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STOCKPORT SCHOOL

Headteacher Mr I. R. Irwin BA (Hons), MSc, NPQH

28th August 2020

Dear Parents/Carers,

I hope you and your child are enjoying the final few days of the summer break. In advance of our return next week, and further to my letters at the end of term, dated 16th July, and midway through the summer holiday on 12th August, I thought it may be helpful to just send a final reminder and update to you of the following information.

Start of Term Dates

Stockport School will thankfully, re-open for all students across all Year groups, from the beginning of September. Before, we begin our full timetable of teaching to all students however, we believe it really important to firstly allow for a phased, safe return, involving Year group induction and transition, particularly following the long six-month break from education.

I would like to inform you therefore, via reference to the table below, that the first week in September, will be an important induction/transition week, where we will gradually on a phased basis, welcome back all of our students into school, guiding and advising them as to our expectations and of the necessary safety measures that we will have in place for them. The following week, from Monday 7th September, all students across all Year groups will then return full-time to school and will begin to study their full school timetable.

Tuesday 1st September	Staff Inset	
Wednesday 2nd September	Year 7	Induction, 8.40am – 3.00pm
Thursday 3rd September	Year 7	Induction (day 2), 8.40am – 3.00pm
	Years 8 & 9	Induction, 11.00am – 3.50pm
Friday 4th September	Year 7	Induction (day 3), 8.40am – 3.00pm
	Years 10 & 11	Induction, 11.00am – 3.00pm
Monday 7th September	All Students across all Year groups return full-time from 8.40am	

New Year 7 students should arrive via the Mile End Lane pedestrian gate, and then congregate on the tennis courts upon arrival on their first day from 8.30am on Wednesday 2nd September. Due to current covid-19 controls, parents and carers must not come onto school premises with their child. Parents and carers must also avoid congregating in groups by the school gate, and should disperse as soon as possible for health and safety reasons.

All other students across other Year groups, should also initially enter the school grounds on their first induction day back in September by one of the gates specified below for their Year group. In terms of covid-19 controls, it is important that all students arrive via the correct gate at the correct time, and do not mix with students in other Year groups.

Students will be required to access and leave the school premises via one of the following specified gates, which have been allocated to reduce the number of students (and Year group 'bubbles') mixing together:

Address Mile End Lane, Stockport, Cheshire, SK2 6BW **Tel** 0161 483 3622 **Fax** 0161 456 9452

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<u>Gate</u>	<u>Year Group</u>	
Mile End Pedestrian Gate (single gate)	Year 7	
Lake Street Gate (double width gate)	Year 8	Year 9
Sandhurst Road Gate (double width gate)	Year 10	Year 11

Students arriving on bicycles, must enter/exit via the same gate specified for their Year group, above. Students must disembark their bikes and then walk and push their bikes across the school to and from the cycle compound to the appropriate gate.

When arriving for their first induction day in September, students must immediately go direct, without mixing with other Year groups to congregate on one of the following Playground areas, where they will be greeted by staff and given further instruction.

<u>Year Group</u>	<u>Induction Date & Arrival Time</u>	<u>Entry Gate</u>	<u>Congregation Point</u>
Year 7	Wednesday 2nd September, 8.30am	Mile End Pedestrian Gate	Small Black Fenced Tennis Courts
Year 8	Thursday 3rd September, 11.00am	Lake Street Gate	Lake Street Gym Playground
Year 9	Thursday 3rd September, 11.00am	Lake Street Gate	Large Green Fenced Tennis Courts
Year 10	Friday 4th September, 11.00am	Sandhurst Road Gate	Lake Street Gym Playground
Year 11	Friday 4th September, 11.00am	Sandhurst Road Gate	Large Green Fenced Tennis Courts

Face Coverings

The World Health Organisation published a statement on 21st August about children and face coverings. They now advise that *“children aged 12 and over should wear a mask under the same conditions as adults, in particular when they cannot guarantee at least a 1-metre distance from others and there is widespread transmission in the area.”* This advice led earlier this week, to an update by the government with regards to their policy guidance on the safe use of face coverings in school settings.

Whilst the government still do not recommend that the use of face coverings are necessary in education settings generally because a system of control, applicable to all education environments, provides additional mitigating measures, they have now built in additional discretion to allow schools to decide whether face coverings may be appropriate for use to help with the control of coronavirus transmission in specific circumstances. The government state in particular, that this may apply where students are moving around indoors, such as in corridors and in communal areas where social distancing is difficult to maintain. However, the government are clear by way of a general approach, that it will not usually be necessary to wear face coverings in the classroom, where protective measures already mean the risks are lower. The government outline that there is greater use of the system of controls in classrooms for minimising risk, including through keeping in small and consistent groups or bubbles, and greater scope for physical distancing by staff within classrooms. The government state that *“Face coverings can have a negative impact on learning and teaching and so their use in the classroom should be avoided.”*

As a school, we have already produced an extensive and very carefully considered ‘Return to School Management Plan’ in order to enable all children and staff to safely return to school next week, which outlines a number of temporary adjustments to our normal way of operating, whilst also helping to control the risk of coronavirus infection, and minimising the risks to our students, staff and wider community. As a result of the temporary control measures put into place with our plan, we are not insisting that all students must wear a face covering in school. However, the WHO and government advice released this week, does suggest that it may have some benefits if worn correctly in certain circumstances, and we therefore, appreciate that some students, through personal choice, may wish to wear a face covering when moving between lessons and in communal areas, and we are supportive of this, should they wish to do so. There is no expectation however, that all students must wear a face covering when in school, and this will remain an individual choice for students.

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Furthermore, and in-keeping with the government guidance, we do not expect students to wear a face covering whilst in lesson, as protective control measures in classrooms reduce the risks and the wearing of face coverings may inhibit effective communication and the quality of teaching and learning activity. Therefore, unless an individual student has an underlying medical condition which makes them clinically vulnerable to coronavirus, or lives with a family member whom is clinically vulnerable, and therefore for those specific additional medical reasons, wishes to wear a face covering in lessons as well as in corridors and communal areas, students should not wear face coverings whilst in classrooms. Should your child fall under these criteria, and they wish to wear a face covering in lessons as an exceptional circumstance, to provide additional self-reassurance and protection for themselves or an immediate household member, then we would ask that you contact your child's Pastoral Manager to confirm. The Pastoral Manager will then issue your child with a pass to confirm with their teachers that the wearing of a face covering in lesson has been requested under medical grounds and has been approved.

Should your child wish to wear a face covering whilst in school, it must be a plain face covering without any branding, imagery or wording, appropriate for a school environment. Your child must also take full responsibility for their provision, and for their safe and appropriate usage. The government state that it is vital that face coverings are worn correctly, including how they are put on, removed, stored and disposed of in all of the circumstances above, to avoid inadvertently increasing the risks of transmission. Safe wearing of face coverings requires the cleaning or the sanitising of hands before and after touching – including to remove or put them on – and the safe storage of them in individual, sealable plastic bags between use. Where a face covering becomes damp, it should not be worn and the face covering should be replaced carefully. Where face coverings require disposal, a student must take the important responsibility of doing so by placing it themselves into a bin to avoid contact with others.

Where local restrictions apply

Whilst as a school, we are therefore allowing for a freedom of choice with regards to the wearing of face coverings, subject to the conditions outlined above, there are certain circumstances beyond our control advised by the government, where it may become a temporary expectation for all students and adults (staff and visitors) to wear a face covering when moving around indoors, such as in corridors and communal areas where social distancing is difficult to maintain.

The government have mandated that all schools and colleges located in geographical regions where the transmission of the virus is high, defined as 'areas of national government intervention' (or localised lockdown restrictions) should take additional precautionary measures, and that face coverings should be worn by all adults (staff and visitors) and pupils when moving around indoors, such as in corridors and communal areas where social distancing is difficult to maintain.

At the time of writing to you today, it has just been announced that Stockport will be released on Wednesday 2nd September, from being an area within Greater Manchester subject to temporary 'national government intervention or localised lockdown restrictions', therefore, the mandatory expectation of all adults and students having to wear face coverings in school, will not apply upon your child's return to school. As you will appreciate, this may be subject to change in the future, and it may then become necessary based upon government instruction, for me to write to update and advise you of the need for all students to wear a face covering in school.

Behaviour Rules for Students

Health and safety are our absolute priority and are of paramount importance to us. We also wish to provide the very best educational support for our students under the tight controls that we need to work within. Please note and be reassured that our plans for the return of all students in September, are very tightly and safely controlled, and all students must therefore, adhere to our safe expectations without exception.

When on-site all students must, at all times, adhere to the safe social distancing and good hygiene actions of washing hands, using tissues etc. In an temporary amendment to our behaviour policy, if any student wilfully disregards these very important rules which have been put in place to protect the health and safety of students and staff, then we may need to immediately contact parents/carers and discuss the student being temporarily withdrawn from in-class teaching and/or on-site education, including if necessary, usage of fixed term exclusion. In the most serious and/or persistently repeated cases, permanent exclusion may also be considered, as it is essential that the health and safety of all students and staff are protected above all other actions.

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Attendance

Under government law, the Department for Education (DfE) have instructed that attendance in school from September, will again be compulsory for all. Our Attendance and Pastoral teams will work with you as Form Tutors on appropriate strategies and policies to support this government expectation.

Our attendance target for all students is 100% (190 days attended from 190) and we have a core expectation that all students achieve over 96% attendance. It goes almost without saying that regular attendance is essential to progress and success and for that reason I would hope that you will support us from the start of term in helping your child to achieve well over 96% attendance next year. Every day matters and each day missed hinders progress. This is even more important with regards to the significant amount of face to face teaching and learning time missed earlier this year due to exceptional circumstances beyond all of our control.

In our necessary attempt to make up for the significant amount of lost teaching and learning time this year, it is really important that we seek to minimise disruption to the teaching of timetabled lessons, as this will only further disadvantage our students. Therefore, all parents and carers are reminded of the School policy upon requesting absence from school to attend medical or dental appointments during school hours. Routine appointments should be avoided where possible during the school day, with appointments ideally arranged outside of school hours. As you will be aware, the NHS in the past couple of years have extended their out of hours GP practice appointment times, and it is hoped that all parents and carers where possible, will seek to make use of those out of hours, and/or non-term time dates for routine appointments for their child. It is accepted that some non-routine, specialist treatments may not be bookable by appointment and may therefore, need additional consideration for leave during school hours.

Importantly, however, all parents/carers are reminded and advised again that under government instruction as well as our own, that you must not send your child into school should they show any of the known Covid-19 symptoms. If your child or anyone in your immediate household, displays symptoms you should seek immediate medical attention via advice from the NHS England website or by phoning 101. The government and NHS now have local Covid-19 testing facilities in place, and it is important that you seek advice on immediate testing, and if necessary self-isolation for the stated period of time before returning to school.

Attendance is very important, and where students can attend school, they should, and we will then do all that we can in school to support them in their progress and development.

Uniform, Equipment & Appearance

As part of our continual drive to maintain high standards, I would once again from the start of term, like to request your full support as parents/carers. In particular, I would ask that students wear their Stockport School uniform with pride at all times, both in school and on the journey to and from school. Students should continue to wear their blazers, with shirts/blouses fully buttoned and tucked in to their waistband, with ties attached correctly at the collar (ties should be clip-on only). Shoes should be able to be polished as black leather, with no canvas material, trainers or boots permitted.

Students are also advised due to the need for us to have increased ventilation due to covid control measures (windows open etc.), to wear under layers such as vests or plain white T shirts under their school uniform, as well as being strongly advised to purchase and wear the optional School jumper underneath their school blazer, in order to ensure that they remain warm enough during the autumn and winter months. Coats should not be worn inside the school buildings.

Outdoor coats are an important addition to the full school uniform, and all students are advised to have a good warm, and if possible, waterproof coat (not hooded top or tracksuit which are not permitted), to wear, when outside, over their school blazer. This is particular important from September, given the fact that all students will be required to go outside of the school buildings at break and lunchtime (unless it is extreme wet weather).

It is also essential that each child brings in their own equipment (pens, pencils, ruler, rubber, calculator, subject materials and books etc.), as we cannot for hygiene reasons allow sharing of equipment whilst in school.

I would also like to remind all parents/carers that the following items are also not allowed in school:

- Students are not allowed to wear jewellery apart from a simple wrist watch (*smart watches are not allowed*).

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- Body piercings are not allowed, apart from one small plain stud in each ear lobe.
- Hair styles and colours should not be extreme.
- Make-up and false eyelashes are not allowed and should not be worn.
- Acrylic nails are also not suitable for school and are not allowed.

Girls are reminded that if worn, skirts must be of a reasonable length and should not be too short. If any skirts are deemed to be too short and inappropriate for school then parents will be contacted and students may be isolated until they appear in appropriate school uniform.

Please could I ask you as parents/carers, to follow our uniform (including correct shoes) policy fully when purchasing any new items of uniform prior to September. The full uniform policy is available on our website www.stockportschool.net

Please also note as a reminder to my previous letters and communications, that we will continue to enforce a strict no trainers rule whatsoever, with students ONLY permitted to wear traditional black shoes. Black training shoes of any type will not be permitted.

I would also like to remind parents that uniform and PE kit items can be purchased from all of our usual uniform suppliers (Davenport's and Badged on Bramhall Lane in Davenport and Monkhouse near to the Bus Station in Stockport).

Full details of our uniform, equipment and appearance policy are available on our school website www.stockportschool.net All parents/carers are advised to shop early before the end of August for new uniform and shoes, in order to avoid queues or covid related restrictions when entering shops. All students, without exception, must wear full school uniform including tie, blazer and black polishable leather shoes upon their return in September.

Mobile Phones & Electronic Equipment

A particular distraction to learning that we have thankfully now almost eliminated, is that of mobile phones, I-Pods, headphones and electronic Apple/smart watches, and I would once again like to request your support in reminding your child that these items should be switched off and kept out of sight throughout the entire school day.

Electronic Apple/smart watches, due to exam regulation and general distraction, are not allowed whatsoever in school and therefore should not be worn.

Students are however, allowed at their own risk, to bring in their mobile phones. They must however, after 8.30am, be switched off and put away out of sight, and not be taken out, looked at, or used in any way whatsoever, until students have left the school building at the end of the normal school day and are about to make their way home for the evening. Students who abuse this rule (including that of Apple/smart watches) will have the item confiscated and stored safely for parents to collect.

Free School Meals Entitlement

We are aware from our records that a number of parents who may be eligible to claim Free School Meals for their children do not submit a claim to the Local Authority. If you receive any of the benefits listed below, your child is entitled to Free School Meals:

- Income support
- Income related employment and support allowance
- Universal Credit
- Income based job seekers allowance
- Support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- The "Guarantee" element of State Pension Credit
- Child Tax Credit, provided they are not entitled to Working Tax Credit and have an annual income that does not exceed £16,190.
- Working Tax Credit run-on paid for 4 weeks after you stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit

I would urge you, therefore in advance of the start of term, to make a claim and use your entitlement. Claims can be made by visiting the Local Authority at <https://www.stockport.gov.uk/start/free-school-meals-application-form>. Should you require any further information or help, please contact the School Finance Office.

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School Meals and Wisepay

Upon return to school in September we have had to amend how we will provide for students at lunchtime, in order to maintain safe social distancing between Year group 'bubbles'. Further details on our arrangements for this are included with the 'Return to School' plans attached. I have also attached for your information, an outline of the amended weekly menu, which will be available to all students in all dining venues from September. We would also like to encourage parents and carers to load lunch money onto their child's account via our Wisepay system in order to reduce queues at the cash loader and to reduce the risk of cross contamination. Please find attached our Wisepay guide for your information. If you do not have your child's log in to Wisepay, please email Ms Tankard on k.tankard@stockport.stockport.sch.uk

Building Works

As reported to you earlier in the summer, Stockport School is currently undergoing an extensive £6.5 million-pound, buildings improvement programme, which will ultimately bring about significant improvements to our resources and facilities for the benefit of all students over the next 12 months. Work to complete the state-of-the-art improvements began back at the start of July, and since then there has already been extensive works undertaken to improve and replace electrics, lighting, heating, roofing, and decor, and also in the creation of new learning spaces with new equipment. However, there is still much to do, in a carefully managed and phased process over the next 12 months before its eventual completion.

When students return to school next week, they will be made aware of certain temporary out of bounds or restricted areas of the school where works will continue, and students for their own health and safety, must not enter those areas. It is our priority working with the building contractors to maintain a safe teaching and learning environment and also minimise any disruption to teaching and learning during the next academic year.

Necessary adaptations and considerations for our full return of all students across all Year groups from September

Since being given the green light from the government for all students across all Year groups to safely return to school from September, we like all schools, have had to put into place appropriate plans and arrangements based upon the Department for Education (DfE) guidance, to allow for a safe return for all, and for the resumption of a near to normal as possible, school timetable for all Year groups. Clearly, in order to make this a possibility, there will need to be some adaptations to allow this to be carried out safely, including our expectations of how everyone conducts themselves around school, in terms of safe social distancing, hand washing/sanitizing, etc. We do however, now have good, carefully considered plans in place to make this work effectively for all, in a similar vein to as was proven with the return of our Year 10 students in the summer term, whom were all impeccably behaved, respectful of the new expectations around movement, hygiene and personal safety, and showed great enthusiasm and responsibility for active engagement with their learning. I am confident that with the careful and consistent implementation of our plans, we can replicate this on a much wider scale for all students from September.

I have re-attached again for your important information, along with this letter, the detailed school plans for our return based upon the DfE guidance, which I sent out to you at the end of term.

Again, I apologise that the additional information (attached) regarding our return to school plans, is quite lengthy, however, as previously explained when I sent it to you on 16th July, it is necessarily so, given the importance that our plans have regarding the health and safety of our students, staff and local community. I would ask that you and your child take some time to re-read the important guidance and re-familiarise and prepare yourselves as appropriate for our safe return in September.

Finally, I hope you continue to enjoy and make the most of what remains of the summer break and the final bank holiday weekend, my staff and I look forward to welcoming you and your child back to school next week.

Yours sincerely

Mr I. R. Irwin
Headteacher

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