

Our ref – JWN/HPE 7

16 July 2020

Dear Parents/Carers

I am writing to share our re-opening plans for September. As you are aware the government has updated guidance for schools. The approach we are taking is in line with the majority of schools nationally and involves placing year groups into 'bubbles'. This means that we have planned the school day so that each year group avoids contact with other year group 'bubbles'.

As your child is in Year 7 in September, their first day in school is **Thursday 3 September at 8.30am** and they will leave at **2.45pm**. On arrival they will be directed to their specific entrance and exit.

Your child will then return to school on **Friday 4 September at 8.30am and leave at 2.45pm** which will be their official start and finish time for school until further notice.

During their first day back we will show them the changes we have made in light of the national lockdown and in order to lower the risk of spreading coronavirus.

We will dismiss year group 'bubbles' at staggered times at the end of the day, therefore your child will be delayed on certain days by up to 10 minutes. This is to ensure we are following social distance guidance so thank you in advance for your cooperation.

I understand that both children and yourselves will be nervous about starting secondary school without having experienced a full transition programme. I want to assure you that we will make sure that all children get the support and care that they need when they first come into school. For at least the first term your child will be based in one area of the school and will have a specific classroom base. This will be very familiar to them from primary school and will help them settle quickly without fear of getting lost! Year 7 will be the only children in school on Thursday 3 September.

From Thursday 3 September at 8am there will be staff waiting at the zebra crossing to greet your child and direct them to where they need to be. Due to social distancing please could I respectfully ask that you leave your child at the zebra crossing as you will not be able to access the school site due to the strict guidance we are following for re-opening. Similarly, if you are planning to meet your child at 2.45pm please arrange to do so away from the school zebra crossing.

As a parent myself, I know this will be a tough day for you, but I promise that we will look after your child as if they were our own!

The government has given all schools a clear instruction to re-open for all children in September and we have completed thorough risk assessments which have been approved by Astrea Academy Trust. A copy of this can be found on our website.

Students in Key Stage 3 (Year 7, 8 and 9) will each be based in one area of the school and will have all their lessons in one classroom with teachers moving to them instead of children moving around the building as has previously been the case. This will significantly reduce the amount of movement in the building.

Students in Key Stage 4 (Year 10 and 11) will be the only people, other than staff, who move around the building and to ensure reduced contact we have created a one-way system.

Break and lunch-times have been staggered and students will only be called from their classrooms when the appropriate eating space is clear. Our catering provider Aspens have completed their own risk assessments and will be following strict food hygiene handling protocols.

Students will still be able to purchase food and drinks using ParentPay and we are hoping to introduce a card system to avoid using biometrics (thumb prints). Please ensure your child's account has credit in time for their start date.

We have installed several sanitisation stations around school with clear guidance around hand washing and will ensure all children use this facility on entrance, at break/lunch and on exiting the building. In addition, our facilities management team, AMEY have increased their cleaning of the building during the day and specific toilets will be available for specific year group bubbles.

Where possible, meetings with external visitors will take place virtually and no visitors, including parents and carers will be able to enter the school building without a prior appointment.

I am aware that some students use public transport to travel to and from school. The government are clear that where other forms of travel are available, such as walking, cycling or being driven by car, they should be the preferred option. Please remember that students travelling by bus must ensure they wear a face mask. If you would like us to support your child by providing these, please just ask your child to request this from school.

Whilst we are living in strange and uncertain times, it is important that we return to a new kind of normal as swiftly as possible. Children will be required to wear full school uniform and I urge you to ensure you arrange this as a priority in case of any delivery delays. If you would like to access support in purchasing uniform please contact school by email (info@astreadearne.org) well before the September start.

The government has informed schools that failure to attend school will result in issuing fines to parents and carers, however I hope that by working positively together we can avoid this happening.

It has certainly been a year we will not forget in a hurry and I remain proud to serve our community. I wish you a summer break filled with family and friends and hopefully sunshine!

Best wishes



Mrs Joanne Wilson
Principal