



Spalding High School

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Headmistress Mrs M Anderson B.Ed

17th July 2020

Dear parents, carers and students,

This will not be my last letter of the term, but I am writing ahead of the end of the academic year with important information for the coming weeks. My final letter, next Tuesday, will contain more of the typical end of year information.

Current Y11 and Y13 Results Days – August 13th (A Level) and August (20th) GCSE

It is with great regret that I have to inform students and parents, that under the current regulations, we cannot operate Results Days as we would normally and that students and parents will not be able to collect their results from the school in person.

This year we have been directed that results cannot be issued to students before 8am. It is our intention to email results to students on their school accounts at that time. A team of staff will then be in touch with every student in Y11 and Y13 to discuss their results and progression routes and a further team will be on hand to support students and parents where assistance is needed.

I know how much students, parents and staff enjoy this day and that this year more than any other, coming together would have been so very important. I am sorry that we cannot make this happen but remain very hopeful that at some point in the future we will be able to celebrate the progression of students in these year groups.

Mrs Haunch and Mrs Bushell have written detailed guidance letters as to how these days will operate. Their letters will be sent to Year 11 and Year 13 students today.

In preparation for September 2020

As you are no doubt aware the Government has issued their advice and regulations for complete school opening with effect from September. Over the last two weeks we have been discussing our response, adapting our risk assessments and planning our new procedures.

The new government regulations can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/actions-for-schools-during-the-coronavirus-outbreak/guidance-for-full-opening-schools>

Risk Assessments

The complete set of current Risk Assessments remain on the School website in the Covid-19 folder. Our new procedures are very heavily based on the systems we have established during Term 6 with Y10 and Y12. On Monday 20th July we will replace the Term 6 Risk Assessments with the Draft September Risk Assessments. These will cover student related procedures across the whole school, including our plans for delivering specialist practical subjects. They will be a useful source of information for students and parents so please do read them carefully.

There will be a period of consultation for the Risk Assessments between Monday 20th July and Friday 31st July. Parents and students should email enquiries@spaldinghigh.lincs.sch.uk with their question or point.

However, it is quite possible that the local situation may change over the summer, or the government might issue updated advice before the start of the new term. For these reasons, the Risk Assessments will be updated at the end of August to reflect the situation at that point. I will write to parents to confirm the final arrangements in the week of 24th August.

Year Group Frequently Asked Questions

Heads of Year and pastoral staff are working to create a set of year group specific FAQs. These will be based completely on the procedures explained within the Risk Assessments. For the reasons given above, we will send these home with my letter in late August.

Health and Hygiene

Prior to lockdown, the school had adopted very robust health and hygiene measures, all of which have continued during Term 6 and will continue into the new academic year as well.

If students/staff have any of the symptoms of coronavirus (no matter how mild) they should not come to school. The symptoms are: • High temperature/fever • Persistent cough • Loss of taste or smell

Staff and students should not come into school if they have tested positive within the last seven days.

We have a cleaning station and hand sanitiser in wall mounted dispensers in each classroom and at entry/exit points in every building.

We will continue to uphold the “Catch it – Kill it – Bin it” measures.

The school has already been deep cleaned and will have another deep clean over the holidays. We have Covid-19 secure daily cleaning measures in place with our contracted cleaners and have a day cleaner during the school day.

There have been weekly health and safety meetings during lockdown and these will continue throughout into next year.

Clinically Extremely Vulnerable/ Clinically vulnerable/shielding students and household members

In previous letters I have asked parents to share information with us if there are students or household members shielding or designated as clinically extremely vulnerable. Please ensure that you contact your child’s Head of Year to discuss how we can best support students when we return to school in September.

We are also very much aware that as scientists gather more information about Covid-19, they share information about certain groups being at greater risk of a more serious response to the virus. If parents or students are worried that they are in one of the higher risk groups, please do contact us to discuss this.

Social distancing

Staff will continue the 2m+ social distancing in September as per the Department for Education guidelines. Whilst there is not an actual social distance recommended for students, we will be taking measures (as explained in the Risk Assessments) that ensure that year groups are kept apart and that students in classrooms are forward facing and sitting as far apart as is practical for the room. There will be very little movement of students at lesson change.

Year Group Bubbles and Zones

At the High School we have created **year group bubbles**, each with their own designated geographical **year group zone** of the school buildings, stairwells, outdoor space and toilets. Students will not be allowed into each other’s year group zones unless accompanied by a member of staff. Students will stay in their zones for all of their lessons, except on occasion when we will collect them to access a specialist, practical subject classroom. For the foreseeable future, students will be in one year group zone for the majority of the day, with teachers moving to them. There will be greater movement between rooms in the year group zones and specialist rooms for students in Years 10-13 where they study option subjects or are in sets. This movement will be supervised.

There will be greater explanation of this topic in the FAQs we send home in August but the zones are as follows:

Year 7 – Upstairs and downstairs in South Porch

Year 8 – Upstairs 1986 block (History/Classics corridor)

Year 9 – Downstairs MFL block and T3

Year 10 – Upstairs MFL and Geography

Year 11 – Downstairs 1986 Block (Maths corridor)

Sixth Form – Sixth Form area, labs, English corridor.

Face coverings and face shields

I have written to parents on this subject a number of times before and our position has not changed. The government advice is to wear face coverings if in enclosed spaces, where social distancing is difficult to maintain and with people you might not ordinarily be with. Facial coverings are mandatory on public transport and as from 24th July, will be mandatory in shops. The Department for Education guidance states that they are not necessary in schools.

The High School has no objection to staff and students wearing facial coverings or face shields when we return to school in September providing they are washed or disposed of according to government recommendations. This will be covered in more detail in our August FAQs as government advice appears quite fluid on this issue at the moment and we wish to give parents/students the most current advice when it comes to September.

Patterns on facial coverings should be appropriate to school.

We have a small supply of fabric facial coverings that staff have made. If students are struggling to make their own, please contact us. We used the following pattern:

<https://sarahmaker.com/how-to-sew-a-surgical-face-mask-for-hospitals-free-pattern/>

The government has recommended face coverings on dedicated school transport buses from September.

School Uniform

We will return to school in September in full school uniform. The government recommendations regarding hotter and more frequent washing have been updated in the new DfE regulations which state: “uniforms do not need to be cleaned any more often than usual, nor do they need to be cleaned using methods which are different to normal.”

The uniform regulations for students and sixth formers can be found on the school website. Term 1 will be summer uniform for Y7-11.

Attendance

The government have updated their advice for school attendance which becomes mandatory again from September.

Dedicated School Transport

We have received the following from the Local Authority:

“Please be assured the Council is working hard to get the plans in place for transport from the autumn term and we are grateful for your continued patience and support with this.

The DfE will shortly publish new guidance to local authorities on providing dedicated school transport from the autumn term and following this the Council will update schools with more detailed plans. *(As soon as we receive this information we will share it with parents).*

The Council will provide transport on the dates recommended for the academic year 2020/21. They do not have the flexibility or capacity to run dedicated school transport to accommodate staggered starts and finishes or changes to terms dates.”

Advice remains that students should cycle or walk to school wherever possible or parents make transport arrangements other than public or school transport if possible. If parents decide to transport their children to school, vehicles are not to be brought onto the school premises. Please be considerate of our neighbours and arrange a drop off and collection point well away from the roads close to the school.

Student Arrival and Departure times

Students normally arrive at staggered times in the morning. For Term 1 at least, **we are unable to accommodate students before 8.30am and after 4.30pm.**

We are planning a slightly staggered finish time by no more than a few minutes to ease the dispersal of one thousand students from the buildings. There will be further details of our plans in the risk assessments that will be shared with parents on Monday and in the August FAQs.

Catering

Edwards and Blake will be operating a more limited lunchtime menu from September. There will be further details of our plans in the risk assessments that will be shared with parents on Monday and in the August FAQs. In August we will also publish the "Grab and Go" menu and prices.

Year groups will be allocated a time slot to use the canteen at lunchtimes so that we can maintain the year group bubbles. Food will not be available before school and at breaktime as they are too short to implement year bubble slots and we cannot operate a staggered system.

Students should ensure that they have enough food and drink for the duration of the day. They cannot share food and the water fountains will not be in use.

The First Day of School

In August we will send home the year group FAQs with details of materials and books students should bring in on their first day. Government regulations insist that students bring as little into school as possible. This is to both minimise the risk of transmission and also to ensure that if a local lockdown is issued, students have their books at home to support remote learning. Students will not have access to their lockers for at least Term 1.

Pens, pencils and stationery are an obvious necessity and are not to be shared with peers.

Students will arrive in school from 8.30am onwards and via the side green pedestrian gate as normal. There is a hand sanitising station at the gate that students will use upon entry to the school. Staff will be present to supervise and help with directions. Peer mentors will be on hand to assist the new Year 7 (from a 2m+ social distance of course!)

In the August FAQs we will publish the base rooms for each form group.

PE

Under current regulations, PE will be very different! On days that students have PE they will come to school in PE kit as the changing rooms cannot be used. From Monday, you will be able to view the PE Risk Assessment and we will give greater detail in the August FAQs.

Of the four PE lessons students have each fortnight, two of them will be PE and two of them will be classroom based work for Maths and English. Students will therefore only need to attend school in PE kit on two out of ten days in each timetable cycle.

As soon as current regulations are lifted, students will resume their four lessons of PE each fortnight.

Teaching and Learning

Teaching and learning has looked very different for many months now. It will continue to look different for many more months. Different is not necessarily bad or worse. Necessity is the mother of invention and we have all become a bit more innovative in recent months. Staff have been working hard to adapt their teaching and schemes of work to account for social distancing and to safeguard learning and student progress from the threat of a local

lockdown. We will be working in very different ways – but as above, this does not mean bad or worse – in fact many of us are excited about the developments in teaching and learning that we are exploring as a result of lockdown. We will also be adopting new technology at the High School, including becoming a Microsoft Teams school!

Students have been working incredibly hard at home and we are not to think of this as “lost” learning time. It has been different learning time and perhaps we have covered topics in a different way or a different order. I have overheard more staff talk about being ahead of where they would normally be with students than I have heard them talking about being behind (I have not heard any teacher say they are behind).

Speaking directly to students for a moment, I know some of you have found it difficult working at home and keeping up with tasks. If this applies to you, you are not to worry. If you have not already had contact with your Head of Year or member of the pastoral team then email us. You will not get into trouble.

We will be working hard to practise skills and knowledge, address misconceptions and plug any gaps. Everything will be fine.

Homework

For the first two weeks and two days we will not be setting any homework (see section below). Thereafter, we will be adopting a revised homework schedule and policy. Homework will be based on practising and refining skills, knowledge and understanding.

The first two weeks and two days

This will be a period of time that we have agreed as “getting ourselves in gear and getting used to being back at school full time”. I am quite aware that it is likely to take longer than two weeks and two days but we have cleared the calendar and will be focusing on getting used to new routines and procedures as a whole school community.

School routines will all be very different (see the risk assessments) and even for students in the senior school there will be new things to get used to; almost like starting a new school again!

Anxieties and worries

It is natural to feel nervous and anxious about the current situation with Covid-19 and returning to school after such a long period of remote working. It is important that students share their worries with parents and if further support is needed we strongly encourage parents and students to contact the appropriate Head of Year, Form Tutor or member of the pastoral team. There will be a member of staff dealing with the school enquiries email address for the duration of the summer holiday.

School Calendar

Many of the events that would typically be part of our school calendar are not possible under the current government regulations and therefore have been removed. This is a particular disappointment for the High School in what is also our centenary year but we are hopeful that at some point we will be able to return to a more typical calendar and to celebrate our 100th birthday in some way, shape or form.

In my final letter of the academic year, which will be sent home on Tuesday next week we will issue the school calendar for 2020/21. Due to the current restrictions, the school calendar is likely to change as the year progresses. We are putting alternative plans in place for many events and also have a “shadow” calendar for staff just in case we are able to resume events at some point during the academic year.

Hardship funds and support

We have received the following from the Local Authority:

“School offices will be closed during the summer holiday period. If families are facing hardship, they can access the Local Authority Emergency Assistance Grant. [Further government support](#) is available for families struggling as a result of coronavirus (COVID-19). If families need urgent help, they can [contact their local council](#) to find out what services are available in their area.”

I realise that during the pandemic my letters to parents have been long and detailed. Thank you for your perseverance in reading all of the information sent home and for the support and time you have been giving home learning during lockdown. I am grateful for the emails and letters of response we have been sent by parents and students. I promise next week's final letter of the academic year will not be as long!

With best regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "M K Anderson". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, prominent 'M' and 'A'.

M K Anderson

Headmistress