

KLA Bulletin

Friday, August 28th 2020

KING'S LYNN ACADEMY

Dear pupils, parents, carers and families,

As we approach the date of our full return to school after the summer holidays, I wanted to write this bulletin to update everyone on the current situation and share full details of how we expect to manage the practicalities of that return so we can do so in the safest possible manner.

I appreciate that this might be a difficult issue for some of you, unlikely to have been made much easier by the constant media speculation and frequent changes! I know that many of you will have been waiting for news from me over the summer, and so I am pleased to be able to share our plans today in some detail. Apologies that it has taken so long, but I did not want to provide information earlier which would then have run the risk of it having to be then changed repeatedly. I am confident that the information we are providing is as complete as we can make it now, and I certainly hope there is no need for much further amendment before pupils return.

I do want everybody to be reassured that we have given an immense amount of thought to how we manage a safe full return to school for all pupils and staff. The risk assessment that is attached for those who are interested has been revised and revisited dozens of times throughout the summer, and has been checked by external Health and Safety consultants. It was then finally approved by our Trust Board of Directors earlier this week, giving us the final confirmation to proceed to open. Although it is important to acknowledge that it is not possible to make any space entirely risk-free, whether that be from coronavirus or any other hazard, I am confident that our school environment will be as safe as we can possibly make it. While the topic of children returning to schools has sadly become a rather unpleasant political debate nationally, I know that the strong collaboration and relationships between families and staff that we have worked so hard to create here will be the key to finding the co-operation and understanding we all need to make this happen successfully. We really can't wait to welcome our pupils back to KLA!

Key information that you need to know is summarised in bullet-point form below. If you would like to know further information, most of that detail can be found in the accompanying risk assessment. The most important information that schools have been given is the reassurance that children are considered to be at exceptionally low risk from coronavirus, and that the control measures we have been advised to take should provide sufficient safety for pupils and staff attending school.

- We will welcome Year 7 pupils to KLA on a voluntary basis on Friday, September 4th at 9 a.m. This is because the restrictions caused by the coronavirus meant that the transition we would normally have run for our newest recruits were not possible, so we want to offer them the chance to take advantage of an extra day to settle. Could Year 7 parents please note that there will be no school transport available on that day – children will need to make their own way to KLA. As I have previously communicated, this is not a formal register day for pupils, so attendance is completely voluntary. As all pupils are expected to be back to attending in full uniform, it would be sensible to ask that Year 7 wear their new uniform on that day.
- **All pupils are expected to return to KLA at normal time on Monday, September 7th**, the date that had always been fixed in our calendar as our first day of term. Given the number of pupils who arrive by school bus, it is not possible to stagger the start of the day, so we would ask that pupils who do not arrive by bus arrive on site between 8.20 and 8.35, when

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the bell rings. Other than on PE days (see below) we expect pupils to return in full school uniform, including blazer and proper school shoes please.

- School transport will be fully functional again for the new year, although the wearing of face coverings is compulsory on the buses and pupils will be asked to sit in year groups. I have been told that there should be communication from the local authority school transport service to all families entitled to school transport before we return – please let me us know if this has not been received by next Thursday. Please be aware that although KLA are not responsible for school transport, we do fully expect all pupils to follow the instructions that they are given, and will investigate and sanction any reports we receive of pupils failing to do so.
- The government are clear that attendance at school returns to being compulsory from September 7th. Clearly we want to support any families who have concerns about coming back to school – if you need any further advice please contact your child's head of year in the first instance to discuss.
- If your child, or anyone in your family, develops symptoms consistent with COVID19 please do not send them to school, but rather arrange for a test as soon as possible, letting us know that you are doing do. If a pupil shows symptoms during the school day we will immediately isolate them in school, contact parents and ask for them to be collected as quickly as possible.
- In the event that a positive case is identified within the school – either pupils, staff or wider families – we ask for your co-operation in complying with test and trace and any other requirements identified by PHE.
- On arrival at KLA, each year group will be working in year group 'bubbles', with limited movement once in school. Each Year Group will have a designated zone within the school, and pupils will be kept as far as possible within consistent class groups throughout the day. Pupils will remain in the same classroom, and staff will move around to deliver lessons.
- Social Distancing is **not** expected of pupils once in school. Although we will do our best to create classroom environments that make some level of separation possible, this will clearly not be possible in most classroom situations. Classrooms have been organised into rows, with pupils sitting side by side, so that the possibility of face-to-face contact is minimised.
- Lunch breaks will be staggered by year group to ensure there is no mixing of pupils. There will be no formal break, and rest and refreshment breaks will be offered to pupils within each teaching session. The canteen will be open once again for lunch, but to begin with there will no breakfast or break provision.
- The timetable has been suspended for the time being, and over the summer we have written an emergency COVID-19 timetable that meets the demands of the guidance we have to follow. This timetable will allow us to ensure we provide high-quality teaching even within these restrictions and will be in operation until the restrictions are lifted.
- The adapted timetable provides a full curriculum for every pupil in every year group – there will be no narrowing of our curriculum and all subjects will be offered. That said, the guidance we have to meet will mean some limitations to some of our subjects – most will be taught outside of their normal teaching environments for example. Our staff are ready to manage these difficulties, but it will not be 'business as usual' quite yet!

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- Art, Design Technology and PE will be taught in their usual spaces, as clearly the requirement for access to specialist equipment here is unavoidable. We have made provision in our planning to ensure that this can be done without breaking those 'bubbles.'
- On days when your child has PE on their timetable, they will be asked to come to school in PE kit for the whole day, as we have no changing facilities available. We have deliberately scheduled all PE lessons for the afternoon session so that pupils are not being asked to sit for the remainder of the day in potentially wet / sweaty clothes. In wet weather we are likely to have to do PE theory indoors.
- We are very conscious that our new Year 11 pupils are still expected to sit full GCSE exams next year, despite having missed several months of teaching, and we intend to offer Period 6 lessons for those pupils for the majority of the year to help them overcome this gap. I am working on transport for those pupils who do not live within walking/cycling distance but it is not proving straightforward. I will provide more information to those families in the early days of the new term.
- We have amended our behaviour expectations for the new term, to ensure that they capture the expectations that are placed on pupils during this health crisis. We continue to have the highest expectations of all pupils, and this extends to their responsibility to respect the rules and guidance in place to ensure everyone's safety. The COVID amendment is also attached to this email.
- There has been huge media speculation and comment on the subject of face coverings. The advice we have been very clearly given by the Department for Education and Public Health England is that *'Nationwide, the government is not recommending face coverings are necessary in education settings generally because a system of control, applicable to all education environments, provides additional mitigating measures. Schools and colleges will have the discretion to require face coverings in indoor communal areas where social distancing cannot be safely managed, if they believe that it is right in their particular circumstances'*.
- Our current approach therefore has not changed – unless local advice from Public Health England changes, pupils will not generally be expected to wear face coverings while in school. If this scientific guidance changes we will of course review this approach, and if our local community becomes a high-risk infection area we will adopt the necessary measures at that time. If you disagree with this approach and urgently want your child to wear a face-covering, please contact me by email so that we can discuss how best to accommodate this. Please note that staff may be wearing some form of PPE in certain circumstances – this will predominantly in the form of visors, as we do not believe it is possible to teach and communicate effectively wearing face masks.

I know that there is much here – I am sorry for that, but I am afraid that the amount of information that I have to share with you all is not really able to be reduced into anything shorter! The three documents I have shared in this parent mail provide the fullest picture I can provide of the steps we have taken to prepare your school to open safely for over 1,000 pupils and staff. If you would like any further information, please email me on alan.fletcher@kla.eastern-mat.co.uk and I will do my best to provide an answer.

I am so excited to be looking forward to welcoming our amazing group of young people back to KLA, and to enjoying the atmosphere in our happy school once again. I completely appreciate the

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responsibility I carry for everyone's safety in these odd and difficult times and if I were not absolutely confident that we have done all we can to look after everyone's health I would not be prepared to open. I hope that the information I have shared today provides some measure of reassurance for you all.

I will be in touch next week once again with another (hopefully much shorter) bulletin before that first day of the new academic year.

Thank you all as always for your great support of our school; it is very much appreciated by my team and I. For the moment, I hope everyone enjoys the final days of the summer break, and we look forward to seeing everyone back at school soon!

Best wishes,

Alan Fletcher