

27<sup>th</sup> August 2020

Dear parents/carers,

**Re: Arrangements for the start of the new academic year**

Further to my letter of 16<sup>th</sup> July 2020 I am writing to confirm details for the start of the new academic year here at John O'Gaunt. There have been one or two changes to previous information so please do take a little time to digest this information carefully.

I firstly want to express again how much we are looking forward to welcoming all our students to school, both those returning and those new to us. As I mentioned previously, we have planned to open in accordance with the guidance from the Department for Education (DfE), and taken a great deal of time and care to ensure that your children will be safe and enjoy the full benefits of education here at John O'Gaunt School. No decisions have been taken lightly and we have risk-assessed comprehensively. A copy of our signed-off risk assessment will be placed on our website before the start of term.

Therefore, as per government guidance, attendance at school is mandatory<sup>1</sup> for all students from the beginning of the new academic year and the usual expectations will apply<sup>2</sup>.

Considering the recent change to government guidance, **we will now require students in all year groups to wear a face covering in corridors and enclosed communal spaces during the school day**. Whilst this is presently only mandatory in areas of local lockdown, we believe it is wise to introduce it from the start of the term and offers some further protection to the transmission of COVID-19. We will explain to students how best to manage this and other elements in the briefings we'll be giving to students upon their return next week.

**Arrangements for the first week of term:**

Tuesday 1<sup>st</sup> and Wednesday 2<sup>nd</sup> September are Staff INSET Days and no students are expected into school.

- **Thursday 3<sup>rd</sup> September Year 7 only** in school from 8.30am. Years 8-11 will be given remote learning tasks to complete at home. These will also be available from the school website. The school day finishes at 3.10pm and there is a Transition Evening for parents/carers of new Year 7 students 5-6pm. Separate details have been sent out about this event
- **Friday 4<sup>th</sup> September Year 7-11** in school from 8.30am. Years 8-11 will be asked to bring their remote learning work from the previous day with them. The school day finishes at 3.10pm
- All students are required to attend in **full uniform**

**Transport**

In line with DfE advice and in the interests of public health, we would encourage students to try and avoid travelling on public transport and to walk or cycle to school where possible. I understand that the information from the LAs has now been posted so you should have the information you need or receive it imminently. Students will need to abide by the rules of the bus company for travel and this includes the wearing of a face covering if required.

<sup>1</sup> In a very small number of exceptional cases there may be students who are unable to attend following clinical and/or public health advice. Please see p4 of the attached DfE guidance for further details about government expectations

<sup>2</sup> This includes usual arrangements for reporting sickness absence and these arrangements will also include those reporting symptoms of COVID-19

### The school day:

Time	Activity	Notes
8.30-8.45	Arrival (split entrances)	Some staff out by buses/entrances to welcome and supervise. Tutors in Tutor bases by 8.30am. Students go straight to Tutor room via handwashing/sanitising
8.45-9.00	Tutor time/wellbeing	Tutor groups in Tutor bases. Year group assemblies possible but kept to a minimum
9.00-10.00	Period 1	As normal timetable – controlled entry and hand sanitising completed, work areas wiped down by students, staggered release at end of lesson and hands sanitised
10.00-11.00	Period 2	As normal timetable – controlled entry and hand sanitising completed, work areas wiped down by students, staggered release at end of lesson and hands sanitised
11.00-11.30	BREAK	<p><b>Students allowed outside/to zoned areas OR canteen – no mixing</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Y10/11</b> have access to canteen 11.00-11.15</li> <li>• <b>Y7/8/9</b> have access to canteen 11.15-11.30</li> </ul>
11.30-12.30	Period 3	As normal timetable – controlled entry and hand sanitising completed, work areas wiped down by students, staggered release at end of lesson and hands sanitised
12.30-13.30	Period 4	As normal timetable – controlled entry and hand sanitising completed, work areas wiped down by students, staggered release at end of lesson and hands sanitised
13.30-14.10	LUNCH	<p><b>Students allowed outside/to zoned areas OR canteen – no mixing</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Y7/8/9</b> have access to canteen 13.30-13.50</li> <li>• <b>Y10/11</b> have access to canteen 13.50-14.10</li> </ul>
14.10-15.10	Period 5	As normal timetable – controlled entry and hand sanitising completed, work areas wiped down by students, staggered release at end of lesson and hands sanitised, teachers walk to exit/buses with their classes and remain supervising until 3.30pm

### General:

- These arrangements are temporary and, as per DfE<sup>3</sup> guidance, we are working towards normal operation by the start of the summer term 2021 (or sooner if advised that we can by the DfE)
- These arrangements adhere to the 'systems of control' set out by DfE guidance and a full assessment of risk has been completed. Copies of these documents are available upon request
- If the guidance changes on any aspect, these plans will be altered accordingly
- Staff and students will be required to social distance when on the school site
- Students and staff must abide by hygiene and sanitisation rules and routines – this is a public health issue
- Usual rules of behaviour and attendance apply, including any addendums that have been put in place for COVID-19
- Students are in year group bubbles for the majority of their day. Where this is not possible, we will minimise mixing as far as possible
- The school will operate a one-way system for student movement and an implicit staggered release at lesson changeovers
- Assemblies will be kept to a minimum and will happen in year group bubbles only
- The school will follow government/PHE guidance if a confirmed case of COVID-19 occurs in school
- Students are required to attend in full school uniform
- **Face coverings should be worn in corridors and enclosed communal spaces during the school day**
- Toilets will be open as normal and operate on a one-in-one-out system
- There will be no locker provision in the short term
- All students will be given a health and safety briefing as part of the start of term induction days

<sup>3</sup> Department for Education

### **Arrival and departure from school:**

- Students are encouraged to cycle, walk, or drive into school rather than use the school bus services
- Where students must use bus services, we will adopt the relevant bus companies' risk assessment and abide by their rules for travel (e.g. use of masks etc.)
- Students will be supervised upon arrival to school and entry will be staggered and controlled
- For arrival **Y7/8/9** will use the main student entrance, **Y10/11** will use the far entrance gate by the pod. The one-way system does not apply to arrival/departure
- Students must wash their hands and/or sanitise their hands before making their way to their Tutor room for the start of the school day and before leaving at the end of the day
- Parents are not permitted to wait on the school site at the start/end of the school day and must make an appointment if they wish to visit the school for any reason. As far as practicable, meetings will be held outside of the hours of the school day

### **Lesson routines:**

- As far as possible, classrooms will be organised to enable students to all face the front (this is not possible in some classrooms, e.g. computer rooms or DT workshops)
- Teachers should stay at the front as far as possible
- Where these things are not possible, good social distancing and hygiene practices will reduce risk of transmission (e.g. Catch-it, Kill-it, Bin-it)
- Seating plans in all classes (except PE/Drama) are compulsory and copies must be left when cover is set
- Hand sanitiser and anti-bacterial wipes will be provided for every classroom
- Where TAs are deployed, they should work with small groups of children where they are able to. If possible, this should be done in a separate space. If neither of these are possible, they should minimise movement around the room
- Students must stay seated at all times unless directed to move by their teacher
- Students are permitted to bring equipment into schools and staff and students can take books to/from home for homework/assessment etc.
- Students should avoid sharing equipment with other students. Teachers can lend equipment to students but should try and keep several separate sets of equipment and avoid using between classes without sanitising it

### **Start/end of lessons:**

- Students will go straight into classrooms – there will be no queuing in corridors
- Teachers must be in rooms to greet students (from a safe distance) at the start of every lesson. Where teachers operate from multiple rooms and need to move between them, they will do their best to get there as quickly as possible
- Students must use hand sanitiser at the start and end of all lessons
- Students must wipe down their own work area before they leave. In computer rooms, it is advised that students do this even if the previous class has wiped workspaces down
- Students must follow the one-way system in all circumstances (except for the start/end of the school day – see above). They must do this even when their next classroom is close by and the one-way route means they have to take a longer route<sup>4</sup>
- Bells will be used to signal the end of lessons
- An implied staggering of releasing classes will be in place and we ask staff and students to follow this as far as possible to aid the smooth transition between lessons

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<sup>4</sup> This is for the safety of everyone and a key part of social distancing



### **Break/Lunch:**

- Each year group will be allocated an indoor and outdoor zone – these will be shared with students at the start of term. Apart from when they are accessing the canteen, students must stay in these zones and are not permitted to mix with students from other year groups
- Where weather permits, students will be asked to spend as much of their break/lunchtime in the outside zones<sup>5</sup> and parents are asked to invest in a good coat (as per our uniform code) to ensure this can continue into colder months
- Where inclement weather does not allow the use of outdoor zones, students will be asked to go to their indoor zones instead. A 'wet break' bell will sound to alert students and staff if inside zones need to be used as well as emails/direct communications. The indoor/outdoor system operates on an either/or approach; students will be asked to be *either* outside *or* inside but **never both**
- Staff will be on duty in these zones to supervise and must move with students if the zones change from outside to inside or visa versa
- Students should not bring their own sports equipment (e.g. footballs) into school as these cannot be shared

### **PE/Music/Drama:**

The school has given particular attention to these subjects due to the nature of the activities frequently undertaken in lessons. Specific guidance will be given to students at the start of the new term, however, the following key principles will apply to these subjects:

#### **PE:**

- Students will be permitted to change for PE
- Equipment will not be shared between groups
- The curriculum will be planned to enable safe practice and social distancing to the best of our abilities. This will mean no contact sports will be permitted in the short term and activities that use equipment will be carefully managed
- We will follow the guidance set out by the DfE and, where it exists, that issued from the governing bodies of individual sports and the 'AfPE'<sup>6</sup>

#### **Music/Drama:**

- There is an additional risk of infection in environments where singing, shouting, playing brass or wood instruments occurs, even if done at a distance. Therefore, large groups undertaking such activities will not be permitted. For example, large drama performances or choirs during school assemblies or events will not be permitted until further notice
- Where students do play certain instruments, they will never be seated face-to-face
- Music and drama lessons may take place outside to help prevent transmission
- Where students play instruments, sharing will be avoided as far as practicable and cleaning will take place between uses
- Drama performances will involve no contact and small 'performance zones' will be marked out for students to remain in during lessons
- Drama lessons may need to reduce the use of props/costume and where used these will be cleaned/allowed to lie fallow between uses
- Peripatetic lessons will be allowed to resume

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<sup>5</sup> Public health information shows this is safer as transmission of COVID-19 is reduced

<sup>6</sup> Association for Physical Education



Thank you once again for your continued support and we know there will be challenges, but by working together in a flexible way we will be able to ensure that your child has safe access to their education. We cannot wait to see the students soon and please be assured again that during their first day back in school, all students will be fully trained in all of these changed routines.

In the meantime, please do continue to stay engaged with us and if you have any queries about next week please do not hesitate to contact the school at [jogoffice@excalibur.org.uk](mailto:jogoffice@excalibur.org.uk).

Yours sincerely,



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Richard Hawthorne  
Head of School

