



# Teesdale School & Sixth Form

Teesdale School and Sixth Form

Prospect Place  
Barnard Castle  
County Durham  
DL12 8HH

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01833 638166

[office@teesdaleschool.co.uk](mailto:office@teesdaleschool.co.uk)

[www.teesdaleschool.co.uk](http://www.teesdaleschool.co.uk)

Dear Parents and Carers

## Re: **September Re-opening**

As this extraordinary academic year draws to a close, I want to take the opportunity to thank you for your continued support and encouraging comments, as well as to share with you an overview of our plans to keep everyone safe on our return in September.

You will be aware that on Thursday 2nd July, the government set out its intention for all children to return to school full time from the start of September. Since that time, we have carefully studied the government guidance and we have carefully considered how we will manage this return safely. Our approach is based on a dual strategy of limiting contact between pupils from different year groups, together with the continued implementation of enhanced hygiene measures. Specific details of these plans relating to the various year groups will be sent to you before the start of the new school term to allow you to discuss them with your child. Any additional government guidance which is issued over the summer will be thoroughly studied and implemented. In the meantime, we would like to share some broader information with you.

### **Important dates**

So that we can safely welcome our students back into school in September, and make sure we can give them time and guidance to adapt to the new circumstances, we have decided to phase the return of year groups.

- Students in **Years 7, 12 and 13** will return on Wednesday 2<sup>nd</sup> September.
- Students in **Years 8, 9, 10, 11** will return on Thursday 3<sup>rd</sup> September.

### **Arriving and leaving**

- There will be a staggered start to the school day and different year groups will enter the school building via different entry points. Members of staff will guide students on arrival.
- Children who arrive on school transport will be asked to remain on their bus until staff guide them into school.
- There will be a staggered end to the school day for different year groups.
- There will be no access to the school car park for parents and carers. Students will need to be dropped off/ picked up in the Sports Centre car park and walk along the path.
- There will be no access to the school buildings for parents or carers, except by appointment.

### **New structure of the school day**

In order to reduce interactions and movement around the school, all year groups will be maintained in their own year group bubble and will not be allowed to mix with other year groups. In addition, students will be taught in their own zones to minimise the need to move around the school, to reduce the number of students sharing the same classroom and to reduce the number of students circulating at lesson changeover, thereby reducing the risk of infection. However, there are also benefits: we will be able to maximise the teaching time to allow more effective catch-up of progress and learning as students will not lose time when moving between different parts of the school. In the majority of cases, staff will move to the students unless a specialist subject area room is required. Year 7 and 8 will remain in the same teaching spaces throughout.

Also, although the year 7s who join us in September have had an innovative, online induction experience, this has not yet been the immersive, extended welcome to our school family we would normally offer to them. By keeping them in a reduced number of rooms for an initial period of time it will help to reduce the possible anxiety sometimes associated with year 7s familiarising themselves with a new environment.

So that we can further reduce the need for movement around the school, students will initially, follow a two-week timetable, adapted from their usual one-week timetable. This will allow us to deliver longer lessons, whilst maintaining the full curriculum, although in some subjects, there will be some learning activities that cannot take place. For example, in science, students will observe experiments but will not be able to handle apparatus, and in music, students will not be able to sing.

When moving around the school is unavoidable, it is important that everyone keeps to the left-hand side and uses the one-way system which is clearly marked.

These arrangements will only be in place whilst the virus is still prevalent in the community; as soon as the government is confident that the virus has diminished sufficiently and this level of reduced contact is no longer required, we will review our position and consider whether it is safe to revert back to our original timetable arrangements.

### **Arrangements for lunch and break**

To ensure that year group bubbles are maintained during the school day, especially at social times, outdoor and indoor areas in the teaching zones will be clearly defined for use by particular year groups.

We are unable to offer food or drink at break time (students will have a staggered break time in their zone). If students wish to, they may bring a snack and a bottle of water to school. Students should not bring fizzy or energy drinks into school.

Initially the lunch menu will consist of sandwiches, salad boxes, pasta boxes, biscuits and drinks. The menu has been carefully reviewed to ensure it is well balanced, has a range of options and provides value for money. Students may, of course, bring a packed lunch to school but they must not share food with others. Students must remain in their bubbles and zones. Clearly, this is currently a formidable obstacle to enabling a full service to resume but will, like all of the other measures, remain under review.

### **Other practical arrangements**

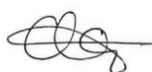
Students must come to school fully prepared to learn by bringing the correct equipment with them. They will not be able to borrow equipment from their friends or the teacher.

On a day when students have PE or Games, they should arrive at school in their PE kit, and wear it all day, to reduce the need for any contact in the changing rooms. On all other days, students are expected to come in their full school uniform. The most up-to-date government guidelines state: *'There is no need for anything other than normal personal hygiene and washing of clothes following a day in a school. Uniforms do not need to be cleaned any more often or differently than usual.'*

As has been the case since lock-down commenced, all students and staff are constantly reminded to wash or sanitise their hands frequently. Please discuss the importance of this with your children and ask them to ensure they wash their hands before leaving home and as soon as they enter the home at the end of the day. Cleaning arrangements have been increased and enhanced, so that we can all be confident that the school is as safe a place as possible for all of us.

I hope that by having a chance to review our broad outline, you are reassured about the arrangements for sending your child back to school in September. We are very eager to have them all safely back in school and are doing everything we can to ensure that we can welcome them with as much care and consideration for their welfare as possible. As I stated earlier, more specific and detailed plans will be shared with you nearer the start of the new term. If you have any questions or concerns about these arrangements, please do not hesitate to get in touch.

Yours faithfully



**Ms C Ellis**  
Head of School



**Mr D Pilling**  
Senior Assistant Headteacher