



St. Mary's Preparatory School
A love of learning for life

Back to school

Our plans for the September return



MESSAGE FROM THE HEAD

Dear Parents



Well, what a term! How I have wished for a crystal ball these last few months. We have made plans A, B, C and D as guidance has changed, often in the space of a day or two. We have guessed, second-guessed and then guessed again what the government guidance would be and how it would impact our school community. I do hope that one thing has been constant during this period however: our unwavering dedication to do the very best for our pupils.

I was so pleased that the efforts made to re-open school safely for the selected year groups have been recognised by you. In the recent survey 100% of you agreed that both you as a family and your child benefited from going back to school, 100% agreed that the return to school process was well managed by the school, and 100% thought that every possible risk mitigation that the school could have taken *was* taken. Some of your lovely comments are included at the back of this document. Thank you also for the ideas and requests some of you made as we turn our attention to September.

We do not know for certain what September will bring but we have made plans based on a number of scenarios and have closely followed the evolving government advice. By imagining and then planning for the different possible scenarios we will be faced with in September I believe we are set up to step into the new academic year with confidence and vigour. There are more details on our planning overleaf.

One overall reflection I have is that I want our school to preserve the best that came from this period – how my staff adapted their educational methods, how we embraced a new way of doing things, how the students coped with uncertainty and change, and how we built a new and deeper relationship with you, our parent body. We will of course, be continuing with our enhanced cleaning regime next year and you can help by making regular hand-washing a part of your daily routine during the holidays.

With that context in mind I am excited to share with you some exciting new initiatives, as part of the Cognita family of schools, later on in this booklet. These initiatives will capitalise on what we have learned over the last few months, take our educational and wellbeing provision for your child to the next level, and prepare us should a second wave require a localised lockdown.

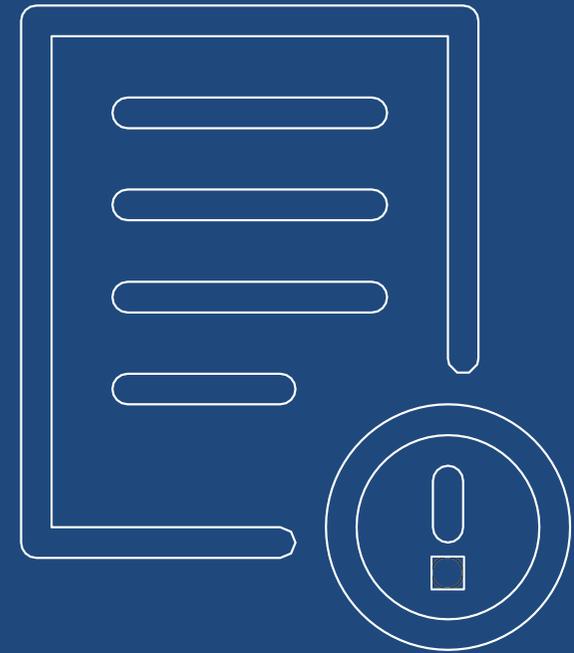
Thank you once again for your support of the school this Summer Term, and for your encouragement and feedback. I wish you all a happy and safe summer and look forward to an exciting new academic year.

As ever, please let me know if you have any questions.

Headmaster

HIGHLIGHTS FOR NEXT YEAR

1. Back to normal - this means open and running a normal day for all year groups, within the government guidelines.
2. Catch up support – where we feel there is a need we will ensure there is provision for pupils to revisit subject learning post lockdown.
3. Wellbeing - a focus on both pupils and staff to help them emotionally process the lockdown experience.
4. Safety – risk mitigation to include enhanced cleaning and hygiene measures with new procedures for confirmed cases and outbreaks
5. Growth mindset - taking the lockdown experience and continuing to innovate and grow from what we have learnt.

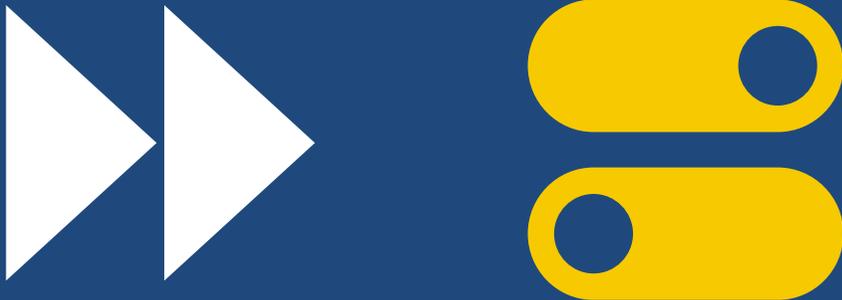


HOW WILL IT WORK?

We have done a large amount of scenario planning and we're confident we can get back to normal.

The latest government guidelines have significantly reduced the need for social distancing and as a result schools will be encouraged to return to a full timetable for all year groups.

This is great news and to the right is a summary of what we know now. This is, of course, conditional on the continued downward trend of the infection rate.



GUIDANCE SUMMARY

Based on the government guidance released on 2 July this is what we are basing our planning on:

- Primary (with specialist teachers) - the bubbles will be increased to incorporate 'whole year' bubbles. This will enable us to deliver lessons as per normal with full classes. Specialist teachers will be able to move between classes provided they maintain social distancing.
- Some of the features from this term may need to remain such as staggered timings and one-way systems, as will a focus on hygiene and cleaning. More detail will follow before the start of next term.
- School services such as catering can return to relative normality with some adaptations to mitigate viral spread.
- Track and trace in schools will be a focus.

NEW INITIATIVES FOR NEXT YEAR

During the lockdown period we also took action to develop a number of other initiatives which have enabled us to lead the way in online learning and teaching and we intend to build on this next year.



- **Masterclasses** - our teachers have benefited from working with global experts on how to build curriculums that offer a **blended educational experience** and how we can approach **assessment** of student's progress in new ways



- **Wellbeing monitoring** – we will introduce from Year 3 **AS (Affective Social) Tracking**, a mental health tracking tool that enables schools to identify pupils' hidden risks early. This equips teachers with targeted action plans to reduce pupil mental health and wellbeing risks and is part of our global commitment to putting mental health and wellbeing at the centre of a well-balanced education.



- **Collecting the best content from our global family** - as a Group we are developing an online platform which will host bespoke content curated from our expert educationalists from across our 80 schools. It's early days for this exciting project so more to follow soon.



WILL THERE BE AN ANNUAL INCREASE TO FEES THIS YEAR?

No. Given the exceptional circumstances, the economic situation and the value we place on our relationship with our parent cohort there will be no fee increase for the 2020-21 school year.

ARE SPORTS, CLUBS & TRIPS RETURNING?

Yes, where possible. We are keen to return to 'business as usual' as much as possible, and this component of education is important.

Certain non-contact sports are approved, and clubs can generally re-start, although there are some restrictions in the latest guidance that we will work through over the summer. We are also planning to have the wrap around care offer of before and after school clubs.

Domestic trips are permitted, but not residential. Overseas trips are not yet permitted. We keep a sharp eye on government advice on these topics as guidance changes frequently.

WILL SCHOOL TRANSPORT RESUME?

Yes. We are able to use the school minibuses if we operate in our bubbles and ensure the vehicles are appropriately cleaned between use.

WILL CATERING RETURN TO NORMAL?

Yes to a point. We may need to operate staggered mealtimes, and apply some other operational safeguards, but we intend to return to catering as it was before as far as we can, within the guidelines.

WHAT ABOUT LOCAL LOCKDOWNS?

We are planning in detail what happens if the school needs to temporarily close in the case of an outbreak or localised lockdown. If the call comes we can respond quickly, following a pre-agreed plan.

WHAT ABOUT INFECTION CONTROL?

We will continue our robust cleaning regime next year and work closely with our cleaning staff to ensure every possible risk mitigation is taken.

We are also reviewing our infection control procedures over the Summer to allow us to track confirmed or suspected cases and communicate with parents in the smoothest way possible.

WHAT WILL MY CHILD NEED IN SCHOOL?

They will need their coat and their water bottle.

For Years' 1-6 to avoid the sharing of resources as and when they move around the school they must have a school book bag which will remain in school containing: a small pencil case containing the following:

a basic set of coloured pencils & felt tip pens. Writing pen (Year 5&6 only), sharpener with a receptacle
School will supply all other equipment.

On days when it is PE they will wear their PE kit.

RETURN TO SCHOOL SURVEY RESULTS

100% of parents agreed that their child benefitted returning to school

100% of parents agreed that their family benefitted from the return to school

100% of parents agreed that the return to school process was well managed by the school

100% of parents agreed every possible risk mitigation that could have been taken *was* taken by the school

THANK YOU FOR THE POSITIVE FEEDBACK

- We just want to say thank you for your hard work and all that you do for our child*
- Thank you for all you have done to enable the children to return, it very much appreciated.*
- I'm seeing a different child now they've returned, thank you!*
- I've been so impressed with the way in which you have handled everything. I cannot begin to think about how much organisation has gone into this. Well done!*

