

BISHOP HEBER HIGH SCHOOL

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Friday, 17th July 2020

Re: Full opening of school in September

Dear Parent/Carer,

We wanted to write to you to update you on our current situation following the Government's announcement on Thursday, 2nd July about the full opening of schools in September 2020. The Government's guidance has been published at gov.uk for both parents ([click here](#)) and schools.

It's remarkable to think that formal education was stopped on Monday, 23rd March – over 114 days ago! In that time, we have continued to remain fully open as a childcare provider for the nation's key workers and vulnerable children and in recent weeks we have offered face to face sessions to all our Year 10s and Lower Sixth Formers which has given us a great deal confidence in moving safely to full opening in September.

The measures set out in the gov.uk guidance for schools ([click here](#)) provides a framework for school leaders to put in place proportionate protective measures for students and staff, which also ensure that all students receive a high quality education that enables them to thrive and progress. In welcoming all students back this autumn, schools have been asked to minimise the number of contacts that a student has during the school day as part of implementing the system of controls to reduce the risk of transmission. By following the guidance, we are confident we are managing risk effectively.

While our ambition is to have all students back at school in the autumn, every school will also need to plan for the possibility of a local lockdown and how we will ensure continuity of education (e.g. blended learning). With this in mind, we have used this final week of the academic year to plan for the full opening in September ensuring we adhere to the guidance which we will share with you in this communication.

Naturally, the first week of the new academic Year 2020/21 will be different to support not just our new students to Year 7 and Sixth Form but to reintegrate all year groups and meet with our families ahead of formal lessons commencing on Monday, 7th September.

Tuesday, 1 st September	Staff CPD Day
Wednesday, 2 nd September	Year 7 Induction Day Year 8 – Sixth Form STEPs Appointments (8.30 a.m. – 4.30 p.m.)
Thursday, 3 rd September	Year 7 – Sixth Form STEPs Appointments (9.30 a.m. – 7.30 p.m.)
Friday, 4 th September	Year 12 Induction Day Year 13 UCAS Day Year 7 STEPs Appointments (8.30 a.m. – 4.30 p.m.)

We have planned a recovery curriculum for all students for September following the gov.uk guidance to ensure we maintain a broad and balanced curriculum as much as possible for everyone, recognising that learning habits over this time have been different for all of us. We are also fully aware of our students' broader health and well-being and understand that students' responses to the period of lockdown have been mixed.



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Clearly, we have had to make several adaptations to ensure we can open fully and support students in September. For example, we will not be able to offer any food in our canteen at break and/or lunch times for any of the 1,300 students other than a sandwich meal to students entitled to a free school meal. Students will be expected to bring their own packed lunch, snacks and drinks for the day. We also hope we will have greater guidance on school transport (e.g. school buses) shortly and we will send more 'COVID-secure' details before we start in September. Students will be expected to wear full uniform as normal. The longer 25-minute STEPs Meeting planned will be central to starting the year off well.

To minimise the risk of any transmission we will deliver our curriculum practically by reducing movement around the site with Year 7, 8 and 9 (KS3) being taught in the same group (bubble) each day. The zoning of KS3 will allow us to use specialist rooms for Year 10, 11 and Sixth Form and therefore reduce the movement of all 1,300 students around the school's one-way system to only three-year group bubbles. This approach will allow us to use our specialist teachers to deliver their subject to students as set out in each student's timetable with few restrictions on the curriculum provision. That said, naturally some subjects such as Music, P.E. and Drama will have to adapt their curriculum more to ensure we maintain safe practices. This plan will be monitored and will be reviewed before the October half term. It will always be our ambition to return all students to being taught in specialist rooms but only when it is safe to do so.

We are planning to send students and parents a recorded message before we start in September which will reiterate much of what is stated in this letter with practical examples of our expectations for opening the school to all students in this phased and staged way.

We are looking forward to all Year 10 students to returning to school in September. We fully understand that there has been a range of work completed during the lockdown by individual students and that they have had a range of experiences. We would like to reassure you that there is no need to worry about any incomplete work, which will be covered again at some point before your examinations. Our main aim at present, is to have a positive start to the year. At the moment, we do not have a complete picture of what the exams will be like next summer, but we will ensure our students are not disadvantaged by recent events. The STEPs appointment will allow time for you to raise any concerns.

It is clear that next year will bring new challenges but by working in partnership with families we will ensure the success of our Year 11 students. The next stage of your child's education will be the English Language GCSE results which will be available to you on Insight at midday on Thursday, 20th August.

Please find attached a guide to supporting your child's return to Heber in September, which we hope you will find useful in preparing for the transition back to school.

Finally, we are very much looking forward to supporting your child next academic year in what will certainly be another year of challenges for them, although hopefully all academic! We look forward to meeting you in person at the STEPs appointments on either Wednesday, 2nd or Thursday, 3rd September.

Take care,



Mr D A Curry
Headteacher



Mr P Balmer
Year Leader – Head of Year 10



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Tips to support your child's return to Heber in September

We are really looking forward to seeing your child back at Heber in September. However, we understand that the prospect of returning to school following lockdown may bring about a mixture of emotions in your child. We hope the following tips will help you to prepare your child for the transition back to school:

1. **Chat to your child about how they feel about returning to school**

Ask your child if they are worried or scared about anything. Whatever your child tells you accept, validate and normalise their feelings e.g. 'It's normal to feel this way. I bet there are lots of other people feeling exactly the same way.' Identify what your child can look forward to in order to encourage feelings of positivity.

2. **Reassure your child**

Talk with your child about ways they can stay safe at school, such as washing their hands regularly including before and after eating. Reassure your child that the school is putting measures in place to keep them safe.

3. **Re-establish a routine to help ease your child into school life**

It is likely that your family's routine may have changed during lockdown. Your child may have been waking up or going to bed later. In the week before their first day back at school, gradually get them back into their usual morning and bedtime routine, ensuring they get the right amount of sleep.

4. **Model coping strategies**

Model coping strategies you use when feeling stressed such as reconnecting with friends, doing regular exercise or using breathing techniques. If it applies, you could share your own worries and feelings about returning to work and ways you are managing these feelings.

5. **Establish a 'family feedback' time**

Establishing a time each day when your family share their worries from their day as well as their fun experiences, makes talking about feelings part of the normal family routine. This could work at dinner time or during a family walk.

6. **Seek support if you need it**

If your child does find the transition back to school a challenge, please let us know so we can work with you to support your child. In the first instance please contact your child's Form Tutor. You can do this by telephoning the Main School Office on 01948 860571. Alternatively, you can also leave a message on the 'Contact Us' page on the school's website.

If you have more serious concerns about your child's mental health please contact Mrs Vaughan (Inclusion Manager), or Ms Mort, Deputy Headteacher, and/or possibly your GP about the best next step/s.

You can also call the Cheshire and Wirral Partnership Mental Health Crisis Line on 0300 303 3972.

We would also like to direct you to the Mental Health, Internet Safety and Safeguarding guide in the News section of the school's website, where you can find useful information to support you and your child with their good health and well-being – click [here](#).



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