



**Horizons Specialist Academy Trust**  
Providing infinite opportunities

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**James Newman**  
Principal

Thursday 20<sup>th</sup> August 2020

Dear Parents and Carers

I hope this letter finds you all well and that you have had a relaxing summer. I am writing to confirm that the plans outlined in my final letter of the term are still in place and we are expecting students back in their agreed place of education as from Wednesday 2<sup>nd</sup> September 2020 at 9.00am. As a reminder, I have included the main points from the July letter below for your information.

**Who will be expected to return to school?**

Nearly all children of legal school age will be expected to return to class full-time in September. This includes those with special educational needs and disabilities, or who have been shielding during the pandemic. We are aware that there are some exceptional cases, and for some of our most vulnerable students a return to school may not be possible at that time. Some students may benefit from a phased return but we will discuss this if the need arises. ***The first day of the new academic term is Wednesday 2<sup>nd</sup> September 2020, starting at 9.00am.***

**What if a student or family member is showing symptoms of COVID 19?**

If a student, or one their family members are showing symptoms of COVID-19, then we would ask that you keep them away from the school and seek and follow further medical advice and, where possible, get a COVID-19 test. If a student starts displaying symptoms in school then they will be isolated away from other students and arrangements will be made to get them home. Given this, it is vital that we have at least two, up to date emergency contact details for all students so we can, if required, make immediate contact with an appropriate adult to arrange transport home.

**What if there is a COVID-19 outbreak at a school?**

If a school has a suspected coronavirus outbreak - with two or more confirmed cases within 14 days, or an overall rise in suspected coronavirus sickness absence, the school will liaise with local health teams.

A mobile testing unit may arrive, focusing first on those in the affected child's or teacher's class, followed by their year group, and then the whole school if necessary.

A large number of students may be asked to self-isolate at home as a precaution, but the government says a whole school closure "will not generally be necessary" unless advised by health officials.

**What will school look like?**

Much of the guidance that we have been provided with is easy for us to implement, given the size of the school. Students will, as has always been the case, be taught in the same class for all subjects, and they will receive specialist teaching. We will still be offering a full curriculum to all students and each subject area will be focusing on ensuring that students catch up on any missed, essential work. For those students who are expecting to complete external examinations, we are confident that we will be able to achieve full coverage of the examination specifications and



course content. To do this, we will need students to be fully focused on their work and it is likely that we will start and increase the expectations around home learning. I will provide more information around this early in September.

Students will be encouraged to wash and sanitise their hands on a regular basis and I hope you will stress the importance of doing this. Hand washing and sanitisers are crucial in our joint fight against COVID-19 and students need to be aware that these facilities are vital in keeping themselves, their family members and the general public safe and that they should not be misused at all.

Whilst the previous 2m social distancing rule has been relaxed, we will endeavour to keep a distance between students and staff, where this is possible

The school has provided extra bins so students can use the 'Catch it, bin it, kill it' approach when coughing, sneezing etc.

The school has increased its cleaning arrangements around the sites in line with COVID-19 recommendations.

### **What about getting to and from school?**

Walking or cycling to school will be encouraged. Parents should not gather in groups at school gates or come on site without an appointment.

Public transport use should be kept to an "absolute minimum", especially at peak times.

The Local Authorities dedicated school transport services will be asked to:

Move children in "bubbles"

Provide hand sanitiser

Apply social distancing where possible

Ask children over 11 to wear face coverings

We will also introduce a process for staff and pupils to remove face coverings safely on arrival at school. We are in touch with school transport and they are aware that we will be fully reopened in September. If you have any questions about this please contact them on 01642 528779

### **Break and Lunch**

The size of our dining hall means that we are going to have to change how we operate at lunch times to ensure the safety of all. For the first few weeks of the term, the school will be offering packed lunches, salads and jacket potatoes as students will be asked to eat in classrooms. Each morning, a list will be sent round and students will then select their choice. This means that students will not be needing to queue in the dining hall.

Break and lunch times will differ in that students will not be able to congregate in corridors, they will be encouraged to be outside when possible as this will be the safest option for them. If this is not possible then other alternatives will be found for them. A tuck shop will still be in operation, though we are changing the items on sale to offer a more healthy range.

### **September 2020**

Now we have a clearer picture of what September will look like, I would like to highlight some key points and some changes that will be happening from the start of September 2020.

### **School Uniform**

Students quite rightly asked why we provided them with a hoodie if they were not allowed to wear the hood up in school. After a request from the student council, we have decided to update our uniform expectations, and I now expect all students to wear a Westlands V Neck jumper. Given this change, the school will be purchasing a new

jumper for each student who needs one and these will be available for them to collect on the first day back at school. If you wish to purchase extra, please contact the school office and you will be advised to how to do this. This jumper needs to be an official Westlands jumper with the school badge on it.

### **Jewellery**

Students are not able to wear any form of jewellery, including rings, necklaces, bracelets or earrings. This is not only to ensure they look smart but also greatly improves the health and safety of students.

### **Black Shoes**

Please ensure that students only wear plain black shoes or trainers. **We will insist** on this as from **Wednesday 2<sup>nd</sup> September** and will not allow any variations, especially with coloured logos, flashes, laces or soles. A copy of what is and is not allowed is included within this letter and is also available on the school website.

### **School Bags**

In line with government guidelines around COVID-19 controls, **school bags will not be needed** as students are being asked to bring in minimal items from home to improve infection control. If you feel that a student does need to bring a bag, please discuss this with the form tutor in the first instance.

### **Mobile Phones**

**As from September 2020, students will not be allowed mobile phones at Westland Academy.** Having spoken to many parents and carers about mobile phone use, as well as speaking to leaders from other schools, I think it is in the students' best interest to take the pressure off them of constantly being distracted, or feeling the need to check social media. It may be the case that some students require a mobile phone when travelling to and from school and, if this is the case, these students will be able to hand in their phone in at the start of the day and they will be stored securely (but switched off) until they are collected at the end of the day. If a student is found to be using a mobile phone in school, then it will be confiscated and will only be returned to the parent/carer. Students will be screened on entry to school each morning to ensure they comply with this, but I am sure you will welcome this move and I thank you in advance for your support.

I hope you enjoy the rest of the holidays.

Best wishes



James Newman

Principal