

17th July 2020

Dear Parents and Carers

I promised to write to you before the end of term with further information about what is happening for September. As you will recall from my last letter, the government has asked schools to fully re-open where possible, something which we are very keen to do, and I am pleased to confirm that we now have plans in place so that we will be able to welcome all students back into school on a full-time basis (without the need for any rotas) from the beginning of next term. To remind you, the starting dates are:

- Monday 7th September – new Year 7 and Year 10 (currently Year 9); and
- Tuesday 8th September – all other year groups.

Under the new guidance from the Department for Education and Public Health England, the rules regarding social distancing between students have been relaxed a little to allow us to bring all students back on site, provided that we are able to implement a stringent set of control measures to protect students and staff and minimise the risk of infection. At the heart of these control measures is the requirement that students be grouped into discrete 'bubbles', and that the school then be organised in such a way as to keep these bubbles separate from one another. In line with most other secondary schools we will operate five bubbles, each one consisting of a year group. We have then put in place systems so that each year group will be kept apart from the other groups whilst the students are on site.

As you can imagine this has not been easy to arrange with new 'arrival areas' being put in place for students when they first come on site in the mornings; the implementation of a new one-way system around the school; break and lunchtimes staggered so that the students are kept apart at these key times; and zoned areas of the school so that different year groups have different social and rest areas. New hygiene measures have also been put in place with all work areas being wiped down at the end of each lesson; toilets being cleaned hourly; students washing their hands or using antibacterial gel at the start of each lesson; and then the whole site being thoroughly cleaned each evening. Classrooms are also being reorganised in such a way as to minimise students passing infection to others. Some of these measures might seem a bit unnecessary but it is essential that we do all we can to limit the spread of any infection if someone should be unwell. We are also adjusting the school curriculum so that there will be less need for students to share specialist equipment. Obviously our hope is that the virus situation will continue to ease over time, allowing restrictions to ease further and for us to move back to a more normal working situation, but until then we are working to ensure that the school is operating as safely as possible, and that all students can join us with a sense of confidence in the measures in place.

I don't want to dwell further on these arrangements now as these are operational details that I would hope you will feel able to trust us with. The more important priorities for next term, as I'm sure you will agree, relate to helping children quickly get back into their learning with us and starting to make the exceptional progress of which we know they are capable. We also want to get back to providing students with the wealth of extra-curricular and enrichment opportunities that are such an important part of Uffculme School. So, whilst we do need to re-think the way in which we "do school", we simply see this as the means to enabling us to have our students back with us, so we can do what we do best: helping them to become the

confident, successful, resilient and happy young people we all wish them to become – ready to go forward and face the challenges of life.

In looking ahead to September, there are some important areas that I need to flag up to you, where we need your help and support. The first relates to basic equipment for lessons. Where possible students should not share equipment that has been used by others unless it has been thoroughly wiped down. Whilst we are putting in place procedures to ensure that all specialist equipment is cleaned before being re-used, it will not be possible for students to borrow the more basic equipment such as pens, pencils, rulers etc. We have put together a list of essential items (see attached) and are asking that all students come to school with these and continue to do so through the school year. Your help with this would be appreciated.

Secondly, we recognise that students, (supported by their families) have worked hard through this challenging period to maintain their learning whilst they have been away from school. We are keen that this momentum is not lost through the summer break. To that end we have put together some guided materials for students in each year group in order that they can continue to review and consolidate their learning from the past months, and so ensure that when they return in September, they are in a position to immediately start to move forward rather than having to circle back over work. We would ask that you encourage your child to regularly access these resources and have a go at the different activities on a 'little and often' basis to keep them going over the next few weeks. You can access them through the following links:

- [Year 7 resources](#)
- [Year 8 resources](#)
- [Year 9 resources.](#)

I have already mentioned in my previous letter, the importance of students returning back in September with the correct uniform. If you have mislaid that information here again is the [link to the school's uniform information](#). Please do check it carefully as there have been some minor changes for September and it is important that your child has the right clothing for next term. We really want to start the year in a positive way and if students are in the correct uniform, and hair, make-up and piercings are in line with school rules, this will help to avoid unwanted confrontations on the first few days back and ensure that students can quickly settle back into their studies.

I would also stress the importance of getting the correct PE kit for September. With schools unable to make use of their changing rooms as part of the new guidance, on the days that students have a PE lesson (which will happen twice each week), we are going to ask them to come into school wearing their PE kit (with their blazer). Please note that this must be the official school kit (as described on the uniform information) and not an alternative version.

Finally, I want to draw your attention to some temporary changes we are having to put in place for the end of the school day. Unfortunately, it will no longer be possible for students to remain on the school site beyond 4.00pm unless they are taking part in a supervised activity (such as after-school revision, or a club or event). We are not allowed to have mixed groups of students waiting together to be collected and with staff fully focused on supporting students in their learning and re-starting our extra-curricular programme we won't have the resources to run five separate waiting areas for students. Please could I therefore ask

that you ensure that arrangements are in place for your son/daughter to leave the site by this time, if they need transport home.

For those students that use buses for travel to and from school, Devon County Council are working to ensure that school transport will safely run for all those students that are entitled to use it. They are also liaising with Stagecoach buses to ensure that there is sufficient space on public transport for those students that need to use this. Earlier this week we emailed all parents, asking that they let us know if they anticipated their son/daughter having to use the Stagecoach buses to attend school. If you have not yet responded, please could I ask that you complete [this form](#) as soon as possible and confirm this to us, and also let us know which of the Stagecoach routes your child will use (No1 or No1B).

It only remains to say a big 'Thank You' to you for all your support and encouragement over the past year, and in particular over the last few months. A pivotal part of Uffculme School's success over the years has been the strong partnerships between the school and parents, and between staff and students, and this has never been more important than through this period. We are really looking forward to seeing all our students back with us next term, and are confident that with your continued support, the recent enforced upheaval to their education won't have a lasting impact on them and that next year will be a really positive and exciting time for them.

Thanks and best wishes,



A R Blackburn (Mr)
Headteacher