

July 2020



Dear Parent/Carer,

VALENTINES HIGH SCHOOL

Headteacher: Mr R D Laws B.A. (Hons)

As we near the end of term, I would like to thank you for your support in what has proven to be a very difficult academic year. We have missed having the students in school and are looking forward to welcoming everyone back in September.

Rather than set summer work for students, we have sent student booklets out with details of the work that has been set during the period of school closure. We recommend that students review any topics that they are unsure of during the summer break. Teachers will use this document when students return in September to help identify gaps in skills and knowledge that may need to be revisited.

We will be saying goodbye to a number of staff this year, but I am pleased to announce that despite the difficulties posed by COVID-19, we are fully staffed with specialist teachers for September.

Opening in September

The government's guidance to schools for September was issued at the start of July. In brief, the guidance requires us to:

- Open the school to all students.
- Ensure attendance of all students. The government has stated that school attendance will be mandatory again from the beginning of the autumn term. This means from September, the usual rules on school attendance will apply, including parents' duty to ensure that their child attends regularly at school, where the child is a registered pupil at school and they are of compulsory school age and the schools' responsibilities to record attendance and follow up absence.
- Put in place a range of infection control measures.
- Establishing extensive cleaning and hygiene regimes, particularly in practical subjects which involve equipment.
- Minimise contact with individuals who are unwell by ensuring that those who have coronavirus (COVID-19) symptoms, or who have someone in their household who does, do not attend school.
- Clean hands thoroughly more often than usual.
- Ensure good respiratory hygiene by promoting the 'catch it, bin it, kill it' approach.
- Introduce enhanced cleaning, including cleaning frequently touched surfaces often.
- Inform parents that they should not gather at the school gates or come on to the school site without an appointment, so please do not come to the school unless you have an appointment.
- Do what we can to minimise use of public transport by asking students to walk or cycle to school if possible and inform parents that for those using public transport, face coverings are mandatory for children 11 years+
- Cooperate fully with the NHS Test and Trace scheme if asked to do so.

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- Set up contingency plans for high-quality distance learning should we have to send one or more year groups home due to a confirmed case in that year group
- Update the behaviour policy to include expectations and rules related to COVID-19.
- If a child comes to school wearing a face covering, then schools must have a suitable bin for these to be put in as they arrive.
- Minimise contact between individuals and maintain social distancing wherever possible by:
 - ◆ Keeping year groups in separate bubbles as much as possible, e.g. at break and lunch times
 - ◆ Reducing movement around the school and avoiding the potential for crowded areas
 - ◆ Setting up one-way systems, staggered end of the day and break times
 - ◆ Expecting social distancing between staff and students (not between students in the same year group)
 - ◆ Seating pupils side to side and facing forwards

Whilst we do this I believe that it is important that we continue to teach an ambitious broad and balanced curriculum to all students and therefore do not propose to alter the number of subjects each student takes.

Pastoral system changes

To enable Year groups to be in “bubbles” and minimise contacts with students from other year groups, we will for September 2020 move to a Head of Year system with pupils in form groups with students in the same year group. Pupils will remain in their current houses for competitions and extra-curricular activities. This means that all students in Year 8-11 next academic year will be in new form groups and most will have a new form tutor. Details of your child’s new head of year and form tutor will be sent out to you as a follow up to this letter.

I have attached to this letter information including, start dates and times for the new term in September, an equipment list, uniform changes and details of permanent changes to the timings of the school day.

I will write to you with further details of plans for September opening after the government update regarding this in mid August.

Please find attached a copy of the student calendar for 2020/21.

Thank you once again for your continued support.

Yours sincerely



Mr R Laws
Headteacher