



THE BUCKINGHAM SCHOOL

A SPECIALIST SPORTS COLLEGE

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Headteacher: Mr A McGinnes

21 October 2020

Dear Parent/Carer,

I trust that this letter finds you and your family safe and well. I am writing to you as we complete our review of the first term operating as a large school during a pandemic.

There are two key messages in this letter:

1. An important change to our routines during the day.
2. The closure of the school for a single day, on Tuesday, 24th November, for a mid-term deep clean of the premises – The Royal Latin School will be closed on the same day.

It seems extraordinary to think back to March, with the visit of Ofsted, closely followed by a national lockdown. We have learned an incredible amount about operating safely in the current environment and we have constantly evaluated the effectiveness of the measures we have in place.

We have established some very successful routines around hygiene and can proudly report that the students follow them very well indeed whilst in school. We have had one single confirmed case of Covid-19 in our student community so far, and we were able to quickly identify and contact the other students potentially affected and communicate to the rest of the community.

We conducted a significant staff and student voice survey last week. The feedback identified that our staff are finding the current arrangements difficult, but are as willing as ever to do what it takes to provide our students with what they need.

The feedback from students, especially those in Years 7-9, are finding the current set up increasingly challenging. In particular, they are finding it increasingly difficult being “cooped up” in the same classroom all day, and are beginning to struggle to remain consistently focused and engaged in the quality of education that we are providing. They are also deprived of teaching in specialist areas, such as Science.

In considering these issues and recognising that our students are required to wear masks in circulation areas, which presents negligible risk in the corridors as they follow our one-way systems, we have decided to introduce a more carefully structured routine throughout the day. This revised structure which will allow students more movement around the site. It will mean that year groups are more likely to encounter each other a little more often during lesson change-overs, but they will all have just sanitised their hands, they will all be wearing masks and they will all be moving in the same direction.

The Buckingham School is concerned that every student should have the opportunity to attend school activities/obtain equipment, regardless of their financial circumstances. As such, it may be possible to subsidise those students who would otherwise be unable to attend trips/purchase items. Please feel free to write in confidence to Mrs K Bones at kbones@buckinghamsschool.org, if you wish to seek assistance, or obtain more information about Pupil Premium funding.



Before the start of term, we published our “Return to School” booklet. Most of the content remains unchanged. The following are just some of the measures that will still apply after October half term:

- We are operating three different entrances to the school
- The day is split into 12 periods of half an hour, which allows us to split pupil breaks – only two year groups are on a break at the same time, in different areas
- Mass gatherings are still not allowed during breaks, and students are not allowed to physically touch each other
- Because the students have split breaks, they are not all moving at the same time throughout the day
- Pupils will still have their own year group toilets
- Every classroom will still have its own supply of cleaning products, and hand sanitiser is available in the corridors
- The rule that students also carry their own sanitiser continues
- Students continue to sit in rows, facing forwards, unless specific other instructions are issued
- The restrictions/care on equipment use that apply to Science, Music, Art, Technology and PE, continue
- The rule that students wear face masks during circulation is extended to any lesson changeover, even outside
- Staff continue to wear visors and/or masks for their own protection
- Students will clean down their desk, place on their mask and sanitise their hands, before leaving a classroom
- Cleaning of touchpoints continues throughout the day.

As we have done all along, we will keep measures under constant review. We will continue to take every opportunity to operate hygienic routines and to keep the school as clean as possible. Therefore, after consulting with The Royal Latin School, we will be closed on Tuesday, 24th November, to allow for a deep clean of the whole school site. No school transport buses will operate that day.

We cannot thank our community enough for the support that we have enjoyed during these unprecedented challenges to us all. It’s heartening to our staff – cleaners, caterers, site team, teaching assistants, other support staff, admin staff and teachers – to receive your personal messages of thanks, recognising their part in the whole community’s effort to stay united and support each other.

With my best wishes,



Mr A McGinnes

Headteacher

aallen@buckinghamsschool.org

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