

Dear Parents and Carers

Thank you for taking the time to read my letter of last week, and for the questions that have been submitted.

I thought it would be useful to include all questions (as well as their answers) here, so that all parents and carers to have access to the information.

“No mention is made of coming in and leaving as close to the start/end of each day as possible...”

We have not specified an exact arrival time in order to take advantage of the staggering that naturally occurs in the morning. Please plan to arrive at school at the time you normally would, but by 8.40am.

“Previously, if my daughter arrived before form time (8.40am), she would go to the canteen to meet with friends. Do you think, based on the current guidance, that this would be the same situation? I’m not sure this would be possible to avoid groups congregating. Please could you clarify what you expect she should do upon arrival at school?”

We will be offering food collection in the morning from the designated points allocated to each year group (please refer to my letter dated 16 July for these details). Once students have collected any breakfast food, they should go directly to their form base. For students who do not wish to collect food, they should make their way directly to form bases.

“Are all desks in classrooms forward-facing? Does that apply to Computer Science?”

All standard classroom desks are facing forward. In practical DT rooms, used by Key Stage 4 and 5 students, we will be operating social distancing measures as it is not possible to move the work benches. In computer rooms the majority of computers either face forward, or face the wall. Where we have a few banks of computers facing each other, screens will be installed between them. In addition, students will be asked to wipe the keyboards with antibacterial wipes after they have used them to minimise the risk for others.

“Will we be doing temperature checks on students?”

Only if a student presents as unwell. We have ‘no-touch’ thermometers to facilitate this being done in compliance with guidance.

“Are students being advised to socially distance from each other at break times?”

We will be reminding students about the importance of social distancing, and students will only be with students in their bubble at these times.

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“Can students complete their work and keep the sheets in a folder, rather than use an exercise book?”

We have looked at the risk associated with exercise books, and do not feel that we need to change the normal way of working. Key Stage 3 students are based in the same classroom for the majority of the time, so will not need to carry them around the school. Key Stage 4 and 5 students use a combination of exercise books and folders according to the curriculum need.

“For students doing PE on the first day back, should they wear their uniform or PE kit?”

Year 7 students should wear their uniform on the first day back. If students in other year groups have PE on their first day back, they should come in their PE kit, unless it is during the first period of the day (as they will be in form time).

“What does ‘change of clothes’ mean in the case of rain on a PE day? School uniform? Alternative sportswear?”

We do not want students to be routinely using the PE changing rooms, as they cannot be easily ventilated to the standards required at the moment. It is very difficult to operate any social distancing in these spaces. The change of clothes simply needs to be a set of dry clothes that can easily fit in a student’s schoolbag, just in case they are unable to remain in their PE kit for the rest of the day. This does not need to be their school uniform. We anticipate that most students will not need to use these.

“Consultation Evenings: The move to email instead of face-to-face. How frequent will these be? Can we move them to Microsoft Teams?”

The email consultations will follow the normal pattern of consultation. This worked well with Year 10 during lockdown, where comments were emailed and questions could be answered directly. If parents and carers or staff feel that a meeting would be beneficial to discuss a particular concern, these can be arranged, via Teams, by the class teacher.

“Lunch arrangements - if we expect longer queues, should students think about have packed lunches more frequently?”

As each year group will have a designated collection point (or sitting at Sevenoaks) we do not expect the queues to be excessive. You may, of course, decide that a packed lunch is a better option for you.

“Given the additional risk to the BAME community and other vulnerable students, will the school be offering risk assessments to those concerned?”

Yes, Student Services will be in contact with our Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) staff and students (as well as any other students deemed to be at a higher risk) to discuss any additional measures we need to put in place to support them. Our BAME staff have also been contacted by both HR and our Health and Safety Team to assess their particular risk. Other staff in ‘vulnerable’ categories have also been contacted.

“As there will be no lockers, will the temptation for students to use their phones be worse and cause a distraction?”

The rules in relation to phones have not changed, other than we will expect phones to be switched off and in student bags – rather than in lockers – during the day. If a student is found to be using their phone during the day, it will be confiscated for the duration of that day. If there are students who are persistent in not following this rule, our behaviour policy will apply and parents and carers will be involved in finding a resolution.

“Will there be provision for students to work after school, if parents are unable to collect them at the same time as school finishes? For example, when younger siblings have to be collected from other schools, meaning they might not be at Weald at the same time as the school day ends?”

If this is a particular concern for you, please contact school@wealdgs.org and we will endeavour to make arrangements that are compliant with our bubbles.

“Do you have bike sheds for those who ride to school?”

We are investing in bike racks for both campus locations and will direct students, who arrive by bike, to these in September. Students will need to provide their own bike lock and we expect all students on bikes to wear helmets.

“What equipment do students need for lessons? Is there anything that parents can do to support learning from September?”

Students should have a full pencil case with them for the start of the year, including pens, pencils, highlighters, glue stick and scissors. In addition, students also need maths equipment. Examples of that equipment can be purchased [here](#) and [here](#). If any family need financial support to purchase these, please let us know so we can arrange to purchase them via our Finance department. We would not ordinarily need to ask you to provide the maths and science specific kit, but we are not able to share the class sets of calculators, as having them (and sharing their use) would mean they would have to be kept out of use for 72 hours after they have been used.

“Can students wear the summer dress in September?”

No, normal school uniform rules apply. Summer dresses are only to be worn in terms 5 and 6.

“Are students able to wear plain navy tracksuit bottoms as part of the PE kit?”

Yes, we have changed our requirements in relation to the PE kit, to allow plain tracksuit bottoms to be worn. This was put in place to reduce the cost of the school uniform.

Many thanks

Mrs E. Bone
Headteacher