

Frequently Asked Questions: Parents and Carers Updated 13.07.2020



**Alderbrook
School**
AMBITION | BRAVERY | KINDNESS

September reopening for all students

In response to the survey that parents and carers completed last week, we have compiled the questions and answers below. This document should be read in conjunction with the information document. This document will be updated as required and redistributed in August. We have not been able to answer every question posed by parents in the survey, but have covered all main areas of enquiry.

TRANSPORT AND TIMINGS OF THE SCHOOL DAY

Will the start and end timings of the school day remain the same for all students?

Yes. While we will control the movement of students onto our school site, there are many students in different year groups who rely on buses to get into school. Currently we are planning to start the school day at 8.30am, and end the school day slightly earlier at 2.50pm. The buses will arrive to meet this finish time. These timings will be confirmed when the final guidance is released in August. School bus timetables will be published on the Council website by 1 September. <https://www.solihull.gov.uk/Resident/Schools-learning/School-travel/School-buses>

Why not stagger start and end times?

We believe that we can safely move students on and off the school site without staggering start times. The added disruption of staggering start times would also disrupt the breadth of curriculum available to students. We are working closely with other local schools, particularly Tudor Grange, to ensure that student movement on and off our sites is well managed. In partnership with Tudor Grange, we are working to ensure Dingle Lane is a 'no waiting zone'. We ask for your support in ensuring that no cars or pedestrians stop and wait on Dingle Lane as we know this can get very busy at the start and end of the school day.

Once on the school site, we will quickly move students to their classroom for their first lesson. Further information on the start and end of the school day will be released with the final guidance.

What will be the approach for those children who catch the bus to school? Will a school bus service resume and if so will several buses be provided?

The local authority will be running bus services to school in September. They are currently consulting on how these will run but their current proposals are to run individual services for each school, ensuring students are not mixing with those from other local schools. There will be a range of safety measures in place. Government guidance states, 'Where your child uses dedicated school or college transport (that is transport that does not cater for the general public), the guidance for public transport will not apply. Your child may be asked to use a regular seating plan on this transport (to reflect where possible the bubbles that are used within school), and measures will be put in place to ensure vehicles are cleaned regularly and boarding is managed.'

We await their final guidance on how school buses will be managed, and I include the local authority's current proposals here:

Bus	Current operation	Proposed operation
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811	Hockley Heath to TGA Solihull + one to St Peter's	Hockley Heath to TGA Solihull only
821	Dickens Heath carrying passengers to all 3 schools	Dickens Heath to Alderbrook only
822	Earlswood / Dickens Heath carrying passengers to all 3 schools	Dickens Heath to Alderbrook only
823	Tidbury Green / Earlswood carrying passengers to TGA Solihull and St Peter's	Tidbury Green / Earlswood to TGA Solihull only with a slight re-route
894	Cheswick Green to Alderbrook	Cheswick Green to Alderbrook only
895	Cheswick Green to Alderbrook via Monkspath	Cheswick Green to Alderbrook only via Monkspath
XXX	New route	Rural south pick up to St Peter's only

Parents should check bus timetables on the Council website on 1 September.

Will break and lunch be staggered?

Yes. There will be 2 breaks and 2 lunches, ensuring that each year group will be kept separate at break and lunch. Each year group will have access to its own canteen/servery, toilet block, and indoor and outside space. The same food and drink will be available from each servery.

Will parents be able to pick up their children at the end of the school day?

We ask that if you need to drop off and pick up your child, you arrange to do this away from the school site. We will only be allowing cars onto site that have a permit or if someone has a medical need or vulnerability.

SUPPORT AVAILABLE FOR STUDENTS

My child is very anxious about the return to school – what will be done to support them?

We understand that many students will be anxious about returning to school after a long absence. The start of the school year will be dedicated to recovery and reconnecting with school. On the first few days, students will spend time focusing on their mental health and needs, and there will be an ongoing programme of support for the first half term. Any student who needs additional support will be able to get this from the pastoral team. Form tutors will be aware of any issues arising from our 'well - being' questionnaire sent out to students on Class Charts 15.07.20, and any student who needs additional support will be able to get this from the pastoral team.

How will you help students catch up on any missed learning during closure?

This will be a key concern for many parents, carers and students. We are working with all curriculum leaders to ensure that all teachers assess gaps in learning. For most students, these gaps will be addressed in lessons as the teacher identifies which topics need to be revisited and embedded. Teachers are evaluating the curriculum to make sure that time is provided to ensure important foundation knowledge is well understood before moving on. There are likely to be some students who need extra support, and these students may be invited to further intervention at the end of the school day.

SAFETY MEASURES ON THE SCHOOL SITE

Will social distancing be maintained at break and lunch time?

The school will support all students in maintaining social distancing at break and lunch time. Year groups will have designated areas on the school site, and will be encouraged to use outside areas when the weather is good. Each year group will have access to a large, well-ventilated internal space. We strongly advise parents to speak to their children about the importance of maintaining social distancing at all times.

Will risk assessments be carried out for clinically vulnerable students?

If you are concerned about the clinical vulnerability of your child please contact the school via the office email and we will arrange for someone to speak to you about any reasonable adjustments that can be put in place from September.

Could each child wipe his/ her desk on entering the room?

Cleaning of all hard surfaces will take place regularly during the school day. There will not be a requirement for students to wipe desks on entering any room. However, wipes and surface cleaner will be available in every classroom if a student chooses to use them. All students and staff will use hand sanitiser on entry and exit of every room, and hand hygiene will be promoted across the school. It is important that the school is aware of any allergies to sanitisers your child may have. Government guidance states that schools must ensure they are:

‘putting in place a cleaning schedule that ensures cleaning is generally enhanced and includes:

- more frequent cleaning of rooms / shared areas that are used by different groups
- frequently touched surfaces being cleaned more often than normal’

We have additional cleaners working during the school day to ensure these requirements are fulfilled.

Will students remain in the same class group throughout the day?

Students in Years 7 and 8 will remain in the same learning groups for all lessons – this will be reviewed if the guidance changes. Students in Years 9-13 will not remain in the same class groups in order for them to be able to access all of their subjects.

Can risk assessments be shared?

Yes. The main Health and Safety Risk Assessment for reopening the school will be available on the school website in August.

Will there be additional cleaning in place?

Yes. Cleaning staff will be on site to carry out additional cleaning of toilets, classrooms, canteens and communal areas, as well as frequently touched surfaces.

Will there be sufficient hand washing and hand sanitising facilities?

Yes. Hand sanitiser stations will be available at all entry points to buildings for students and staff, and each classroom will have hand sanitiser. Soap and hand washing stations will be readily available in all toilet blocks.

Will those in the same year be able to interact at break times as they may not know others in their new options classes which could cause concern.

Yes. Students will be able to interact with all students in their year group at break and lunch time. However social distancing must be maintained at all times.

Will all students’ temperatures be taken every time they arrive on site?

We will not be taking the temperatures of all students on arrival. This decision has been led by our risk assessing and the government guidance, which now states: “Parents, carers and settings do not need to take children’s temperatures every morning. Routine testing of an individual’s temperature is not a reliable method for identifying COVID-19. Educational and childcare settings should reiterate to parents the need to follow the standard national advice on the kind of symptoms to look out for that might be due to COVID-19, and where to get further advice.”

Parents should not send their child into school if they are displaying any symptoms of COVID-19.

Will my child be able to wear face coverings?

Public Health England does not (based on current evidence) recommend the use of face coverings in schools. This evidence will be kept under review. They are not required in schools as pupils and staff are mixing in consistent groups, and because misuse may inadvertently increase the risk of transmission. If you have concerns regarding this, please contact the pastoral team and we will work with you to ensure we reach an agreement. Any PPE must not be disposed of on the school premises, it must be bagged and brought home.

As a school we are keen to stress the importance to everyone of other hygiene measures (hand washing, social distancing, frequent cleaning of surfaces).

I am concerned students will not follow social distancing guidance on the way to and from school and while on site.

If any student deliberately or consistently fails to follow rules that are put into place for everyone's protection, then contact will be made with the student's parents. An addendum has been added to the school's behaviour policy to help the school to protect all students and staff. We strongly advise parents to speak to their children about the importance of maintaining social distancing whilst travelling to and from school.

Will policies be reviewed to check they are fit for purpose as we bring students back into school?

Yes. We have reviewed our safeguarding and behaviour policies. We have also updated our First Aid procedures, emergency evacuation procedures and classroom expectations.

SUSPECTED OR CONFIRMED CASES OF COVID-19

What will happen if a student develops symptoms of COVID-19 while on the school site?

Should a student become unwell, they should tell their teacher who will request support from a trained first aider.

If a child exhibits symptoms of COVID-19 they will be isolated in the pupil support area until a parent or designated adult can come to collect them. In this scenario, the following should then happen:

- Your household should self-isolate. You should engage with the NHS Test and Trace process so that cases can be identified and action taken - this means if your child develops symptoms, you should arrange for them to get a test and you should inform school of the results of that test
- Where the student or staff member tests negative, they can return to school and the fellow household members can end their self-isolation.
- Where the student tests positive, your household will be asked to self-isolate in line with current public health guidance.
- In the case of a positive test, the school will work with the local health protection team to ascertain whether any other students or staff are required to self-isolate for 14 days. This may be the case if someone has been in close, face-to-face contact with someone who has tested positive for the virus.

If there is a confirmed case, could this impact on whole year groups?

We will work closely with our local health protection team to manage any cases of COVID-19 within the school community. These will be treated on a case by case basis and we will keep all members of the school community updated. The government guidance states the following:

'If a school or college experiences an outbreak, either because they have 2 or more confirmed cases of coronavirus (COVID-19) among pupils or staff in their setting within 14 days, or they see an increase in pupil or staff absence rates due to suspected or confirmed cases of coronavirus (COVID-19), they will need to contact their local health protection team. This team will advise if additional action is required, though the closure of the whole school or college will generally not be necessary

Where an outbreak in a school is confirmed, a mobile testing unit may be dispatched to test others who may have been in contact with the person who has tested positive. Testing will first focus on the person's class, followed by their year group, then the whole school, if necessary.

If your local area sees a spike in infection rates that is resulting in localised community spread, decisions will be made on what measures to implement to help contain the spread. The government will be involved in decisions and will support individual schools and colleges to follow the health advice.

In all cases, where groups of pupils need to self-isolate or where a larger restriction of attendance at school or college is needed, your child's school or college should seek to ensure children and young people's education can continue remotely.'

FOOD AND DRINK

What arrangements are being made for food and drinks available for the students?

All students will have access to hot and cold options at school. We will not be able to offer our full menu as food will need to be 'grab and go'. The same offering of food will be available at each servery as each year group will only have access to one servery to prevent mixing with other year groups. We will require students to bring bottled water with them to school. For hygiene reasons, water fountains will not be available.

Is the biometric fingerprint system being used by students to pay for food?

No. We are working with the caterers to ensure there will be no requirement for students to use this system due to the danger of the spread of the virus on touched surfaces. Catering accounts can still be topped up by parents on ParentPay – students will state their name to caterers at the till who will be able to manage their purchases.

SIXTH FORM

Please could you give an update for students moving into Sixth Form (Year 12)?

Letters have been sent to the parents of all Year 11s with details of results day and sixth form enrolment. These are available on the school website. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact the sixth form team.

Are Sixth Form required to wear business dress?

Yes. All sixth form will be required to wear business dress.

REMOTE LEARNING AND ATTENDANCE

Will attendance be compulsory?

Yes. The Government guidance states that: 'It is vital that children and young people return to school and college - for their educational progress, for their wellbeing, and for their wider development. School and college attendance will again be mandatory from the beginning of the new academic year. For parents and carers of children of compulsory school age, this means that the legal duty on you as a parent to send your child to school regularly will apply.'

A small number of children may not be able to attend school if they are following public health advice and self-isolating, for instance. Where children are not able to attend school as parents are following clinical and/or public health advice, the absence will not be penalised.

If you have concerns about your child returning to school, because you consider they may have other risk factors, you should make contact with the school via the office email. We will work with you to support your child.

Will resources still be available online if certain students are forced to self-isolate?

Yes. All lesson resources will be posted on Microsoft Teams and homework will continue to be posted on ClassCharts. All students will be trained in the use of Microsoft Teams in the first few weeks of the new school year.

Can you continue with online learning for some to reduce the number of students in school?

The government requires all schools to open fully in September. Furthermore all schools are required to offer a broad and balanced curriculum.

If a child does not return to school will they still receive the learning given in face to face lessons?

There is no replacement for face-to-face lessons with teaching staff. However, if a student is unable to come into school due to public health advice, lesson resources will be available on Microsoft Teams.

GCSEs AND A LEVELS

Are there any changes being made to next year's GCSEs/A Levels because students have missed out on a lot of school?

Ofqual are currently consulting on this issue. We are expecting there to be some changes but do not yet know the extent of these. As soon as we are informed we will update parents and students.

GENERAL

Will students be required to wear school uniform?

Yes. All students will be required to wear normal school uniform. The Government guidance states: 'We are, however, encouraging all schools to return to their usual uniform policies in the autumn term. Uniforms do not need to be cleaned any more often than usual, or in any different way to normal due to coronavirus (COVID-19).'

Whilst usual uniform is expected, we understand the various challenges regarding obtaining new uniform at this time and will show understanding to individual circumstances.

We intend for all students to be able to take part in PE. Changing rooms present a challenge with the requirements to distance students where possible; we are currently planning to ask students to come into school on the day of their PE lessons wearing their PE kit. We will also require them to wear their school blazer over their kit so they can be easily identified. We will confirm this in August.