

13 July 2020

Dear parent/carer

Arrangements for the Start of the Autumn Term

Following my recent letter outlining our initial response to the Government guidelines for the re-opening of schools, I am now able to confirm further details for the start of the Autumn Term.

Key Dates:

Tuesday 1st September	INSET day for staff
Wednesday 2nd September	Year 7 and Year 12 transition day (only these year groups on site)
Thursday 3rd September	All other year groups return to school

In line with the updated Government guidance, we have a number of measures in place to keep students safe in school. First and foremost, we will be focusing on ensuring enhanced levels of cleaning, handwashing and respiratory hygiene as these are the most effective controls in reducing the spread of Covid-19. We also have some additional measures in place to ensure groups of students are kept separate and that mixing between them is kept to a minimum. These are outlined below; a full guide for parents and students will be published on our website before the start of term.

Start and Finish Times

The government recommends that schools have staggered start and finish times, to reduce the number of students at key 'pinch points' at any one time. Please look carefully at the table below which summarises the start and finish times for each year group.

	Start time	Finish time	Entrance
Year 7	8:40	2:50	Main front entrance
Year 8	8:40	2:50	Back gate
Year 9	8:50	3:00	Back gate
Year 10	9:00	3:05	Back gate
Year 11	8:50	3:00	Main front entrance
Sixth Form	8:40	3:00	Sixth form entrance

Students should arrive on site promptly (but no more than 5 minutes before) their start time each morning. Parents dropping children off by car should remain in their vehicles and drop off on Green Lane safely. Duty staff will be on hand to direct students to the correct entrance. On arrival, students will be directed straight to their period 1 classroom, with the exception of Year 7 who will be met on the yard by their teachers.

On Mondays to Thursdays, students will be registered by their period 1 teachers rather than their form tutors. This will help reduce the movement of staff around the building and ensure a smooth start to the day for all groups. On Fridays, all students will have an extended (25-45 minute) registration period with their form tutor.

Organisation of Groups

To reduce the risk of contact and transmission between different groups, we have organised students into 'bubbles' which will be kept separate throughout the school day. The aim is to reduce movement around school as much as possible, whilst delivering the full curriculum.

Each year group will be based in a different 'zone' of the school and will have all their lessons in that zone.

Year 7 and 8 will be taught in class bubbles, remaining in their class bubble and the same classroom for all lessons.

Years 9-11 will be taught in year group bubbles, with students moving to different classrooms within their zone for lessons.

NE6 (Sixth Form) will be taught as one bubble across two sites, with students travelling to receive specialist teaching in both Ashington Academy and Bedlington Academy. At Ashington, Sixth Form Students will use the sixth form area as their study and social space and have lessons in the main zone of the school.

For all year groups, specialist teachers will move between bubbles. Students will come into contact with no more than 3 teachers in any one day.

Break and Lunch Arrangements

Each year group will have their own dining zone and yard area. At breaktime, students will be outside in their yard area, with the exception of 10, 11 and NE6 students who will have designated social spaces inside the building to use. There will be no food service at break time, so please ensure students have a drink and a snack with them for morning break.

At lunchtime, students will eat in their designated lunch area and also have some time outside (weather permitting). At the start of term, lunches will be **packed lunch only**. Students can either bring their own packed lunch, or pre-order a school packed lunch during morning registration. Students who are eligible for Free School Meals will receive a school packed lunch free of charge; other students will have the cost of the packed lunch (£2.30) deducted from their meal account.

To help us gauge demand for our school packed lunch service and plan for any special dietary requirements, you will receive a link to a survey this week. Please complete this to let us know whether you will require a school packed lunch for your child.

Uniform and Equipment

All students should be in full school uniform at the start of the Autumn Term. For a reminder of our uniform requirements and ordering details, please see our website <http://www.ashingtonacademy.co.uk/useful-info/uniform>. For our Sixth Form dress code, please see <http://www.ashingtonacademy.co.uk/sixth-form/sixth-form-dress-code>.

Year 7 will be given their school tie during registration on the first day of term.

Students should bring a bag to school with them each day containing the following:

- Pencil case containing pen, pencil, ruler, rubber (spares are advised as due to health and safety restrictions we cannot allow students to share or borrow equipment)
- Water bottle containing enough water to last the full school day (water fountains remain switched off due to health and safety restrictions).
- Packed lunch (unless a school packed lunch is being ordered)

- Outdoor trainers for PE*

*Please note that due to the current restrictions, we cannot use the PE changing rooms or have large groups taking part in indoor PE. We are therefore asking students to bring outdoor trainers, which they will change into in the classroom for limited outdoor activity. We therefore do not require students to have PE uniform at the beginning of term. We will review this situation in line with government guidance and advise parents with appropriate notice when PE uniform will be required.

Travel to School

The government advises parents that the safest methods of travel to school are walking or cycling. Car journeys should not be shared between families. Public transport should be avoided if possible, but if used then we advise that journeys are planned carefully as restricted timetables remain in place in many cases. Students are reminded that face coverings must be worn on public transport but removed before entering the school site. We are currently working with the local authority to establish the position relating to school transport and will be in contact in the coming weeks with further updates for families who use this service.

Behaviour

As outlined in this letter, we have a number of new rules and policies in place in school to keep everyone safe. It is more important than ever that when students return to school in the Autumn term, they follow all the rules which are in place, particularly in relation to hygiene, distancing and movement around school. We will work with students and parents to make sure our expectations are clearly communicated. Our behaviour policy is being updated to reflect our new ways of working, and this will be published on our website in due course.

Next Steps

We are expecting further government guidance over the summer holiday and will contact you before the start of term in September with final details. Please check our website and Facebook page for updates.

We are very much looking forward to welcoming all our students back refreshed and ready to learn in the Autumn term. We are also excited to meet our new Year 7 students for the first time.

Until then, I hope that you all have a safe and restful summer break

Yours sincerely,



Yvonne Weston
Head of School

