



25th August 2020

Dear Parent/Carer,

Plans for reopening – September 2020

The period of mandatory lockdown for schools is coming to an end and St Bernard's intends to be open to all students in September. All students will return to school, and school attendance now becomes compulsory once more. The starting dates and times for each year group are as follows:

Wednesday 2nd September: Year 12 students will be enrolled on their courses and have their induction activities starting at 1.30pm, entering via the school gate on Milton Road and going to the Sixth Form Common Room (SF1). They are then in school for the rest of the week.

Thursday 3rd September: Year 7 students will enter the school via the gate on Milton Road. Year 7 should arrive from 8.30am for an 8.45am start.

Year 12 should arrive from 8.45am for a 9am start.

Friday 4th September: These two year groups will be in school to continue with their induction, arriving from 8.30am for an 8.45am start.

Monday 7th September: all year groups will return, with staggered arrival times, entering via the school gate on Milton Road:

9.00am - Year 8; students should make their way to the Bernadine Hall, entering via the steps;

9.20am - Year 11; students from 11A, 11C and 11F should make their way to the Dining Hall extension; students from 11M and 11R should make their way to the library;

9.40am - Year 10; students should make their way to the Bernadine Hall, entering via the ramp;

10.00am - Year 9; students should make their way to the Gym, entering through the usual door;

10.20am - Year 13; students should make their way to the Sixth Form Common Room;

11.50am - Year 7; students should make their way to the Dining Hall;

12noon - Year 12; students should make their way to the Sixth Form Common Room.

All year groups will be dismissed between 3.20 and 3.40pm, using the school gate on Milton Road, and the vehicle gate on Canewdon Road.

As you would expect, staff have been working tirelessly to ensure that all the necessary measures are in place in order for all students to return to school in September. Covid19 has presented many challenges for schools, but we have made extensive plans to enable our community to thrive, despite the current context.

Our priorities are as follows:

- **to take every reasonable step to ensure the safety of students, parents and staff;**
- **to continue to provide our full curriculum in all year groups;**
- **to continue to provide high standards of teaching and learning that enable all students to make excellent progress.**

We must ensure that, along with every other provider, St Bernard's conforms to the expectations set out in the DfE guidance for the re-opening of schools. In order to meet these expectations, many routines will be different for our staff and students.

The first key action for parents and students is to read and carefully digest the following information.

Year Group Bubbles

Our student community will be separated into '**Year Group Bubbles**' to ensure that risk of contact with students in other year groups is minimised. As far as is reasonably possible, students will only interact with peers within their year groups. In order to achieve this, the following steps have been taken:

- some staggering of arrivals;
- arrival zones for children arriving early;
- staggered departures - school will start later and finish earlier for many children, though the amount of teaching will be the same;
- staggered break and lunch (which will be shorter);
- use of different exit points from the school site (different entry points are not required as students arrive at school at different times between 8-8.45am);
- different toilets for each year group;
- registration by the class teacher (only one form time a week for Yrs7-11; only form assemblies - no year group assemblies); Years 12/13 form time and registration will take place every day.

Procedures for Parents

Visiting or dropping of students at school: please arrange the drop off and collection of your daughter or son at a safe place some distance from the school site. Please park legally and considerately. Government guidance says that gathering at the school gates and otherwise coming onto the site without an appointment is not allowed. If a child needs to be accompanied into school, only one parent should attend.

The local authority has also asked that we remind parents of the provision for free travel which is made for eligible students. This information can be found on the "Travel Information" page on our website.

Routines to Maintain Hygiene

Whilst hand sanitiser will be available in many locations across the school, students must take responsibility for washing their hands using hot water and soap available in the toilet facilities on site. Staff will be encouraging students to maintain these routines and address any concerns accordingly and we will be endorsing the government's 'Catch it, Bin it, Kill it' hygiene campaign and be providing students with education around personal hygiene.

Teaching and Learning

The school day has been re-designed, and students will have a full curriculum, but lessons will be a different length, to reduce movement around the school and corridor congestion. Please be aware that there will be a longer turnaround in relation to assessed work, in order to ensure it is free of the virus when the teacher receives and returns students' work.

As teachers are permitted to teach across bubbles, members of staff will move around the site instead of students. Naturally, staff will be able to maintain social distancing measures with greater success than our younger students. On occasions, students will be moving to additional classrooms for practical lessons and some crossing of paths in the corridor will take place. However, our staff will maintain a high level of presence at such times to facilitate student movement as quickly and efficiently as possible.

Students who have PE on a particular day should come to school wearing their PE kit, so that the changing rooms are not required. PE Kit will not be required on Monday 7th September.

Behaviour, Safety and Wellbeing

Throughout the period of lockdown, pastoral staff have continued to provide extensive support to children and families at point of need. The wellbeing of students will be a priority for all school staff upon our return in September and students will receive lots of advice, guidance and support as we help them process the events of 2020.

Safeguarding Procedures at St Bernard's remain unchanged and will continue to fulfil all legal obligations towards safeguarding young people.

St Bernard's will continue to expect the very highest standards of behaviour and student cooperation, and the normal range of rewards and sanctions will apply.

Uniform Expectations

Expectations of student uniform will be the same as in any other year and students are expected to attend according to the standards that are set out in our uniform policy.

Attendance

The Secretary of State for education has directed all students to return to school in September and that usual standards of compulsory attendance apply. **However, if your child has any of the symptoms associated with coronavirus, they should not attend school, and should follow the**

advice issued by Public Health England. Students displaying symptoms of Coronavirus should obtain a test and contact the school's reception to inform us of the outcome.

All the guidance concerning symptoms and testing procedures can be found here:
<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/symptoms/>

Canteen Arrangements

We have worked closely with our catering team to make arrangements for the safe provision of food and drink for students during break and lunch times. Each year group will have a designated area for break and lunch. However, please be advised that there will be a significant change to the menu available to students.

Lockers

Lockers will be available for student use during the Autumn Term, but access will be limited to once early in the school day, and a second time towards the end of the school day. Lockers may be inaccessible at other times. We will be reviewing this following further communication from the government concerning the expectations around pupil movement in schools.

Risk Assessment

Details of our full Risk Assessment is available for parents in the statutory section of our website.

Next Steps

St Bernard's success has always been based on the three cornerstones of faith, staff expertise and parental support. We look forward to continuing to work in partnership with you as we ensure that, despite the impact of Covid 19, our students achieve the most they can academically and as members of our society, within the context of our Catholic faith.

Best wishes,



Mr A Sharpe
Headteacher