

17<sup>th</sup> July 2020

Dear Parent/Carer

I hope you and your family are safe and well. It has been a long and strange Term 6 for all members of our school community during this time so I would like to thank everyone again for their continued support.

As you may be aware, the Government released their guidance for opening to all Year groups from September and we have been working very hard to reflect and plan for welcoming back all children in the new academic year. We are now in a position to be able to share a summary of the principles for opening to all children in September.



As we prepare to increase our provision in school, we have been working closely with our Trust and following government advice to ensure the safest way to welcome back our students. As a school we have successfully met the Government expectations for children returning to school based learning in Years 10 and 12 and we are now in a position to apply similar principles to welcoming back all year groups.

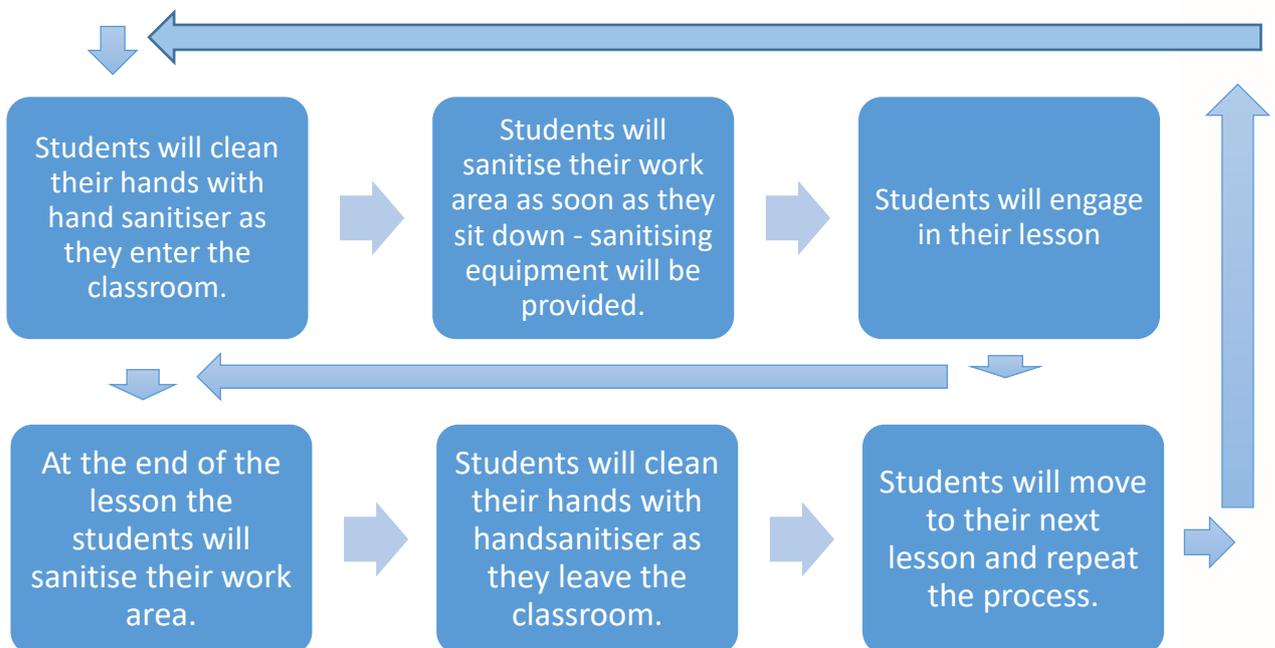
The information here will help you understand how the return to school based learning will happen and answer some of the questions you may have.

As throughout the return to school based learning during Term 6, we will be continuing to work to our belief that Child First = Child Safe = Adult Safe. This has been the key principle that has guided our planning since lockdown began and we are pleased with how well it worked and was understood by everyone in our school community.

**How will we achieve Child Safe?**

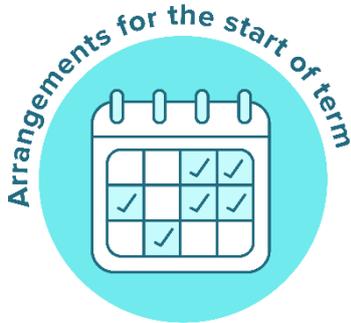
At the heart of our strategy to keep everyone safe will be the concept of the Year Group Bubble. Each child will be part of a consistent bubble made up of their Year Group. There will be no mixing of children between these bubbles.

To help manage the Year Group Bubbles we are introducing additional measures that will allow students to move from safe space to safe space throughout the day with their bubbles – this will be achieved through the protocol of ‘Clean, Use, Clean’:



Teachers will be, where appropriate, situated as they would have been pre-covid, in a base classroom with limited movement between classes during the school day.

I have outlined below some of the other considerations and broad principles that we expect to be in operation.



### 1. Arrangements for the start of term

We will provide a full time education provision for all children 5 days a week. The Government expect all children to return in September and we have planned carefully to ensure that we are able to welcome them all back safely.

To support our children and families to return to school we are operating a staggered return to start the new academic year. These Year group bubbles will return on the following days:

| Date                             | Year Groups in school           |
|----------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Mon 7 <sup>th</sup> September    | Years 7 and 12                  |
| Tues 8 <sup>th</sup> September   | Years 7, 11, 12 and 13          |
| Weds 9 <sup>th</sup> September   | Years 7,9,11,12 and 13          |
| Thurs 10 <sup>th</sup> September | All students in all year groups |
| Fri 11 <sup>th</sup> September   | All students in all year groups |



### 2. Arrangements for the school day:

To reduce the number of times students move around the school we will be operating a three-lesson school day, each lesson will be 100 minutes long.

To support social distancing students must enter and leave the school site through the entry / exit points outlined below:

| Year | Entry / Exit point              |
|------|---------------------------------|
| 7    | Entrance on Walderslade Road    |
| 8    | Entrance on Walderslade Road    |
| 9    | Entrance on Maidstone Road      |
| 10   | Entrance on Maidstone Road      |
| 11   | Main entrance on Letchworth Ave |

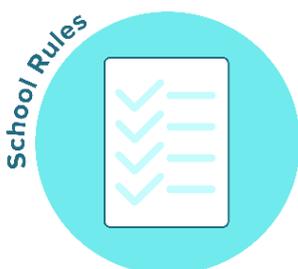


|    |                                 |
|----|---------------------------------|
| 12 | Main Entrance on Letchworth Ave |
| 13 | Main Entrance on Letchworth Ave |

Students should arrive from 8:30 and should go straight to their lesson 1 classroom. On the first days, staff will be around to direct them. Registration will be carried out by their lesson 1 teacher in their lesson 1 classroom at 8:45.

There will be no whole school assemblies or external school trips taking place throughout the Autumn Term to ensure that we do not have large gatherings, however we will be working to use any technology available to us to come to together and 'visit' places virtually.

Break and lunchtimes will be staggered so that the Year Group Bubbles do not mix. Please provide your child with a healthy break snack as usual. We will be offering a hot meal option as usual, alternatively please provide your child with a healthy packed lunch.



### 3. School Rules

When we return in September, we will expect our students to return in full school uniform. Wearing the correct uniform is important to our identity and school community and we recognise the importance of establishing our school as a family of learners together and uniform is integral to this.

All normal school rules will apply as well as additional expectations around behaviour in corridors and the maintenance of social distancing. If students choose to ignore these expectations then the school will apply the normal range of sanctions.

We would encourage students to bring in their own stationery in a plastic based pencil case.



#### 4. Safety & Cleaning

Ensuring that our school is kept clean is a key part of our plan. This means regular deep cleaning of all shared spaces including classrooms, corridors, IT suites and toilets. We will put in place a “cleaning habit routine” at the start and end of every lesson in every classroom that is being used – see above.

Hand sanitizer will be the principle means of securing hand hygiene and will be available across the school.

Public Health England does not (based on current evidence) recommend the use of face coverings in schools. This evidence will be kept under review. They are not required in schools as pupils and staff are mixing in consistent groups, and because misuse may inadvertently increase the risk of transmission. There may also be negative effects on communication and thus education. Therefore, facemasks are not to be worn in school.

As a result of these measures we believe we will be able to provide a safe learning environment for your children and we look forward to welcoming them all back in September.

#### Managing Sickness & Reporting

Please remember that you must not send your child to school if they are unwell or displaying any symptoms of Covid-19.

We are going beyond the government advice regarding Track & Trace to ensure the highest safety for our community. Therefore, any member of our school community that is displaying symptoms must self-isolate and be tested. In the event of a positive test result, we will inform Public Health England and require all students identified as being within prolonged close proximity to the infected person to isolate for 14 days.



## Remote Learning

During lockdown, our work to make Microsoft Teams fully functional continued and so our students were unable to access all of the available features. We are also aware that some students found using Teams, and some of the other features of digital learning, a challenge.

Upon students' return in September we will make sure they receive training on the skills they need to use Teams effectively. We will also be supporting students to make sure they understand the behaviours that are necessary for good digital citizenship.

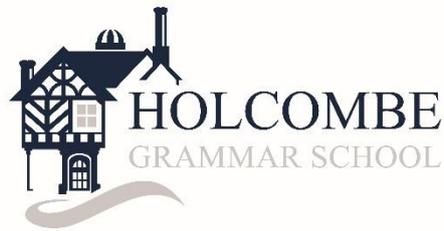
For your information, we are moving towards a phasing out of Show My Homework and towards all home learning being delivered through the MS Teams digital classrooms. We will continue to provide more information regarding this change and will make sure you are fully informed about the transition process throughout.

This means that should we go into lockdown again, we will use MS Teams to provide live learning, but with the added benefits of using the Teams digital classroom. This platform provides many of the benefits of Show my Homework but will also ensure that students are able to access everything in once place - something which many of you have told us would be helpful.

To support your child with this change, it would be great if you could find the time over the summer to take part in a workshop created for parents by Microsoft:

1. Go to <https://tablet-academy.com/>
2. Click access free online courses and login with a Google or Microsoft account.
3. Scroll down and you will see a course called Microsoft Teams- A guide for Parents to Support Home Learning, which has information and demonstrations of the different features in Teams. You can click on this and work through the reading and video clips.

I would also add that there are 419 free 'Virtual Summer Camps' which operate as Interactive Online workshops, for parents and young people of all ages, being run by



Microsoft this summer. See here for details. [https://www.microsoft.com/en-us/store/workshops-training-and-events/digital-passport?OCID=bm\\_eduweb\\_summercamp20\\_general#page=1&program=302](https://www.microsoft.com/en-us/store/workshops-training-and-events/digital-passport?OCID=bm_eduweb_summercamp20_general#page=1&program=302)

In due course, we will be providing you with additional tools you can use to track your child's engagement with home learning, and indeed remote learning, should we need to go into another period of lockdown.

Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to thank our children, parents/carers, staff and governors for their support over the last term and indeed since the pandemic impacted on our usual ways of teaching and learning. Together we have overcome some great challenges and we are proud of what we have achieved.

Should there be any further changes to Government guidance over the summer break, we will of course respond as best as we can, however in the meantime, I would like to thank you again and wish you a safe and restful summer break.

I hope you have found this update useful. Further information will be following throughout the summer.

Yours sincerely,

Mr L Preston  
Principal  
Holcombe Grammar School