

Dear Parents,

I am delighted to be welcoming all of our students back to school fulltime next week.

<b>Monday 7<sup>th</sup> September</b>	8.25am	Year 7
		Year 12 – one to one appointments
<b>Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> September</b>	8.25am	Year 7 & Year 11
	9.00am	Year 8, Year 12 & Year 13
	9.30am	Year 9
	10.00am	Year 10

I really do appreciate that many parents and students will be experiencing some very understandable anxiety about returning to school for the first time since March, almost 6 months ago. We are all trying to come to terms with the impact of the pandemic and how it has changed how we live our lives and, more specifically, how we run our schools. The 'new normal' will be a very different experience for students.

Our priorities are to ensure that students and staff are safe to return to school and that we continue to run the school in as normal a way as possible.

There is guidance and opinion from a range of sources to help schools in planning to re-open safely. It is not helpful that the guidance is not always consistent. There are differing views from central government, scientists and the World Health Organisation. There is varying practice across schools globally, within the different nations of the UK and across Bournemouth, Poole and Christchurch. We will continue to review all the guidance and monitor practice as we make decisions regarding our risk assessments and 'Ways We Are Keeping Each Other Safe' & Operational Procedures.

You will be aware that there have been significant changes in government advice and policy in relation to education over recent months. There were changes in relation to face coverings as recently as last week.

The wearing of face coverings is now commonplace across many areas of society. There are very sound scientific reasons for this. The wearing of face coverings reduces the risk of transmission. Anything we can do in schools to reduce the risk of transmission will be essential.

At this point I have made the decision that **all students should wear facemasks at all times when in the school buildings**. This will not apply to lesson time. The only exceptions will be where social distancing can be managed safely.

#### **Why will students be expected to wear face masks?**

- Facemasks will reduce the risk of transmission of Covid-19.
- Students, their families and staff will be safer because facemasks are worn.
- Facemasks will reduce the risk of having to self-isolate for individual students, partially close the school to whole year group bubbles or even close the school fully.
- Facemasks will protect staff and reduce the risk of significant staff absence and a loss of further high quality teaching time to students.

I fully recognise that the risk locally at this moment in time is low. However, I want to avoid any possible risk to your child's education. Students have much learning that they need to catch-up with. The best way to do this will be in school, face-to-face with qualified teachers. The wearing of face coverings will help achieve this and reduce the risk of partial or full school closure.

Staff will be expected to wear facemasks or face shields at all times in the school. The only exception to this will be when teaching or when effective social distancing can take place. It would be very difficult to teach a whole class effectively whilst wearing a facemask. When teachers are working closely with individual students they will be expected to wear a facemask or face shield.

This decision has been taken after much consideration of all the available options. It will be reviewed regularly and is subject to change. I fully expect that there will be varying opinions in response to this decision. I believe it to be the right decision for the safety of our students, their families and our staff. I believe it is the right decision to ensure our school remains fully open to all students. I thank you in advance for your support.

Best wishes,

Paul Mc

**Please note-**

It is the responsibility of parents to provide facemasks for students.

Facemasks must be a plain colour- no designs, images, logos, etc.

Scarves, bandanas, snoods will not be permitted.