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Headteacher: Mr M Wignall

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Dear Parent/Carer

Firstly, may I welcome year 7 parents/carers to Downlands - we are so pleased you are joining our community. Thank you so much to our existing parents/carers for the ongoing support and many supportive messages we have received over the difficult months of school closure.

In September, all students will be returning to school. As you can imagine, this has presented us with many logistical challenges and I am writing to provide details about the measures we are taking to ensure we can continue to provide outstanding provision whilst ensuring all in our community remain safe.

School organisation

The government released [guidance](#) in July relating to the safe return to school of all students. The guidelines necessitate major changes in school organisation and dictate that students will need to be kept in year group 'bubbles' – i.e. each year group will be kept apart from the others. The rationale behind this is that if there are infections in one year group, this 'bubble' can be removed from the school while students self-isolate for 14 days and the school can remain open for the remaining year groups. Students will be able to access the entire curriculum although there will be limited access to practical spaces at Key Stage 3 for safety reasons; practical spaces will be prioritised for Key Stage 4 students so they can complete examination work. We will be reviewing the arrangements regularly and the operation of the school will depend on the local and national Covid-19 picture. It is our hope that these restrictions can be lifted as soon as possible but the safety of our community will always remain at the heart of our decision making. Students teaching areas, social areas and toilets are detailed below:

Year Group	Teaching area*	Social area	Wet weather area	Toilets
7	Science	Amphitheatre and picnic benches	Sports Hall	Sports Hall (PE)
8	Mathematics	Playground – Windmills end.	Hall	Mathematics
9	English	Playground – Car park end.	Old gym	Cloakroom toilets nearest new block
10	Humanities	Canteen and courtyard	-	Library toilets
11	New block – top two floors.	Common Room, cloakrooms and middle section of playground.	-	Cloakroom toilets nearest reception

* additional zoned rooms will be allocated to each area to facilitate the timetable.

Arrival and departure

Each year group will have a designated arrival time and arrival area (below) so that students can be kept in their 'bubbles' when on site. Different year groups will also be physically separated as they make their way along the drive. Students must arrive on site at the correct time as all available staff will be supervising students at their staggered start times – the



canteen will not be open before school. Staff will be on duty on the drive and at the gate and we must keep the area at the foot of the drive clear. For safety reasons therefore:

- Parents should not drop off or pick up students in the vicinity of the school – please find alternatives.
- The area at the end of the school drive including the junction of Windmills Avenue will be a 'no waiting' zone for pedestrians.
- Parents should not access the school site – please see our [Covid-19 visitor policy](#).

Year Group	Arrival time (am)	Arrival area
7	8.45	Back of school
8	8.50	Playground – Windmills End
9	8.55	Playground – Car Park end
10	9.00	Back of school
11	9.05	Playground

In case of wet weather students will be directed straight to their Teaching area.

Students will be released in a controlled manner to maintain the year group 'bubbles' from 2.45pm.

Revised school day

Organising the school into 'bubbles' has necessitated changes to the school day to manage the new arrangements. To facilitate adequate supervision of the five social areas we have reduced the length of break and lunchtime but the amount of time students spend learning in class remains the same. We have kept tutor time due to the importance of the morning 'check-in' but the length of this varies due to the staggered start times.

Time	
8.45 onwards	Arrival and tutor time (as above)
9.10	Lesson 1
10.05	Lesson 2
11.05	Break – no food will be served (see Catering section below)
11.20	Lesson 3
12.15	Lunch (see Catering section)
12.45	Lesson 4
1.40	Lesson 5 including 10 minutes DEAR* time for Key Stage 3
2.45	School will be dismissed by year group.

*DEAR time – Drop Everything And Read

Transport

The government is strongly advising students to walk or cycle to school where possible. We are currently liaising with transport providers and have asked for their risk assessments. We will update parents in September once we have received this information. As already stated, parents are asked not to drop students in the vicinity of the school and are reminded that the area at the foot of the drive is a no waiting zone for safety reasons.

Catering

In order to service the five social areas, food will need to be ordered in advance so it can be bagged and delivered to each area in time for lunch at 12.15. We will write to parents in September with details of the online system and App that will be used to order food and also provide details of the menu. We are planning that students will be able to continue to make food choices until the end of tutor time at 9.10am. The food order will not be ready for break time at 11.05 so students may wish to bring a snack from home also.

Students may bring a packed lunch.

Lockers

Due to the zoning of the school, we will not be able to offer lockers when we come back to school in September. Please accept our apologies if you have booked a locker – we will be contacting parents separately with details.

Site safety

In addition to the changes outlined above, we have introduced a range of control measures to ensure our school community is safe on-site. These include:

- Wall mounted hand sanitiser on every entrance point to the building
- Hand sanitiser at the entrance to every classroom
- Extra cleaning routines to ensure the school is deep cleaned at least once a week
- All bins to have lids
- Extra cleaning routines for toilets, social areas and often used surfaces for example door handles, bannisters etc.

Our risk assessment will be posted on the website at the start of the new term.

Start of Term

Thursday 3 and Friday 4 September

Staff will finalise preparations on the school site and receive extra training bearing in mind the changes to school organisation and the impact this will have on working practices. Transition will begin on Friday for students with SEND by invitation only.

Monday 7 September – Year 7 Induction Day – only year 7 students will be on site. Year 7 students will complete their 'taster day' as we were unable to offer an on-site transition programme over the summer. The day will follow normal arrangements for taster day although no food will be available. The day will begin at 8.45am and end at 12.20pm – a further letter with full details will be sent to parents before the start of term.

Tuesday 8 September - Year 7 students will arrive at 8.45 am. Years 8 to 11 will arrive from 11am as follows – students will be directed to their designated arrival area (see table above):

Year 8	11.00am
Year 9	11.05am
Year 10	11.10am
Year 11	11.15am

Students will receive an induction and safety briefing in tutor time during period 3 and lessons will begin period 4 – please see the revised school day structure. Students should ensure they have ordered food by 9.10am.

Wednesday 9 September – school will begin as per the revised timetable for all students.

Inset Days

INSET Days will fall on the following dates:

Friday 2 October
Friday 4 December
Monday 4 January
Friday 23 July

The school will finish at 1.25pm on Thursday 1 October (Open Evening) and also Monday 8 March and Monday 10 May for staff training.

Uniform and behaviour policy

We are proud of the high standards that define our school. A revised code of conduct (to include Covid-19 issues) has been developed and we will continue to operate after school detentions in a similar manner to before the school closure. Detentions will begin at 2.45 and end at 3.25 and provision will be made for longer sanctions where necessary.

Students who are unable to adhere to behaviour policy will serve sanctions on the same day wherever possible. Parents/carers will be informed by text of the sanction and are asked not to organise commitments before 3.45pm each day in order to facilitate this.

Students are expected to wear [full uniform](#) as detailed on the website but may attend school in their sports kit on days they have PE as the changing rooms are not available. Students will be allowed to wear smart tracksuit bottoms and

sports sweatshirts on these days and will be taking part in risk assessed outdoor physical activities unless the weather is inclement.

After school activities

Apart from detentions there will be no after school activities for the first few weeks of term. We will review this in line with our own arrangements and also government policy.

Homework and returning to school

The beginning of term will be a potentially challenging time for students as they return to school to routines most of them have not experienced for nearly six months. Therefore, we will not be setting homework for the first week and will then only set Maths, English and Science in week 2. We are planning to return to setting full homework in week three but will review this based on our judgement of students wellbeing.

Attendance

On 2 July, guidance was published to announce that from September 2020 all children and young people are expected to attend school unless exceptional circumstances apply.

Track and Trace

It is important that students and staff do not attend school if they have Covid-19 symptoms, or have tested positive in the last 7 days. If anyone in the school becomes unwell with a new, continuous cough or a high temperature, or has a loss of, or change in, their normal sense of taste or smell (anosmia), they will be sent home and advised to follow the stay at home guidance and be tested for Covid-19 – see [track and trace](#) guidelines. Our medical room has supplies of PPE and we also have an isolation room if necessary. We are in close contact with Public Health England so we are able to follow their procedures should they be necessary next term.

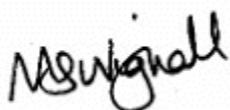
Finally....

We are very aware of the challenges returning to school may bring and we will be on hand to support students and families in any way possible to ensure their successful reintegration to school. Our plans will be routinely reviewed following Public Health England, DfE and other government guidance and we will communicate any changes to you as soon as possible.

Thank you for your support as we continue to finalise the details of these unprecedented changes to school organisation. I very much hope that the provisions outlined above are as temporary as possible but we must plan for them remaining in place for at least the Autumn Term.

I will write to you again at the start of term and in the meantime please let me know if you have any queries.

Yours faithfully



Mr M Wignall
Headteacher