



West Hatch High School

A Specialist Business and Enterprise School

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Dear Parents/Carers,

I am writing to you regarding our initial plans and principles for re-opening in September. It's important to note that any plans we make are subject to change following any updates to guidance from the Department for Education (DfE); the plans shared below are in line with the most recent guidance released on 2nd July 2020. There are a number of areas where we are still seeking guidance. This letter is designed to give you a flavour of some of the experiences students may have to support your preparation:

Key driving principles:

- We cannot guarantee that we can keep everyone completely safe from catching Covid 19. We can, however, take a wide range of reasonable steps that mitigate and minimise this risk. We will publish our risk assessments online and seek professional support in making a broad and balanced curriculum and school experience as safe as reasonably possible.
- We want to ensure that our curriculum experience is as normal as we can possibly make it.
- We are dealing with young adults who have the capacity to understand and take responsibility for the actions necessary to keep themselves and the community safe.
- We are dealing with young people and staff who may be anxious about returning to school. We will look to create effective cultures of care through encouragement and reminders rather than fear. However, we will not hesitate to take extremely tough action against those whose actions seek to create fear amongst others or put others at risk by deliberately not following guidelines and expectations (for example coughing near people, deliberately obstructing corridors, interfering with students' ability to wash their hands effectively etc.).

Things we will have in place for the duration of Covid restrictions:

- A strict cleaning regime, hand sanitiser across the school and regular reminders to students and staff to wash their hands. There will be hand sanitiser at every room, entrance and exit across the school.
- Enhanced cleaning rotas of all toilet, dining areas and key 'touch points' around communal areas in the school.
- Year group bubbles. This means students within a year group do not have to follow social distancing guidelines. Students will have separate breaks and lunchtimes in their bubbles. Students may pass other year groups in the corridors but the DfE has advised schools that this is low risk.
- A one-way system around the school to minimise students coming into contact with other year groups.
- Where resources are shared between groups, for example technology, we will have a strict regime of cleaning equipment in between lessons.
- The start and end to the day will be staggered across the year groups.
- Sixth Form students will not have to be in school until their first lesson starts and may leave after lunch to help with staggering.
- Break is staggered for all year groups, only one year group will be allowed to use the canteen at any one time.



- We have purchased an additional 'Snack Shack' to ensure year groups can utilise separate facilities at lunchtime and therefore not come into contact with each other.
- All 'general' teaching classrooms will have all of the desks facing forwards.
- All extra-curricular clubs and detentions will only be with students from the same year group bubble.
- Staff socially distancing to a guideline of at least 2 metres from each other and, where possible, students. We will be continuing with remote meetings, wherever possible, to reduce the risk of 'adult transferal' which appears to be the highest risk of passing infection in schools.
- We are advised that students and staff do not need to wear face masks or PPE for standard situations in school as it interferes with teaching and learning. We will, however, leave this down to individual choice: we will not refuse anyone the opportunity to wear a face mask.
- We will remind students travelling on public transport that face masks are compulsory.
- Continued senior staff supervision of break and lunchtimes to monitor student behaviour and well-being.
- Detentions and Internal Exclusions will continue to be put in place, but where different year groups are forced to mix we will have very strict 2 metres social distancing measures in place.

Strategies we have considered but will not use unless regulations direct us to:

- Keeping students in the same classroom all day to maintain the most efficient bubbles – we feel this is too restrictive educationally and will not give students the specialist support that they need. It is not consistent with providing the broadest and best educational offer for students and is simply not compatible with effective GCSE and A Level teaching.
- Zoning year groups of students to specific parts of the school – whilst this gives significantly greater freedoms than the strategy above, it still remains restrictive on our site and is inconsistent with supporting students in specialist classrooms.

Key unknowns at this time that we are reviewing for September:

- Specific details on how to teach practical subjects without social distancing but mitigating risk as far as possible. This includes Dance, Technology, PE and Art.
- We are unsure as to best guidance on use of shared resources e.g. textbooks, pens, calculators etc.
- How additional adults in the classroom may best support students whilst minimising risk of being 'too close'.
- When fixtures and contact sports will be able to resume.

The Government has informed schools that we will receive further details regarding the re-opening of schools on the 11th August and we will review all of these aspects after this date. We have worked hard to ensure that we do our best to maintain the safety and well-being of students and staff whilst also maintaining a full curriculum offer and hour long lessons. Any decisions we have made have been done so in consultation with a wide range of other schools, Essex County Council and, of course, our Governing Body.

I must note, however, that the school staff can only do so much and as I have alluded to above, it is essential that our students take on the responsibility of keeping everyone safe with their behaviour towards maintaining social distancing, following guidelines regarding hand cleaning, adapting to rules such as our one-way system and behaving in a way that enables others to flourish educationally and personally. Never before has it been so important that our students' behaviour is exemplary and we look forward to the support of our parent body in ensuring this is the case.

Yours sincerely,



Daniel Leonard
Headteacher