



The Priory School

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Dear parents and carers

I hope this finds you all having enjoyed a rested summer break and you are looking forward to waving off your child(ren) to us, very shortly! We are very much looking forward to having all students back with us and welcoming our new Year 7 into school. In preparation for a full return, I wanted to get in touch with a few reminders to make sure you feel well prepared for the start of term. I apologise for much of this still being Covid related.

Staggered return

If you have given consent for your child to be tested on site at the beginning of term, they will have been contacted with a time slot for their House and year group for Years 8-11 and by primary school cohort for Year 7. Could I ask that students keep to these timings as it helps us to manage the flow of students through our test site? I also understand that the parents of Year 7 may wish to drop them off for this. Please try to do this by foot or bike wherever possible and if dropping off by car you will not be able to drive onto site so, please drop off and then return later. Congestion on Longden Road, along with regular ambulances can cause real problems for other road users and local residents. For Year 7, staff will meet and greet students to make sure they have a warm welcome and know where to go.

If you haven't registered your child for onsite testing, I'm afraid we cannot add anyone else to the list due to the need to complete individual admin and registrations in advance which we will not have capacity for – the majority of staff will be involved in testing. Please feel free to carry out an LFT at home and please do not worry that your child will have missed out in any way! Please find a reminder of the days and times for testing and return from my previous letter.

Thursday 2nd September – Years 7 and 8 first test.

Friday 3rd September – Years 9-11 first test.

Monday 6th September – Years 7 and 8 second test

Tuesday 7th September – Years 9, 10 and 11 second test.

Tuesday 7th September - Year 7 return to school at 8.25am for an 8:30 start in the School Hall. This will include transition activities.

Tuesday 7th September - Year 8 return to school at 9.00am for an 9:05 start in the School Hall. This will include transition activities.

Wednesday 8th September – Years 9, 10 and 11 return to school alongside Years 7 and 8.

Year 7 & 8 Transition Day

This year, due to Covid restrictions, we were unable to hold our usual transition days during the Summer Term. Because of this we are running the transition day on Tuesday 7th September, a day before the rest of the school return. This will enable students experience a normal school day of moving around the school, meeting teachers, Buddy Mentors and House Captains as well as reminding themselves of our high expectations. Year 7s will be given the opportunity to participate in team building activities as well as the transition dance, instructions for this can be found on the school website or by following this link <https://priory.tpstrust.co.uk/parents/transition-and-new-parents/>

At 8:25 Year 7 students will be welcomed into the School Hall for an assembly from Mrs Pope and Mr Bucknall, they will then be given a tour of the school finishing at their form rooms where they will receive their Transition Booklets and their Lanyards. Lanyards are linked to Parent Pay accounts and students will be able to use them on the day to purchase food from the canteen at both break and lunch time. Students bringing a packed lunch will be able to eat in the canteen at break and lunch also.

At 9:00 Year 8 students will be welcomed into the School Hall for an assembly from Mrs Pope and Mr Bucknall, they will then be given a tour of the school finishing at their form rooms. Year 8s will then go to the Drama Studio for an assembly from Heads of Houses. The rest of the day will run as normal, food will be served in the Dining Hall (students wishing to purchase food must remember to bring their Lanyards) at 10:40 (break) and 13:00 for lunch.

Any students who are eligible for free school meals will be able to order food as normal.

Zones and bubbles

Just a reminder that there are no year group bubbles or zones in school anymore. All classrooms are back to normal with regard to layout and specialist room access for all subjects.

Start and end of day – no stagger.

We have an 8.35am start for all students (this is the start of registration so I would recommend students being on site by 8.30am at the latest) and a 3pm finish for all.

Breaks and lunches

These are no longer staggered across the day, per year group. The whole school has break at 10.40-11am and lunch is 1-1.40. Please note with lunch we have never been able to fit everyone into the dining room at the same time so a first and second sitting operates which rotates on a weekly basis. This will mean a return to a longer queue than students have been used to recently.

Facemasks

If students still wish to wear a facemask in communal areas or when they are in close proximity to others, they can, but this is currently no longer a requirement. I have given this option to staff too. It would still be appreciated by our reception staff if you could wear a face mask in this area due to the volume of visitors we receive.

Please note there was a government update to guidance on 17th August which stipulates that if there is an outbreak in school OR case numbers start to rise in the local area public health may well

instruct us to return to all wearing face masks in both communal areas and classrooms. This may well be the case as we head into the winter months.

Hygiene

We are retaining a higher level of daily cleaning of regular touch points as well as hand sanitiser stations and pumps. We will continue to focus on encouraging regular washing of hands for all those on site.

Testing, tracing, self-isolation and attendance

As of 16th August, the age group which attend the Priory no longer need to self-isolate if they are deemed a close contact. If school is notified of a positive case, I no longer need to carry out our own close contact tracing in school; the NHS test and trace will contact families and individuals directly. If they are deemed a close contact then they will be asked to take a PCR not an LFT, I would recommend doing this straight away if someone within your household tests positive. Whilst waiting for the PCR test result the child does not have to self-isolate. However, I would request that, as with any illness, if the child is displaying symptoms and is ill that you keep them away from school. This is to ensure we do not have an outbreak which could jeopardise our ability to staff the school timetable but more importantly to keep our families and wider community safe.

If your child is symptomatic or ill, please contact the school absence line in the usual way. If the PCR comes back as positive, then they will need to self-isolate for a full 10 days; again test and trace will advise you of this date. Please do not try to send your child back before this period has elapsed. Once you have the date of return, please communicate this to school via the absence line so we can record it correctly.

If your child is well enough to work, then please contact their House tutor directly who will arrange appropriate work. If this request isn't made, as with any illness, we will presume they are too unwell to work.

The government's new contingency framework will deem school to have an outbreak if 5 or more staff or students test positive in a 10-day period or 10% of staff or students who have mixed closely test positive. I therefore will still need your support in reporting cases to us through the absence line so I can contact public health if this threshold is met.

There is still a requirement for us to provide home testing kits for staff and students until the end of September and we have had an excellent take up of LFT packs. Mrs Wassall will keep circulating these to students who have signed up and I would encourage families to continue with this twice per week.

All groups of students are expected to attend; I understand that some anxieties will still remain with families, but we will be unable to authorise any absence where a child does not attend school when they are able to do so. We will do our very best at this end to keep everyone safe. Our latest risk assessment will be available on our school website.

Uniform

If you have any queries with regard to school uniform, our policy and requirements are on the school website but please do get in touch with us as there were some slight changes towards the end of the year. I am keen for us to return to full school uniform as this helps us to develop the school's ethos

and, in turn, students' conduct and behaviour. It gives a leveller for all and prevents a differential occurring between groups of students. Uniform and how it is worn will be a focus from tutors early in the term and contact will be made with home if there are any issues. There is no longer a requirement to wear PE kit on the day of PE as changing rooms have reopened.

Remote learning

Now that we are not in 'bubbles' it is much less likely that large groups of students will be asked to learn from home. However, remote learning is still in the government guidance and can still be a recommendation for a year group or parts of school to revert to online learning, if we have large numbers of cases in school, the locality or safe staffing levels are jeopardised due to illness. I will continue to give regular updates should this be the case and it will only ever be taken as a last resort.

School events, assemblies and extra-curricular

These are an important part of life at The Priory School, and we have a full calendar planned to ensure we can get back to gathering school together for important celebrations and to regain our sense of community. Full school and House assemblies will return in September, and we are already looking forward to the return of the House Run. All events on the school calendar can be viewed on the school website.

A full range of after school clubs will start to appear in the autumn term and we want as many students as possible engaging in the wider life of school. These will be communicated via tutors, please encourage your child to get involved and perhaps try something new!

As we continue to receive advice and guidance from the DfE and local public health we will continue to review what we do and how we do it. If there are any changes, I will communicate these to you as soon as possible.

Kind regards



Mrs A Pope
Headteacher