



28<sup>th</sup> August 2020

Dear Parent/Carer

## Student Return to School and Face Coverings

I hope that you have had an enjoyable, relaxing summer, despite the recent weather, and that this letter finds you well. I am really looking forward to meeting your children as we return to school during the week beginning 7<sup>th</sup> September, and to working with you, albeit remotely initially until such time that we can meet as well.

As you will be aware, there has been much in the news over the summer about education, including the importance of getting young people back into school safely in September. I am sure you will have your own thoughts about this, ranging, no doubt, from being delighted by the prospect of your child returning to school full time, to anxiety about their safety and perhaps that of your family. I can completely understand any mixed emotions you may be having and so I am writing to reassure you that we are putting the safety of students, staff and our community first, while also trying to establish good routines which will enable your child to flourish in their learning again.

We welcome back South Dartmoor students in Years 7 and 12 and Atrium students on Monday 7<sup>th</sup> September, and all students on Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> September at 0845. You should have received in July our comprehensive guidelines on students' return to school and a copy of this can be found here, [Return to school guidelines](#). Also available to you is our Risk Assessment, which is available on our website, a link is provided [here](#). Next week I will write again to remind parents and students of some of the key changes and with respect to essential equipment students must remember to bring with them each day.

Further to the guidelines we sent out before the summer, there have been a few updates, not least concerning the wearing of facemasks in school. Following the advice from the WHO and the DfE change on the use of face coverings in English Schools, we have as a Trust decided that all secondary age students will be **expected to wear a face covering** in corridors and any communal areas where social distancing outside of the year group bubble is difficult, for example, on the buses, entering and exiting the school site and moving to and from lessons. You will find full details in the [WeST Guidance on Face Coverings in Secondary schools](#).

Face coverings do not need to be worn:

- By any students who is exempt (please see the exemption guidance for further information).
- By students or teachers in the classroom or during lessons, but both are still free to do so if they wish.
- Whilst consuming food and drink at break and lunch times.

This additional safety measure does not change the South Dartmoor and Atrium approach to how we will manage the school day insofar as students will continue to be collected by staff and access their subject specialist teachers in their rooms, rather than remaining all day in the same classroom. This will be reviewed in the first few weeks of term.

However, in order to minimise risk and follow the DfE guidance on the re-opening of schools, other measures we shared with you in July remain unchanged. These include:

- A strictly enforced one-way system (i.e not passing each other face to face)
- Additional staff presence at lesson changeover (staff will also wear masks in corridors)
- No queuing in corridors (students will go straight in to the classroom).
- Hand sanitizer on entry to classrooms
- Procedures for the removal and safe storage of masks on entry (i.e. they cannot be just placed on the desks). We will train our students on how to use masks correctly and sensibly (taking a mask off while avoiding touching their faces, storing it safely etc).
- Separate year group bubbles where students are registered; returning at break and lunch to their year group areas
- Separate pastoral year team bases
- Monitoring of children at break and lunch by Senior Leadership Team, duty staff, members of our pastoral team
- A pre-ordered lunch, delivered to student bubbles

We want your child to have the very best educational experience possible, in an environment that will be as close to normal and as familiar as possible, but one in which safety of us all is of the utmost importance.

Although these are strange circumstances in which to be starting a new school year, I am excited to be joining the school as Executive Headteacher. There are so many wonderful opportunities for children to learn and succeed and I know that staff are keen to focus on this as we establish these new routines to keep us all safe. Your support is greatly appreciated.

Kind regards



Mrs J Veal  
Executive Headteacher