



29 August 2020

Dear parents and carers of our new year 7 students,

Firstly, may I say how excited I am to finally be able to meet your son or daughter next week. This has been a very challenging period for all of us, not least students moving to a new school and I can only imagine how tricky this has been for your family. Please be assured, however, that our new year 7 students are at the centre of our thinking and planning. We are looking forward to the transition day activities we are planning on Thursday 3 September, ahead of the rest of the school returning on Friday 4 September.

Your son or daughter will be joining the school as we emerge from an extended period of disruption and where the school has not been fully open. I am pleased to confirm that Maiden Erlegh School in Reading will be fully open for the new term, albeit with a number of additional measures in place. The remainder of this letter outlines some of the most important aspects of our planning to ensure the school reopens safely.

In planning our approach to reopening we have followed government guidance to schools which can be found [here](#). A further guidance document written for parent and guardians can be found [here](#) and I would urge you to read it carefully.

The decision to reopen schools has been taken on the basis of:

- The prevalence of coronavirus decreasing;
- The new NHS test and trace system being in place;
- More clarity about the measures that need to be in place to create safe environments in schools;
- Time out of school being detrimental to children's development;
- The low risk to children of becoming severely ill from coronavirus.

### **Attendance**

School attendance will be mandatory from September and the government expects all students to attend school. The usual rules will apply, meaning we will be recording attendance and following up on any absences. If you have received clinical or public health advice that your children should still remain at home, please let us know and continue to follow that guidance. We will be offering remote education to these students but we will require verification. If your child is ill, they should not attend school. If your child has suspected COVID symptoms, we would ask you to let the school know immediately. This is important so that we can assist the "test and trace" service to act quickly to contain any infection. Symptomatic students should not attend school and the government advice for those suspected of having COVID should be followed, including getting a test <https://www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test>. We also need you to let us know if your child is having to self-isolate (for example, if another member of the family is suspected of having COVID or if NHS test and trace have directed you/your child to self-isolate). Again, we will provide remote learning in this instance.

## General safety measures

We have been working with government guidance to draw up a robust Risk Assessment and risk mitigation plan which we have published on our website [here](#).

When students return to school, we will have the following protective measures in place as directed by the government:

- We will require students who are ill to stay at home;
- We will require everybody in school to follow robust hand and respiratory hygiene;
- We have enhanced our cleaning regime, including cleaning within the school day of high traffic areas;
- We will actively engage with public health agencies where necessary and act swiftly if students or staff become symptomatic.

We will also introduce measures to minimise direct contact between students and between students and staff. These include:

- Teaching students within their year group and doing what is possible to keep the year groups from coming into contact with each other for extended periods of time;
- Staggering the start and end of the school day, so that we reduce the contact between different year groups;
- Staggering the morning break time and the lunch period so that we reduce the contact between different year groups;
- Introducing new lesson protocols so that teachers and other staff are distanced from students;
- Strengthening our expectations that students follow our procedures outside of lessons e.g. following the one-way system, following a strict “hands-off” policy.

## Staggered start and end to the day

Students will be asked to start and finish school at different times in order that mixing is minimised as students enter and leave school. Each year group will be asked to use a designated entrance. Please take note of the following arrangements:

	School open to students (for lockers)	Entrance	Tutor time begins (Students ready in tutor room)	Dismissal from school
Year 7	8.20am	PE door	8.30am	2.50pm (2.15pm Friday)
Year 8	8.20am	Student Services door	8.30am	2.50pm (2.15pm Friday)
Year 9	8.30am	PE door	8.40am	2.55pm (2.20pm Friday)
Year 10	8.30am	Student services door	8.40am	2.55pm (2.20pm Friday)
Year 11	8.20am	Main Reception	8.30am	2.50pm (2.15pm Friday)

This is a temporary adjustment to the normal timings of the school day in response to the COVID-19 emergency, and given the time constraints forced on us, we have not been able to consult with you on this adjustment. Should there be a need for this to become a longer-term arrangement, we will engage in a full consultation exercise.

### **Arrival to school**

In order to reduce instances of students congregating at the front of school and mixing with students in other year groups, we would ask parents not to send your child/(ren) to school before 8.20. We would also discourage, where possible, students using public transport although we understand that this may be the only option.

### **Staggered breaks and lunch time**

Student break and lunchtimes will also be staggered so that contact between year groups is limited. Students will get a 15 minute break in the morning and a 30 minute lunchbreak. The menu at lunch time will be streamlined to aid efficiency and to support the catering team, who have to clean thoroughly between each lunch sitting.

Weather permitting, students will spend time outside during break time and for the last 10 minutes of their lunch break. If it is raining they will either use the sports hall or their classrooms.

### **Hand and respiratory hygiene and cleaning**

We will continue to promote proper hand and respiratory hygiene and students will be required to sanitise hands through the day (e.g. upon their arrival at school, at the beginning of every lesson, at lunchtime, after they have used the toilet, when they leave school). We will continue to reinforce the "Catch it, bin it, kill it" mantra for dealing with coughs and sneezes.

In order to keep surfaces as clean as possible, we will be asking students to wipe down their work area at the end of each lesson. Teaching staff will provide paper towels to do this.

Every key space in the school, including all classrooms, will be supplied with plenty of hand sanitiser, tissues and paper towels. Students will also be guided to dispose of their tissues and paper towels in the correct bins.

### **Masks/face coverings**

You may be aware that, as of Tuesday 25 August, the government guidance around the use of face masks has changed. As a result, we have reviewed our approach and in accordance with guidance we will now allow students to wear face masks in school outside of lesson time (e.g. during lesson change overs, when students are congregating with others at break and lunchtime). Please note that we have decided not to make this mandatory.

Those wearing face coverings must:

- Provide their own face coverings;
- Provide sufficient coverings each day to last the whole day (and for journeys to and from school);
- Wear them correctly at all times, covering their face and nose, and dispose/store them safely when not being worn. We would recommend that students bring in a small bag to store their mask when not in use;
- Never discard them on the floor, on surfaces or anywhere where others may be contaminated.

If a student opts to wear a face-covering it must be plain, preferably in neutral or school colours. Students wearing inappropriate face coverings will be spoken to and we may ask them to remove it. They will then wear a disposable one for the remainder of that day. Please remember that if they use public transport, students are required to use a mask.

Within school we will seek to educate students on how to wear face coverings correctly and encourage those who are wearing them to follow guidance. Where students do not follow the guidance, we reserve the right to deal with incidents under our Behaviour Policy and Addendum.

Students will not be permitted to wear gloves in school as this poses a cross-contamination risk. Students will be asked to remove and dispose of gloves if, for example, they have been wearing them on public transport.

### **Lockers**

Lockers will be available to all year 7 students. We would encourage all students to use a locker to reduce clutter and the amount that students are carrying during the day. Students will only be able to access their locker at the beginning and end of each day. Please can we remind parents to pay for their child's locker package by 3 September 2020 where possible. Payment is made through our ParentPay shop [here](#).

### **Lunches**

Our canteen will be open for the provision of meals at lunchtime only, however we will be operating a streamlined menu. If you would like your child/(ren) to have a school meal, please can you ensure that their ParentPay account has sufficient credit as we will be unable to offer any credit going forward.

### **School Equipment**

We are asking students to ensure that they have their own set of school equipment as sharing will not be permitted. Students should ensure that they have a black pen, pencil, ruler, highlighters, maths equipment – including a calculator, glue and scissors. Any equipment borrowed in lessons from the school will need to be cleaned and not used for 72 hours.

### **PE changing**

Students are asked to attend school in their PE kit on the day(s) that they have PE. We are not able to utilise the changing rooms at the moment. We would recommend students having a set of spare clothes to change into in the rare cases that their PE kit becomes unwearable.

### **Extra-curricular programme and school trips**

Due to the restrictions, we are currently unable to offer an extra-curricular programme for students apart from Homework club and no school trips will be running at least for the first half term. Access to homework club may be restricted to one-two days per year group. We will let you know more about this in September. Our position on extra-curricular activities and trips will remain under review, and when it is deemed safe, we will reintroduce these as soon as possible.

## Breakfast club

We are reopening breakfast club with effect from 7 September 2020, for further details please refer to the letter issued in July which is available [here](#).

## Visiting the school

In order to reduce the potential transmission of COVID from visitors to the school, we would politely request that parents contact by phone or email rather than coming into school. If it is absolutely essential or urgent, we will offer an appointment to you. Similarly, we would ask parents not to congregate around the school gate or along Crescent road to drop off/meet students.

## The Curriculum

We are planning to provide **a full, ambitious and broad curriculum** as we believe that this is the very best way to get students back into the swing of learning and making good progress in their studies

We plan to follow our usual, well-planned and well-sequenced study programmes delivered by our excellent teaching team.

## On-line provision and any return to lockdown

Schools have also been asked to consider contingency planning for the curriculum if a number of students, or even the whole school, has to return to lockdown. We are currently working on our plan for this to ensure any online provision is of the same high quality as our face-to-face teaching. We have learnt a great deal during the lockdown about different approaches to online learning and we are keen that the skills and insights that staff have developed are not lost. We are therefore making contingency plans for a number of scenarios including:

- individuals being unable to attend;
- whole year groups being unable to attend school;
- groups only being able to attend on a rota-basis;
- whole school lockdown.

Across these plans we are considering how to support the best possible educational outcomes for students and to ensure that the rigour and effectiveness of face-to face teaching is mirrored in our online offer.

As we reopen, we know we will be asking a great deal of our students, but I am confident that they will rise to the occasion with maturity and good sense. We will spend significant time at the beginning of term and then regularly throughout the term reinforcing expectations and reminding students about these important safety measures. Please could I ask you to carefully read this letter with your child so that they understand the seriousness and importance of the measures we have put in place. We believe our plans are robust and thorough but they will only succeed if everybody, including the students, play their part.

If you have any questions or concerns about the points we have set out above, please get in touch with the school via the office and we will endeavour to assist.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mr A Johnson', with a horizontal line extending to the right.

**Mr A Johnson**  
Headteacher

