

15th July 2020

Dear Parent / Carer

I hope that you and your families are well as lockdown begins to ease and we adjust to a new sense of normalcy.

This Thursday is the last day of our academic year, and it is far from how we expected to end the year and term. The past four months have brought many challenges for us all, with us each having personal experiences of COVID-19 across our community. As the academy principal I have been proud of how our community has responded, with systems and provisions that we could never have expected to have needed to plan for.

The academy has remained open throughout the pandemic providing a vital provision for our most vulnerable children and the children of key workers. Alongside this we have also been delivering face to face academic sessions and tutorials for students in Year 10 and 12, and we have operated an inclusion centre for students requiring more bespoke support, all of which have been very well attended and will support students going forwards.

Our teachers have developed a platform for delivering online remote learning whilst students have not been able to come into school and our recent *Remote Learning Reflections* highlighted some great examples of dedication to learning and effort by our students during this period. It has also been pleasing to hear of how students have been accessing our community resources.

Reflecting across year groups; our new Year 7 students have participated in an exciting virtual transition programme, whilst Year 10, 11, 12 and 13 students have gained life changing qualifications and have secured a range of future destinations and opportunities.

I am pleased that we have been able to collaborate in the government processes in providing laptops and routers for our most vulnerable students and that the free school meal voucher provision continues through the summer break.

You may have seen on our academy film and via the media that our academy now looks very different as we have adapted our building and learning environments to create a safe but welcoming environment for our students and staff.

On the 2nd June the Government announced the guidance that would enable all children to return to school from September. We fully support this announcement with our belief that school is a vital part of the development of young people and supporting their life chances, but the safety of both students and staff is paramount in all of our decisions.

We are currently meticulously preparing the academy and our procedures to meet and deliver beyond this guidance so that we can firstly provide a safe and controlled environment and then we can deliver an ambitious curriculum which supports the wellbeing and academic needs of each and every one of our students. Our updated risk assessment can be found on the academy website.

Attendance

It is the expectation that all students will return to the academy as the government outlines mandatory attendance for all students with exception to those who are deemed clinically vulnerable by a medical professional. September brings us the opportunity to bring normalcy back to our young people, develop their confidence and get them back on track to achieve their full potential.

COVID-19 symptoms

If any member of the academy community, students or staff should develop symptoms of COVID-19 they should not attend the academy. The symptoms should be reported to the academy at the earliest opportunity and those affected should seek testing, communicating the outcome with the academy. This will trigger our test and trace systems working in conjunction with the Local Authority and Public Health England.

Key dates for September

- 1st September 2020 The academy will be closed to students for academy staff (INSET)
- 2nd September 2020 The academy will be open to Year 7 and Year 12
- 3rd September 2020 The academy will be open to all year groups

The academy calendar and regular updates can be found on our website.

Bubbles and zones

We are committed to delivering an ambitious, broad and balanced curriculum, with controls which mitigate transmission risks. The school is organised into year group bubbles, where whilst in school students will only come into contact with students in their own year group. Each bubble has been designated a zone within the school where they will receive the majority of their lessons, supplemented by controlled movement when classes access more specialised areas such as Science, IT, Art, Music and PE. Staff will move around the zones to teach specific subjects, minimising student movements and the risk of transmission.

The only variation on year group bubbles is the combination of Years 12 and 13 who will be within a single Post-16 bubble as this is a smaller cohort.

Learning managers and inclusion specialists are also based within each of these zones to provide support for students within each of the bubbles.

Curriculum

Whilst over the past 4 months we have endeavoured to deliver an online remote learning platform, we recognise it will never have the impact of students working directly with teachers in the classroom. Our subject directors are working in tandem with heads of department to develop schemes of work and high quality lessons that will rapidly fill gaps in learning, and re-engage students as they return to the classroom.

This, in conjunction with our Praising Stars system will enable us to identify personal needs and intervene quickly and effectively. Students should not be adversely affected academically by this pandemic and we will ensure they are not disadvantaged by the time they have missed in school.

Staggered timings

We are conscious of minimising pinch-points and potential student gatherings such as at the start and end of the day both in school and in the local community. Therefore, we have introduced staggered start and finish times for the academy day.

Year group	Arrival time	Arrival venue	Lessons start	End of the normal school day
7	8:10	Sports hall	8:25	14:30
8	9:30	Dining room	9:45	15:50
9	8:30	Sports hall	8:45	14:50
10	8:30	Dining room	8:45	14:50
11	8:10	Dining room	8:25	14:30
12 and 13	8:10	Post-16 base	8:25	14:30

It is important that students arrive as close to the arrival time as possible, to ensure they are punctual for lessons, but also to restrict contact with other bubbles and prioritise safe distancing.

Post-16 students should arrive via the Library gate, and it is restricted to this year group only to support distancing.

We have installed outdoor hand washing facilities at the entrance of the student information desk and the PE department. All students will wash their hands and sanitise when entering the academy, before lunch and at other times scheduled during the day.

Staggered breaks and lunch times

Break and lunch times are also staggered so that no more than one year group is accessing a space at any one time. To make this feasible we have created an additional dining room. We will initially be delivering a limited menu that will include hot and cold options but would recommend that where possible students initially bring a packed lunch, but we will continue to deliver free-school-meals entitlements.

The diagram below provides an insight into the updated format the academy day.



Tutor groups

We have changed our tutor groups from September, so all students in each tutor group will be from the same year group. This will enable us to deliver age and stage related pastoral support and maintain the year group bubbles.

Post-16

Our Doncaster Post-16 provision is ordinarily delivered across both Outwood Academy Adwick and Outwood Academy Danum sites. To minimise travel and the risk of transmission between sites we are proposing that initially students only attend their home site. With the technology we have been using over this period we are able to deliver lessons virtually between the two sites, enabling staff and students to be able to communicate and interact, delivering the curriculum whilst following their usual timetable. We have invested in personal equipment for each post-16 student who will access a lesson in this format.

Behaviour

Our behaviour system is built upon three key principles, being respectful, being responsible and being safe. This has never been more prevalent than in our current circumstances. We always have very high expectations of our students and we will be very clear in our expectations such as; adhering to social distancing, hygiene controls, movement around the academy, attitudes to learning and respecting safe practice for themselves, their peers and adults. We appreciate your support in relaying these expectations from home and the importance of positive behaviour at all times.

Travel

Our student catchment covers a vast area and we are conscious of how students travel to the academy and how this relates to our bubbles and social distancing, linking back to how and why we have staggered the academy day. The Government advises students to walk, cycle or travel by car to school. In some cases, students will be required to use public transport, students must wear a mask on public transport to limit the risk of transmission.

PPE

Students are not required to wear PPE other than the current guidance for wearing masks on public transport and for accessing shops and retail outlets (from 24th July). Students will remove their face masks when they arrive at school, they should be careful not to touch the front of their face covering during use or when removing them. Temporary face coverings should be disposed of in the bins at the academy entrances, reusable face coverings should be placed in a plastic bag for students to take home with them.

Local lockdowns and self-isolation

Should there be a future spike in local COVID-19 cases we will work with the Local Authority and Public Health England in taking action quickly, and we have systems in place to deliver immediate remote education provision for any students unable to access the academy.

Communication

We welcome your communication through our recent *Remote Learning Reflection* form and through the contact us button on the website so that we can work together transitioning students back into the academy. We may contact you over the course of the summer break as we continue to gain vital information that will support your child.

Please continue to follow the academy on social media via Twitter and Instagram, and updates on our website.

Summer activities

As we reach the end of the summer term I know for many of you will be considering activities to engage your children and for some parents and carers working in critical roles you are reliant on childcare. Doncaster Council are about to launch their 'Doncaster Summer Staycation'. The offer will be a mixture of virtual and face-to-face activities throughout the six-week summer break and will include a mixture of arts and crafts, sports and physical activity, employability sessions for older children, reading challenges and much more. In line with current restrictions and safety measures the majority of this provision will be delivered virtually. Please look out for how to sign-up via the Doncaster Council website and local media.

We have reached a very positive phase in these challenging times, with an opportunity to begin making positive steps in returning to normalcy, rebuilding the wellbeing and education for our students and coming back better than ever.

Our students are fantastic and resilient young people but we recognise that the impact of this pandemic will affect each individual differently. Some of our students will be anxious about returning, whilst others are excited. It is important that we work together to support our students in returning to more normal surroundings and social settings as soon as possible.

I hope that you have a great summer break and we look forward to working with you and your children in the new academic year.

Yours sincerely



Mr Andrew Scruby

Principal