

August 2020

Dear Parent / carer

We are looking forward to welcoming back all year groups in September. As I mentioned in my summer newsletter sent out in July 2020 I am writing to update you on preparation ready for September. Much of the information shared in July remains the same however there have been a few changes. This letter is lengthy but I want everyone to have the relevant information before we start back. You can access the government guidance on return to school here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/what-parents-and-carers-need-to-know-about-early-years-providers-schools-and-colleges-during-the-coronavirus-covid-19-outbreak>

I recognise that there may be some students and families who will be concerned about being behind with learning or anxious about returning in September, I will reiterate that our priority continues to be the safety of everyone. We have made arrangements to ensure we adhere to the guidelines issued by the government, this includes some changes to our building and our routines. We will continue to develop both academic and personal skills, aiming to build resilience, confidence, dedication and a willingness to support others in our young people. You can access our academy return information and risk assessment on our academy website here: <https://www.bydales.outwood.com/sept2020>

As you will expect and appreciate, structures and routines will not simply return to the 'normal' that we knew and a great deal of work has been done to ensure that all students and staff are as safe as possible. I highlight below some of the key pieces of information ready for September.

A significant change is our move to 'Horizontal Tutor Groups' (HTGs) from VMGs (Vertical Mentoring Groups). Students will be in Year group tutor groups. The academy day will commence with a HTG period from 8.20am – 8.45am. Students will receive their timetable in their HTG on their first day. Details for your child's HTG can be found below:

INSERT: child name, HTG and HTG base

Support and safety

We expect our students to 'be safe, be respectful and responsible'.

In response to government guidance on maintaining social distance and avoiding unnecessary large gatherings of our young people, each morning there will be a slightly staggered start to the day to ensure students are on site safely and sensibly and can start each day with hygiene routines.

Year 7 **ONLY** will return to the Academy on Wednesday 2 September, to be on site for 8.20 am. All other year groups will return on **Thursday 3 September** at the times below.

Staggered starts to the day are as follows:

Year 7	8.00 am
Year 8	8.05 am
Year 9	8.10 am
Year 10	8.15 am
Year 11	8.20 am

Students should not gather together en-route to the academy and must enter straight into the academy via their designated route. Each year group has a separate entrance which is signposted and staff will be on duty to support students to access their entrance. Routes and entrances can be found on the website through the link above.

To prioritise safety, each year group will be seen as a separate 'bubble'. This means that each year group will be taught in a specific 'zone' of the academy and students will remain in their zone for the majority of their lessons, exceptions being when they have breaks and lunchtime and access to some specialist rooms.

Breaks and lunch times will also be in separate bubbles at different times. This does mean that some year groups will have lunch early, we will alternate the year groups. These measures are all to maintain high levels of safety through minimising transmission. There is a one-way system operating throughout the academy, including designated stairways and specific doors for each of the zones. There are distance markers on the floors to remind students to stay apart whenever possible. There are also safety posters throughout the academy as expectation reminders. In the dining room students will be seated so they do not sit opposite each other. I would encourage everyone to use Parentpay online to put money on your child's account to avoid handling money as outlined in government guidance. Information on parent pay can be found here: <https://www.parentpay.com/>

Students will have increased access to hand washing and sanitising products both inside and outside the academy, we will encourage students to practise good hygiene routines throughout the day. Public Health England does not recommend the use of face coverings in schools. They are not required in schools as students and staff are mixing in consistent groups, and because misuse may inadvertently increase the risk of transmission.

Learning

Teaching and learning will also look a little different this year. As directed by the government, students will be taught in rows, facing the same direction and our teachers will teach from the front of the class. Teachers will allocate seats to individual students. A significant focus of this year is ensuring all students 'catch up' any lost learning at pace. To do this we will continue to build on the values and work ethic that have been instilled in our students. I am sure you will agree our staff are incredibly passionate about putting 'Students First' through excellent teaching, coupled with willingness to give time and support outside the classroom, both academically and across other enrichment activities. Please support us by encouraging your child to attend all Enrichment and interventions that are available.

To ensure our students are ready for learning please organise for them to have the basic equipment listed below. If students have the majority of their own equipment it will also help to reduce transmission, therefore your support with this would be appreciated.

The basic equipment that is required from September is:

A black pen

A red pen

A pencil and pencil sharpener

An eraser

A scientific calculator (Casio Fx 83gtx or Casio FX 85gtx are preferred)

A school geometry set which should include a compass, a protractor, a 6 inch ruler and a set square

A Collins Pocket English Dictionary or equivalent

A Collins Pocket French / Spanish (where studied) Dictionary or equivalent

Students may also want to bring in their own whiteboard pen and highlighters. All students will be provided with a Planner on their first day. They are expected to have a school bag that is large enough to contain an A4 folder and all their equipment.

Lockers

PLEASE NOTE: initially there will be NO access to lockers, students will have to keep their belongings with them throughout the day.

For PE lessons there will be different arrangements for specific groups and students will be informed by their PE teacher what will be required during their first PE lesson. Students who have PE in the first week will only need to bring their training shoes not full kit.

Year 7 do not have PE in the first week

Year 8 have PE on Thursday

Year 9 have PE on Thursday

Year 10 do not have PE in the first week

Year 11 have PE on Thursday

Uniform

Standards and expectations, as I know you would expect remain high. Students are expected to be in full academy uniform. Students are required to wear black shoes that can be **polished**, rather than boots or canvas/suede shoes. Socks must be plain black. Hair bands/bobbles must be **plain black or purple**, and should not be worn on wrists when not in use. All students must have a suitable bag to carry A4 books. Any coat worn must be large enough to go over the blazer. **Hoodies are not allowed**. For PE, students will require trainers without dark soles, and football boots. Full uniform information can be found here: <https://www.bydales.outwood.com/uniform>

Behaviour expectations

As part of the first day students will receive, during tutor time, information on our addendum to the Behaviour Policy which explained the new arrangements during the Covid-19 pandemic from September 2020. The overarching aim of the policy continues to promote positive behaviour, to provide a safe learning environment for students and staff during the Covid-19 pandemic and to help students to understand the importance of keeping everyone safe. You can view the policy here: <https://www.bydales.outwood.com/policies>.

We want all of our students, during their time with us, to reach the 'top of the pyramid', meaning that they leave us as good citizens, and this is the rationale for our approach. We want our students to do this not only because they have to, but because they want to, and are mature enough to know how to do the right thing. In the main policy you can view the pyramid and read about some of the tools (STAR, STEPS, CHOICES and ABCDEF of Learning) we specifically use to support students. These tools support students in developing the correct behaviours to ensure they learn better and helps prepare them for life once they leave our academy.

We want to help students to make the right choices. In order to do this it is important to help students understand that actions have consequences and as part of this we continue to operate a robust sanction and reward system. This is part of how we manage behaviour rather than the entirety of our processes, which include how we live, our values, and how we constantly teach one another by our actions and words. Our sanction systems are there to act as mild deterrents to misbehaviour, and as part of how we define and uphold our culture of safety, respect and responsibility. These work best when they are consistent, fair and proportionate. Our rewards are targeted, sincere and also promote our values. You can read more details about our praise and sanctions systems in the policy. The consequences system remains the same in the classroom, however there are a number of interventions 'prior to formal consequences' outlined in the policy.

Under the current circumstances, I would draw your attention to some areas that sit within the consequences system:

- C1-4 in the classroom will remain the same. If a student receives a C4a in the classroom, they will go to a matrix room within their year group bubble
- If a student fails, or fails to attend a C4b (1 hour) detention, they will be issued with a C4c (2 hour) detention after-school. This was previously time spent in the reflection room. To keep to the 'bubbles' created in the Academy - a mix of different year groups cannot be in the reflection room at the same time
- Any student that is out of bounds will now be issued with a C4b detention. This was previously a C4a detention but in the current circumstances, a student being out of bounds and potentially in another year group bubble has significant health and safety risks
- Any detentions for missed homework will continue to be a one hour (C4b) detention

Working together with a fair and consistent approach creates an environment where all young people can flourish, learn from their mistakes and develop the necessary work place skills, attitudes and attributes.

After a long period of school closure, the mental health and wellbeing of all of our students is paramount and we recognise that these are challenging times for many young people and their families. We have a robust system in place to ensure contact with all young people and families and are able to signpost help where required. The 'Green Button' on our websites is a great place to look for support.

Curriculum

In year 8, I am delighted to inform you that many of our students will also be studying Spanish for one hour a week, in addition to French.

All year 9 students now have one hour of Digital Literacy each week. This will include areas such as word processing; analysis of data; understanding bias and reliability in internet sources; communicating effectively using technology and web design. These skills will be delivered through a series of projects which relate to our everyday lives.

Attendance

You can view the academy term dates on our website here: www.bydales.outwood.com/term-dates

Please do not book holidays during term-time. With the lost learning due to Covid 19 the amount of time students spend in school and in lessons contributes hugely to the academic success our young people achieve. There is no 'slack time' and Praising Stars assessments, preparation and indeed GCSE coursework and exams/mocks occur throughout the academic year, we will be focusing this coming year on significant 'catch up'. I am very grateful for the support we receive from parents and carers in this regard.

Transport

Thank you for completing our joint travel survey with Redcar & Cleveland Borough Council. If you have already done so, there is no need to complete the survey a second time, but if you haven't managed yet, please can you do so as it only takes a minute and helps the local authority ahead of September. The short online survey can be accessed here: <https://forms.gle/FgjfqwTNmZpicRo7A>

Guidance for the small number of students who use public transport can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-safer-travel-guidance-for-passengers#history>

Please remember that it is mandatory for everyone to wear face coverings when accessing public transport. These will not be provided by the academy so it is important that you source these yourself before September. Students will be able to dispose of their face covering on entry to the academy. If the face covering is reusable students must place the covering in a sealed, protective bag on arriving at school. Please ensure you remind your child of the importance of social distancing whilst walking to school or when queueing at bus stops. We would encourage students to walk or cycle to school wherever possible.

Bike safety

Cycling is a great way to travel to school, but we want to make sure our students are safe. When we are allowed, there will be an assembly each term for parents to attend on cycling safety. A parent must attend in order for you to acquire a permit to ride your bike to school. If your child has a bike permit from last year, this can still be used this year and you do not need a new one.

If your child does not have a permit, they need to go to reception to collect a form, and return to school once parents have signed it. Cycling permits will be checked daily on student's entry into the Academy by Miss Peacock.

If travelling by bike, students must dismount their bike at the main gate as normal. Year 7 and 11 students will use the side delivery entrance next to the sports hall to access the bike sheds and then return back through the delivery entrance to join their bubble lines. Year 8, 9 and 10 students will follow the normal route to the bike sheds. Year 10 students must be extremely careful when walking back around to student entrance and into their bubble area.

Covid-19 Symptoms

I must reiterate the importance of following government guidance for the safety of students and staff. Please do not send your child in if they are showing any symptoms including:

- New continuous cough / high temperature
- A loss of, or change in, their normal sense of taste or smell.

In this scenario you must ensure you keep your child at home, they self-isolate and get a test. Other members of your household (including siblings) should then self-isolate for 14 days from when the symptomatic person first had symptoms. Parents must also immediately inform the school once test results are known.

For further detail please familiarise yourself with the government websites here:

www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance

www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-getting-tested

If your child tests negative, if they feel well and no longer have symptoms similar to coronavirus, they can stop self-isolating. They could still have another virus, such as a cold or flu, in which case it is still best to avoid contact with other people until they are better. Other members of their household can stop self-isolating if a test is negative.

If your child tests positive, they should follow the 'stay at home' guidance' above and must continue to self-isolate for at least seven days from the beginning of their symptoms. They should only return to school if they no longer have symptoms other than cough or loss of sense of smell/taste. If they still have a high temperature, they should keep self-isolating until their temperature returns to normal. Other members of the household should continue self-isolating for the full 14 days.

Packed lunches, access to water fountains and healthy eating.

If students are bringing a packed lunch they can use lunchboxes. Students will be able to access the academy water fountain at break and lunchtime only, these will be monitored and controlled by staff to minimise contact. Students must bring their own recyclable water bottle to be used. If students wish to bring their own water to school, please ensure a recyclable water bottle is used. We would appreciate your support in encouraging our students to be healthy; chewing gum, fizzy pop (including energy drinks), big 'family' bags of sweets and crisps etc are NOT allowed anywhere on site. These will be confiscated from students and returned at the end of the academy day.

Bereavement

During these very difficult times, we acknowledge that some families will have experienced bereavements. We are extremely sorry for your loss and our thoughts are with you. It would be helpful for us to be aware of any bereavements in order to ensure we can put relevant support in place for your child and family. In September please contact Miss Gates if you would be prepared to share this information with us. Miss Gates can be contacted via email on k.gates@bydales.outwood.com or on the usual school number on 0164247400 ext 202.

Results 2020

Let me finish with celebrating the excellent results of our year 11 students. These young people deserve a special mention, they finished their five years of secondary education with very little of the usual collective celebrations. They have achieved a fantastic set of results. It was a privilege to see students on results day, they demonstrated the true skills and attributes of a Bydales student; excellent academic achievement alongside the personal skills of resilience, confidence, dedication and a willingness to support others.

I am delighted to report that the results this year continue to be outstanding: 90% of students achieved a grade 4 or above in both Maths and English. A superb 96% of students passed English at a grade 4 or above. Maths results were also outstanding with 91% attaining a grade 4 or above.

77% of students achieved a 'strong' GCSE pass in both maths and English with grade 5 or above. English achievement in this respect was outstanding, with 87% of students achieving a grade 5 or above, and in Maths results with 80% of students achieving a grade 5 or above, and a staggering 17% of the year group achieving a grade 9 in Maths.

I am delighted with the recognition students have achieved through their GCSE qualifications, both in Year 10 and 11, it is a testament to their working so closely with teachers and parents to try their very best. All the academy community couldn't be prouder of them. A giant 'well done' to all of our students and thank you to staff, parents, governors and colleagues from across Outwood Grange Academies Trust.

I look forward to working with you next year.

Yours faithfully



Seana Rice
Principal