

# Sponne School

*A Music & Science Academy*



*Inspiring*  
Achievement

Monday 17<sup>th</sup> August 2020

Dear Parents/Carers of Year 8

## **RE: September Reopening**

Thank you once again for all of your support during the last 5 months through this most unprecedented and challenging time. I very much appreciate that you have all had to balance home schooling with your own personal commitments, together with the many uncertainties that we have all had to navigate.

You will be aware from Government announcements and from my correspondence with you that schools have been asked to reopen to all students in September and that they have asked schools to minimise the mixing of students whilst maintaining a broad and balanced curriculum. We have spent July formalising our plans to enable this to happen and I am therefore writing to you now to explain what will be happening during this period and outlining our expectations of students.

In the Government guidance to schools they have detailed a list of actions that must be taken and our risk assessment and plans have put into place a number of control measures that take these into account. These are:

### **1. Minimise contact with individuals who are unwell by ensuring that those who have coronavirus symptoms or who have someone in their household who does, do not come into school.**

We are therefore asking you not to send your children into school if they have the characteristic symptoms of a raised temperature and/or a persistent cough and/or loss of smell/taste. If any student develops these symptoms at school they will be immediately isolated and sent home, advised to follow the stay at home guidance and you will be asked to arrange for them to have a test. If this test is negative then they can return to school once well enough to do so. If the test is positive you will need to let the school know and Public Health England will be in contact with us to decide on any further actions.

### **2. Clean hands thoroughly more often than usual**

Coronavirus is an easy virus to kill but requires the use of soap and running water or hand sanitiser. We expect students to be cleaning their hands regularly, including when they arrive at school, when they move between rooms or areas and before and after eating. We will ensure that there is sufficient soap in all our toilets and that each room has hand sanitiser available for students and staff to use. I know that many young people carry their own sanitiser with them and I am happy for this to be brought in and used at school.

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### 3. Ensure good respiratory hygiene

Students and staff will be expected to use the 'catch it, bin it, kill it' approach and to ensure all used tissues are disposed of in the bins appropriately. Public Health England do not recommend the use of face coverings in schools as staff and students are mixing in consistent groups. However, I do have some clinically vulnerable staff who work very closely with students and may themselves decide to use some form of covering. If you have any children who fall into this category please do make contact with your Progress Learning Leader to look at what may be required.

### 4. Introduce enhanced cleaning

As part of our risk assessment we have identified additional cleaning that will take place during the school day to ensure that frequently touched surfaces and toilets, in particular, are regularly cleaned. Each year group has been allocated set toilets to use and for **Year 8** these will be the toilets in the **sixth form study room**.

### 5. Minimise contact between individuals and maintain social distancing wherever possible

It is recognised in the guidance that in the context of secondary education this is difficult to achieve whilst maintaining a broad and balanced curriculum. They therefore suggest that the use of year group bubbles is the best solution especially for students at key stages 4 (GCSE) and 5 (A Levels). To enable this to happen significant adaptations to the rooming of the timetable and timings of the school day have had to be made to minimise the movement of students around the school and mixing of year groups.

At key stage 3 we are planning to maintain tutor group bubbles for the majority of the learning time. Therefore, in **Year 8** all students will be taught in their tutor groups for all subjects in the same room in E Block or in one of the two new mobile classrooms T1a and T1b. This is with the exception of PE when they will go to the Sports Hall facilities. The two stairwells at the front of E block will be for the exclusive use of Year 8 students. They will continue to receive the same teaching hours but the timing of their school day will be as follows:

Period	1	2	Break	3	4	Lunch	Tutor time	5
Time	8.45-9.45	9.45-10.45	10.45-11.05	11.05-12.05	12.05-13.05	13.05-13.35	13.35-13.55	13.55-14.50

At the start of the school day students will not be expected to arrive at school until 8.30 am and should ensure that they follow social distancing guidelines on their way and once they arrive before lesson 1 begins. For those who arrive early they must make their way to the sixth form study area which will be their social space and start to make their way to lesson 1 at 8.35 am. At the end of the day there will be a staggered finish time to reduce the mixing between year groups and Year 8 students will be escorted to the buses and off site at 2.50 pm.

During break and lunch times Year 8 will be provided with a canteen service in the sixth form study room and they will also be able to use the bus park and areas outside the Sports Hall. They will not mix with students from other years and will not be allowed in other areas of the school.

### Other Points:

- The first day for Year 8 students is Monday 7<sup>th</sup> September.
- Attendance at school in September is mandatory. However, there may be some young people who are advised by health professionals to continue to learn remotely or whose attendance would be contrary to guidance relating to the incidence or transmission of coronavirus. If this applies to your child you must advise the school immediately of the situation so that this can be recorded appropriately on their attendance record.
- Students are expected to wear full school uniform to school except on the days when they have PE. On these days they will need to attend in their appropriate sports kit to avoid changing.
- We are limiting the number of visitors during the school day so please ensure that your children are fully prepared and do not need anything dropped off later. Staff will not be able to loan equipment to students and stationery must not be shared. Students must have a reading book with them as staff will be moving between rooms and the expectation is that while this take place students should read quietly until their next teacher arrives.
- Staff are more vulnerable to coronavirus than young people. Therefore the guidance is that staff teach from the front and maintain their distance from students during lessons. This may require staff and students to change their usual learning interactions and will make individual support

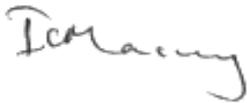
more difficult. However, I have no doubt that we will all adapt to this and certainly communication via the Google Classroom will continue to be a valuable tool for this support.

- During this period lockers may be more difficult to access though Year 8 students will be able to leave their bags in their dedicated teaching rooms during the school day.
- All students should ensure that they bring in their own reusable water bottle.
- Parents/carers must be available to pick up their children immediately should they become unwell during the school day. Our first aid team are equipped with PPE and students will be isolated until they can be taken home. Please ensure that we have at least two contacts on the system to enable this to be acted on rapidly if required.
- There will be a very limited number of assemblies and after school sessions taking place during this period.
- Buses are operated by the Local Authority and are dedicated services for transport to Spone. This means that students are not mixing with others and buses will have been thoroughly cleaned before and after use. In conversation with the bus companies we are suggesting that students fill up the buses from the back by pick up points in the morning and by year group in the afternoon. My understanding is that the buses will be running to their usual schedule.
- Our expectation is that all students will follow the guidance given to ensure that we all minimise the risk of transmission of the coronavirus and avoid any local outbreaks. If a student was to deliberately put others at risk by not doing so then this would be dealt with accordingly.

I am aware that this letter contains a significant amount of information and really do appreciate your time in taking your children through this. We all want to avoid any possibility of a local lockdown and hope to return to a more normal routine as soon as possible. However, in the meantime we will continue to do our best to provide an outstanding learning experience. I would like to thank you again for your continued support and please do not hesitate to contact me or a member of my team if you have any questions regarding this.

Can I take this opportunity to share with you and all your families my best wishes and I look forward to seeing the students again in September.

Yours sincerely



Iain Massey  
Headteacher