

The Green, Devizes, Wiltshire, SN10 3AG

Principal: Mr Phil Bevan BSc, NPQH

Tel: 01380 724886 Fax: 01380 720955

Email: devizes_school@devizes.wilts.sch.uk

www.devizeschool.co.uk



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**Devizes School
& Sixth Form College**

Raising aspirations, building futures

20th July 2020

Dear Parents & Carers,

Following on from previous communications last week, this letter contains further information regarding the opening procedures in September. **We will be writing to you again in late mid-August to further update you as government advice changes and we evolve the current plan.**

As you will be aware the Department for Education (DfE) issued guidance to schools. A full copy is available here <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/actions-for-schools-during-the-coronavirus-outbreak/guidance-for-full-opening-schools> Their plan is that all students, in all year groups, will return to school full-time from the beginning of September. In order for this to happen, we have outlined below how Devizes School can do this safely. We are really looking forward to having all students back in school. Please can I encourage you to allay any concerns over gaps in learning as these can be addressed during the course of the year.

What we can confirm at this stage is the following September Opening procedures:

- Please note (applies to year groups as of September 2020, not current year groups):
- Thursday 3rd September will be for Year 7 and 12 only
- Friday 4th September will be for Years 7, 8, 11, 12 and 13 only
- Monday 7th September all students

Year group bubbles

From September each year group will become its own 'bubble' so we can deliver the full range of curriculum subjects and students can receive specialist subject teaching. The government guidance states that the bubbles 'should be kept apart from other groups where possible' therefore, we will implement a zoned approach to school. Each year group will be allocated a zone and all of their lessons will take part in these classrooms. This will allow students to move into different sets or option blocks to allow the specialist teaching, without interacting with another year group. Guidance has stated that 'all teachers and other staff can operate across different classes and year groups in order to facilitate the delivery of the school timetable'. Each zone will also have a toilet allocated to that area.

Zoned areas would include:

o Y7 will be in A Block

o Y8 will be in the front part of B Block

o Y9 will be in back end of B Block

o Y10 will be in D Block

o Y11 will be in Sci block & specialised rooms where essential

o Y12 & Y13 – Sixth Form Block and specialised rooms where essential but also in smaller rooms around the school.

We are currently looking at how we arrange our Pastoral and SEN Hubs so that support is available without students having to mix year group bubbles.

Curriculum Timetables

All students will follow their planned two-week timetable. They will access all of their lessons to offer a breadth and depth of curriculum. The biggest challenge is where subjects require specialist rooms such as in science, DT and the performing arts. Y11 and Y13 have been prioritised, as per the guidance. This will mean for at least the initial period of the return to school that KS3 students will have more theory-based lessons than practical lessons. Classrooms cannot be easily shared across year groups. Students will be issued with their timetables on their first day back.

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PE uniform and changing for PE lessons

We are currently working on the plan that gives students as much PE in their curriculum balanced with safely accessing/cleaning changing facilities. Information will be included in the August update.

Attendance

The DfE are clear that all students should return to school in September if they are well enough to do so. 'The circumstances have changed, and it is vital for all children to return to school to minimise as far as possible the longer-term impact of the pandemic on children's education, wellbeing and wider development'. Therefore, the usual rules and graduated response for attendance will follow. Shielding for most students and families will cease from the 1st August, however there may be a very small number of students who are unable to attend in line with their own health advice.

If any family takes a summer holiday to a country that requires self-isolation, please ensure that the holiday ends 14 days before the start of the academic year so full isolation can take place. A full list of countries we can visit without self-isolation can be found at the following link - <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-travel-corridors>.

Should your child or any member of your household display COVID-19 symptoms then it is important that they stay at home, self-isolate and get tested, in line with government guidance. Students will be able to access online learning during this time. If you have concerns because of shielding, BAME background or underlying illnesses/concerns, please follow the most recent government guidelines. As it stands the law is that all pupils must attend school unless "*children are not able to attend school as parents are following clinical and/or public health advice,*" **at this point** "*absence will not be penalised.*"

If your child is unwell, please contact the school on the first day of absence and each subsequent day of absence on 01380 724886. Leave a message giving the full name and tutor group of the student with a reason for the absence. If the school does not receive notification of the absence, it will be unauthorised. If students are unwell during the school day, they should report to Student Reception, who will contact parents. Students should not contact parents directly and we ask that parents do not arrive at school until a member of the staff team has contacted them.

School Transport

The government guidance is that public transport should only be used where absolutely necessary and this is subject to change. As we plan for September this guidance is still active and therefore, we are strongly encouraging students to avoid using public transport for their school journeys unless it is not possible to do so.

The current guidance for using public transport is that people should physically distance themselves and face coverings must be worn at all times. As the vast majority of school buses are also public service buses this will apply to students using any bus to get to school unless it is a dedicated school bus. Students will not be admitted onto public transport unless they follow this guidance. This guidance will also apply to students who travel to school in taxis. We are in regular contact with Wiltshire Transport and will update again in August. The government guidance state:

- Encourage parents, staff and pupils to walk or cycle to school if at all possible
- Students reminded of the guidance and procedures for safe travelling on public transport
- Use of hand sanitiser upon boarding and/or disembarking / Additional cleaning of vehicles
- Organised queuing and boarding / Distancing within vehicles maintained in line with guidance

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Student Arrival to School

When students enter the site, they will be asked to remove their face covering, if they have worn one, (this will then need to be stored in a plastic bag or thrown away) and sanitise their hands before moving directly to their allocated zone. **If students can bring their own sanitiser, it would be greatly appreciated.**

- Y7 Access through the main gate through to Lower school dining hall doors into A- Block
- Y8 Access through the main gate round the back of A-Block to the automatic doors into B-block
- Y9 Nursted Gate – straight to B-block
- Y10 PE Gate – straight into D-Block
- Y11 PE Gate – straight into S-Block
- Y12/13 Postern Gate, Straight in through reception straight in to Sixth Form Area

Parents driving their children to school are welcome to drop them off between 8.10am and 8.20am using the most convenient drop off closest to the allocated entrance but there will be no access to parking within the school grounds (unless agreed due to exceptional circumstances). We will be asking a member of site team to help to ensure that the school drive is not used by cars.

Any student who is cycling will be locking their bikes in the school bike shed and then entering into their zone via allocated routes.

Departure of Students

Students in Y8, Y9, Y11 and Sixth Form will leave at the normal time of 3.00pm via their specified exit (same as entrance). Y7 and Y10 will leave at 2.50pm to eliminate mixing with other year groups using the same exit.

Break and Lunch Times

Each year group bubble will be allocated their own wet and dry weather social spaces. We are currently exploring how best for students to access canteen facilities. We do know that in the first instance there **will not be hot food provision**. Students in receipt of Free School Meals will continue to have food provided.

Behaviour for Learning (BfL)

It is important that when returning to school we try to maintain a sense of normality and high standards. Therefore, we will continue to use the existing positive BfL Policy as has been previously used. We will re-issue this policy with the next update. Please may we ask that you speak to your son/daughter about school standards and expectations, as whilst we do appreciate many students will have been out of school for almost six months by the time we return in September, it is essential that students are able to follow school rules and staff requests.

Classroom Expectations

As per the DfE guidance, all students will sit in rows facing forward in all classrooms where possible. To ensure year group bubbles do not mix with other year group bubbles, staff will move between rooms and students will predominantly stay in the same classroom. Students must use their reading book at the end of a lesson between the time their teacher moves to a new room and their new teacher arrives.

Uniform for September

Devizes School has high standards and expectations with regard to uniform, it creates a strong sense of identity for the school. In preparation for the new academic year, it is a very good time to reinforce these expectations particularly as we want to return to normal as soon as possible. It is therefore so important that given the other pressures/restrictions in school we would ask for your support by continuing to send students to school with the correct uniform and correct equipment for lessons, ready to learn when we return in September. To be clear, full school uniform is always expected. If there are any concerns about this, please ensure that you contact your child's form tutor at the start of the year.

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“Public Health England does not, (based on current evidence) recommend the use of face coverings in schools”. The guidance also states, ‘uniforms do not need to be cleaned any more often than usual, nor do they need to be cleaned using different methods to normal.’ A separate document is attached detailing uniform requirements. Please ensure that students are correctly attired each and every day and that uniform is clearly named.

Students will be able to bring a bag that contains their lunch box, books and stationery. Students will be expected to bring their own equipment and be prepared for their learning. Please can you make sure that students have the following every day and for all lessons in a pencil case: two black pens, two pencils, green pen, highlighter, colouring pencils, pencil sharpener, ruler, set of compasses, protractor, eraser, scientific calculator, glue stick, reading book and school planner (provided by school).

We are also asking that all students bring with them a small container of hand sanitiser, as this will greatly increase our efficiency at moving students around school.

We will be sending letters out if any student is not wearing the correct uniform or does not come to lessons with the correct equipment and we would ask that this is corrected within 7 days. Thank you for your support in this matter as the majority of students have the correct equipment, are dressed correctly and wear their uniform with pride.

Hygiene

In line with government guidance, it is important that we all regularly wash our hands and ask you to emphasise to students the importance of regular handwashing. Sanitiser/hand washing facilities will be available for when students arrive in school, leave their zones, and arrive back in their year group zones. Please reiterate that they should be washing their hands thoroughly and more often than normal. We must also ensure good respiratory hygiene by promoting ‘catch it, bin it, kill it’. To support this, tissues will be available in every classroom. Each zone will have access to a PPE kit including disinfectant spray, clothes, paper towels, face masks, gloves, aprons and hand sanitiser. Each classroom will have its own hand sanitiser and disinfectant spray and wipes. Schools will communicate with dedicated bus services to ensure that hand hygiene rules are enforced by bus companies. Students will be reminded of the hand hygiene rules daily. We will also be introducing enhanced cleaning, with more cleaning staff on site during the day to support with the cleaning of areas that are used by mixed groups e.g. the dining hall. Our **Risk Assessment** is available on the school website.

If anyone becomes unwell with a new, continuous cough or a high temperature, or has a loss of, or change in, their normal sense of taste or smell (anosmia), they **must stay at home** and you are advised to follow ‘stay at home: guidance for households with possible or confirmed coronavirus (COVID-19) infection’ and should arrange to have a test to see if they have coronavirus (COVID-19). You must inform the school of any positive tests. Other members of the household (including any siblings) should also follow the guidance on self-isolation. Should there be any health concerns, the school, students and staff will be engaging with the Track and Trace process and will seek advice from Public Health England.

Thank you once again for your continued support. 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 hope everyone is able to enjoy a safe summer and look forward to seeing all students return in September.

Best wishes,

Phil Bevan
Principal

Julian Morgan
Principal (from September 2020)

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