

Return to School September 2020 Update 29th August 2020

Dear Parents, Carers and Students

I hope that you and those around you remain well and you have been able to enjoy some rest over the somewhat unusual summer holiday break. This is my final letter to you before the start of term regarding changes to school procedures in response to COVID-19.

This letter will provide some additional updates on some of the measures outlined in the school's reopening plans, as outlined in my letter on the 10th August, as well as some useful reminders to aid your child's return:

- Returning to school in September
- Arrangements for the Start of Term 1
- The Wearing of Face Coverings in School
- Partnerships with Parents

Returning to school in September

We are looking forward to welcoming our students back to school and are excited to see them. I would like to extend a special welcome to those children and families who are joining us for the first time.

You will have no doubt seen the very strong messaging from the government about the return to school next week. We fully endorse the crucial importance of children returning to school. We do so in the knowledge that we cannot eliminate all risk, but that we must consider the 'balance of risks' between the short-term healthcare risks (from Covid-19) and the long-term risks of further disruption to children's education and do all we reasonably can to minimise the risk of transmission.

For almost all students it is vital that they return to school. In the very few cases where returning to school is against specific medical advice, or against government guidance (such as due to self-isolation), we will support students to access education remotely. We will communicate with parents as appropriate where this is the case. So that we can be aware of any students who are in this position, or where we need to ensure that the school's health and safety measures are appropriate for the circumstances of any other students (and in event of any changes to government advice in the future) please communicate, if you haven't already done so, with your son /daughters tutor if your child is clinically vulnerable, or extremely clinically vulnerable, or living with someone in the same household who is.

For those in quarantine following a foreign holiday to a restricted country, we will authorise the period of required quarantine absence where there is evidence of bookings being made before quarantine measures were introduced. For those in self-isolation we will need details of the cause of such self-isolation. In either case, please liaise with your son/daughter's tutor and our Attendance Officer via attendance@corsham.wilts.sch.uk on all matters relating to attendance.

We do appreciate that many students and families will be anxious about the return to school. This is entirely understandable and we will do what we can to ensure that students have a positive start to

the new school year. The planned induction sessions will help them to feel confident about the new routines and expectations that we have put in place for their safety. We also know that some young people will have had a difficult time during the lockdown. Our altered day, enhanced PSHE curriculum and pastoral care services have all been set up to best support each student's emotional needs as this will be an essential part of helping them to get back into learning.

We would also like to share this leaflet, produced by the government for parents, which can be viewed [here](#) and would encourage you to visit www.gov.uk/backtoschool for information and practical guidance to help you plan for your son/daughter's return to school.

Arrangements for the Start of Term 1

The arrangements that will be in place at The Corsham School to welcome all children and young people back to school full time next week are the same as those we shared with you in my letter on the 10th August apart from one minor change to our afternoon lesson timings and an update in relation to last week's announcements about face coverings in schools (see note below).

School Day Timings

To further reduce the frequency of session changeovers and the related corridor traffic of pupils and staff we have decided to remove the afternoon tutor time session and add those 5 minutes to period 5 where it will be the responsibility of the Period 5 teacher to complete a brief post lunch pastoral check in with their class and take the afternoon register. All other times remain the same

Gates unlocked not before	8.25
Tutor rooms available	8.25
Tutor time	8.40
Lesson 1	9.00
Lesson 2	10.00
Break	11.00
Lesson 3	11.20
Lesson 4	12.20
Lunch	1.20
Lesson 5	1.55
School day finishes	3.00

As a reminder:

Start Dates

Clearly, with such a host of new rules and requirements to ensure that all pupils are safe, we have to organise some induction sessions for pupils so they all fully understand what is expected of them in September and can get to grips with their zones, gates, routines and routes around school.

On Thursday 3rd September

New Year 7 will be in all day. **(Please bring a Packed Lunch as our Kitchen is closed until 7th September)**

Year 8 will have a partial day from 8.25 to 10.40 and then return home, and

Year 9 will have their induction from 11-1pm after which they too can go home.

On Friday 4th September, there will be no Years 7, 8 and 9.

Instead it will be Years 10 and 11 from 8.20-10.15 only and

Year 12 from 8.20 onwards all day.

Induction for Y13 students will be online prior to a full start on Monday 7th September.

All year groups will be back to the normal times and full days from Monday 7th September onwards.

Remember, all year groups will be roomed within their zones and each year group has a separate entry/exit point allocated to them within the school, as set out in the table below. Pupils must use only their allocated gate to enter the school site, this way we can ensure that the bubbles start each day separated out and without mixing with students from other bubbles.

Year Bubble	Zone	Notes	School Gate
Y7 -7 rooms required	R21-24 -H2-4	Y7 use H ground floor toilets only	Only enter/leave school by Springfield pedestrian gate
Y8 -7 rooms required	S block first and second floors	Only use s20 stairs, middle stairs for staff. Use S gym toilets only	Only enter/leave school by S block bike shed gate
Y9 -7 rooms required	S block ground floor and T12	Use T block toilets only	Only enter/leave school by Tynings alley pedestrian gate
Y10-8 rooms required	R block upstairs	Use back doors exclusively and upstairs toilets only	Only enter/leave school by H block car park gate
Y11-8 rooms required	R block downstairs	Use snack shack side doors exclusively and downstairs toilets only	Only enter/leave school by Astro pedestrian gate
Y12/13 -16 rooms required	H block	Use 6 th form build for study and toilets	Only enter/leave school by Paul Street pedestrian gate

All of our reopening information is available on our website via the link [September 2020 Arrangements](#)

The Wearing of Face Coverings in School

I am sure you will have noted the changed government guidance, published on August 26th, with regards to face coverings in school, particularly in schools in local lockdown areas. In these lockdown intervention areas, *'face coverings should be worn by adults (staff and visitors) and pupils when moving around indoors, such as in corridors and communal areas where social distancing is difficult to maintain. As in the general approach, it will not usually be necessary to wear face coverings in the classroom, where protective measures already mean the risks are lower, and they may inhibit teaching and learning.'*

The advice for schools not under lockdown restrictions remains that the government is not recommending face coverings are necessary in schools generally because measures are in place to minimise risks and they have the potential to impact negatively on learning. However, the latest guidance gives secondary schools the discretion to require face coverings to be worn in communal areas if they believe that is right in their particular circumstances.

This is a complicated issue, and there are valid reasons on both sides of the wearing of face coverings in school debate. I recognise this, and am aware that there is not a solution that will generate unanimous agreement. We had already decided that students and staff would be allowed

to wear face coverings in lessons and around the school at all times if they so wished. This position has not changed.

However, following the changing position of the government on the use of face coverings in schools and although we are not yet in a local intervention area, I have decided to make the wearing of these mandatory for staff and students when they are inside buildings (except in lessons) and when moving about the site. Of course, if eating / drinking this would not be the case.

As much as any 'scientific' reasons for taking this view, although we don't have to adopt mask wearing because we are not yet in an area facing restrictions, I think anything that further reduces the risk for our young people, our staff and our community needs to be adopted and know many parents, staff and students will appreciate the extra degree of safety that face coverings bring. I also believe that there is some significant value in the message that this sends to students of how seriously we need to take the return to school and how all members of The Corsham School community need to play their part in doing so.

Therefore, students will be expected to wear a face covering until they enter their class, at which point they will sanitise their hands when they enter the room, after removing the face covering. If a student chooses to wear a face covering in a lesson then we would expect that they would wear this at all times when indoors to reduce the frequency of removing / replacing the covering. In addition, students will require a small bag to store their face covering in when not in use.

Clearly, there are rare individual circumstances where the wearing of a face covering is not advised. We will follow government advice on this, found via [Face Coverings in Education](#) and if this applies to your son/daughter please get in touch with their Tutor.

Please note that the face covering must be an appropriate mask, no snoods or scarves are to be worn, must be plain in appearance, no logos or motifs and must be worn appropriately and sensibly at all times. Any student intentionally misusing a mask will be required to take it off.

Our partnership with parents

More than ever, this year is going to require close partnership between the school and parents; we all have a significant role to play, and positive relations and strong communication are going to be crucial.

I always welcome your thoughts and feedback as to how we can continue to make this as effective as possible for our community, and I ask for your support to ensure that we can work together in the best interests of your children.

If you have any queries or worries, please get in touch directly with the school.

Again, apologies for the length of this letter but it's crucial that parents are fully informed prior to the start of the school year.

Enjoy the last days of the summer break over the bank holiday weekend. We can't wait to see the students return to school later next week.

Kind regards,

Rod Bell
Headteacher