

15th September 2020

Dear parents and carers,

Thank you for all your patience and support in helping us to reopen our GFM secondary schools. We would like to recognise the patience displayed by children and families in helping to overcome the inevitable challenges. It is recognised that this has been an exceptionally challenging time and we would like to share our next steps which are designed to improve the provision for our learners.

The School Day

The Bay House and Brune Park School sites are some of the largest single-campus school settings in the country and making these 'Covid-19 secure' has been a significant undertaking. We have received feedback from parents that we have not always communicated the challenges that this has brought. Today we are also publishing a video for parents and pupils to explain these changes in more detail.

The public health advice we have implemented follows a PHE-endorsed 'system of controls', building on the hierarchy of protective measures that have been in use throughout the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. These measures have been implemented alongside our revised risk assessments in order to create an inherently safer environment for children and staff where the risk of transmission of infection is substantially reduced.

The main methods we have used to reduce the potential for virus transmission are:

- staggering start, finish and movement times for each year group
- grouping children together in 'bubbles' (which has sometimes necessitated changes to tutor groups)
- avoiding contact between groups by establishing zones
- arranging classrooms with forward facing desks as much as possible
- staff maintaining distance from pupils and other staff as much as possible
- encouraging all staff and pupils to wear face coverings when in indoor communal areas

We do, however, recognise that the current model of 'staggering' is providing a range of challenges for families. Having implemented the trial period we now have an increased confidence that we can reduce the staggering of the school day significantly whilst using other controls to keep staff and learners safe.

Therefore, from 21st September the school day will be reformatted as follows:

- Year 7, 8 and 9 pupils will start school at 8.45am every day and finish at 3.00pm
- Year 10 and 11 pupils will start school at 9.00am every day and finish at 3.15pm
- Sixth Form students will start at 9.15am every day and finish at 2.45pm

	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10	Year 11	Sixth Form
08:30						
08:45						
09:00						
09:15	1	1	1	1	1	1
09:30						
09:45						
10:00	Break	Break	Break			
10:15						
10:30						
10:45	2	2	2	2	2	
11:00						
11:15						
11:30	Tutor Time	Break (Lunch)	Tutor Time	Break (Lunch)	Tutor Time	
11:45						
12:00	Break (Lunch)	Tutor Time	Break (Lunch)	Tutor Time	Break (Lunch)	Break (Lunch)
12:15						
12:30						2
12:45						
13:00	3	3	3	3	3	
13:15						
13:30						
13:45				Break	Break	
14:00						
14:15	4	4	4	4	4	
14:30						
14:45						
15:00						
15:15						
15:30						
15:45	Online Learning	Online Learning	Online Learning	Online Learning	Online Learning	
16:00						
16:15						
16:30						

We recognise that this will bring some additional challenges (particularly in terms of using all three entrances in the mornings, at lesson changeovers and at lunch) but we are now confident that we can make this change because across each of our sites we have learned that we cannot use a 'one-size-fits-all' approach where the 'system of controls' describes every scenario. However, over the last week we have worked hard to understand the needs of each school and community and have made informed judgments about how to balance delivering a broad and balanced curriculum with the measures needed to manage risk.

Of course, this does not mean that we do not remain rigorous in our management of Health and Safety procedures. In order to make the school sites as safe as possible we will need to ensure that there remains:

- a requirement that people who are ill stay at home
- robust hand and respiratory hygiene
- enhanced cleaning arrangements
- active engagement with NHS Test and Trace
- formal consideration of how to reduce contacts and maximise distancing between those in school wherever possible and minimise the potential for contamination so far as is reasonably practicable

Timetables

We are now **very** close to the stage where permanent timetables can be published to our young people. We would anticipate these would be printed and distributed to our learners by the end of this week. Please bear with us at this challenging time whilst we get these essential systems in place.

The majority of learners are currently working in tutor groups for their lessons. This was a decision taken for the start of the year to support learners as they returned to school with consistent groups, but this will not be something we will want to continue. The next stage of timetable development will be to review groupings within bubbles for each year group. We will keep you informed of any changes to groupings over the course of this half term.

Online

You will notice that online learning sessions appear on the timetable above. This will give pupils the opportunity to engage with a range of additional remote learning activities (e.g. the use of learning apps or live/recorded sessions) as a supplement to their full school day. Pupils will be able to opt for online learning as a flexible method for catch-up, enrichment, intervention or as an enhancement to home learning. However, this does not replace homework set by the teacher in the normal way. We recognise in our attempts to deliver online learning during the transition weeks, that there have been logistical difficulties and technical lessons to learn. We apologise for this and continue to work hard to improve this offer.

The DfE has been clear that schools are expected to consider how to continue to improve the quality of their online existing offer and have a strong contingency plan in place for remote education provision by the end of September in case of further 'lockdowns'. The inclusion of some remote learning on our timetable may be important to support a scenario in which the logistical challenges of remote provision are greatest, for example where large numbers of pupils are required to remain at home.

In addition to the work our staff are supplying our students across the phase, in the event of students needing to self isolate they can also access the Government endorsed online platform - Oak National Academy. Oak is a collection of high-quality lessons and online resources. Backed by the Government, it has been created in response to the coronavirus lockdown for national use. Online classrooms offer free access to teachers, delivering video lessons, quizzes and worksheets. All of the lessons are ordered so that your child can follow with a clear, structured plan. Oak National Academy fits alongside our own curriculum offer and is in addition to our Google classroom resources and Apps to offer a structure for the day for those students across the phase who need to self isolate. Oak National Academy can be found online via the following link - <https://www.thenational.academy/>.

Kind regards,

The Secondary Headship Team