

August 2020

Dear Parents/Carers,

### **Re: Autumn Term Welcome Back**

We hope this letter finds you and your families well. I am writing to remind all our parents, carers and students of the arrangements for the start of the Autumn term. Please also see the [letter to parents](#) on the 16<sup>th</sup> July.

Please note that the government has launched a [#BackToSchoolSafely](#) campaign to reassure parents and students that schools and colleges are ready for their return in September. Parents are encouraged to visit [gov.uk/backtoschool](http://gov.uk/backtoschool) for information and practical guidance to help them plan for their children's return to school. We have also put some of this government information on our website here: [Current Information](#).

I am sure you have been following the media closely and hearing about all the impending arrangements as schools prepare for the September return. We would like to assure you that the Harrow High Schools Headteachers' group have had detailed discussions on implementation of the government guidance for the full re-opening of schools in September. In common with our approach to partial re-opening earlier this year for Years 10 and 12, we have taken collaborative decisions at the same time as considering the unique circumstances of our own schools. It is recognised in the DFE guidance that there cannot be a 'one-size-fits-all' approach, and that Headteachers are best placed to make informed decisions about how to balance delivering a broad and balanced curriculum with the measures needed to manage risk.

All schools have also had to work within their existing resources to welcome the children back, as there are no plans at this stage to reimburse schools for the additional costs incurred in mitigating the risks associated with the coronavirus. As a result, whilst we have worked hard to put systems and procedures in place to ensure the safety of our staff and students and still ensuring a full return to school, these will differ in every institution. We thank our parents and carers in advance for understanding that any comparison between schools is unhelpful and for trusting the leadership teams of their child's own school.

I would like to take this opportunity to share some updates, to reinforce some of the good practice we have in place, clarify our expectations from the first day in September and hopefully provide some reassurance about your child's return to school.

#### **Start of term and the school day**

All students must arrive on site by 8:40am or 9:00am according to the table below. I and other members of the Senior Leadership Team will greet students at the entrance every morning. This initial first contact is a very important part of showing that we care for and welcome all students to the school. We ask that parents and carers do not congregate outside the school gates but drop their child off at a reasonable distance for them to walk into the school by themselves.

**A reminder of the days and times of return:**

|                | Wed 2 Sept                                 | Thur 3 Sept             | Fri 4 Sept                                 | Mon 7 Sept       | Tues 8 Sept             | Wed 9 Sept              | Thurs 10 Sept onwards |
|----------------|--|-------------------------|--|------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------|
| <b>Year 7</b>  | Staff PD Day<br>College closed to students | 8:40am – 11:40am        | Staff PD Day<br>College closed to students | 8:40am – 11:40am | 8:40am – 3:10pm         | 8:40am – 3:10pm         | 8:40am – 3:10pm       |
| <b>Year 8</b>  |  | Remote Learning at home |  | 8:40am – 11:40am | Remote Learning at home | 8:40am – 3:10pm         | 8:40am – 3:10pm       |
| <b>Year 9</b>  |  | Remote learning at home |  | 8:40am – 11:40am | Remote Learning at home | Remote Learning at home | 8:40am – 3:10pm       |
| <b>Year 10</b> |  | Remote learning at home |  | 12:10p – 3:30pm  | Remote Learning at home | Remote Learning at home | 9:00am – 3:30pm       |
| <b>Year 11</b> |  | Remote learning at home |  | 12:10p – 3:30pm  | Remote Learning at home | 9:00am – 3:10pm         | 9:00am – 3:30pm       |
| <b>Year 12</b> |  | 8:40am – 11:40am        |  | 12:10p – 3:30pm  | 9:00am – 3:30pm         | 9:00am – 3:30pm         | 9:00am – 3:30pm       |
| <b>Year 13</b> |  | Remote learning at home |  | 12:10p – 3:30pm  | 9:00am – 3:30pm         | 9:00am – 3:30pm         | 9:00am – 3:30pm       |

| Year groups            | Y7 and Y11    | Y8               | Y9 and Y10            | 6 <sup>th</sup> form   |
|------------------------|---------------|------------------|-----------------------|------------------------|
| <b>Entrance points</b> | Main entrance | J Block entrance | E block entrance left | E block entrance right |

From Thursday 10th September, all students will be in school. Years 7-9 should enter via their designated gate in time for an 8:40am start and Years 10-13 should enter via their designated gates for a 9:00am start. For the remainder of the year the College day will be as follows:

8:40am – 3:10pm      Years 7, 8 and 9

9:00am – 3:30pm      Years 10, 11 and 6<sup>th</sup> form (unless there is a period 6 which will end at 4:10pm)

**Uniform**

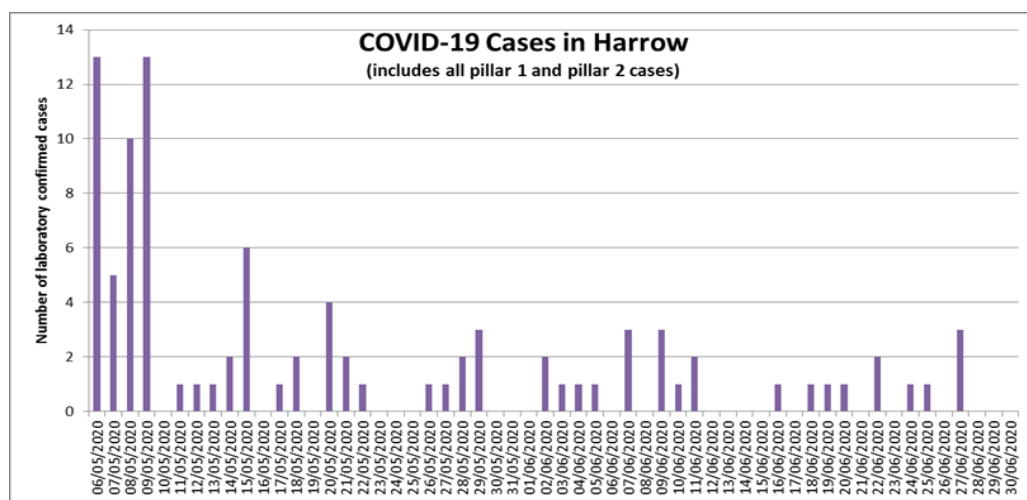
We are a uniformed school and we want to continue to see our students wearing their uniform with pride. The Rooks Heath uniform is easily identifiable and wearing it demonstrates that we are a community that values good appearance, respect for ourselves and our identity. We have high expectations of our students and therefore any student wearing incorrect uniform items will be challenged at school. We may need to phone you to ask you to bring in correct uniform for your child to wear. We know that parents value schools that place an emphasis on order and remain true to their values so we know that you will support us in upholding our uniform procedures as you have agreed to in the 'home-school agreement'. Students who refuse to wear or adjust their uniform to our regulations will face a sanction as per our Behaviour for Learning Policy. In only the most exceptional circumstances will we accept a reason from parents or carers who must call the school.

**Health advice**

It is very reassuring for us to know that COVID-19 cases in Harrow are at an extremely low level and the benefits of being back in school far outweigh the very low risk from COVID-19. The slide below shows the most recent figures we have from Public Health for confirmed cases in Harrow. Pillar 1 cases are swab testing in Public Health England (PHE) labs and NHS hospitals for those with a clinical need, and health and



care workers; Pillar 2 cases are swab testing for the wider population, as set out in government guidance. The data is very encouraging, but in order to keep transmission rates low, when students return in September, it is essential that they do not attend school if they become **unwell with a new continuous cough, a high temperature or a loss of or change in their normal sense of taste and smell**. If students develop any of these symptoms they must stay at home and follow public health guidance. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance>. Please advise us immediately in the usual way if your child is unwell. The school will naturally be cooperating fully with NHS Test and Trace.



### Hygiene

As we are all aware, good hand and respiratory hygiene is essential to halt the spread of the virus. Please could you ensure that your child brings with them each day **a pocket hand sanitiser and a packet of tissues**. Please emphasise to your child the importance of **regular hand washing** (or using sanitiser if they can't easily get to a wash basin); always **coughing or sneezing into a tissue or the crook of their arm**; and **disposing of any used tissues in a lidded bin**. Clearly any kind of embellished throat clearing or spitting is as always, completely unacceptable. We have invested in a number of hand sanitising stations and ask that students sanitise hands as they come onto the school site. Students will be expected to **wipe down their desks and keyboards at the end of any ICT lessons** and wipes will be provided for this.

### Face masks

At the time of writing, the guidance is that it is recommended that students wear face masks in communal areas of school. They will not need to be worn in classrooms, because other protective measures will already be in place and they might affect learning. Schools have the discretion to require face coverings in communal areas where social distancing cannot be safely managed, if they believe that it is right in their particular circumstances. We understand how the current context may be leaving students and parents feeling anxious and believe we must act in a way that ensure everyone feels safe and able to return and resume working and learning together. We have made arrangements to minimize movement and mixing of students across different year groups, however, if you feel strongly about your child wearing their mask during break, lunch and whilst commuting, we will allow these to be worn in communal areas. We ask that you have a conversation with your child about the safest ways in which to put on and remove the masks



during the day. We will also ensure this is communicated to students on their first day of return. DFE information about this can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/face-coverings-in-education/face-coverings-in-education>

### **Equipment and PE kit**

'Education is your passport to the future for tomorrow, for tomorrow belongs to the people who prepare for it today'. All students are expected to come to school ready to learn every day. It is extremely important that every student arrives with the equipment they need to be successful learners. This includes a full set of stationery, PE kit, a reading book, headphones (if required) their school link book and an appropriate school bag large enough to carry everything they need. On the days your child is scheduled to have PE, they must come to school wearing their full PE kit and remain in this for the remainder of the day.

### **Breaks and Lunchtimes**

We suggest that it may well be more convenient for students to **bring their own snacks and a packed lunch** where possible. The Rookery and Grab n' Go food outlets will be providing a slightly reduced hot food menu on our return, to enable students to "take away" their hot meal; unfortunately, we do not have seating capacity for all students to sit down during lunch and maintain adequate social distancing. Children in receipt of free school meals will of course receive these as usual. **We have introduced split lunches this year with two 30-minute breaks for different year groups at a time to reduce the numbers of students in circulation at any one time.** Year Groups will be allocated zones for their free time, in which they will be able to relax and socialise. These will be made very clear to all children during their induction days. Students will **only be permitted to use the water fountains to fill bottles at** and not drink from. To facilitate regular filling of water bottles we will be installing additional water points. Finally, we recommend students bring an umbrella and/or a rainproof jacket to enable them to enjoy the fresh air during their breaks and lunches.

### **Attendance**

Shielding advice for adults and children paused on 1<sup>st</sup> August subject to the decline in the rates of transmission of the coronavirus. All children of compulsory school age are now expected to return to school with the exception only of those who are complying with clinical and or public health advice. Attendance recording and reporting procedures will therefore resume. If your child needs to be away from school, it is important that you contact the school as soon as possible giving clear explanations.

### **Behaviour**

The Behaviour for Learning policy and expectations of excellent attendance, punctuality and attitudes to learning remain. The policy has been updated further to the coronavirus pandemic to allow for heightened intolerance and for more serious sanctions for anyone who breaches our health and safety guidelines. We will not tolerate any jokes regarding COVID-19, particularly as some of our community have suffered bereavements relating to the illness during the period of school closure. Similarly, although we are willing to remind students regarding the need for social distancing and one way systems in school, we will expect them to follow staff instructions first time, every time.

### **Travel to and from school**

Given the current situation, it is advisable that all students walk or cycle to school where possible. If your child uses public transport, please also remind them to be safe whilst travelling. It is important that all our students leave home early enough to arrive on time and go directly home immediately at the end of the school day. DFE guidance on travel arrangements can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-safer-travel-guidance-for-passengers>. Your children are our school. Our reputation is built upon the attitudes, behaviours and appearance of all the students as they travel to and from school. Please remind your children to exhibit their best social behaviours as they travel to and from school.

### **Mobile phones**

We recognise that mobile phones and other portable devices are important to our students for contacting parents and carers and as a safety precaution that can be used to and from school. We also recognise that mobile phones can be appropriately used as learning tools. We will not ban mobile devices from the school premises, however, recent research suggests that the use of mobile phones can have a detrimental effect on student outcomes. Mobile phones affect behaviour; they can be a major distraction and can be used to bully and harm others. We do not allow the use of personal mobile phones, headphones or personal digital devices on the premises at any time during the school day. These items will be confiscated if seen used inappropriately. The only exceptions to this will be if a teacher specifically asks for students to use their mobile phone in a lesson for the purposes of learning and in lessons where headphones are a requirement. If you need to contact your child urgently please phone the school Reception and the message will be passed on to your child. Please note that any mobile phone or digital device brought into school remains the responsibility of the student.

For parents of our year 7 cohort, we recommend the purchase of a simple mobile phone and not a smart phone.

### **Extra-curricular and Breakfast clubs**

We are delaying the reintroduction of our extra-curricular activities and breakfast club until we have all resumed and become accustomed to the new ways of working at the school. We intend to build this up over time. We will communicate with you once we have reintroduced these activities.

### **Communication**

To keep you informed about school events and notices, our main format of communication will be electronic. We have moved to the SIMS Parent App for our parent communication. From September, we will no longer use My Child at School (MCAS). It is important that you use the details sent to you to log in and connect to this new app so you are kept informed. If you have not received the details or have queries, please contact Ms Haines via the [contactus@rooksheath.harrow.sch.uk](mailto:contactus@rooksheath.harrow.sch.uk) email. Letters will continue to be posted in our [Letters](#) section and other news will be available in the [Current Information](#) sections of our website. Please ensure we have your current working email address.

### **Visitors to the site**

We are sorry but in order to meet the government guidance for re-opening schools, we are not permitted to have visitors on site unless by prior appointment. In addition, it will not be possible for equipment to be dropped off at the school office during the day, so please ensure that your child has everything they need for the day ahead before they leave home.

### **And in the event of another lockdown.....**

We hope that with everyone practising appropriate social distancing and good hygiene this will not be the case, but we have been working hard to enhance our remote learning offer and your child will be introduced to Microsoft Teams which will be ready to go if required. Similarly, if any child has to self isolate, remote learning will be available for them from the first day of their absence.

It has been a challenging time for us all however, I am looking forward to working with the whole community as we strive for even greater success for all our young people. By working together, we can ensure that your children enjoy their time at school, make excellent progress and leave us with the necessary skills and attitudes to lead successful and fulfilling lives. Your support with any changes we implement will be greatly appreciated and will help continue to have a positive and successful year.

Finally, I would like to thank all our parents and carers for taking the time to read this letter to the end. It is a very long but necessary communication. It is likely that government guidance will continue to be updated and we will need to exercise flexibility without compromising on any health and safety arrangements as best as we can. Thank you in advance for your continued support and for all your previous encouragement. I have every confidence that we will work together with you for the best of all our students.

We hope you have had an enjoyable summer and I look forward to meeting you in the coming months.

We look forward to welcoming your children in September.

Yours sincerely



Mrs Miriam Manderson  
**Headteacher**