



1 September 2020

Dear Parents / Carers

I hope you are all well and are enjoying the last few days of the summer break.

I wanted to write to you to update you in relation to the College reopening. Students learn best in school and I, and my colleagues on the staff are delighted that we will open in full and we are looking forward to seeing and educating your child in person. Many of them have not been in the College for nearly six months and I want to reassure parents / carers that it is safe for your child to return. We have undertaken several actions to make the College 'Covid secure' (inasmuch as we can), which are indicated here. A reminder that we are adhering to the following key principles with regard to the safe opening of our College. Our principles are:

1. Student and staff health and safety. We will follow all published guidance from the DFE to plan for and mitigate risk
2. Students are taught the full curriculum by subject experts in specialist rooms
3. Students learn best in school – attendance will be compulsory

I believe it is important that we return to normality and we will expect all students to be in full College uniform and to meet our expectations of jewellery and make-up.

Start of term

As per my previous letter to you at the end of term, I confirm that I have decided to stagger the start of term for different year groups. This will allow us to manage the changes we have made to the operation of the College building and a gradual start for year groups will help to settle students in quickly and, more importantly, safely. Year groups will return to College as follows:

Friday 4 September:	first day for Year 7 and Year 12
Monday 7 September:	first day for Year 11 and 13
Tuesday 8 September:	first day for Year 10 and Year 8
Wednesday 9 September:	first day for Year 9

The College day will not be shortened and will operate as normal for all students. Students are expected to be on site by 8.25 and the College day will finish at 3.40.

Key reminders for parents / carers

The following information was sent to parents / carers at the end of last term. I include it here as a reminder of how we will operate for the first two terms of this academic year. I have also included some additional information on emerging points that have been raised nationally over the last few weeks.

Students will be based in protective 'year group bubbles' to prevent them mixing with other students and to reduce the risk of possible virus transmission. Each year group has been allocated a separate area of the College as their base for the majority of their lessons, as well as a specific area outside for break and lunch. Indoor spaces have been allocated to each year group for wet break / lunch. Images of this were sent to

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parents / carers and students before the break and are available on our website <https://www.mrc-academy.org/communication/letters> Please follow this link and click on the appropriate Year group for your child.

1. Student movement around the College will be limited, but not prohibited. Students will leave their bubble area to go to lessons that require specialist teaching, such as art, drama, music, D&T, photography and some science lessons (not all science lessons require a laboratory).
2. Students can move around within their bubble to go to different classrooms. This means we can continue to set children in appropriate ability classrooms, according to their educational needs. SEN support will be provided within year group bubbles.
3. Staff can move across bubbles to teach. This means that students will be taught by specialist teachers.
4. Sanitising stations will be in every classroom and also in corridors. Students will also be reminded of the need for thorough handwashing for 20 seconds. We have increased our cleaning of the College building, in particular handrails, door handles and other frequently touched surfaces.
5. Students are not required to socially distance from one another and will be in normal class sizes, but staff should maintain a two metre distance from students. If a member of staff is one metre away from a child, this should be for less than 15 minutes. This means that staff can see and help students with their work for short periods.
6. Students will be seated in bubbles on transport to and from school. There will not be separate buses for year groups.
7. Students will enter and exit the building through different doors to avoid mixing as much as possible. They also have Year group areas for break and lunch allocated. It is important that students adhere to these areas.
8. All young people over the age of 11 must have a face mask to wear in shops, in other enclosed spaces and in transport to and from College. The government has delegated the decision on face masks to headteachers in schools. We are recommending, in line with DFE guidance, that students wear masks in communal areas and at lesson changeover times only. Students do not need to wear masks in lessons. Face masks should be plain in colour and the College will provide temporary masks for students who need them. To encourage mask hygiene, please provide your child with a sandwich-type resealable bag to keep the mask in.
9. The canteen will provide hot food for students at break and lunch in their designated areas, but this will not be the same level of service as previously. Food will predominantly be 'grab and go'.
10. We will uphold and remind all students about the need to 'catch it, bin it, kill it' as necessary in College. This is on our digital signage as reminders to all students.

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Covid cases on site or locally

Please let us know if you believe you or a member of your family has Covid-19 symptoms. The most common symptoms to look out for are:

- a high temperature
- a new or persistent cough
- a loss of sense of smell or taste

The guidance with regard to self-isolation remains the same as previously, that families must self-isolate for 14 days if a member the household is suspected of having the illness. Please contact NHS 111 to arrange a test if these symptoms are present. It is essential that this is adhered to and that children are not sent to College if they, or a member of their family has the above symptoms. If there is a confirmed case in College, I will notify Public Health England and will follow their guidance, including use of Test and Trace, and respond accordingly. If a student develops symptoms during the College, we will isolate the student in line with DFE guidance and arrange for them to be collected.

It is well known that the risk to children from the Coronavirus is incredibly small. I appreciate that some parents / carers and students may be anxious about returning to College. If you feel that you need additional support, please contact your child's pastoral leader.

Catch-up curriculum

Staff have spent considerable time planning the curriculum for when we return so that students can catch up on any lost learning as soon as possible. We have also appointed 1:1 staff to support students where this may be needed. Homework and independent learning in the first term will cover content that was delivered remotely during lockdown.

We are in uncharted territory with regard to the pandemic and all of us are learning and adapting to new ways of working. Undoubtedly, we will learn as we go through the process of reopening and we will adapt as we need to. I will endeavour to communicate with you to update you on any substantial changes that we are making in good time.

I look forward to welcoming your child back to College.

Yours sincerely

Stuart Edwards
Principal