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Website: www.hexhamstjosephs.uk
Executive Headteacher: Mr Paul Naughton

31st August 2021

Dear Parents,

I hope you've managed to have a restful holiday and your child is excited to return to school. I thought it would be worth highlighting a few points before the children return so that they can be fully prepared for their first day.

The good news is that life in school will be returning to something like we once knew before the pandemic began as 'bubbles' are now not deemed necessary in schools. I have included some key points especially regarding government guidance surrounding COVID positive pupils.

As always we will have a Risk Assessment in place which will be visible on our website. We will continue to ventilate teaching areas, encourage good hygiene by washing hands and maintaining cleaning regimes and following government and public health advice.

I am delighted that face coverings are no longer advised for pupils, staff and visitors either in classrooms or in communal areas.

While the government has removed the requirement to wear face coverings by law it expects and recommends that they be worn in enclosed and crowded spaces where you may come into contact with people you don't normally meet. This includes public transport and dedicated transport to school or college.

Close contacts will now be identified via NHS Test and Trace and education settings will no longer be expected to undertake contact tracing. However, school will need to be informed if your child has suspected Covid and as a consequence tests positive. This is for the purpose of registering the correct code for that absence.

As with positive cases in any other setting, NHS Test and Trace will work with the positive case and/or their parent to identify close contacts. Contacts from a school setting will only be traced by NHS Test and Trace where the positive case and/or their parent specifically identifies the individual as being a close contact. This is likely to be a small number of individuals who would be most at risk of contracting COVID-19 due to the nature of the close contact.

Individuals are not required to self-isolate if they live in the same household as someone with COVID-19, or are a close contact of someone with COVID-19, and any of the following apply:

- they are fully vaccinated



- they are below the age of 18 years and 6 months
- they have taken part in or are currently part of an approved COVID-19 vaccine trial
- they are not able to get vaccinated for medical reasons

Instead, they will be contacted by NHS Test and Trace, informed they have been in close contact with a positive case and advised to take a [PCR test](#). We would encourage all individuals to take a PCR test if advised to do so for the safety of everyone in our school community.

Covid testing for KS3 pupils

As required by the government, all KS3 pupils will have two Lateral Flow Tests at the start of the Autumn term. The first test will take place on the afternoon of 6th and 7th September. You will be sent an appointment time for your child's first test via ParentMail.

The second test will take place during school hours on 9th and 10th September.

If your child is going into Y7, you will be sent a form via Parentmail to give consent for your child to take part in testing. We already hold the consent forms for the Y8 pupils.

Please keep checking ParentMail so that we can administer these tests effectively and keep all pupils and staff safe.

Uniform

Please make sure your child has the required school uniform and has it named so that it can be returned if mislaid. Shoes are to be polishable black school shoes and not trainers as stated on our website. Can I also remind pupils that ear studs must be taken out or pupils will not be able to take part in PE lessons.

Timings of the day

We have decided to stay with the staggered start and finish for our KS2 and KS3 pupils. This is conducive to a calmer start and finish to the school day as well as to stagger the amount of pupils walking down the Allendale Road with pupils from Queen Elizabeth High School at the same time.

Key Stage 2 pupils will line up on the top yard at 8:40am and will finish at 3:10pm

Key Stage 3 pupils will line up on the bottom yard at 8:50am and will finish at 3:20pm

Please ensure that your child does not arrive at school early as the yard will not be supervised before this time. If you would like your child to arrive earlier please make use of our Breakfast Club facility, this must be booked in advance.

We will be welcoming our new **Y5 pupils** into school on **Tuesday 7th September**. All other pupils will be invited to a Google Meet with their form teacher and will have a maths and English lesson online on Tuesday. These will be through the Google Classroom platform that was used during the lockdowns. Further information will be sent this week via Parentmail. Our **Y6,7 and 8** pupils will then be welcomed into school on **Wednesday 8th September**.

Curriculum

Please ensure your child has the correct equipment ready for their lessons. School will not be providing equipment this year and pupils will be able to take pencil cases and school planners between home and school.



All pupils will be completing baseline assessments this year in September. This is to help us identify the needs of the pupils and determine the best curriculum for them in maths, English and science. These will be completed digitally and the results used for school analysis only.

Year 7 pupils will now have the opportunity to learn Spanish as well as French each week. This is to ensure pupils can make a more informed choice when taking their options for GCSE and is in line with the Hexham Partnership of Schools. We are fortunate to have a specialised language teacher from QEHS teaching our Y7 pupils one lesson a week. These pupils will therefore have one French lesson per week and one Spanish lesson per week.

I do hope the above information is helpful and I thank you all for your ongoing support.

Kind regards,

Paul Naughton
Executive Headteacher