



Dear Parents and Carers,

We have now had chance to review the DfE guidance published on Thursday 2nd July. The government has now clarified an expectation for schools to reopen fully in the autumn term. It is a stated expectation that students should be able to access a full curriculum entitlement that is broad and balanced. This objective is framed within the context of maintaining stringent controls to promote health and safety and minimise the risk of transmission of COVID-19 as much as we are able to do so.

I absolutely see the need to try to provide everyone with clarity about how we will re-open. However, I am clear that we are not able to do this at the moment. In our view, a much more cautious and phased approach to our planning is necessary:

Phase One:

We need to be completely transparent about what we are considering in response to the guidance and provide time for you and our staff to respond to our proposals. We are setting out our thoughts in this document and we want you to respond by **3pm on Thursday 9th July**. Please use the survey which is available [here](#).

We will summarise the responses we have had and publish these in a letter to everyone in the week beginning **13th July**.

We will then have a period of three weeks from Friday 17th July to Friday 7th August, where everyone will be able to take a break.

Phase Two:

Leaders will return to school on the 10th August and we will review the local data and begin more detailed planning. This will also give us time to finalise detailed plans to ensure we have a timetable for remote delivery, should we need this. As you are aware, we have already been working with all the other schools in the trust, recording video sessions and developing materials aligned to our curriculum for a virtual learning environment that will be ready by the end of September.

After the 10th August, we will consider any outcomes of further government reviews; we will also look at local data and information on transmission rates again. We will then write to staff and parents on the **21st August** with a phase two consultation document.

Phase Three:

We will write again with finalised details for the re-opening of the school on Wednesday 26th August.

We are certain that Wednesday 3rd September we will welcome our year 7 students at 12.30pm. We can confirm now that all students will return, though a staggered start on Thursday 4th September. We are able to confirm this because we have prioritised year groups and we are confident that we can limit social mixing as we induct new students into key routines for the autumn term ahead. By

this stage we will have a coherent site access plan, sanitising stations and enhanced hygiene measures to keep students safe. Please note, this could change if instructed by the Government. I do hope not and we are eager to get the school going again and welcome all back to Tudor Grange Academy Kingshurst.

Phase one response to DfE guidance

This is our initial response to the DfE guidance regarding the full reopening of schools published on 2nd July. The government, supported by Public Health England, has highlighted the importance of the following controls which must always be in place to minimise transmission:

1. Minimise contact with individuals who are unwell by ensuring that those who have coronavirus (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.

If we look back and reflect on our experiences since we opened small school provision on Monday 23rd March, we have learnt a great deal about the management and application of these controls:

- We have developed significant resilience and understanding of the risk management process when focused on infection control, based on the technical expertise from our partners at Bellrock FM through detailed risk assessments.
- We have benefitted from the excellent standards delivered by our Ridgecrest cleaning team who know our site well and have a track record of high standards of work.
- We have an established team of staff in student services who have the capacity to respond to suspected cases of COVID-19 through the use of PPE and a secured isolation room.
- We have included the majority of our staff in either small school or face to face provision with many colleagues having been involved in both.
- Students and staff who have taken part in Year 10 and 12 face to face provision have reported a high level of confidence in the management of controls.
- We have had positive feedback from parents and carers who have reported confidence in small school provision and face to face tutorials and the way that this has been managed.
- We have continued to benefit from strong governance. I have been accountable for presenting plans and detailed risk assessments to both Trustees and the Local Governing Body throughout this phased reopening process. We have continued to operate with their full confidence. The quality of our risk assessment application was reflected in a report from Claire Maclean (CEO) on Friday 19th June.

These factors demonstrate that we have the capacity to operate within a controlled environment. All staff have completed statutory online training and we also have taken practical steps such as ensuring that senior leaders are trained as First Aid Responders. This is further evidence of our preparedness for full reopening.



Full re-opening: Implementing the controls

Controls 1-4 can be implemented to enable the full reopening of the school in the autumn term to all students including all areas of the curriculum. The leadership team is clear that students must have access to a full curriculum entitlement from the start of term in keeping with national expectations.

These are the initial, practical steps that are under consideration to implement all controls

1. Minimise contact with individuals who are unwell by ensuring that those who have coronavirus (COVID-19) symptoms, or who have someone in their household who does, do not attend school.
 - Proactive communication before the autumn term to clarify symptoms, updated guidance to ensure that individuals with symptoms will not attend school.
 - Regular communication regarding symptoms will be published and updated accordingly.
 - Student induction lessons in PSHE to ensure understanding of symptoms.
 - Visitors to the site will not be permitted without a prearranged appointment authorised by the Principal.
 - Individuals who develop symptoms will be supported in a medical isolation room and they will be sent home.
 - We will maintain accurate registers to ascertain contact tracing.
 - We will promote and adhere to NHS Track and Trace.
 - We will consult with Public Health England where we become aware of suspected symptoms or individuals who have tested positive for coronavirus.
2. Clean hands thoroughly more often than usual.
 - We will ensure that all staff and students sanitise their hands on arrival to our site. (i.e. staff washing hands, students using sanitising stations).
 - We will ensure that students sanitise their hands at the end of each lesson using a sanitising station.
 - We will enhance personal hygiene by ensuring hand sanitising after break times.
 - We will update our behaviour policy and communicate expectations clearly to all stakeholders.
 - We will challenge non-compliance and sanction accordingly.
 - We will ensure enhanced supervision in corridors (i.e. SLT meetings will be done 'on foot').
 - Student induction lessons in PSHE to ensure understanding of hygiene impact.
3. Ensure good respiratory hygiene by promoting the 'catch it, bin it, kill it' approach.
 - We will ensure that all students bring a packet of tissues as part of their equipment.

- We will ensure good ventilation in all working spaces (i.e. through open doors, windows).
 - We will ensure the safe disposal of any products that are possibly contaminated at the end of each working day.
 - Student induction lessons in PSHE to ensure understanding of ‘catch it, bin it, kill it’.
 - We will significantly upgrade sanctions for non-compliance.
4. Introduce enhanced cleaning, including cleaning frequently touched surfaces often, using standards products such as detergents and bleach.
- We will ensure an enhanced regime of cleaning of hard contact surfaces to reduce the opportunity for virus transmission at the end of each working day.
 - All internal doors will remain open to limit touch points.
 - We will ensure that additional cleaning capacity and sanitation supplies are in place to maintain a clean site (i.e. hand sanitiser, disposable glove supply).
 - We will ensure the safe disposal of products at the end of each working day with special treatment of any products that are possibly contaminated.
 - We will maintain transparent records of all cleaning schedules.
 - This provision will be professionally managed by Ridgecrest.

Further considerations

Consideration 1: Quality of teaching

The DfE guidance is clear that schools must carefully consider the controls that can be put into place whilst ensuring a full curriculum entitlement. We are highly ambitious for all students and our objective is to keep them safe while enabling access to the full curriculum within a carefully managed environment.

The guidance promotes schools to consider organising the school so that students remain in bubbles. It is acknowledged that in secondary schools it is potentially more problematic to zone students and create bubbles; all school sites are very different so it may be more difficult to achieve for some schools than it is for others. Following consideration of our school, the leadership team have been discussing the student experience and rooming arrangements and our ability to apply the system of controls as part of careful considerations for reopening.

Option 1:

We accept that we will not be able to maintain year group bubbles in the true sense of a bubble that ‘protects’ a vulnerable group or person from the risk of infection. This is because we accept that we have many children who are siblings and live together and are not in the same year group. We accept that we are not able to guarantee that students from different year groups will not mix on their way to and from school and at weekends.

We have considered a scenario where we operate a normal timetable of lessons, students travel to each specialist teacher and they are taught in their classroom. In this model we need to consider how much we can minimise mixing (minimising any situation where the children are with children from another year group and would potentially be face to face and talking to them).



In years 7 and 8 we would keep the students in the same class group for all of the curriculum, minimising mixing. It would not be possible to keep students in years 9, 10, 11, 12 and 13 in the same class groups as we wish to maintain the full curriculum and the students are following their option subjects. We would not have any large gatherings for students, including assemblies: we will deliver these virtually whilst the students are in their class groups.

We would ensure that break and lunchtimes are staggered with pupils given separate areas so that year groups do not 'mix', where possible.

Controls in place during transitions are more important in this model as at times all students are moving, and they are moving more frequently. We would need to ensure that movement during transitions is controlled to minimise any possibility of face to face mixing or transmission. Hard surfaces will need to be cleaned in between different groups using a space. The positives of this scenario seem to be:

- ✓ Teachers assume complete ownership of their teaching space.
- ✓ Teachers can set the tone at the start of their lesson (i.e. seating plan, starter task).
- ✓ Teachers are likely to establish higher expectations through security in their environment. In a different scenario we would need to leave students unsupervised inside a classroom whilst teachers move between rooms.
- ✓ Teachers having control of their room is even more desirable in the context of COVID-19.
- ✓ Teachers usually feel more comfortable and confident in their own teaching room.
- ✓ Teachers will be able to stay in their defined 'Teacher Zone', this is especially important for teachers who are clinically vulnerable or clinically extremely vulnerable
- ✓ Students will thrive with routine and predictability; this is their established routine and experience of secondary school life.

As raised above, student movement is increased in this model therefore we need to minimise the risk of transmission during movements:

- We know that where people are singing/shouting/speaking loudly this can increase the creation of droplets and this can increase transmission. Leaders would be required to prioritise supervision and presence in their daily work and support all staff to establish and enforce 'quiet corridors'.
- We know that transitory passing between people is not considered to heighten the risk of transmission. We think that ensuring that we minimise opportunities for pupils to cross face to face will reduce the risk even further. The site team would be required to establish a 'one-way system' to support this.
- The guidance requires hard surfaces to be wiped down in between groups. We would not be able to have cleaners wipe down desks at the end of every lesson. We want to take our time and consider a scenario where we re-timetable so that we have as many double sessions as possible, we can then model the possibility of employing an extra cleaning team that can use the staggered break and lunches to wipe down surfaces.

Option 2:

Students will be based in one classroom for as much time as possible.

The benefits of this scenario are:

- ✓ Students remain at the same desk for most of the day and therefore we are limiting the need for wiping down hard surfaces as often as in model one.
- ✓ Limits the transitions needed/movement of students around the site

The issues with this scenario are:

- Teachers would be required to teach in as many as five classrooms in one day and therefore would need to be constantly moving across the site.
- Teachers would be required to wipe down the keyboard, the teaching desk and whiteboard touch points at the start of each lesson, delaying them from immediately organising their resources and beginning the lesson.
- Students would already be in the classroom and would be unsupervised for a period of time before the teacher arrives.
- Students would be unfamiliar with this way of working; it is not their established routine.
- Students may find the experience of being based in one room for most of the school day difficult.

On balance, at the moment senior leaders feel that we would best serve the interests of staff and students by proceeding with Option 1. Our view is that teachers will be more confident and assured if they are able to take ownership of their environment which will, in turn, positively benefit students. The evidence suggests that students will benefit from predictable routines and over the long term we feel that it is better to build their resilience so that they are proactive in their application of hygiene controls and managing their own ability to keep socially distanced whenever they can. They will then be able to translate these routines to their lives outside of school. This option will also enable a higher standard of curriculum access to students and more teaching time, as we are concerned about the risk posed by time taken for teachers to re-establish routines with a class who has been sat in a room without supervision, whilst they clean and take time to login, for example.

We know that we have teachers who will be anxious about full reopening and we feel that the experience of nomadic teaching will raise anxiety levels and limit their capacity to teach well. We feel that these factors would significantly prejudice the educational experiences of our students.

We are confident that we can always build the resilience of our students by raising our expectations of their conduct so that transitions are carefully managed and do not cause additional risks. Students and staff have continued to demonstrate adaptability, willingness and readiness to work together since the initial closure of schools in March. We are well placed to deliver a broad curriculum and give our students their entitlement and opportunities toward progression and life chances.

There is still much for us to do. Colleagues from across all schools in the trust are re-writing risk assessments for all practical subjects such as music, performing arts and physical education, so that



we alter the curriculum we deliver in line with the current guidance. We will not simply remove subjects from the curriculum. The guidance from the government has made it clear that we will not receive any support for the additional costs we face and so we will need to re-write our budget, with the support of the trust, because it is clear we will be facing high costs for additional cleaning and sanitation.

We hope that outlining our thinking to you does give you some reassurance about what September will look like in that we are ambitious to ensure:

- All students make a full time return to education
- We will deliver the full timetable and therefore a full and positive educational experience for all
- Our planning for the possibility of returning to a remote model of delivery will be much more confident

As is outlined above, please do respond to the survey by 3pm on Thursday.

Thank you for your continuing support and encouragement, this has been so important to us all and has sustained us throughout this term. I know I can rely on this going forward and this truly makes all the difference.

Yours faithfully,

D Turner

Executive Principal

