes with safety measures in place and strict social distancing applied to social and travel times.

Under the first 2 scenarios we would have been opening for all students but not full time due to the restrictions on class sizes. Under this model we would have operated a blended learning model such that face to face days and home learning continued until being allowed to open up to full classes.

It has now been confirmed that we will align to scenario 3 and as such this model plans around full attendance daily from all students. It has also been confirmed that we are not permitted to run a rota for attendance and as such must align to a full return of all students.

We have temporarily adapted the timings of the day in line with government guidance, to allow for staggered start and finish times, smooth transitions between lessons where social contact is reduced and staggered break times that facilitate appropriate separation of groups/bubbles. This is the best way to protect your children from risks whilst commuting to school and during the periods where they are not in a classroom. This staggered working day is shown on the final page of the letter.

We are fortunate that we only need to operate 2 staggered start and end times since our year groups are small enough to operate with a maximum of 170 students arriving at any given time. Many schools may require separate start times for every year group which we understand can be disruptive to travel plans for siblings. We hope it is helpful that we have been able to manage a full return to school for all students with only 2 separate start and end times. Students will be in year group bubbles during social times to further reduce any health risks. This will enable appropriate integration with their year group peers in both an indoor and outdoor space. Arrangements for arrival to and departure from school will make use of our additional access points to separate groups/bubbles as well as taking advantage of our increased handwashing facilities to ensure the most important layer of guidance around robust hand hygiene is regularly and routinely reinforced. In regard to travel to and from school, students will be asked to

dispose of protective gloves used on public transport and to remove face coverings without touching the front of their face. PPE bins will be available for the safe disposal of gloves and single use face coverings. Please encourage your children to practice the safe removal of face coverings over the holidays to support us in embedding this habit and minimising the risk of infection. Mrs Pitman will be sending out a travel survey shortly so that we can plan effectively for cycle storage, bus times and drop off arrangements.

In addition to planning for separation of groups in social and commuting times, we have also applied the Public Health advice to minimise Covid-19 risks and have a robust risk assessment which is revisited and updated on a 3 weekly basis to ensure we continue to review and mitigate any change to risks. We have taken all reasonable steps to ensure we protect staff and students and will continue to review all controls.

Since my last communication, we have installed additional handwashing facilities in the reception area to avoid any congestion when enforcing strict handwashing measures. As part of our robust and detailed risk assessment, additional staff will be deployed at all duty points to ensure highly effective hygiene standards are retained in the school day.

The Government have advised us to prepare for future lockdowns or partial closures. Please be assured that we are well prepared for this with scenario 1 and 2 above such that we will be able to swiftly communicate to you the impact this will have should it become necessary. Under each model we will be ready to revert to our alternate timetable offering blended home and school learning in line with government direction. Hopefully this will not become necessary, but we are ensuring we have contingency planned all scenarios such that we minimise any risk of further disruption to learning. In line with this, our home learning model will move to Google Classrooms such that students are well supported with a more interactive learning experience from September should this be needed.

The Government have also announced funding to support catch up for students. We are very excited to build in opportunities for catch up and will send further detail about our plans separately. This may include catch up in the summer, after school and during weekends in the new school year. Please be assured that we will take all necessary steps to ascertain where the break from regular school has resulted in gaps in your child's learning and to address these gaps with appropriate support.

I would encourage you to read the linked document cited at the start of this letter, so you are well informed of the guidance that has fed into our planning. Please note, in particular, references to Test and Trace and attendance. The government are expecting students to return to school from September and in order to support each child's academic and emotional well being we are fully supportive of ensuring full attendance. However, please note that there remains a definite need to self-isolate where symptoms prevail in the household. Parents and carers will be required to engage with the NHS Test and Trace process. This involves booking a test where symptoms emerge, self-isolating if the test is positive, and providing details of recent close contacts. Please see the link [here](#) for further guidance. Should a child present with symptoms at school, please be advised they will be sent home immediately and we will engage with our local health protection team to act in response to the circumstance. This may involve sending home other students who have been in close contact with an individual during a period of infection/incubation. Please note that students currently shielding or living with a shielded family member are also expected to attend school in September. Please see the guidance [here](#) if you are concerned about this expectation.

I realise there is a lot of information to take on board so please be reassured that we will continue to communicate regularly around different layers of the arrangements for our September return in the coming 2 weeks. We are also preparing a video link which will 'virtually' walk all students and parents/carers through the numerous changes to the building and the working day from September. These changes will of course be reiterated and reinforced when students return, but we would like to

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support them with as much forewarning as possible to ease this adjustment and the understandable challenge of returning to school after such a long break. It is also our intention that students will initially come in one year group at a time to spend a day being reintegrated into our new routines before full teaching commences.

In the meantime do please feel free to raise any queries or concerns with relevant staff.

Yours sincerely,

Tash Hurtado, Headteacher

Staggered School Day for September 2020

Years 7-9
Period 1: 8.15 -9.00
Period 2: 9.00- 9.45
BREAK (20)
Period 3: 10.05 - 10.50
Period 4: 10.50 - 11.35
BREAK (25)
Period 5: 12.00 - 12.45
Period 6: 12.45 – 13.30
Detentions/After school catch up: 13.30 - 14.15

Years 10-13
Period 1: 9.15 - 10.00
Period 2: 10.00 - 10.45
BREAK (25)
Period 3: 11.10 - 11.55
Period 4: 11.55 - 12.40
BREAK (20)
Period 5: 13.00 - 13.45
Period 6: 13.45 - 14.30
Detentions/After school catch up: 14.30 - 15.15