



24 August 2020

Reopening of St Helena School from September 2020

Dear Parents/Carers,

Following my letter sent at the start of the summer holiday, I am now in a position to share our plans for the full reopening of St Helena School in September. As you are aware the government has announced that schools should fully reopen from the start of the upcoming autumn term. The decision has been made on the government's message of:

- The prevalence of Coronavirus decreasing.
- The new NHS test and trace system being in place.
- More clarity about the measures that need to be in place to create safe environments in schools.
- Time out of school being detrimental to children's development.
- The low risk to children of becoming severely ill from Coronavirus.

We are working hard to make the school a safe, purposeful and enjoyable environment. This letter explains what you can expect from us and what we will expect from all of our students and parents/carers. As you can imagine there is a large amount of information that we need to share with you to demonstrate that our school will be Covid safe for both students and staff. Please also appreciate that our plans may have to change in response to alterations in future government policy. I ask for your understanding at this time. This letter will provide you with all the information you require for September.

Arrangements for the first week back

To facilitate a smooth start to the term and allow all students to become familiar with the new routines we will have a staggered start:

- Year 7 will return from Thursday 3rd September, students should arrive for 8.35am
- Years 8 and 9 will start from Monday 7th September students should arrive for 9.00am
- Years 10 and 11 will start on Monday 7th September students should arrive for 9.30am
- From Tuesday 8th September all students should arrive from 8.20am and no later than 8.35am

We will spend time with students on their first day back to familiarise them with the new systems and structures, so please do not worry about anything at this stage.

Please make sure that your child/ren arrives at the correct time and no earlier than the time required. We have no facilities to hold students who arrive early and we cannot have students waiting on the pavements outside with passing traffic. At this time we are encouraging as many students as possible to walk or cycle to school and avoid public transport where possible.

Safety measures

When students return in September the school will feel very different. We have reduced the contact that students have with each other, this is to help us minimise the impact of any future confirmed case and reduce the need for students, and potentially their families, to self isolate. We have completed a full risk assessment and as a consequence have put the following protective measures in place to create a safe environment for staff and students:

We will be applying two basic principles:

1. Students in years 7 and 8 will be taught in their form group bubble for all of their lessons.

2. Students in years 9-11 will be taught in their year group bubble for their lessons.

- The school has been divided into five separate mini schools, one for each year group.
- Each year group will have a separate entry/exit point, meet and greet area outside, bike storage area, and classroom allocation.
- Students will be asked to line up in their year group meet and greet area. Session 1 staff will meet their students to lead them into the building to their classroom.
- To allow the students to remain in their relative bubbles (tutor or year group) staff will be expected to move between schools. This will ensure students receive specialist teaching across all curriculum areas.
- To reduce the movement of staff we have adjusted our timetable to a three session day. The timings of the day can be found at the end of this letter.
- Each year group will have social time as an isolated year group. Each year group will have a 25 minute break and a 35 minute lunch period. All social time will be spent in the west end of the school and students will only have access to canteen service at lunch time, not at break time.
- We need students to come to school prepared and have all of the necessary equipment. The full list can be found at the end of this letter. You will understand that we will not be in a position to share equipment between students during this time.
- We are encouraging students to only bring the equipment required for that day, lockers will not be available for students.
- Students will be asked to sanitise and wash their hands at regular intervals throughout the day, including every time they walk into a classroom where sanitiser will be placed outside.
- Our classrooms have been rearranged to allow all desks to face the front, where this is not possible screens will be used to reduce the face to face contact of students.
- Classroom doors and windows will remain open to allow for improved ventilation.
- We do expect students to be in full school uniform and we would strongly encourage students to wear base layers or vests under their shirts. These will help keep students warmer when waiting outside and when in well ventilated areas. I kindly ask that students do not bring hoodies to school from September but use coats and base layers as alternatives.
- We will not be in a position to provide any changing room facilities. Therefore when a child has a practical PE lesson they should attend school in their St Helena PE kit for the day, we will always make sure that lessons are planned observing the weather so that students are not sat in wet clothing for the rest of the day. Please remember we are trying to offer a broad curriculum whilst meeting the safety requirements laid out.
- We will be making a series of information videos to share with you no later than Thursday 3rd September to help provide you with the visual information. These videos will show where and how students need to enter the school grounds which is now dependent on their year group.
- Students will have a virtual assembly every Monday morning where we will communicate changes/updates/news with them.
- If a student displays Covid like symptoms during the school day our Health & Welfare Officer

will assess them and isolate the child if necessary. We will contact you immediately and would appreciate a response that allows the child to leave the school site within 30 minutes.

- Following government guidelines we would recommend if a child or adult in school displays Covid like symptoms they receive a test and should self isolate until they receive the result of that test.
- If we have a confirmed case in school we will communicate with the 'bubble' parents. This is why it is so important to reduce the contact between students.
- At this point we do not plan to run our breakfast club, any school trips or after school activities for the first four weeks back. We need time to embed these plans and routines first.

Curriculum

Although there will need to be some changes to reflect the teaching time that was lost during the lockdown, we'll still be providing an ambitious and broad curriculum.

Our current plan is:

- Year 7 and 8 students will be taught in their tutor group bubbles - they will be taught in this group for all curriculum areas.
- Year 9, 10 and 11 students will be taught in year group bubbles, this will allow these students to be set in core areas and continue to follow their full curriculum option offer. We do not plan to reduce the curriculum offer for any student.
- We will continue to provide a SMSC curriculum through our new Opening Minds initiative. This will be delivered during the first 20 minutes of session 1 by the session teacher. Curriculum topics will include; well being, keeping safe, resilience, careers education and financial literacy as examples.
- We have no intention of testing students when they come back in an attempt to see where the learning gaps are. We feel this will heighten student anxiety, there will be a place for assessment when we have all been back and established our new learning rhythms.
- Some parents have been in contact with me to ask what the 'catch up' programme will look like for students. The best catch up we can provide for students is quality first teaching in the classroom. We are supporting our staff with training to remind them of the principles laid out in the Education Endowment Fund Teaching Toolkit, you can read the principles [Here](#).
- We are mindful that there may be future periods of local or national lockdown. To support with any future disruption we are reflecting on the last 4 months to ensure we can enhance the educational offer for all students.
- I would like to offer some reassurance to those students entering years 10 and 11; do not panic. We have plenty of time to prepare you for the future exam series, for now concentrate on being in school and making every session count.

Pastoral support

We are aware that the lockdown has been a difficult time for many of us. We have recently surveyed our young people about well being and how they feel about returning to school. The overriding feedback was that they wanted to come back to school and wanted to feel safe in school. Our current plans to support your children's wellbeing during this time are:

- We will continue to offer support through our mentoring hub.
- We have increased capacity to support student well being through our new wellbeing hub.
- We will continue to work with outside agencies to support children including the Child First charity and have an onsite chaplaincy service.
- We will deploy our Home School Liaison Officer to support any students who may be anxious about leaving the home.

Please let us know if you think your child/ren might need extra support when returning to school, such as if they feel anxious about coming back or they're experiencing bereavement. You can get in

touch with your child/children's Year Leader to do this on our return in September. Please use the following email addresses:

Year 7 Mr Jack Goldrick: J.Goldrick@sthsch.com

Year 8 Mrs Anna James: A.James@sthsch.com

Year 9 Mr Mark Van Geete: M.Vangeete@sthsch.com

Year 10 Mr Tom Blaydes: T.Blaydes@sthsch.com

Year 11 Mr Tom Wray: T.Wray@sthsch.com

Students with identified educational needs will continue to be supported by our Learning Support Faculty, led by Julie Coe, and through quality first teaching in the classroom. On our return in September, if you have any questions or concerns please contact Mrs Coe at j.coe@sthsch.com

Attendance

The government has advised that attendance will be mandatory for students in September. The usual rules will apply, meaning we'll be recording attendance and following up on any absences.

If your child/ren have been staying at home due to the current shielding guidance, the government paused this guidance on 1st August, this means they should be able to come back to school in September. However, if you've received clinical or public health advice that your children should still remain at home, please let us know and continue to follow that guidance. We'll be offering remote education to these pupils.

We are extremely grateful for all the support we've received so far from our school community. We'll continue to keep in touch if there are any updates to our plans or if we need to make changes due to new or updated government advice. For now I ask for your continued understanding and patience as we navigate our way through the next few weeks together.

Finally, please see the links below for additional/helpful information:

1. Structure to the new school day and our two week timetable (week A and week B) [Here](#)
2. The new site map including entry and exit points for designated year groups. Staff will be on hand for the first few days to help students find their way to their meet and greet points [Here](#)
3. Equipment requirements for every student to reduce the sharing of resources (see below)

We are very much looking forward to welcoming all of our students back to school and seeing you all very soon.



Fiona Pierson

Headteacher

Required Daily Equipment

We expect all students to arrive at school properly equipped to learn. The following are our desired

expectations of what each student should bring:

- A school bag, large enough to hold A4 folders and books without folding
- Black pen (more than one is advised)
- Green pen for self-assessment and responding to marking
- HB pencil (a range of other grades may be useful)
- Pencil Sharpener
- Soft Rubber
- 30 cm Ruler
- Basic Geometry Set
- Scientific calculator
- English dictionary
- Reading book (from home or the school library)

We also recommend that students bring a set of coloured pencils and, for those studying French, an Oxford/Collins French dictionary.