

28 August 2020

Dear Parents/Carers

Re: Full reopening – September return

We are very much looking forward to welcoming back all year groups at the start of Autumn term. I wanted to write to you to outline the plans in order for the school to open safely and to meet the guidance that the Department for Education has published for schools. The updated guidance can be found [here](#).

We have prepared detailed guidance for you, outlining key changes to our school structures, timings and timetable to reduce movement around the site and corridors and to create year group 'bubbles'. Our site team have already reconfigured classrooms so that students in their year group bubbles are sitting side by side in rows with all of them facing forward as the guidance describes for secondary schools.

The Government have also asked us to stagger the start, break, lunch and the end of the school day so that the year group bubbles enter and leave the site with minimum interaction. It is really important that your child arrives at the designated time and entrance as stated below so that they arrive with other students in their year group bubble and do not mix with other year groups. The times of the day for each year group are given below.

	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10	Year 11	Sixth Form	Progress Academy
Start Date	Fri 4 Sep	Mon 7 Sep	Tue 8 Sep	Tue 8 Sep	Mon 7 Sep	Fri 4 Sep	Mon 7 Sep
Entrance	Reception Gate (Acacia Road)	Main Gate (Tamworth Lane)	Reception Gate (Acacia Road)	Main Gate (Tamworth Lane)	Reception Gate (Acacia Road)	Reception Gate (Acacia Road)	Reception Gate (Acacia Road)
Start of Day	8.20am	8.30am	8.50am	9.10am	9.20am	9.20am	10.00am
End of Day	2.30pm	2.40pm	3.00pm	3.20pm	3.30pm	3.30pm	2.00pm

During your child's first day we will be showing our systems, expectations and how the school will be operating. All year groups will complete an induction programme that aims to reintegrate our students back into an educational setting with support and care at the heart of it. The induction process delivered by our dedicated pastoral members of staff allows students to undertake a variety of interactive activities such as quizzes, behaviour reconstructions and role-plays to promote fun and a sense of community within the year group. Students will be assigned a coach who will provide clarity around the rules and routines within the Academy, whilst developing a trusting and meaningful relationship with both the students and in subsequent weeks their parents.

These are extraordinary times and these arrangements will be temporary and in place until the Government advises us that we no longer need to take these measures for the safety of our school community. It is likely that our planned events such as parent information evenings and open evenings will be virtual events but this will be confirmed nearer the time. Parents will only be able to come onto the school site in the case of emergencies, for example if your child is ill and needs to be picked up.

All other parental meetings should be arranged either by telephone or virtually with staff and other agencies. We expect this to be the normal situation until government guidance change.

I know a number of siblings travel together to and from school. We will be putting in place arrangements for the start of the day for siblings in other year groups to wait in a designated area, until it is their start time. A detailed map of designated holding areas is attached.

We will start the term re-establishing routines and getting our students back into lessons. Following this we will look at our extra-curricular programme and individual lessons. A number of the activities that involve different year groups mixing will not be able to take place in the autumn term.

If there are any periods of lockdown or periods of self-isolation for groups we have made robust arrangements for your child to be able to follow their normal timetable with online resources, lessons with staff in their bubbles. We will be using Microsoft Teams to deliver this work and will spend some time at the start of term showing your child how all this will work.

Travelling to School

Everyone needs to play their part in reducing the demand for public transport. If possible, you should look for alternative transport options, especially walking or cycling, particularly at peak times.

See the guidance from:

- Living Streets on [walking to school](#)
- Sustrans on [keeping safe on the school run](#)

If your child relies on public transport to get to school, the [safer travel guidance for passengers](#) will apply to help young people get to school or college. Students must not travel to school if they or a member of their household has symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19).

Exams

There has been additional information published on the curriculum and examinations. One point to note is that OFQUAL is still considering when the best time to start summer examinations in 2021 will be. There is a suggestion that they could start and therefore finish later. To be safe I would therefore suggest that families with students in their gcse year groups should not book any holidays next year before the very end of our term.

Blended Learning (RSE)

The teaching staff here at the Academy will work hard to ensure that every student feels confident about their learning. To support your child, all teachers will:

1. Put their lessons on Microsoft Teams so that your child can revise in their own time or catch-up if they miss a lesson.
2. Put knowledge organisers on MS Teams and on the website so your child can revise for quizzes in lessons.
3. Set online Microsoft Forms exit ticket homework quizzes once-twice a week to help us to find out what your child is confident with and what they need more help with. Instructions and links to each quiz will also be placed on Show my Homework.
4. Provide your child with individual feedback, based on the quizzes.
5. Actively support and guide your child in completing these quizzes.
6. Reward your child with a positive for successfully completing the Exit Ticket HW quiz.
7. Provide a timetable of access to ICT rooms after school for students who need support with accessing a computer.

Maintaining High Expectations

Our values of Love, Hope and Trust permeate across all that we do. We expect all students to arrive to the Academy each day fully equipped to learn. We expect all students to have a school bag and all appropriate equipment, every day. Full uniform is a requirement – any student not wearing full and

correct St Mark's uniform will not be permitted to access mainstream lessons. For the avoidance of doubt, the uniform code is listed below.

Please note:

- Visible makeup is not permitted e.g. lip gloss, mascara, eye shadow.
- Nail varnish is not permitted. Nail extensions or decorations are not permitted on health and safety grounds.
- No jewellery except for a wristwatch and one pair of plain stud earrings are permitted. No facial piercings are permitted.
- Mobile phones, mp3 players, portable gaming devices or tablets are not permitted on site.

Uniform Expectations

Can I ask you to ensure that all aspects of your son or daughter's uniform are in place for the start of the new academic year, including full PE kit. Full details of the uniform expectation can be found [here](#).

Equipment Expectations

In order to set the tone of the Academy day and to create a calm and studious atmosphere within the building, we provide students with clear routines to follow at the beginning and end of lessons. In preparation for the wider world and to promote academic success we expect students to arrive at the Academy each day fully equipped to learn.

At St Marks Academy we have a list of equipment that is essential and must be present every day alongside a list of recommended items that students may find useful to carry with them.

Essential daily equipment	Recommended daily equipment
Pen – Black or blue ink	Pencil case
Pen - Green	Glue
Pencil	Colours
Ruler	Maths set
Planner	Highlighters
Reading book	Water bottle
Reusable mask	
Hand sanitizer	
Calculator	

Face Covering

On 26 August, the Government published new guidance on the use of face coverings in educational settings. Details can be found [here](#). All students will be encouraged and supported to wear a face covering whilst moving around the Academy in communal areas. We have designed careful lesson start and ends to make sure that masks can be taken off on entry to the classroom placed back on safely after hand sanitising. Please ensure that your child is equipped with a reusable face covering when arriving at school and take some time to talk them through the following procedures that we trust they will adhere to:

- pupils should not to touch the front of their face covering during use or when removing them but use the strings on the side.
- They must sanitise their hands immediately on arrival using our stations student hub, dispose of temporary face coverings in a covered bin or place reusable face coverings in a plastic bag that will be provided.
- Please note that face masks are not required for teachers or students during lessons because other measures of control are in place, however, staff will be wearing a visor to add an additional layer of safety for students.

Behaviour Expectations

At St Marks we have firm behavioural procedures in place that give students the opportunity to make the right decisions. We offer our students reminders as a means of readjusting their behaviour and have firm intervention structures in place to support any struggles that students may experience. Our

procedures are delivered with transparency and consistency. Behavioural issues are centralised and overseen by our Vice Principal of Behaviour and Attitudes and Behaviour for Learning Lead to ensure that the expectations of our students behaviour are caring yet uncompromising. Acknowledgement of exceptional and exemplary behaviour is also at the forefront of our procedures. Teachers make frequent positive phone calls home, nominate students for awards, distribute achievement points and offer verbal praise in the classroom.

Pastoral Support

We pride ourselves at St Marks on our pastoral support provision. We have a dedicated student Well-being Co-ordinator, Director on Inclusion, Student Support team, Progress Leaders for each year group, coaches and Designated Safeguarding Lead. Our student support team aims to nurture the entire student and celebrate their differences and elevate and adversities they may face. Where possible we seek to offer all pastoral support internally but also recognise that external intervention may be more suitable for some of our students. In such cases we make referrals in a timely and precise manner.

Attendance

The government have made it really clear that all parents must send their child back to school and have reinstated the procedures for fining parents for non-compliance. Research also shows that the long-term risk to students' lives for not returning is significantly greater than the very small risk to students of COVID-19. We expect all students to return to school and want to work with you if you have any reservations to ensure that your child does not get further behind in their academic progress. If you still have concerns about sending your child back to school, please contact Mr Hampton,

hampton@stmarksacademy.org.uk

Catering

AIP, our catering provider have been working hard to ensure we can continue to offer a break and lunch service. There will be a reduced 'grab and go' offer and food will be available. Parents are now requested to **top up student's lunch accounts online**. Parents will be required to make any necessary top ups at least 2 hours before the student is required to use the funds. This is to allow the system time to update and for the funds to become available. In exceptional circumstances if parents are unable to top up online then Academy staff will assist students to top up their accounts manually. This will need to have been discussed with a member of the student support team or the student's coach prior to needing to top up. You can top up your child's dinner account [here](#). The canteen **will not** be open for breakfast service at the moment.

We pray that you had a restful and safe break and are thrilled to be able to welcome students back to the community that will love, encourage, challenge and support them endlessly.

With Love, Hope and Trust,



Hannah Fahey
Acting Principal