

1<sup>st</sup> September 2020

Dear Parents and Carers

### Return to school

As the summer holidays draw to a close I just wanted to take the opportunity to confirm that, as planned, Budmouth will be open to all students at the start of term. After so much disruption to their learning, our staff cannot wait to get back to the business of face to face learning for all students. It will be a little different, but I am sure we will all settle into the new routines very soon. In particular, we are excited to be welcoming our new students joining Year 7 and Year 12.

Our plans have not changed and remain the same as in the letters that were sent at the end of term. Our staff have been busy over the summer preparing the new timetable to accommodate the year groups 'bubbles' and in making physical alterations to the site to enable this to happen safely. How long we will be required to work in this different way remains to be seen. In the meantime, we will all get stuck in and make the best of our 'new normal'. I know our students are going to be fantastic in helping this to work.

A final reminder of the key dates:

- **Friday 4<sup>th</sup> September:** Year 7 Induction Day and 6<sup>th</sup> Form Registration Day.
- **Monday 7<sup>th</sup> September:** Years 8, 9, 10, 11, 12 and 13 Tutorial Sessions. Please check your arrival times carefully. Year 7 is not in school on this day.
- **Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> September:** Full timetable begins for all year groups.

### Face Coverings

If you have been following the news, you will have seen that the issue of face coverings in schools has created a lot of debate in recent weeks as counties within the United Kingdom have been adopting different positions. In England it remains the case that face coverings do not need to be worn in schools in areas of the country that are not subject to special restrictions. Specifically, the guidance from the Department for Education states:

*'The government is not recommending universal use of face coverings in all schools. Schools that teach children in years 7 and above and which are not under specific local restriction measures will have the discretion to require face coverings for pupils, staff and visitors in areas outside the classroom where social distancing cannot easily be maintained, such as corridors and communal areas and it has been deemed appropriate in those circumstances. Primary school children will not need to wear a face covering. In particular, schools that teach years 7 and above may decide to recommend the wearing of face coverings for pupils, staff or visitors in communal areas outside the classroom where the layout of the schools makes it difficult to maintain social distancing when staff and pupils are moving around the premises, for example, corridors. In primary schools where social distancing is not possible in areas outside of classrooms between members of staff or visitors, for example in staffrooms, Headteachers will have the discretion to decide whether to ask staff or visitors to wear, or agree to them wearing face coverings in these circumstances. Based on current evidence and the measures that schools are already putting in place, such as the system of controls and consistent 'bubbles', face coverings will not be necessary in the classroom even where social distancing is not possible. Face coverings would have a negative impact on teaching and their use in the classroom should be avoided'.*

.../

Although the guidance is very clear that the use of face coverings is not required, we are mindful that some students who are returning to school may be anxious and in some cases they are living with relatives whose personal health condition means they have to be much more cautious. It is for these reasons we are not prohibiting the wearing of a face covering by students in school. All we ask is that if you do want your child to wear a face covering whilst they are in school, please would you contact Justin Abbott, our Medical Officer: [jabbott@budmouth-aspirations.org](mailto:jabbott@budmouth-aspirations.org), so that we can keep an accurate record of who is wearing one and ensure that any children who take this approach have some guidance on how to wear them correctly and especially in their safe removal.

However, the Academy Trust is recommending that all children do carry a face mask with them, even if they are not wearing it in school. There are a number of reasons for this. Firstly, it is compulsory on all forms of public transport. Secondly, it is compulsory in all shops. Finally, whilst we have arrangements in place to keep students in their 'bubbles', there might be an occasion where the mass movement of students and staff in a common area is unavoidable. The most obvious example of this would be in the event of a fire alarm, where a quick and safe exit to our assembly point has the highest priority and cannot wait for year groups to go one at a time. In this situation the wearing of a face covering would be advised as social distancing could not be guaranteed.

### **Changing for Sport**

This is another area where schools are taking different approaches depending on their student numbers and facilities. We know that in some schools students are being asked to wear their Sport kit all day on days when they have Sport. There are some issues with this:

- Students who get wet or muddy during morning lessons might find this uncomfortable for the rest of the day.
- It is not good hygiene practice to participate in strenuous physical activity and then remain in those same clothes, including socks, all day without changing.
- Some students might feel self-conscious about wearing their Sport kit all day.

We understand why some schools have taken this approach but we will not be following it. Instead we have decided to employ additional cleaning staff and have purchased a special sanitizing machine that will be used in the changing areas between the different year groups using them. As we are having longer Sport lessons this term there are also far fewer occasions where the changing rooms will be used by different year groups in one day. We will monitor this carefully but we hope it will enable a more normal sport experience to take place and enable the students to practice good hygiene after their physical activity.

### **Uniform Orders from Brigade**

Many of you are aware that these challenging times have impacted on many businesses and Brigade, our uniform supplier, has not been immune to this. Many of you who placed your orders before the 7<sup>th</sup> August deadline would have received your orders, with others of you receiving them this week. We are aware of a very small percentage of you who have been contacted directly by Brigade as they have been unable to fulfil your full order. Please accept our and Brigade's sincere apologies for the understandable disappointment and inconvenience this may cause and trust that Brigade are working with us to ensure that orders are dispatched as soon as possible. With regard to orders that were placed after the 7<sup>th</sup> August deadline (73 families in total), Brigade is currently quoting 4-6 weeks from the date the order was received. This will be constantly reviewed. However, please rest assured that we will not be penalising students who are still waiting for items to arrive. We just ask you to write a short note to their Tutor explaining the individual issue.

### **And finally.....**

I do hope the students enjoy their last few days of the holiday and make the most of it. Our outgoing Years 11 and 13 students were able to end the year on a positive note and we enjoyed seeing them collect their results and share the excitement of the next steps they are taking. In the case of Year 13 these next steps are taking them all over the country. After such an unusual year, these Results' Days were a good reminder of what we are trying to achieve in helping our students to be successful. It is with this in mind that we now look forward to 2020/21.

Yours sincerely



David Herbert