



# THE BUCKINGHAM SCHOOL

## A SPECIALIST SPORTS COLLEGE

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Headteacher: Mr A McGinnes

26 February 2021

Dear Parents and Carers

I hope that my letter finds you and your loved ones in good health.

I am writing to you following the Prime Minister's announcement about the "Road Map" out of Lockdown. For further information about this, please refer to the Covid-19 section on the Gov.uk website: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-response-spring-2021>

### **Reopening on 8<sup>th</sup> March**

The Buckingham School will fully reopen to all students on Monday 8<sup>th</sup> March. We will not be phasing the return in any way, or delaying the return of any groups of pupils. All pupils should attend on that day.

### **Important: Testing begins next week, on 1<sup>st</sup> March**

One of the requirements of the School is that we provide each pupil with the opportunity of three Lateral Flow Tests, three to five days apart. We start our testing programme on Monday 1<sup>st</sup> March. A letter, outlining the arrangements, should already have reached you.

If you have not already confirmed your consent (or confirmed that you do not give consent), you should have received a link to do so in that letter. Whilst testing is not a pleasant experience, we do encourage you to give permission for your child to be tested at school, by our trained team. However, testing is not compulsory for staff or students.

### **Attendance**

Attendance at school is compulsory from 8<sup>th</sup> March, except for a tiny handful of pupils who will still be unable to attend in line with public health advice to self-isolate because they:

- have symptoms or have had a positive test result
- live with someone who has symptoms or has tested positive and are a household contact
- are a close contact of someone who has Coronavirus (COVID-19)

The rules around symptoms and self-isolating can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus>

### **School Uniform – suspended until Summer Term**

There are a number of issues facing our families in relation to the availability of uniform and we have taken the decision that school uniform will not be required when students return on 8<sup>th</sup> March. We will keep this decision under constant review and you can expect that your child is required to wear uniform after the Easter Holiday. If financial hardship presents an issue to obtaining uniform, please do contact the school via [finance@buckinghamschool.org](mailto:finance@buckinghamschool.org).

The usual expectations about non-uniform will apply. No inappropriate clothing or clothing which leaves midriffs exposed is allowed. In these cases, students will still be asked to rectify their dress before being allowed to join the school day.

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We do recognise that some students may have expressed their creative side with hair colouring or cut during lockdown. Under the current restrictions, this may be difficult to address immediately, especially with hair salons still closed. However, we do expect that families are taking steps (eg washing out, re-dying with natural colour) to address this. If this applies to your child, please bear in mind that we will discuss this with them, and ask them about how and when their hair will be returned to normal.

The school's rules on make-up, jewellery, false nails and eyelashes still apply and will be enforced. Students should wear appropriate sports-wear on PE days. As per main uniform, there is no requirement to wear school PE uniform. However, students will need a change of footwear for after PE and to wear clothing suitable for exercise.

### **Standards – Behaviour to Be Ready to Learn and Attitude to Learning**

We will be emphasising our standards yet again when the students return. We will be republishing our Return to School Guide, with updates, next week. This will include information on our expectations, our “non-negotiables”, via key routines that will be in place to support a safe and purposeful return on their first day back. Students will also be briefed on this in Form Time and via assemblies.

If your child has any concerns about returning to school, please contact your child's Form Tutor or Head of Year. We will seek to reassure you and if necessary, put a plan into place to support your child.

### **Standards – Compliance with Covid-19 Safety Routines**

Most of the routines that your child has become used to will not change as we reopen fully on 8<sup>th</sup> March. However, one key change is that students will be required to wear masks indoors, including during lessons. I can't say I'm too happy about this and hope, as hinted by the PM, that this requirement will only be until Easter. As before, a small number of students are exempt from this requirement. Please note that masks are required and that visors are not acceptable.

Masks should be brought into school by students, ready to wear on transport and when they enter the gate (to demonstrate that they have one).

As in all matters, the school's Behaviour Policy allows us to deal with non-compliance with basic requirements. These requirements also apply when on school or public transport.

The school's Risk Assessment and accompanying Method Statements, are available online, at <https://www.buckinghamschool.org/page/?title=Coronavirus+Info&pid=299>

### **Hygiene**

We still require all students to carry their own supply of hand sanitiser and to provide their own mask. The hand sanitisers are still stationed around the school and the routines that students became used to, at the beginning and end of every class, still apply.

Additionally, the building works continue with great success and the second new set of toilets has opened this week. Students now have a good opportunity to wash their hands, when needed. The rules and procedures for hand and respiratory hygiene are well-established. Please see: [https://ebug.eu/eng\\_home.aspx?cc=eng&ss=1&t=Information%20about%20the%20Coronavirus](https://ebug.eu/eng_home.aspx?cc=eng&ss=1&t=Information%20about%20the%20Coronavirus)

### **Calendar Changes – Parents Evenings**

Please note that:

- the Year 7 Parents Evening will be delayed until Thursday 29<sup>th</sup> April
- the Year 10 Parents Evening will be delayed until Thursday 10<sup>th</sup> June
- the published Year 13 Parents Evening was brought forward and has already taken place – please do not hesitate to contact us in the case of any concerns
- the Year 9 Parents Evening will take place, as planned, on Thursday 13<sup>th</sup> May

As usual, we will contact you ahead of each Parents Evening event, with booking arrangements.

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## **Examinations for Years 11 and 13**

Please note that Year 11 and Year 13 will have mock examinations in the week beginning 22<sup>nd</sup> March and 29<sup>th</sup> March. Each subject teacher will make sure that their class understands what will be examined.

We still await clarification as to how grades will be awarded this year. The guidance is emerging, but we will have to consider very carefully what we will do as a school. We will let you know as soon as decisions have been made.

## **The School's Preparation Time**

So that we can ensure that every aspect of the school is ready for a "full steam ahead" approach from day 1, we will be scaling back our live provision in the week beginning 1<sup>st</sup> March. There will be no live lessons on Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> March, or Friday 5<sup>th</sup> March, to allow the school time for training and planning. The students will still receive a full suite of work to engage with, on both of those days and form time will still take place on these days.

## **Extra-curricular clubs and Interventions**

Extra-curricular clubs are not allowed to run normally yet, but academic interventions are. We will start to plan extra-curricular activity as soon as we are able.

"Period 13" restarts for Years 11 and 13, as soon as we return and interventions for certain Year 10 students, will also begin as soon as we return.

## **Lockers and Cashless Payments**

As has been in place all year, lockers are not available to students. As has also been in place for some time now, the cash machine is not available to add funds to students' catering accounts. Please add funds online.

## **Finally**

We are all united in our pride for our wonderful school. I'm sure, as we reach the end of another challenging period, we are full of optimism that we will never experience another school closure during a lockdown. However, for as long as the virus presents a significant risk in society, we have to be realistic about accepting that partial or even full closures of the school are not completely behind us yet.

The decision that opening schools is the only relaxation of lockdown so far, reminds us that Covid-19 is still a significant risk in society and it is still of high importance that you do everything possible to ensure that your child complies with the rules in place outside of school. Social mixing outside of school is still not allowed.

I take personal pride in being an optimist. However, I understand and respect that the last twelve months has presented us with so many challenges, many that we could never have imagined. I also recognise that some of our community have faced more than mere challenges, and bereavement or financial issues have made things even tougher. As a society, it is our responsibility to "build back better" and the school plans to do its part, I can assure you.

With my best wishes



## **Mr A McGinnes**

Headteacher

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#wearebuckinghamsschool

#proudtobebuckingham

#buckingham

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