



28 September 2020

Dear parents and carers,

**Arrangements for the return to school
Year 10 First Day of Term – Monday 7th September 10:00am**

I hope you and your family have had a peaceful summer, despite all the restrictions.

I am writing to you to update you on our plans for the safe reopening of the Academy for all students. We are looking forward to welcoming them back, and also to being able to come back together again as a whole school. Some of this guidance may be familiar from my previous letters, but, because things have continued to change over the summer, we have continued to work on the issue of safety and there are, therefore, some significant changes that I would like to make you aware of.

As you will know, the Government expects all students, in all year groups, to return to school full-time from the beginning of September. You can read [their guidance here](#) or by searching for 'Guidance for full opening: schools.'

The Government have set out the actions our academy must take to minimise the risk of transmission of coronavirus, and have guided us to consider how this will impact on school operations, curriculum and behaviour, assessment and accountability, and the plans we have in place to continue education should there be a local outbreak.

Our response is to do everything that we can to maximise safety for our students, families and staff. I will summarise the arrangements in this letter, attach more detail in the accompanying document, and finally provide a shortened copy of the Government's latest advice to parents for your reference.

Summary

1. As part of Oasis Community Learning, we have completed an in-depth risk assessment which has been reviewed by the Oasis national leadership and by the Academy's local health and safety committee. The risk assessment will be updated on a weekly basis by the Academy and reported to Oasis and the local committee will continue to meet weekly until further notice.

2. In order to reduce the risk of transmission across the whole academy and each group of children, we have thought carefully about how we use the space in our Academy. We are repurposing some of the Academy to maximise the space both between students, and between students and staff.

This is in addition to how we will group our young people which we wrote to you about at the end of term. Students from each Year Group will be taught in one part of the school and have break and lunchtimes together. This will reduce the number of contacts each student has with other year groups and reduce the chance of spreading infection.

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3. Hygiene remains an essential part of a safe return. Students and staff will be required to wash their hands thoroughly upon arrival at school, before and after eating, and after break times. Students will have access to a sink for handwashing. We will also have hand sanitiser dispensers at all receptions, all entrances and exits, dining rooms, halls, in every classroom and first aid rooms.

You may consider providing your child with a personal bottle of hand sanitiser. This is especially important if your child has a skin condition or an allergy that may mean the standard sanitiser we make available is inappropriate.

Everyone will be reminded of the importance of 'Catch it, Bin it, Kill it' approach, and we will have enough tissues and bins available in every classroom and throughout the school to follow this routine. Hygiene will be everyone's responsibility, including all students, to ensure we make the Academy as safe as we possibly can.

The Academy will be cleaned every day as normal, and we will be wiping down surfaces and equipment more frequently to reduce transmission of the virus.

In classrooms where practical lessons take place, these will include dance and drama, classrooms will also have floor washing throughout the day. All PE lessons will be outdoors until further notice as the sports hall is part of the year group bubble structure.

On days where students have PE or dance, they are to arrive in the PE kit and remain dressed in this clothing throughout the day, again to reduce possible transmission areas and to manage areas where distancing is not possible.

4. As you will no doubt be aware, the Government has mandated the use of face coverings for secondary students as they move around their school in communities where there is a high level of transmission and left it up to the discretion of schools about further use.

Again, this is a matter that Oasis has given a lot of thought to. Oasis believes that the health and safety of our students and staff is **not** a discretionary matter. We will therefore require students to wear face coverings as they move around the building, and all staff to wear visors when they are teaching and face coverings when social distancing is not possible. Please see below for more information and details as to how this will work for your child.

We have reached this decision on the basis that we are of the view that everyone is responsible for everyone else's health and we trust that you will be reassured by it.

Questions and feedback

Please take the time to read the included arrangements document where we explain in more detail how school will work. If you have any questions or concerns that are not addressed in these documents, please contact us at office@oasisisleofsheppey.org.

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I wanted you to have the full information on the preparations we are completing to make the Academy safe and welcoming for everyone. I recognise that for some our students this will be the first time back in school after many months and the arrangements will be unfamiliar. We will take the time to ensure they understand the changes as soon as they return and will provide additional support for those who are apprehensive.

If you don't have any further questions, we look forward to seeing your child on their first day back at school. **As a member of Year 10 your child's first day back will be Monday 7th September at the start time of 10:00am. Their school day will finish at 3:00pm.**

They are asked to enter via the vehicle gate, turn left again and walk on the yellow socially distanced lines.

Thank you for your continued support as we make these arrangements.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tina Lee'.

Tina Lee
Principal, Oasis Academy *Isle of Sheppey*

More Details About Our Arrangements

1) Attendance

The Government's guidance is clear that students are expected to attend school from September following the DfE statutory guidance. This means that parents have a duty to ensure that their child regularly attends school, and that schools have a responsibility to record attendance and follow up absence.

2) Social Distancing

We will have a number of one-way systems in place to remind students about the importance of distancing wherever possible. Classrooms will be set up in a way to maximise individual students' space. Desks will be side by side and forward facing so as to avoid students breathing over one another. There will be as much ventilation as possible.

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3) Amended start and end times dependent on year group

Each year group bubble will arrive to school at the same time, to start school at 8.30am. It has not been possible with public transport arrangements to change these. We ask that students arrive in good time to allow hand washing before the 8.30am school start please. There are different entry and exit lines to follow from the main gate; this will help with social distancing measures. There will be a lightly staggered end time, to support exits and home journeys.

Year group	Enter and exit via	End time
Year 7	Left Vehicle Gate. Turn left again. Walk on red socially distanced lines on rear walkway. Walk to yellow Harty doors.	2.55
Year 8	Pedestrian student gate. Walk on yellow Lines to Shurland doors. Enter building through doors on the left.	2.50
Year 9	Student gate. Walk on blue lines to Shurland doors. Enter through doors on the right.	2.55
Year 10	Enter Vehicle Gate. Turn left again. Walk on yellow socially distanced lines.	3.00
Year 11	Student gate. Walk on socially distanced yellow lines on main pathway to Abbey doors. Await here for line-up procedures.	3.00

4) Hygiene and cleaning

We will ensure that everyone understands that good hygiene is everyone's responsibility and that everyone is responsible for everyone else's health. We will maintain intensified cleaning routines with a focus on regularly wiping down door handles and hard surfaces. As per normal, the Academy will be cleaned every day and there will be disinfectant sprays and paper for cleaning purposes in each classroom.

We continue to have a stock of PPE within the Academy, including face-coverings, disposable gloves, disposable aprons, hand sanitisers and soap, if required.

5) Risk assessments

The risk assessment described overleaf has been developed following guidance from the Government and detailed guidelines from Oasis Community Learning. As explained overleaf it will be signed off by the Oasis national leadership team along with myself as Principal and will remain under constant review as we monitor our progress.

6) Getting to and from school

The Government continues to advise that students should try to avoid public transport especially at peak times and, where possible, travel to and from the Academy by walking or cycling. We know that this will not always be possible, so please let us know any concerns around this.

Wearing face coverings is a requirement for using public transport for children over 11.

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7) Face Coverings and Visors

Students will be asked to follow the below guidance:

- When students arrive at school, they must safely remove their mask if they have used one whilst travelling to the academy, by using the straps rather than the front of the face covering.
- They will then be required to dispose of this mask in a covered bin, or place reusable face coverings in a plastic bag/in their bag.
- They will then be required to wash their hands and put on a face covering provided by the Academy for use whilst moving around the communal areas of the school.
- The Academy face covering will be made of cloth and therefore is re-useable and washable. We ask that they are washed at home on a regular basis. They will be colour coded by year group and will be treated as an item of uniform.
- When in class, students should 'wear' the face covering around their neck and put it on their face when they are seeking support from a staff member or whenever social distancing is not possible.
- When collecting pre-ordered lunch, they should wear their covering on their face until they are seated for the purposes of eating. At this point they should lower their covering to their neck. After eating, the covering should be lifted back onto their face.

Staff will be required to wear visors when teaching. They will be required also to wear a face mask when social distancing is not possible i.e. when they are supporting an individual student.

8) Water bottles

Students are required to bring in their own water bottle for their individual use. These must be labelled and can be re-filled during the day. Fizzy/energy drinks are not permitted for student use. If these are seen, staff will confiscate until the end of the day and families will be informed. At this stage, in order to support Sodexo, our catering provider it will not be possible to purchase liquids/drinks during the pandemic management. We will inform if and when we are able to change this arrangement, and thank you for your understanding in this matter.

9) Reduced access to outdoor visitors

To help us reduce the risk of infection, we are asking parents to communicate with us via the telephone to the Academy on 01795 873591.

If it is required for you to come into the Academy, you will be required to wear a disposable face covering provided by us.

10) Food and packed lunches

Each bubble will have a time allocated to access the dining area and hot food provision. Students may bring in packed lunches, but they must remain within their bags throughout the day, and any rubbish should be taken home each day.

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11) Uniform

All students will now be required to return to full uniform. The latest Government advice is that uniforms do not need to be cleaned differently or any more often than usual because of coronavirus.

Students in Years 8-11 are to arrive with their old academy ties. New ties have been ordered and we are hoping all will arrive in time for the start of the year. These will be distributed to students once in tutor rooms on their first day. Old ties will be collected in a plastic bag by form tutors. There is no additional charge for new ties for students in Years 8-11.

12) Suspected symptoms, a confirmed case, and multiple confirmed cases

We will be following the Government's direct guidance on what to do if a student or staff member has suspected coronavirus symptoms or is confirmed to have the virus. We have provided this guidance at the end of Government Guidance section below.

Government Guidance

You may have questions about the Government's approach to reopening schools. I have summarised some of the [Government's latest advice](#) (updated 21st August) which I hope will address some your questions. You can read the Government's full advice by searching '*DfE parents guidance*.'

Is it safe to return?

All children, in all year groups, will return to school full time from the beginning of the autumn term. The prevalence of coronavirus has decreased since schools restricted their opening to most pupils, the NHS Test and Trace system is up and running and we understand more about the measures that need to be in place to create safer environments in schools.

The scientific evidence shows that coronavirus (COVID-19) presents a much lower risk to children than adults of becoming severely ill, and there is no evidence that children transmit the disease any more than adults. There will still be risks while coronavirus (COVID-19) remains in the community, and that is why schools will be asked to put in place a range of protective measures

Attendance

It is vital that children and young people return to school and college, for their educational progress, for their wellbeing, and for their wider development. School attendance will be mandatory from the beginning of the new academic year. This means that it is your legal duty as a parent to send your child (if they are of compulsory school age) to school regularly.

If you have concerns about your child returning to school or college because you consider they may have other risk factors, you should discuss these with your school. They should be able to explain ways they are changing things to reduce risks.

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Actions you can take

Do not send your child to their nursery or school if:

- they are showing [coronavirus \(COVID-19\) symptoms](#)
- someone in their household is showing symptoms

[Arrange a test](#) if you or your child develops symptoms. Inform your nursery or school of the results.

If the test is positive, follow [guidance for households with possible or confirmed coronavirus \(COVID-19\) infection](#), and engage with the NHS Test and Trace process.

It is really important that you help nurseries and schools to implement these actions by following the advice set out here and wider public health advice and guidance.

Actions that schools will take

We have asked schools to:

- manage confirmed cases of coronavirus (COVID-19) in the school, in line with current public health guidance - this means your child may be asked to self-isolate for 14 days by their school (based on advice from their local health protection teams) if they have been in close, face to face contact with someone who has tested positive for the virus
- ensure that everyone cleans their hands more often than usual, including when they arrive, when they return from breaks, and before and after eating - this should be done for 20 seconds with soap and running water or hand sanitiser
- promote the 'catch it, bin it, kill it' approach, to ensure good respiratory hygiene
- enhance cleaning, including cleaning frequently touched surfaces more often

Schools will minimise contact and encourage maintaining distance as far as possible. They will decide how best to do this because it will be different for each school. This will involve asking children and young people to:

- stay within specified separate groups (or bubbles)
- maintain distance between individuals

Local outbreaks

Schools will contact their local health protection team if they:

- have 2 or more confirmed cases of coronavirus among pupils or staff within 14 days
- see an increase in children or staff absence rates due to suspected or confirmed cases of coronavirus (COVID-19)

The local health protection team will advise what action is required. Usually, closure will not be necessary, but some groups may need to self-isolate. If an outbreak in a school is confirmed, a mobile testing unit may be dispatched. They will test everyone who may have been in contact with the person who has tested positive. Testing will first focus on the person's class, followed by their year group, then the whole school if necessary.

If your local area sees a spike in infection rates that results in localised community spread, the government will decide what actions need to be taken. Your child's school should provide remote education if:

- groups of pupils need to self-isolate
- a larger restriction of attendance at school is needed

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Face Coverings

Schools have the discretion to require face coverings in communal areas where social distancing cannot be safely managed, if they believe that it is right in their circumstances.

More information on [Face Masks is available here](#) or by searching 'face coverings in education.'

Curriculum

The Government has set out what they expect schools to teach when pupils return. Schools will provide an ambitious and broad curriculum in all subjects. There may need to be changes to some subjects, such as PE and music, so that schools can teach these subjects as safely as possible.

Extra-curricular activities

The Government advises that schools will be permitted to run breakfast and after-school activities. They must be delivered in line with the guidance on protective measures, so things may need to run things differently.

Suspected symptoms of coronavirus amongst the school community

The Academy will fully engage with the NHS Test and Trace process and contact our local Public Health England health protection team. Parents/carers need to be ready to:

- book a test if you or your child are displaying symptoms. Pupils must not come into the school if they have symptoms, and must be sent home to self-isolate if they develop.
- provide details of anyone you have been in close contact with if you or your child test positive for coronavirus or if asked by NHS Test and Trace
- self-isolate if you have been in close contact with someone who develops coronavirus symptoms or someone who tests positive for coronavirus

Anyone who displays symptoms of coronavirus should get a test. Tests can be booked online through the NHS testing and tracing website. Parents must inform us immediately of the results:

- if you or your child tests negative, and if you or your child feel well and no longer have symptoms similar to coronavirus (COVID-19), you can stop self-isolating.
- if you or your child tests positive, you should follow the 'stay at home: guidance for households with possible or confirmed coronavirus infection' and must continue to self-isolate for at least 7 days from the onset of their symptoms and your child may only return to school if they do not have symptoms other than a cough.

Confirmed case of coronavirus amongst the school community

The Academy will take swift action if we become aware that someone who has attended has tested positive for coronavirus. We will contact the local health protection team that will carry out a rapid risk assessment to confirm who has been in close contact with the person during the period that they were infectious, and ensure they are asked to self-isolate. Based on the advice from the health protection team, we would then send home those pupils who have been in close contact with the person who has tested positive, advising them to self-isolate for 14 days since they were last in close contact with that person when they were infectious. Close contact means:

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- direct close contacts - face to face contact with an infected individual for any length of time, within 1 metre, including being coughed on, a face to face conversation, or unprotected physical contact (skin-to-skin)
- proximity contacts - extended close contact (within 1 to 2 metres for more than 15 minutes) with an infected individual

The health protection team will provide definitive advice on who must be sent home, and we will keep a record of pupils and staff in each bubble to help in this instance.

Household members of those contacts who are sent home do not need to self-isolate themselves unless your child who is self-isolating subsequently develops symptoms. If someone in a bubble that has been asked to self-isolate develops symptoms themselves within their 14-day isolation period they should follow 'stay at home: guidance for households with possible or confirmed coronavirus infection'. They should get a test, and:

- if the test delivers a negative result, they must remain in isolation for the remainder of the 14-day isolation period.
- if the test result is positive, they should inform us immediately, and must isolate for at least 7 days from the onset of their symptoms. Their household should self-isolate for at least 14 days from when the symptomatic person first symptoms had, following 'stay at home: guidance for households with possible or confirmed coronavirus infection'

If we have more than one confirmed case

If the Academy was to experience an outbreak (2 or more confirmed cases of coronavirus among pupils or staff within 14 days, or if there is an increase in absence due to suspected cases of coronavirus), we will contact our local health protection team. This team will advise any additional action, though the closure of the whole school will generally not be necessary.

Where an outbreak in a school is confirmed, a mobile testing unit may be dispatched to test others who may have been in contact with the person who has tested positive. Testing will focus on the person's class, their year group, the whole school, if necessary. If our local area sees a spike in infection rates, we may be advised to implement further measures.

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