

26th May 2021

Dear Parents, Carers and Students

It seems hard to believe that we are only a few days away from the summer half term, especially given the distinctly unseasonal weather in recent weeks. Thankfully, the forecast suggests we are going to have a reprieve from the recent heavy showers and it's going to improve somewhat next week which will help getting out and about during the half term break, whatever you have planned.

My end of Term 5 letter comes to you slightly earlier than normal because I wanted to give you some timely important reminders and updates, one of which concerns some changes we are making to our Year group zone arrangements from Friday 28th May.

Key messages in this letter:

- **Changes to our Year 8, 9 and 10 Zone arrangements from Friday 28th May**
- **Changes to our Face Covering Policy from Tuesday 8th June**
- **Reminder about the importance of twice weekly LFD home testing in the holiday**
- **Journeys to School and reminder about Car Parking and Drop Off / Pick Up**
- **Year 11 and Year 13**
- **Reminder about our additional Teacher Development Day on Monday 7th June**
- **Free School Meals Provision over the May Half Term Holiday**
- **Positive Covid Test Contact Tracing over the May Half Term Holiday**

Changes to our Year 8, 9 and 10 Zone/Bubble arrangements from Friday 28th May

As from Friday 28th May, we are planning some changes to the zones and bubbles in operation around school. This will improve many things from the perspective of both facilities and the daily routine of pupils. The letter contains various pictures that may help your child get their bearings, in addition to the briefing messages they will be receiving from their tutors, from Friday morning and when we return after half term.

The pictures below detail the major changes that will come into force on Friday May 28th for Year 8 and Monday 7th June for remaining affected Year groups (Years 8, 9 and 10). There are no changes to the arrangements for Year 7.

Year 8 (Friday May 28th)

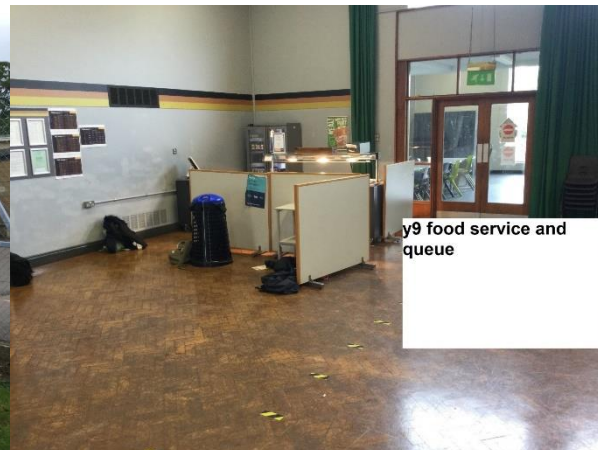
All lessons will switch to the ground floor of R block, a new Year 8 rooming timetable will be issued. This means Year 8 will use the R block ground floor toilets and will change their food service to the snack shack. Classes in Year 8 will line up in the snack shack area. In addition, the Year 8 break and lunch time zone will be on the field at the back of R block in the area currently used by Year 10. Year 8 will access and leave the field from the R block end closest to S block.

In addition, the new Year 8 gate at the start and end of the school day, will be the big blue gate by the H block car park. This means that school drop off and pick up for Year 8 will best happen at The Springfield car park.



Year 9 (Tuesday 8th June)

As from Tuesday 8th June, Year 9 will have access to the S block playground as well as their usual break and lunch time zone. Their food service will now be in the old S block hall. This will also be their wet weather area for lunch and break times. Year 9 will continue to access their classrooms from the outside Year 9 line-up area and they will access the hall for dining via the rear entrance from the S block playground. In addition, the Year 9 toilets will now be the ones in the S block changing rooms and not T block.



Year 10 (Tuesday 8th June)

The main change for Year 10 will be their outside space. They will simply switch to the Year 11 zone on the top part of the school field. They will access this directly from the back of R block. Their new food service will be the old staff room in L block currently used by Y11. This will be accessed via the volcano end of R block only. During break and lunch times, access to the y10 bathrooms will be via the R block exit only.



Year 12 (Tuesday 8th June)

Year 12 will have access to both Year 12 and Year 13 zones except during our Corsham6th induction for Year 11 during the week of June 21st.

Changes to our Face Covering Policy from Tuesday 8th June

You will recall from my 14th May letter that although the latest DfE guidance allowed for some relaxation of the requirements for all staff and students to wear face coverings, we were going to continue with our system of control measures in place, including the wearing of face coverings at all times inside, for the remaining two weeks of Term 5, after which we would review our position again.

In light of the updated DfE guidance, the easing of lockdown restrictions, the completion of the crucial Year 11 and Year 13 'Chances to Shine' activities and our desire to start preparing students for a sense of pre-pandemic normality, we will be changing our face covering policy from Tuesday 8th June and partially relaxing our requirements as follows:

- Students and staff **will no longer be required to wear face coverings in lessons** although they will be allowed to continue doing so if they wish.
- **Students will no longer be required to wear face coverings in year group communal areas** inside, but they may continue doing so if they wish.
- **Students will continue to be required to wear face coverings in situations outside of the classroom where social distancing is not possible** (for example, when moving around in corridors inside before school, between lessons and at the end of the day). Beyond the mitigation this provides, we think this sends an important message that Covid 'is not over'.
- **Students must continue to wear face coverings on home to school transport, or when using public transport to and from school.**
- Face coverings should continue to be worn by staff and visitors in situations outside of classrooms where social distancing is not possible (for example, when moving around in corridors and communal areas).
- Those students who are exempt from wearing face coverings will continue to be exempt.

Given that all students will be required to wear a face covering at some point during the school day, whether on school transport or when inside a building moving between lessons, they should continue to bring a face covering to school every day.

This partial relaxation of our face covering policy is the sensible next step as part of our gradual relaxing of our school system of controls, linked to transmission rates in our community and the national guidance. This will come as welcome news to some and be a cause of increased anxiety for others; I know the issue divides opinion. We will continue to review this policy and will be keeping a careful eye on developments locally and nationally when considering any further relaxation of our policy during Term 6. The government has promised the next review of the system of controls in line with the roadmap out of lockdown on the 21st June. We will update you when we know more about the implications for schools of this next stage of “unlocking.”

If the public health situation worsens again, and face coverings within classrooms have to return, we know that we can manage it well. But we also know that education is so much better when you can see the full face of the person you are talking to.

All previous guidance on types of face covering and their safe hygienic storage at break/lunchtime remains the same, as does our existing guidance for those who are medically exempt from wearing a mask.

I would like to thank you for your continued support of our safety measures and pay tribute again to our students and staff. It has not been easy teaching and learning through face coverings over the past weeks, but we have recognised the necessity of this precaution and adapted accordingly. Our students have adapted with minimal fuss, and got on with the business of learning. Education relies so much on relationships, which are based on good communication. So much communication is carried by facial expressions which are obscured by a face covering – not to mention the difficulty of making yourself heard through the cloth. Now that the face coverings in classrooms mandate has been lifted, we are all looking forward to seeing their smiling faces in our classrooms again!

Reminder about the importance of twice weekly LFD home testing in the holiday

As the rules on face coverings and social contact relax, the importance of ongoing home testing becomes even greater so it is essential that we all keep up the testing twice a week to maximise the chances of identifying positive cases. Please ensure students:

- continue to test twice a week at home during the holiday (for all those who are able to)
- report all results online on the ‘gov.uk’ as positive, negative or void and inform us directly if a test is returned as positive. This information is critical in helping us to understand the prevalence of the virus across the country
- test before returning to school or college for the summer term, either the night before, or the morning of the 8th June, to find and isolate any positive cases.

Journeys to School and reminder about Car Parking and Drop Off / Pick Up

We always recommend that wherever possible, children should walk or cycle to school. It is better for their health and it is a more sustainable way of organising one’s daily routine; our website has good advice concerning walking and cycling in safety (follow the link below).

<https://www.corsham.wilts.sch.uk/page/?title=Journey+to+School&pid=219>

If you bring your child(ren) to school by car, we would respectfully ask that you follow best advice in terms of where to drop off and pick up.

The Springfield car park is still the safest and best place for drop off by car. It is designed for that purpose and facilitates pedestrian access to school. Even though some parents will be tempted to drive into Paul Street or The Tynings, this must not happen as these 2 roads are really not suited for school drop off and doing so causes significant risk to all and inconvenience to residents.

With this update to school gates attributed to each year group, all years should now be using the Springfield car park for drop off. The gate for Y9 is a little further down the alley, it is approximately a two minute walk from Springfield car park to access the y9 gate in the alley close to the Tynings. I know that some parents drop their children off in the Co-op car park in Newlands Rd or South Street by the Cricket Club. These are also suitable for Y9 drop off.

We will ensure that Tutors brief their groups concerning these updated instructions, I would be very grateful if you could reinforce these key messages at home.

Year 11 and Year 13

Thursday 27th May marks the final day of the 'Chance to Shine' assessment opportunities for Year 11 and 13 students and on Friday 28th May we will be celebrating their achievements during their time at The Corsham School together in separate 'leavers style' events that we traditionally do.

Parents/carers of Year 11 and 13 students will receive a further separate longer message on Friday detailing the arrangements in place for Year 11 after half term, up to and including the 25th June and the support available for Year 13. It is, of course, of real sadness that Year 11 and 13 have not been able to benefit from the 'full' experience in their final year of GCSEs or Sixth Form studies, but we could not be prouder about the way that they have navigated the challenges that they have faced over the past 16 months. It says so much about them as young people with the talent and resilience to go on and make wonderful contributions in their lives.

Reminder about our additional Teacher Development Day on Monday 7th June

As mentioned in previous letters and by way of a final reminder, Monday 7th June is a Teacher Development Day to support the Year 11 and 13 grading process. This means that, in term 6, the first day back for students is Tuesday 8th June. Can I thank you for your continued support of staff in these challenging times. Staff have been working incredibly hard ensuring that the marking and moderation of assessments has been as thorough and objective as it can be, and this additional time is essential to help them to achieve this.

Free School Meals Provision over the May Half Term Holiday

Local Authorities have been provided with funds to support families facing hardship during these unprecedented times under the COVID Winter Grant Scheme. As you will know, some of these funds have been used to make sure children eligible for benefit-related Free School Meals have access to food for their lunches over the school holidays. With this in mind we have arranged for a £15 Voucher to be sent to you on Saturday 29th May for the holiday period via the usual method.

Positive Covid Test Contact Tracing over the May Half Term Holiday

In line with the arrangements during previous holidays, schools continue to play an important role in supporting the NHS Test and Trace process over the holiday period by continuing to be responsible for contact tracing for those pupils and staff who were attending school up until the 28th May. As a reminder, I wanted to clarify what you should do if your child tests positive for COVID-19 during the May Half Term break.

Public Health have identified a 6-day window after the final day of teaching in which schools must be informed so we can assist with contact tracing should your child test positive for Covid-19 over the holiday period.

- 1) Parents/carers must continue to inform the school of confirmed student positive test cases if symptoms developed within 48 hours of last being in school (up to and including Sunday 30th May (if they were in school on Friday 28th)).
- 2) Parents/carers of pupils who were not symptomatic but tested positive within 48 hours of last being in school (up to Sunday 30th May if they were in school on Friday 28th) also need to let the school know.

For example:

If a pupil was last in school on Friday 28th May:

- Develops Covid Symptoms on Sunday 30th May (within 48 hours of last being in school)
- Gets PCR tested on Monday 31st May
- Receives a positive PCR result on Tuesday 1st June
- Notifies us by email on Wednesday 2nd June

The student will have been infectious while in school on Friday 28th May and we would need to contact Public Health who would carry out their risk assessment and potentially ask the year group bubble to self isolate.

- 3) Where a student tests positive for coronavirus (COVID-19), having developed symptoms more than 48 hours since last being in school (from Monday onwards if they were in school on Friday 31st), **the school does not need to be contacted**. Parents and carers should follow contact tracing instructions provided by NHS Test and Trace.

If you need to inform the school of a student positive Covid-19 test result as per 1) and 2) above please email me at RBell@corsham.wilts.sch.uk as all other telephone lines/inboxes will not be monitored over the holiday period. If informing me of a positive case it would be really useful if you could include the following information within your email:

- Name of Child and Year Group
- Date of the Home LFD Covid test Result (if done as there were no symptoms)
- Date of onset of COVID-19 symptoms (including what symptoms they had)
- Date of the confirmatory PCR Covid Test result (and evidence of the result/ID number)
- Date your child was last in school
- How do they travel to school?
 - E.g. walk, cycle, car, public transport, school transport, taxi
 - If by car – do you car share with anyone else?
 - If public transport/school transport do they know who they sat near?

At the start of Term 6 on Tuesday 8th June you will need to continue to inform us if your child tests positive, is self-isolating or symptomatic and contact the school via Attendance@corsham.wilts.sch.uk whilst also making sure your child self-isolates for the required number of days.

If you have any urgent concerns about your child's welfare over the holiday break, please do not hesitate to get in touch with Chris Smith, Pastoral Deputy Headteacher and Designated Safeguarding Lead via his email: CSmith@corsham.wilts.sch.uk

And finally,

I hope you are all able to enjoy much needed rest over the bank holiday weekend and Half term break; a holiday where we can once again visit one another's homes and look forward to enjoying live music, going to the cinema, theatre or watching sport with a live audience. We have worked so hard for one another over this past year. This "unlocking" feels like a release. We've earned it.

Thank you for your continued support.

Take care,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "RBell". The letters are cursive and connected.

Rod Bell
Headteacher