



13th July 2020

Theale Green School

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Dear Parents, Guardians and Carers

Please do share this letter with your children.

As we enter our last full week of term in the most unprecedented of school years we are likely to encounter I wanted to express my continued thanks and appreciation for the support that you have offered to Theale Green School, staff, and to the children throughout this period of lockdown.

As promised, we have been working hard on the DfE guidance sent out last week for September opening, and we have spent much of the last week, and will continue to do so this week, in preparation for the next phase of our planning.

There appear to be three possible scenarios for September, and each one is dependent on the guidance given at the point of the planned return to school, most likely towards the end of August:

- 1) All students return in September in line with the opening plans we are currently working on;
- 2) A phased return for students with some blended learning (home and school);
- 3) A continuation of lockdown with blended learning and timetabled in school education for specific groups.

Each of these scenarios is dependent on a number of factors such as a rise or fall in the R-rate, the prevalence of a second spike in Covid-19, the potential for local lockdowns, the possibility of confirmed cases in our school community or a further period of national lockdown. Whilst we do not really wish to have to consider options 2 and 3, we know that we must plan for them in order that we can act with immediacy should we have to. I would, however, like to stress that our key focus is on bringing back all of our staff and students in September so that we can quickly develop our new routines and reconnect with our learning.

The purpose of this letter however is to explain a little about the reality of the changes that we need to make in order to return; the ways that we will need to work in our school will be very different and it is for this reason that we have been working hard to develop our 'Back on Track Curriculum' and our approaches to the return in September in order that we can:

- get back onto the right learning track
- be reminded of and build upon some of the amazing skills that we know many of our students have grown and developed during this period of lockdown, and
- to ensure the health and wellbeing of everyone over the forthcoming months.



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So whilst this letter may sound cautious and based around new and strict rules for our safety, we are both excited and optimistic that as a community we will make a very positive return to school. Putting everyone's safety first, will enable this very positive return.

In order for us to be able to do this safely and effectively we all have to focus on some key areas required by the Government. We need every single adult and child in our school community to take responsibility for the actions that relate to them, and to all act in accordance with them for the safety and security of everyone. In order for us to be able to open the schools safely we are all required to:

- 1) Not come to school if you are unwell, and to report this to the school office immediately
- 2) Ensure high levels of personal cleanliness – clean hands, regularly – on entering school, before lessons, after lessons... as directed by the school and the guidance
- 3) Ensure high levels of respiratory hygiene, particularly the use of tissues and following the 'Catch it, Bin it, Kill it' principles, and to keep hands away from your face
- 4) Provide enhanced cleaning in schools
- 5) Engage with Test, Track and Trace
- 6) Manage negative tests. Schools have been asked to manage negative test results through the continuation of a 14-day self-isolation period in specific circumstances.
- 7) Manage confirmed cases. Where cases are confirmed Public Health England will guide the process and all schools are required to follow the guidance given
- 8) Contain any outbreak. Following guidance from Public Health England, in the case of any outbreak a decision will be made to close a bubble, a group of bubbles, or the school.

In developing our plans, we have explored the DfE guidance thoroughly, consulted with relevant national bodies, consulted with our West Berkshire secondary colleagues and of course, our schools within our Trust (ALET). Key to our opening plans will be the nature of the 'bubbles' that we implement; nationally, every school will be making a different plan, and every school plan will reflect the needs and the context of the individual school. The 'bubbles' need to ensure that we can provide safe access to learning, appropriate levels of social distancing and reduced mixing between bubbles. The bubbles have been determined to ensure that we can provide continuity of staffing and opportunity, and to ensure that the running of the school day is not impacted adversely. There will be three bubbles:

- Year 7 and Year 8
- Year 9, Year 10 and Year 11
- Sixth Form

The decision around the size of the bubbles has been made as part of our risk assessment process and is similar to other schools in a similar context.

We will be writing to you later this week with the detailed overview of how each year group will return, but please do note at this stage that the INSET day planned for October 23rd, will now be moved to Wednesday September 2nd, with the first students returning on Thursday September 4th. October 23rd will now be a normal school day. Staff will need that extra time to familiarise themselves with the new routines before our students arrive. When our students first return, they will be introduced to the rules and routines that we must adhere to in order to fulfil the Government's requirements for schools returning. Attendance on that first day is critical for every student as considerable time will be spent introducing students to the changes. By way of a few examples:

- One way systems in all corridors
- Hand sanitiser points at every classroom / entrance & exit
- Two large external handwashing stations (in the front of school and the main playground)
- Different breaks and lunchtimes for every bubble
- Zoned breaktime areas (as other bubbles will be in lessons)
- New classroom routines
- Compulsory ventilation in all rooms

We will walk and talk all students through all the new rules and routines to ensure that there is no student who misunderstands the importance of adherence at all times and without exception for the safety of our community. In terms of forward planning for families, the advice is still very much based around avoiding public transport where possible and students are encouraged to walk and cycle where they can, or be dropped off by car. School transport is of course available for those who cannot do so, and we are working closely with the Local Authority to support safe transport for our students. ***The Local Authority has asked us to survey parents in relation to transport so that they can best support the measures that we are taking in school to support safety and health for all of us. You do not need to reply if your child does not need transport. The deadline for this survey is the end of the day on Thursday 16th July.***

<https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=CLXERj9hfkKUaS1o25M2A4vJhnk2BFZHS2pAU57ufZ5UNE5aNjVXTIhJRFMzSUdXWDIjNIY5NkhCUy4u>

We will ensure that you have all the information that you need in a timely manner and will confirm on 28th August our final plans for opening based on the guidance at that point from the Government. I hope that this offers some further reassurance of our next steps and I will write again at the end of this week to confirm our ongoing plans.

With best wishes

Jo Halliday
Headteacher