



Blackfen School for Girls

Raising aspirations - releasing potential

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Dear parents/carers

I hope that your summer is going well. It continues to be an uncertain time for us all so the aim of this letter is to provide you with more concrete information regarding the start of term and the short term future for all young people as they return to school across the country in September. Like most young people, your daughter has probably not been in school since the initial lockdown in March. I appreciate, therefore, that there will be anxieties and stress around her return to school in September. My virtual assembly, at the end of term, to all students, reassured students that the school buildings remain, most of the staff who were here last year remain and the Blackfen school community of 1500+ including staff still remains. From September, the way in which we will be doing things will be different. We have all had to adapt over the last few months and this will also be the case in terms of how we approach school.

I would also like to apologise, at the start of this letter, for the length of this letter. My aim is to include as much information as I can at this point. Please continue to send any questions, queries or concerns to admin@blackfen.bexley.sch.uk.

5 controls

In following the most recent guidance, the five following systems of control are at the heart of the risk assessment to protect people from harm.

1. Minimising contact with individuals who are unwell by ensuring those who have Covid-19 symptoms, or have someone in their household who does, do not attend school.
2. Cleaning hands thoroughly more often than usual.
3. Ensuring good respiratory hygiene by promoting the 'catch it, bin it, kill it' approach.
4. Making sure there is enhanced cleaning, including cleaning frequently touched surfaces often.
5. Minimising contact between individuals and maintaining social distance.

I have updated the risk assessment and risk assessment action plan in line with local and national guidance. These were previously sent home in July and provide reassurance that the school has put in place a range of measures to reduce the risk of infection of Covid-19 and reduce the risk of the spread of Covid-19 within the school. The updated risk assessment and action plan are available to view on the school website.

Examination gradings

During my August mailing letter I always write about the success of our young people in years 11, 12 and 13 and this year is no exception. You will have seen in the media the issues that these year groups have been facing. Firstly, as they were not able to do examinations and secondly in the fiasco that surrounded the issuing of results. As I write, we still await BTEC results and Cambridge National results for some of our young people and this is not acceptable. However, I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate each and every single student on their successes. The grades achieved provide a platform for all our young people to move to the next steps in their lives or education. Well done to them all. The grades achieved are the result of the great partnership work between staff, students, parents and governors. A great deal of work has gone into making sure our young people have been supported and have been successful.



Start of term and structure of the school day

On the first day of term for students, Friday 4th September, the school will be open to year 12 and our new year 7 only. Year 7 will be provided with a lunch on Friday 4th September and Monday 7th September. They should bring a snack for break time. Year 12 will attend an induction session on this day and year 7 will be in school from 10.00 am till 2.10 pm. In addition, all year 7 and 12 families will also receive a call from their daughter's form tutor on Thursday 3rd September, prior to starting on Friday.

Other year groups will return to school on Monday 7th September (start times as below) and families in these year groups should also expect a call from their son/daughter's tutor on Friday 4th September (for students in years 10,11 or 13) or during the first week of term (for students in years 8 and 9.)

Timings of the day

Please see below the timings of the school day that were issued in July. There have been no changes to these times.

In order to reduce the number of contacts between students and staff and limit interaction, we have made temporary changes to the timing of our school day. These changes will be reviewed and may change later in the year as we respond to government guidance. Students will have 3 sessions each day, 2 longer sessions of learning totalling two hours each and a shorter session of one hour. Students will have a 25-minute morning break and a 30-minute lunch break.

Students in years 7, 8 and 9 will be in a separate bubble of up to 30 students for all their lessons. They will remain in their own classroom for the majority of their lessons and their subject specialist teacher will come to their room. Students in years 10 to 13 will be taught in specialist rooms and will therefore change rooms for their different lessons. All students will follow the full curriculum.

We have also staggered our start times and our finish times (as well as having staggered breaks) to minimise contacts and support social distancing. See the table below. Please ensure that your son/daughter arrives at their scheduled time. Students will also have to leave the area outside school straight away at their finish time for that day, they will not be allowed to wait for students in other groups.

	Year 7		Year 8		Year 9		Year 10		Year 11		Year 12*		Year 13*	
	Start	Finish	Start	Finish	Start	Finish	Start	Finish	Start	Finish	Start	Finish	Start	Finish
Monday	8.15	14.35	8.30	14.35	8.30	14.35	8.45	14.25	8.45	14.25	8.45	14.35	8.30	14.25
Tuesday	every day	14.35	every day	14.35	every day	14.35	every day	14.25	every day	14.25	every day	14.35	every day	14.25
Weds		14.25		14.25		14.25		14.35		14.25		14.25		
Thursday		14.25		14.25		14.25		14.35		14.25		14.35		
Friday		14.25		14.15		14.15		14.25		14.25		14.25		

* When year 12 and 13 do not have a timetabled lesson or timetabled study period session 1 or session 3, they will be allowed to start or leave early to study at home. This will allow for further staggered starts and ends to the day.

Some students will have community time with their form tutor or mentoring sessions with their student support officer at the end of the day by arrangement from 14.35 – 14.55 which will be 1 to 1 or in small groups of students in the same year group. Students will be notified if they are going to have a tutor session or mentoring session the week before it is scheduled. There will be no tutor time or mentoring on a Friday.



Timetable

In years 7-9 students will be in bubbles of 30 for all their sessions. They will be with the same students for all of the sessions and will remain in the same room for their learning apart from lessons in PE and IT. All students in years 7-9 will be based in the main building. Students in Jigsaw will stay in the OASIS area. In years 10 and 11 students will be in year group bubbles and will move to different rooms for each of their sessions.

Parents and carers of students in years 8, 9, 10, 11 and 13 will receive an email before the start of term that states where students should go on arrival to school on Monday morning (7 September) so that students know where to go on their first day.

Equipment and lockers

We have made a decision that lockers cannot be used at the start of the term. It is important that students only bring what is essential for the 3 sessions that they are having on that day. They must make sure that they have everything they need as it is not possible for parents/carers to bring forgotten items to the school during the school day. (See information about visitors). Students who kept a locker from last year can remove their items from their locker on the first day of term. We will be working with the locker letting company for students who have rented a locker for this year. The hope is that students will be able to use these later in the year.

The equipment list is provided below.

Pencil Case containing:

- Black or Navy Blue Pen (Biro or Fountain pen or similar) +spare
- Pencil + spare (including a 2B pencil for art)
- Eraser
- Pencil Sharpener
- Protractor
- Ruler (30 cm ruler)
- Pair of Compasses
- Scientific Calculator- Casio fx-83GTX
- Green Biro
- Black drywipe pen
- Coloured pencils (recommended good value art set: https://www.amazon.co.uk/Evolution-Original-Graphite-ECOolutions-Colouring/dp/B01EQ0XJJS/ref=sr_1_25?dchild=1&keywords=colouring+pencils&qid=1594214384&sr=8-25)
- Round topped/safety scissors
- Glue stick
- Highlighter(s)
- Fine liner (For technology)

Although there is hand sanitiser in the school we advise students to keep a small hand sanitiser in their bags. Ring bound folder with page dividers x 2 (for art and technology).

A small English dictionary. The Oxford mini dictionary and thesaurus would be a good choice but any small English dictionary would be beneficial.

https://www.amazon.co.uk/gp/product/0192756974/ref=as_li_qf_sp_asin_il_tl?ie=UTF8&camp=1634&creative=6738&creativeASIN=0192756974&linkCode=as2&tag=oxfowl-21



A small French/Spanish dictionary. (Year 7 should wait till they have their timetable so they know if they are studying French or Spanish) Collins are recommended but any would be beneficial.

French: https://www.amazon.co.uk/Collins-Gem-French-School-Dictionary/dp/0007569319/ref=sr_1_1?dchild=1&keywords=French+School+Gem+Dictionary%3A+Trusted+support+for+learning%2C+in+a+mini-format&qid=1597918429&s=books&sr=1-1

Spanish: https://www.amazon.co.uk/Collins-Gem-Spanish-School-Dictionary/dp/0007569300/ref=sr_1_9?dchild=1&keywords=Collins+Spanish+School+Dictionary+%28Collins+School%29+Paperback&qid=1597918366&refinements=p_76%3A419158031&rnid=419157031&rps=1&s=books&sr=1-9

Uniform and PE kit

Students must be in full school uniform.

PE Years 7-9

On a day when your daughter has a session of PE she should wear her PE kit to school as per the PE kit expectations.

PE Years 10-11

On a day when your daughter has a session of PE she should bring her PE kit to school with her. Provision for changing into kit will be put in place.

Behaviour

A copy of the school behaviour charter is included with this mailing. Please make sure you have read this and keep a copy for future reference. In addition, there is a behaviour policy addendum included with this mailing to provide further information on procedures and processes for this term (Covid-19).

Library

There is no after school library (homework club) provision at the start of term and the library will not be open before school or during break and lunch times. Library borrowing will be via a click and collect service which students will receive more information about.

Face masks and coverings

We are taking a pragmatic approach to the wearing of face coverings in lessons. There is no compulsion to wear a face covering but, should a student wish to wear a face covering, they are able to do so. Students wearing face coverings to school who are not going to wear them in school should remove them on entry to school and put them in a plastic bag in their bag. This is subject to any change in the guidance.

Purchasing food items from the school catering facilities

Students will be allocated an area of the school for both break and lunch time. The same food provision will be on offer in both areas. Students who bring packed lunch will also eat in the year group allocated area.

Year 7 - Canteen

Year 8 - Sports hall and Food Cube

Year 9 - Canteen

Year 10 - Sports hall and Food Cube

Year 11 - Canteen

To ensure we are keeping our staff and students safe during the COVID crisis we have implemented a number of initiatives around hygiene following the government's guidance. One of these initiatives is to introduce



staggered break and lunch times by year group where each year group has a designated area for eating food purchased from our catering facilities or alternatively bring in their own packed lunch. Historically, the catering company have taken cash that is added by the student to the students account via the cash loader. However, due to COVID-19 the catering company will not be taking any cash so the cash loader will be turned off. This leaves two options: Option 1 - Add funds to your daughter's WisePay account (cashless system). Option 2 – Bring in a packed lunch. The added issue we will be facing is that we currently use a Biometric system for taking funds via a Fingerprint reader or PIN number pad. Under the current guidance these methods should not be used as it would require sanitising after every student has touched the device which is too impractical to implement. To combat this we will be having to use the “look-up” method where the catering person at the till will take the year group, form and name of a student and once verified against the student's image on the catering system the cost of the food item(s) will be deducted from their account. Any new student (year 7 or 12) will not have a photographic image so they will be asked to show their journal for name verification. This is a much slower process but one that will ensure students are not touching devices that could transfer the virus. Those students on Free School Meals will be flagged at the tills and the verification checks made as previously mentioned.

Cash for other items

The school has also made the decision at this time due to the COVID guidance not to take cash for any other items we have in the past, such as books, trips etc. The same rule will apply where these items will need to be paid for using the school cashless system WisePay.

If you have any queries relating to WisePay please email the address below

BSFGWisepay@blackfen.bexley.sch.uk Details on WisePay can be found on the schools website.

New buildings and refurbishment

Work has continued on the new building and this will be handed over to the school in January 2021. The progress of the new build is on schedule and the building will be watertight by the time we return in September. There have also been some internal improvements in the school and this includes converting the present staff room to a science lab.

Other important information

One way system

There will be a full one way system in operation in the school for all members of the school community. This is to maintain social distancing and to prevent mixing of bubbles. It is vitally important that everyone follows the system as it is there to help to protect us all.

Entry to school and exit from school

Students in years 7-11 should use the main school entrances. If they are arriving from the direction of Blendon, students must use the pedestrian gate by the bus shelter and use the pedestrian crossing to cross the car park. Students arriving from the direction of Blackfen should use the main school pedestrian entrance. Likewise, in the evening students heading towards Blendon should use the pedestrian gate by the bus shelter and those heading towards Blackfen should use the main school gate. Year 12 students will be coming in and leaving school via the visitors' car park.

Car drop off

During the first week of term we will be trialling a car drop off for students. Cars should enter through the main school vehicle gate and drive towards the exit gate. As close to the exit gate as possible, students should alight and cars should then drive off through the exit gate. Drivers should take great care and students will need to be watchful for other cars. Unfortunately, due to car parking constraints, we cannot provide a facility for pick up at the end of the day.



Covid-19 isolation room

As per the risk assessment there is a Covid-19 isolation room on the school site for any student who presents with symptoms of Covid-19 during the day. Any student who has symptoms at home must stay at home, self-isolate and be tested. Please see the risk assessment for more information on this procedure.

Cleaning

There are additional cleaning staff who will be in school every day during the day. Enhanced cleaning is taking place every evening and morning.

Toilet facilities

We have added to the toilet facilities in school by temporarily converting some staff toilets to student toilets. This ensures every block in the school has toilet provision for students and staff.

Hand washing

Three handwashing troughs have been installed in the school and automatic hand sanitisers are available for use outside every classroom in the school and in the common areas.

Contacts

The following staff are Student Support Officers:

Mr Pidwell – Yellow Community extn 3012

Ms Matthews– Green Community extn 3112

Mrs Dimond-Banks – Purple Community extn 3036

Mr Loughlin – Red Community extn 3038

Mrs Osborne – Blue Community extn 3039

The attendance officer is Mrs Parkinson extn 3156

In the sixth form, the following staff are led by Miss Brewer, Head of Sixth Form:

Ms Purbrick – Deputy Head of Sixth Form

Ms Drewer – Year 12 Transition Co-ordinator

Mrs Eiffert – Sixth Form Co-ordinator and Admissions Manager

In order to help your communication with the school, the following are Faculty Leaders:

English – Miss McCarthy

Mathematics – Mrs McMahan

Science – Ms Gough

Humanities – Mrs Doyle

The subjects in this faculty are history, geography and RS.

Expressive Arts (this is a new faculty which has combined some of the art and technology faculty and the creativity and performance faculty)– Ms Magrowski

The subjects in this faculty are technology, art, photography, music, PE, dance and drama.

Vocational – Ms Gilles-Terry

The subjects in this faculty are law, IT, business, economics, health and social care and child care.

Social Sciences – Ms Blatch

The subjects in this faculty are Spanish, French, PPE, sociology, psychology and media.

Ms Cascarino is the school SENCO

Visitors and meetings

As part of our risk assessment it has been agreed that no visitors are allowed on school site. Please do not



turn up at the school gate or reception expecting to see a member of staff or to ask a question. The receptionists will not allow you onto the school site and will politely request that you leave. I realise you may urgently need to speak to a member of staff and request you use the contact details below to go initially through your daughter's student support officer. All meetings next term will be conducted by phone as per the school risk assessment.

Travelling to and from school

The advice at present is that students should aim to walk, cycle or travel to school by private transport.

Students who use public transport must adhere to the expectation to wear a face covering.

With all these new procedures in place we will be monitoring and reviewing on a daily basis and will make any amendments that we feel necessary to improve any procedures in place. I also urge you to let the school know if there are any issues that your daughter highlights, so that we can put actions in place to overcome those issues.

I am delighted that all members of the school community are going to be in school together for the first time since mid March. However, I also appreciate that it is a worrying and anxious time for us all. I would like to reassure you that we have worked tirelessly during the summer to make sure the school is ready and, most importantly safe, for us to be in school together in September. We will continue to approach the start of term with caution and we are looking forward to starting to get back to face to face education for all as we begin the new school year.

A warm welcome to you if you are a new parent/carer to the school and welcome back if you are an existing member of the community. I look forward to working with you this year.

Yours sincerely,

Matthew Brown
Head Teacher

