

Full return to school – further information and the ‘F’ word (that’s ‘Face coverings!’)

Dear pupils, parents, carers and families

I hope everyone is well, and all looking forward to resuming schooling next week? We certainly are very excited to be welcoming 900 young people back over the coming days!

Following our staff training and information sessions that have been ongoing this week, as well as a very handily-timed further update to government guidance on 9pm on the Friday of the bank holiday weekend(!), I am writing with a further update to clarify and hopefully finalise plans for the full, safe re-opening of KLA for all pupils from Monday 7th September (with Year 7 only invited to join us a day early on Friday, 4th September).

We are confident that we have clear, wide-ranging and comprehensive plans to enable everyone to return as I shared last week. I shared the then-draft of the risk assessment with you all, and so I will refrain from sharing the slightly updated version, as it contains only minor changes. The fully updated version will be available to view on our website from later today, once staff have had enough opportunity to check it and suggest any alterations.

- Upon arrival at school on Monday morning, all pupils will be greeted by senior staff at the gate and directed to their own year-group entrance. Staff will be placed very visibly throughout the school to help settle pupils and make sure that they are guided to where they are supposed to be.
- I have been asked to stress that it is considered sensible for pupils to make their way to school on foot or by bike if possible, and to avoid walking in groups or with pupils from other year groups. Obviously, our ability to enforce this is not very high, but I would ask please that parents make clear this request to their children.
- All pupils should wear PE kit for the whole day on which they have PE lessons (there will be no practical PE on the first day on Monday so ALL pupils on Monday should be in full school uniform please). As we go through the year it will be perfectly acceptable for pupils to wear warmer outer clothing (jogging bottoms / tracksuits / warm tops) for those days – as long as they are appropriate for a school setting!
- PE lessons will take place exclusively at the end of the school day (i.e. final lesson or double lesson) to avoid pupils who will be in PE kit throughout the day having to endure a full day in potentially wet / sweaty clothing.
- Behaviour expectations clearly will be extremely high. We have altered our behaviour policy slightly (already shared with parents last week) to capture the increased risk that some poor behaviour might pose to Health & Safety, and we will enforce this rigidly – even for things that might seem relatively trivial. For example, pupils will be sitting side-by-side in rows to avoid face-to-face communication – if a pupil turns around to speak to a classmate, this has the potential to be more serious than it would normally be considered to be, and will be sanctioned as such. I would be very grateful if all parents could discuss the reason these measures are in place, and reinforce these

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expectations – appreciating also that staff are clearly at much higher risk than pupils from this illness than pupils are likely to be. I have reattached the annexe to the behaviour policy as I am aware that it would not open properly for some last week.

- Now.... the question about face-coverings!! The DfE guidance that face masks are not considered to be necessary in school settings generally has not changed in England. If our community at any point becomes subject to 'national intervention' because of high infection rates (i.e. some form of local lockdown), then we have to implement face-coverings in communal areas at that time, but still not in classrooms.

Having carefully considered all of the guidance and information we remain of the opinion that face-masks in classrooms are not desirable, because they clearly do limit communication and impede great teaching. That said, I do appreciate that there may be some staff, parents and pupils for whom the ability to use PPE to guard against transmission would help increase their confidence around returning to the school environment. Therefore, I have decided that, while masks are not really appropriate items for pupils in school, I do understand that giving individuals the ability to decide for themselves on this issue is going to be important. We have therefore ordered a number of plastic visors, which will do the same job as masks, but crucially not impair an individual's ability to communicate. If a pupil or member of staff therefore wishes to have one of these we will make them available (providing of course they arrive on time before Monday!). I do not anticipate there being either much need nor demand for these, but it is important I feel that the potential is there for their use for those few who may wish to do so.

I hope this compromise will meet with everyone's approval.

- All pupils will have one formal break per day at staggered times – the canteen will be fully open at this time as will the packed lunch hall. In addition, each teaching session will incorporate a flexible 'comfort break' of 5-10 minutes. During these pupils will be able to consume food and (non-fizzy!) drinks in the classroom, which is obviously completely contrary to our usual rules! This approach was one we used during the initial return to school for Year 10 before summer and worked really well. Please therefore do send your children with some additional refreshments for them to use during these times.
- We are taking an incremental approach to our reopening – we intend to begin by focusing hard on getting the basics right, and keeping well within all guidance. This means that for the first half-term or so we are focusing on running our school smoothly and without fuss as we all get used to the way our school will feel for the coming wee while. That means we will not be running additional after-school clubs to begin with, although we will have that in the second phase of our plan to hopefully bring in after the first month or two.

It is really clear that this is not going to be the school life our pupils know and have experienced at KLA up till now – pupils will stay in consistent groups, will be in the same classroom, indeed the same seat for the vast majority of each day. We look forward to the day when we can get back to our normal way of working, but clearly, we are not at that point yet!

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- We are going to lack the ability to use the thumbprint scanners for individual pupil parentpay accounts for the foreseeable future. We have a workaround in place for food service, but it would be very helpful if parents could use the online payment facility to make top up payments rather than asking children to bring cash into school. The cash loader is currently out of operation as part of our risk assessment.
- We will provide stationary and learning materials for all pupils, who will be given this in their room. These will stay in classrooms throughout and not be taken home – please do not send children into school with pencil cases – we have provided this to eliminate the need for materials to transit between home and school.
- I am aware that the Local Authority school transport team have sent information to some families but not others at this point – thank you to those of you who have shared this with me. On investigation it appears that information has been bundled in with any new bus passes being issued, but not for those pupils who are continuing to use the previously issued one. To avoid any confusion, I would suggest that you consult the information they have made available on the LA website <https://www.norfolk.gov.uk/education-and-learning/school-and-college-transport/home-to-school-transport/coronavirus-and-school-transport>
I have also copied the most important information below...

Dedicated school transport, including bus, mini bus or taxi

- *Social distancing guidance will not apply to dedicated school transport. This is because students will not be sharing with members of the general public and will generally, or mostly, be with the same group of students each day.*
- *Face coverings should be worn by anyone aged 11 or over, and by younger children if they are able to do so safely. The face coverings do not need to be medical grade. Please ensure they are worn correctly covering the nose and mouth. Store them in a small sealable bag during the day.*
- *Students should sit with others from their year group or bubble if possible*
- *If transport is shared with students from another school, then you should sit with others from your own school and bubble where possible, Leave space between yourself and the students from the other school when you can.*

At the bus stop and boarding

- *While you wait, keep your distance from other passengers. Stay on the footpath and be considerate of people who may be passing.*
- *Please let other passengers off the vehicle before you try to board*
- *If you have a bus pass, you **must** tap on the reader every journey and you must use the vehicle we have allocated you to for test and trace purposes*
- *If you forget your bus pass you may be asked by the bus driver to give your name. This is for test and trace purposes.*

On the vehicle

Make sure you follow all instructions from the driver, and passenger assistant if you have one.

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- *You should sit with other students from your year group if you can. Also try to sit in the same seat each day.*
- *Sit side-by-side where possible and avoid face to face contact such as close talking*
- *Get off the vehicle at school from the front row by row, lower deck first then upper deck*
- *Do not interfere with any tape, signs or barriers that have been put there to help passengers socially-distance*
- *Do not close open windows - they help to increase the airflow through the vehicle*

This will be (hopefully!) my last communication with you before we welcome all pupils back to school on Monday. I know that there may well be some anxiety for parents and pupils, and respect that. My team and I will do absolutely everything we can next week to make this most unusual of starts to a school term as easy for our pupils as possible—the team here have been working around the clock for a large part of their summer to make sure we are ready to welcome everyone back as safely as we can. I hope that the communications you have had from us have helped to reassure you – if you need anything else please do email me.

As the leader of this school, I was given a very clear direction from the Department for Education – take all measures necessary in following the national guidance to ensure that KLA can open for all of its pupils on September 7th. I am confident that we have done all that has been demanded of us. I know you will appreciate that I cannot give cast-iron guarantees to anyone that there will never be a case of COVID at KLA, any more than I could guarantee that a pupil would never catch a cold. In putting the risk assessment and mitigations in place that we have I am confident that we have followed the advice we have been given by those public health professionals who understand this far better than I. I am very grateful to all parents for the support we have had throughout this time – my commitment to you is that we will do everything we can to keep your children safe, happy and, crucially, learning. The coming weeks and months may have some uncertainties still ahead for us, but thanks to the fabulous work of our team here at KLA we are as ready as we can be!

Best wishes,



Alan Fletcher