

9 July '20

Dear Parent(s)/Carer(s),

I hope you're well and coping in these difficult times.

As you may be aware, on Thursday of last week the Government released its guidance for the **full-time return to school for all students from the beginning of the autumn term.**

We have worked through the guidance carefully, taking into account Health and Safety advice, and I have now revised the **Risk Assessment and Action Plan (COVID-19)** and the **Social Distancing and Infection Control Policy** (currently in draft form).

With all students returning, the situation is very different and this is only possible on the basis of the Government's relaxation of social distancing expectations, especially between students. It will still be the case that staff will be advised to keep their distance, as much as possible, both from students and from each other. It is important that students play their part and avoid getting close to members of staff and, where possible, avoid touching each other.

You will see from the revised documentation that there remains a strong emphasis on the good hygiene protocols and enhanced cleaning procedures. The one way system that was introduced will also continue – and be extended to other parts of the school. Our judgement is that it will be better for students to travel to lessons (as they ordinarily would), rather than keeping classes together as 'bubbles', based in a particular room, and having staff travel to them. We also believe that, where possible, it is better for lessons to be taught in their departmental areas.

Our approach, therefore, is to have 'year group bubbles'. This allows us to continue to use the same grouping and timetable structure and, through this familiarity, we believe that there will be a better basis for the application of the social distancing and infection control measures and a better quality of education. There is also some staggering of start/end times and break/lunch periods to aid with the separation of 'bubbles' and to support social distancing (within the practical constraints of full-time provision for all).

Your son/daughter may, understandably, be anxious about returning, particularly if they have not been in school since March and you may also have misgivings. We will do all that we can to support students, on their return, emotionally as well as academically. However, if you or your child have any specific worries, then please do get in touch, so that we can talk these through with you.

Clearly, the COVID-19 situation is changing all the time and, by September, the national, or local, situation may require a 'Plan B' response. Furthermore, even in a 'Plan A' situation, there will be a small number of students who will be unable to attend, either due to specific medical conditions (as advised by a medical specialist) or because they are self-isolating. We will therefore also have a continuing online version of good quality curriculum provision.

However, in general, **students are expected to attend** – Government guidelines are very clear on this and we will therefore be following our usual attendance management procedures.

Of course, the clear exception to this is **when a young person has COVID-19 symptoms, or where someone in their household has symptoms**. In these circumstances, **they should not to come onto the site**. Furthermore, anyone who has tested positive in the last seven days must also not come onto the site.

Where there are COVID-19 symptoms, students, their parents and other members of their households are eligible for testing and should take advantage of this service. Tests can be booked through the [NHS 'Test and Trace' website \(111 Coronavirus service\)](#), or by calling NHS 119.

Please note carefully the proposed staggered start/end times and break/lunch times for different year groups (as below):

	Start	Break	Lunch	End
Years 7 - 9	8.30 am	9.50 - 10.10 am	12.10 - 12.50 pm	2.45 pm
Years 10 / 11	8.40 am	10.50 - 11.10 am	1.10 - 1.50 pm	2.55 pm
Years 12 / 13	8.30 am	10.50 - 11.10 am	1.10 - 1.50 pm	2.55 pm

Also, please ensure that your son-daughter is aware that they must arrive within 10 minutes of the start of their school day (and no earlier).

Students will be expected to wear school uniform (which, other than for Year 11, is the new version). We do understand, though, that these are financially challenging times for many families and so, once again, please do get in touch if this presents difficulties for you.

We anticipate that school transport will be up and running again, with specific provisions in place. If your son/daughter is using this service, please ensure that they have a face mask for the journey (and, for non-disposable masks) a plastic bag in which to secure it for the day. A further communication should be on its way to you soon to confirm your booking for September.

Please note that, consistent with Government advice, **it will generally not be permitted for students to wear face masks in school**.

If you have any comments, queries or suggestions in relation to the documents attached, please let me know by the end of the day on **Tuesday 14 July** – by email to stuart.jones@stephensuttonmat.co.uk. As before, the Social Distancing and Infection Control Policy will be the most easy to digest. I am sure that you will understand that these draft documents had to be drawn up in a very tight time-frame. Nevertheless, I appreciate that the period for further consultation is relatively short. The documents are now also being distributed to directors/governors (although I have had some discussions) and the wider staff team – there is not enough time to layer the consultation. I will aim to circulate a revised version on Wednesday or Thursday of next week. However, the risk assessment will be subject to continuous review, so feedback will continue to be very welcome after the consultation deadline.

Best wishes - stay safe.

Stuart Jones
Executive Headteacher