

15 July 2020

Dear Families,

A parent wrote to me earlier this week describing what she termed as ‘the strangest of times’ and she was absolutely right. However, no matter how strange this past term has been, our ‘Misbourne Family’ has pulled together and I wanted to start my final letter of the year by saying thank you for your support over what has truly been an unprecedented term.

Whilst we have all had to operate under such unsettled and ever-changing conditions, we have never lost sight of the fact that we are here to support every student in striving to achieve their best. I have seen and heard of stories of real resilience in both students and staff; positive and constructive communications and some truly outstanding work completed. But whilst there is much to be very proud of, I also know that this period has not been easy for many. Our staff have never wavered in their provision of learning, care and support for individual students and their families on a daily basis.

We have appreciated the many comments received from families about our approach to pastoral support and wellbeing. These are the foundations on which academic and personal success can be built, so investing in this work must remain front and centre as we move into the new challenges that face us from September as we welcome all students back.

It has been a delight, this half term, to see Year 10 and Year 12 back in school, albeit in small numbers or ‘bubbles’ at any one time. This period has also been helpful for us to plan for and respond to the latest guidance for September. Having said that, and no matter how well prepared we are, there is no escaping the fact that September will be more complex than how we have been operating this term.

Crucial to our success will be to have as smooth a start to the year as possible. Many students will not yet have been into the school to see the changes made first hand, nor experienced our new procedures. We need to ensure that we fully support their transition back into school, including taking time to walk through the various new procedures with each tutor group, so that they are clear, effective and very quickly become our ‘new normal’. Therefore, In order to do this, we are making a slight change to the planned start of term for years 9, 11 and 13 by extending our staggered start.

Start of term dates:

- Tuesday 1 September - INSET Day for all staff - no students on site
- Wednesday 2 September - First day back for Year 7 and Year 12 only
- Thursday 3 September - First day back for Year 8 and Year 10 (joining Y7 and Y12)
- Friday 4 September - First day back for Years 9, 11 and 13, therefore all students in school

This is a cumulative build of students; all students will attend every day after their first day in school.

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This approach will mean that some students will have an additional day at home than previously advertised but we hope that you can understand and appreciate why we are having to take these measures, giving priority where possible to the year groups who have not had an opportunity to come into school since March.

Once in school, it is important that we put in place measures that align with the Government's system of controls that I introduced in my last letter and re-iterate again below:

System of controls overview:

Prevention

1. Minimise contact with individuals who are unwell by ensuring that those who have coronavirus (COVID-19) symptoms, or who have someone in their household who does, do not attend school
2. Clean hands thoroughly more often than usual
3. Ensure good respiratory hygiene by promoting the 'catch it, bin it, kill it' approach
4. Introduce enhanced cleaning, including cleaning frequently touched surfaces often, using standard products such as detergents and bleach
5. Minimise contact between individuals and maintain social distancing wherever possible
6. Where necessary, wear appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE)
7. Numbers 1-4 must be in place in schools at all times

Response to any infection

8. Engage with the NHS Test and Trace process
9. Manage confirmed cases of coronavirus (COVID-19) amongst the school community
10. Contain any outbreak by following local health protection team advice
11. Numbers 7-9 must be followed in every case where they are relevant.

As a consequence of these controls, one of the main changes in September will be that, where practicable, students will remain in 'bubbles'. Years 7 and 8 will be in tutor group bubbles for all lessons, with the exception of language and a whole year group bubble during unstructured times. Years 9-11 will be in separate year group bubbles and the combined Sixth Form of Years 12 and 13 will form the final bubble.

As you can imagine, having to operate in this manner will require a number of significant changes. We will be sending out a revised version of our Families Guidance document before the end of this week. As before, this

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document will detail all of the changes and safety precautions we are making. Some of them remain unchanged from what we have been doing this term, but there will also be new content to reflect, firstly, the changes in Government Guidance and, secondly, changes relating to our own context and numbers.

I have listed below a few of the key changes which I wanted to let you know about as soon as possible but please do read through the full details in the guidance document when it arrives, as this is only a summary of key points that are specific to us.

Summary of key changes for September:

- Where practical for families, we would like to manage slightly staggered arrival times between 8.15 and 8.30 am.
 - 8.15 am – Sixth Form, Year 10 and 8
 - 8.30 am – Year 11, 9 and 7
- Different year groups will be allocated a specific gate (along Misbourne Drive) in which to enter and exit the school (there will be no change to coach drop off times or location):
 - Gate 1 - Year 11 and Sixth Form
 - Gate 2 – Year 9 and 10
 - Gate 3 – Year 7 and 8
- Year groups will be allocated an outdoor ‘zone’ in which to socialise prior to moving into form time.
- Tutor group rooms have changed to accommodate all of one year group being in the same building.
- Students will be expected to maintain the highest standards of cleanliness and hygiene, including regular hand-washing/sanitisation and wiping down desks prior to use.
- Hand sanitisers have been placed in all rooms around the school, but if students can bring their own as part of their daily equipment, this would be helpful.
- The timings of lessons and opportunities to visit the café will change to accommodate two breaks of 30 minutes during the school day. There will only be only two bubbles on a break at any one time, and in different zones. Students will only have one of their break times in the café so you may wish to send them in with additional snacks.
- One-way system around all buildings
- All break times will be outdoors, other than during inclement weather or when students are scheduled to be in the café.
- In lessons, all seats/desks will face forward (where practicable) and teachers will predominantly remain at the front of the classroom.

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Supporting the health, safety and wellbeing of all students and staff has been at the forefront of all of our plans for September, alongside wanting to continue to offer as full a curriculum as possible for all students. There will be some compromises that need to be made, particularly in practical subjects where some adjustments to what can be taught and the cleaning down of equipment will need to be accommodated. The current Government guidance also sets out restrictions on large gatherings and visitors to the site, so we are also having to re-think things such as assemblies, Open Evenings, Parents Consultation Evenings, clubs, trips and enrichment activities that usually go across multiple year groups. Where possible, we will continue to run our full calendar of events and activities, thinking creatively about how to approach them. For example, running virtual Consultation Evenings, which ran successfully in our trial this term with two year groups.

If you have not yet completed the Travel Survey to indicate how your child will be travelling to school in September, we would be very grateful if you could do so by **midday tomorrow** (Thursday 16 July) to enable us to finalise our plans around arrival and departure times at school in September. You can access the survey [here](#).

We anticipate that there will be further changes to the guidance at some point. As and when this happens, we will write to you as soon as possible to explain how this affects your child.

In the meantime, I'd like to take this opportunity to thank you once again for your continued support and wish you all a pleasant, safe, and enjoyable Summer break.

Yours sincerely,



Jo Meloni
Headteacher

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