

11th September 2020

Dear Parent and Carer

I hope that your child has enjoyed coming back to school this week. Our staff certainly have and there has been an overwhelming sense of 'relief' in getting back into a routine again. After so long away I do think it might take a little time for us all to get used to having over 1,700 people back on site together again! It has certainly been interesting for everyone having to get used to our new systems and working practices. I do hope that these have enabled the students to feel safe coming back and for you to feel confident as well. We are delighted that our attendance has been 98% so far and thank you very much for supporting this. I think the students deserve special praise for the amazing way that they have come back being ready to learn, looking smart and adapting to the new school day. Making good plans is all very well, but until they have real people to test them, you can never be sure what works and what does not! I have no doubt that our plans will be tweaked as the days and weeks progress and as we get feedback from students, staff and parents.

Parents and visitors on site

An 'InTouch' message was sent at the start of the week confirming that, at the current time, we are not able to allow parents on site without an appointment, unless there is an emergency. If parents or friends and family are collecting children on foot, we kindly ask them to wait off site. If a child is being picked up in the car, then we request that adults stay in the car and this will help us avoid large group gatherings. Given that we are making these requests, we are happy to allow students to use their mobile phones once they are out of the school building as this may be helpful in them finding you and vice versa. Thank you for your understanding with this. In circumstances where talking to a member of staff is necessary, our preference is that this takes place via a phone call or in a video meeting. In circumstances where a face to face meeting is essential, we will book a meeting room where social distancing can be observed and the room will be sanitized before and after the meeting.

Contacting Staff

In a large school it is always helpful if any questions or queries you might have go directly to the relevant member of staff. This means that you will get a quicker reply. We aim to respond to non-urgent communications within 72 hours and urgent communications within 24 hours. Here is the link giving details of who to contact at Budmouth Academy: <https://budmouth.academies.aspirationsacademies.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/4/2020/09/Who-to-contact-at-Budmouth-Academy.pdf>

Evening Events

It will probably come as no surprise to you that the majority of our after school and evening events that bring together large numbers of staff, students and parents in one place will not be able to go ahead at the current time. We will look for alternative ways to share important information, but events that were scheduled for this half term and now find themselves cancelled are:

- Year 7 and Year 12 Tutor Evenings (22nd September)
- Open Days/Evenings (30th September and 1st October)
- Year 11 Raising Achievement Evening (8th October)

Bike Lockers

Students are still permitted to ride their bikes to school. Please remember that the wearing of a bike helmet is essential and that bikes must not be ridden on the site itself. To help with the 'bubbles', we have allocated the bike lockers in areas. Here is the link to the location of bike lockers: <https://budmouth.academies.aspirationsacademies.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/4/2020/09/Push-Bike-Locations.pdf>

Lockers

In normal circumstances we encourage students to use lockers which can help prevent them from carrying unnecessary items all day. Unfortunately, the current circumstances make use of lockers (except for 6th formers) impossible as they are positioned in different places around the site and often in other year groups' 'bubble' area.

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Feedback to students

We have been in contact with the Department for Education to receive guidance on the safety of receiving work from students, reading it, providing feedback and then giving it back. Scientific guidance seems to differ on the length of time that Covid-19 can live on various surfaces. In order that we can keep everyone safe, teachers will only be able to collect in work that has remained in school. In the vast majority of cases therefore students' books will be kept in school. As they are sanitizing their hands before and after lessons this means that it is safe for staff to review their work. However, teachers cannot take the books home. This does provide more of a challenge in marking work, especially as our staff are not staying in their own classroom this term, but instead are moving to visit the students. During this period of time the majority of feedback will take place in the following ways:

- Feedback via Google Classroom.
- Whole Class feedback: this is when the teacher reads the work of all of the students and then shares one common feedback sheet with them, highlighting the main strengths and areas for improvement.
- Verbal feedback.

Important assessment such as marking tests, or practice exams, will still take place and we will find ways to give staff time to undertake this important activity, on site.

Extra-Curricular Clubs

In the first two full weeks back, staff are getting used to their new routines and very different timetables. We hope to have an adapted clubs' timetable to be sent out ready to start the week beginning Monday 21st September. Groups like the Combined Cadet Force are still receiving guidance on safe ways that they might be able to operate. Any club which has mixed age groups is much more difficult to plan for. We will do our best to put on whatever we can, even if it is different or on a smaller scale.

6th Form Employability Diploma

Having to say goodbye to our Year 11 far too early last year was very difficult. However, we are delighted that we have welcomed the majority of them back into Year 12 and they are settling into 6th Form life very well. We are pleased that our highly successful CEIL programme has been recognised by the Trust. Our Director of CEIL, Marcel Ciantar, has been working hard to develop this even further and has created a new 'Employability Diploma' that will help support students' learning and develop those wider skills that they will need long after they have left school. Marcel has also been given the opportunity to develop this programme in all of the Sixth Forms in the Aspirations Academies Trust. It is good that the quality and value in this programme has been recognised.

Homework

One positive thing to come out of the closure of schools was the very fast development of 'Google Classroom' in supporting independent learning. This will continue to be the main way that we will set homework for all students. To avoid duplication, staff will not therefore be setting homework on SIMS separately. Therefore we have removed this module from the SIMS Parent App and the SIMS Student App. Mr Clark (Assistant Principal) is leading our developments with online learning and we will be able to confirm soon how you can stay aware of homework that has been set so you can help support your children with their organisation and planning.

Morning Break

One of the ramifications of the new 'bubble' arrangements is our inability to provide the usual common morning break time with access to the canteens/play areas. As we are now coming towards the end of the first week, we are making arrangements to specify a ten minute break where students can relax and eat a snack if they have one. Although these have already happened naturally in some cases, each group has a slightly different timetable and we need to be clearer so that no students are disadvantaged.

Mr Bartlett

I am very sorry to inform you that Mr Bartlett has been unable to return to work this term. He has been diagnosed with lymphoma and is undergoing treatment. I know he was so pleased to be able to see his outgoing Year 11 students collect their GCSE results. He is in good spirits and sends his best wishes to everyone and is focussed on getting well and coming back to work in the future. Mr Bartlett is the Pastoral Support Leader for Hawking School and during his absence we are delighted that Mr Pring and Mrs Lawrence will be on hand to support Miss Ives (Head of Hawking) working with the students.

Yours sincerely



David Herbert