



Perschore High School

Quality education
for all in a
challenging,
supportive and
safe environment



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Dear Parents / Carers,

I hope you are well. As promised, I am communicating with parents/carers today with an update ahead of our return in September.

Firstly, I would like to congratulate our A' Level and GCSE students on their recent results and praise them for their fortitude and resilience in view of the recent uncertainty regarding the grades issued. All teaching colleagues undertook a rigorous process in creating our 'Centre Assessment Grades' to ensure they were as equitable and fair as possible, and all the staff here at school are rightly very proud of the students and their achievements. The grades the students have received carry the same value as any other year and mean that in the majority of cases they have been able to progress to further study or employment as anticipated.

In preparing for September, the information previously issued still provides the substantive detail in terms of our return. This information was communicated through:

'Preparing for September 2020' online meeting: A recording of this meeting for students and parents/carers held on Wednesday 15th July 2020 can be accessed here:
<https://youtu.be/ruKicMfKWcl>

The associated PowerPoint presentation can be found at:
<http://www.perschore.worcs.sch.uk/media/3177/preparing-for-september-2020-presentation-wednesday-15th-july-2020.pdf>

My previous communication to parents/carers on Friday 17th July: This contained a number of updates still relevant to our September start including:

- *Preparing for September 2020 (key points from our online meeting)*
- *Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) (most pertinent to pre-summer communication)*
- *Staff changes for September 2020*

This communication can be found at:
<http://www.perschore.worcs.sch.uk/media/3189/phs-letter-to-parents-carers-17th-july-2020.pdf>

From this July communication, I would like to remind you of our start of term arrangements:

Tuesday 1 st September:	Professional Development Day (Closed to students)
Wednesday 2 nd September:	Professional Development Day (Closed to students)
Thursday 3 rd September:	New Year 8 only
Friday 4 th September:	New Year 8 / Year 11 (focus on Options subjects) / Year 12 (Induction activities)
Monday 7 th September:	Whole school returns

Upon the arrival of all students for their first day, staff will be on hand to direct students to the required Year Group area. All students will be informed of their Tutor Group upon arrival and directed to their new Tutor Room.

Whilst we had formulated plans in most aspects for our return in September, parents/carers raised some relevant questions during the online meeting in July. Those issues raised which were most time-sensitive, or clarified aspects discussed, were included in my July communication; I have not included these responses again here due to the number of them. The previously unanswered questions are addressed below. Apologies for the length of this communication but I am keen to respond to every question posed to help reassure you regarding our plans for a safe reopening.

Groups and Curriculum

When will students know their tutor groups, teaching groups and timetables?

Students in Years 9-13 will be notified of their Tutor allocation when they arrive on their first day in school. Students in school on Thursday and Friday will follow a temporary timetable issued in the first Tutor period. On Monday 7th September, all year groups will be notified of their teaching groups and timetable during the period one Tutor Time. (N.B. This is a revision to information published in July). From Monday 7th September, all of this information will be available to students and parents through epraise.

What is the maximum number of children you will have in one classroom?

The classes are the same sizes as under normal circumstances, up to a maximum of 33 students. The students will be spread out as far as possible. However, government guidance does not require a 2m distance between students. All desks will be front facing to reduce the possibility of transmission, where possible.

Will the numbers in the year group pods be less than normal class sizes to help distancing?

A year group pod will comprise the whole year group, as per government advice (between a minimum of 226 and maximum 246 students across Years 8 to 11). The students will be taught in their normal classes so there will be some mixing between students in the same year group pod, but not between year groups.

How many pupils will be in each tutor group?

There will be up to 30 students in tutor groups in Years 8-11.

Will teaching groups be a mixture of Houses or will it just be within the one House?

Tutor groups will be made up of students from only one House. Teaching groups have students from all three Houses from within the same year group pod. In the Sixth Form, Tutor Groups will also have students from all three Houses.

What is happening regarding setting within the pods?

The setting arrangements for all students will remain in place even though they are being taught in year group pods. In subjects where students are normally set, students will be set as usual within the year group pods.

Will teaching and the curriculum for subjects like Performing Arts, Drama and PE need to be changed to allow for social distancing as much of the dance, acting, etc usually requires close contact? Will students use the gym? Will team sports still be played?

The Government is asking schools to ensure we are minimising contact and maintaining social distance as far as possible. In broad terms, we are doing this using year based pods and maintaining distance where possible within the year group's various settings. Where these include lessons of a more practical nature activities will be based upon these principles. The use of team sports will be judged in this context alongside the government's published guidance on the shared use of equipment and the guidance from each individual sport's governing body. The first phase of PE lessons will focus on fitness given the length of time students have been absent from PE lessons.

Will Year 10 be taking their GCSE English Literature in year 10 or 11?

Year 10 GCSE English Literature students will study English Literature as planned this coming year with the intention of sitting their GCSE examination in summer 2021.

The Education minister has mentioned extra funding for one to one tutoring for children that have fallen behind, Will this be available if needed and how can this be accessed?

The Government plans for additional funding have been announced but we are awaiting further guidance on this.

Will there be a Parents' evening or individual meetings via Teams for students, such as Year 13, particularly for support to parents in University applications?

At the present time, all school events for the autumn term are postponed until further notice. We are currently looking at our options regarding online meetings, for Information evenings and Parents' evenings, and will update you at the start of term once decisions on individual events have been made.

How will you carry out sanctions and detentions?

Firstly, we hope that students will appreciate the unique circumstances created by the COVID-19 situation and challenges presented to all members of the school community and engage in appropriate behaviours and conduct to the benefit of all. For students who do not meet our expectations, breaching our non-negotiables or engaging in behaviours which put the health and welfare of others at risk, our usual system of sanctions will be in place, including appropriately organised 'Ready to Learn' arrangements for students who cannot continue with their usual routine.

The main change to note is that there will be no detentions held during the school day, as previously. All examples of incorrect behaviour will be logged with an appropriate 'detention time' (e.g. 15 minutes / 30 minutes / 1 hour, etc). This detention time will be accrued and when 60 minutes is reached, a one-hour after school detention will be served.

Separate detentions will be held twice weekly for each year group in their year group base as follows: Mondays & Wednesdays: Year 8 & Year 10 and Tuesdays & Thursdays: Year 9 & Year 11. An all year Leadership Team detention will be held, if required, on Fridays with limited numbers of students and appropriate arrangements to avoid contact and ensure social distancing.

Parents/carers will be given at least 24 hours' notice of after school detention to allow for appropriate collection/travel arrangements to be made.

If further lock downs are ahead, have you looked at the possibility of running the timetable as normal with all lessons taught live via Teams?

We have been looking at our remote learning provision for September in line with the Government's guidance for a plan to be in place for the end of September. This has taken into account parent/carer and student feedback.

If you did not manage to complete the survey below evaluating our remote learning provision in the second half of the summer term, your feedback would still be much appreciated. The required link is:

<https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=3miwMbYDbUWVSnFB8YRFBfsrXvAQJYdCiBhOEd0F69UMTZKNzJDWUpCRJlaSzI0NIFEUktGUFBWRC4u>

Students were also asked complete a similar survey through Issue 16 of the Student Bulletin published on Monday 20th July. Should another phase of remote learning be required in the autumn term, their feedback will also be useful in helping shape our provision. Issue 16, with the survey link and an outline for students of our arrangements for September is found at:

<http://www.pershore.worcs.sch.uk/media/3188/phs-weekly-student-bulletin-issue-16-200720.pdf>

Previously, our online lessons largely ran using the timetable as normal, but did so for a proportion of lessons rather than all lessons. This was to take account of the planning time required by colleagues using this new delivery model, an appropriate amount of time set aside for colleagues' assessment and tutoring obligations, as well as taking into consideration their own personal circumstances and what is reasonable to expect. Decisions for our remote learning provision from September will once again weigh up these and other factors.

If a student has to self-isolate for a period, what provisions to deliver education will be put in place?

If a student needs to self-isolate they will be provided with the work for the lessons they are missing. This will be via the Shared Area of our school network, which the students are used to. We will reinstitute a revised remote learning plan, if required for large numbers of students due to any local lockdown.

What is going to happen about the issuing of GCSE certificates?

GCSE results statements are issued on the Results Day itself, whilst GCSE certificates are available later in the autumn term. Students will be notified when these are ready for collection.

When do Options considerations begin for next year's Year 9 students?

Our Year 9 Options process will begin early next calendar year. Further details will be made available in the second half of the autumn term to Year 9 students and parents/carers.

Uniform

What is the Government's view on 'uniform'?

We had relaxed uniform policy while only certain groups of pupils were attending before the summer holidays. Although it is up to schools to decide their own uniform policy, the government are encouraging all schools to return to their usual uniform policies in the autumn term. Uniforms do not need to be cleaned any more often than usual, or in any different way to normal due to coronavirus (COVID-19). All students are expected to attend PHS in full, correct uniform apart from days when they have PE, when correct PE kit should be worn.

If students do PE outdoors in the rain how will they stay in these clothes all day?

Students will be asked to bring some spare clothes to school to change into and wear underneath their PE outerwear being worn during the day. Where possible, PE lessons will take place indoors when the weather is particularly inclement.

Arrangements for the Dining Room

Will students be allowed to use other seating areas (e.g. seating shelter or the new PE corridor seating)?

There will only be two year groups having lunch at any one time and each is designated an indoor eating space (the 'Persore Kitchen' (our rebranded Dining Room) or the School Hall set up appropriately) and an outdoor space (the bottom playground or area in front of the Library, including the Seating Shelter). Students will only be able to use seating within their designated year group areas. Time has been built in to clean areas used by consecutive year groups.

Safety Protocols

Can children wear masks when they return?

Government guidance states that students do not need to wear masks in school. Should a student wish to wear they are able to do so, however, mask-wearing protocols must be followed; If a student has been wearing a face covering before arriving at school or college, it will be important that they understand how to remove it. The Government has asked schools to have a process for ensuring face coverings are removed when pupils and staff who use them arrive at school.

The general principle will be for students to follow our 'SAS' protocol: 'Sanitise – Action – Sanitise'.

In relation to masks, students must wash or sanitise their hands immediately on arrival at school, dispose of any temporary face coverings they may have been wearing in a covered bin, or place reusable face coverings in a plastic bag they can take home with them, and then wash or sanitise their hands again before heading to their classroom.

Public Health England does not recommend the use of face coverings in schools because misuse may inadvertently increase the risk of transmission. Putting on and taking off a face covering increases the risk of touching faces and therefore may spread the virus more easily.

My child cannot use hand sanitiser due to medical reasons, what will happen on this occasion?

The Government is asking schools to ensure everyone at the school cleans their hands more often than usual, including when they arrive, when they return from breaks, and before and after eating - this can be done with soap and running water or hand sanitiser. We are asking all students to attend with a personal bottle of hand sanitiser so it is possible for each student to find a product that is most appropriate for their personal use. Further issues in this regard should be resolved in consultation with a student's House Team.

What will happen if I do not wish my child to have a test but they have what may be symptoms (e.g. runny nose from hayfever)?

The Government requires schools to implement certain approaches which are essential to controlling the virus. The Government requires parents/carers to support this by:

- *Firstly, not sending students to school if they are exhibiting symptoms of the coronavirus (a new continuous cough, high temperature or loss of taste or smell) or have someone in their household who does as they should self-isolate (NB a 'runny nose' as indicated in the question is not considered to be a symptom)*
- *Secondly, engaging with the NHS Test and Trace process so that cases can be identified and action taken – this means if your child develops symptoms, you should arrange for them to get a test and inform the school of the results of the test*

If a student develops symptoms whilst in school they will be sent home to self-isolate in order to book a test. If a student tests negative, they can stop self isolating and return to school as soon as they feel well; other members of the household can stop self isolating. If a student tests positive, they stay at home for at least 7 days and members of the household must self isolate for a 14 days. Parents must inform the school with details of anyone the student has been in close contact with; the school will then follow local health protection team guidance.

If one sibling sent home with symptoms then will the other sibling be sent home too? However, if a child is sent home as precaution due to others having symptoms, the sibling can still come to school?

Siblings of those who are sent home do not need to be sent home unless they develop symptoms.

However, once at home, they should self-isolate if they are in close contact with a sibling who has coronavirus symptoms. The sibling without symptoms can return to school if the sibling with symptoms returns a negative test. Should their test be positive, they should self-isolate for 14 days.

What assurances can be given over the quality of cleaning?

Our cleaning regime within the school has been organised to be as comprehensive as possible, in line with our overall plans and Risk Assessment for reopening the school, and complement all the other control measures being put in place. There will be a dedicated cleaner on site every day with a planned schedule, focused on the cleaning of high frequency areas (e.g. door handles; bannisters, toilets, etc) and those used by more than one year group pod, as well as the ability to respond to particular requests, in line with government guidance.

Will you be using any chemical products that coat surfaces and last for a specific length of time?

The school is using standard household cleaning products as per government guidance.

Will windows be open and blinds drawn open, particularly in the quad, as currently they are very stuffy and dark which will not be great for hygiene?

In all classrooms, blinds, windows and doors, fire regulations and weather permitting, will be opened as a matter of course to increase airflow and ventilation. Air conditioning will not be used other than in IT rooms to regulate the temperature of the equipment. Many of our newer classrooms have 'air handling' devices to increase airflow.

General

How will the extra curricular activities work given the expectation is that students should take part in at least one?

Sadly, one of the consequences of our arrangements from September is that we will need to suspend our expectation of participation in at least one extra-curricular activity by all students. Unfortunately, from the start of term, we shall not be planning to run any extra-curricular clubs / activities or school trips. We would like the focus for all students and staff initially to be on ensuring our overall plans are instigated appropriately and an effective return to face-to-face teaching and learning for all students. Should it become apparent that we are able to run extra-curricular activities in line with the wider guidance on protective measures, we shall communicate this in due course.

In terms of the Government's wider guidance to parents/carers, in order to minimise risks, you should consider sending your child to the same setting consistently and limit the number of different providers they

access. Where you choose to use childcare providers or out-of-school activities for your children, you will want to assure yourself that the providers are carefully considering their own protective measures, and only use those providers that can demonstrate this. There is advice available for parents on the use of clubs and activities at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-for-parents-and-carers-of-children-attending-out-of-school-settings-during-the-coronavirus-covid-19-outbreak/guidance-for-parents-and-carers-of-children-attending-out-of-school-settings-during-the-coronavirus-covid-19-outbreak>

Are water fountains still going to be available for students? If so, what are the measures in place to ensure these are sanitised before/after use?

Water fountains will be available for students although none of these can be used to drink from directly and are only used to fill up water bottles. We are asking students to each bring in a personal transparent water bottle filled with water only at the start of each day. Students will be able to fill these at water fountains within their designated year group areas or Pershore Kitchen where hand sanitisation will be available. The general principle will be for students to follow our 'SAS' protocol: 'Sanitise – Action (e.g. fill up water bottle) – Sanitise'.

If students arrive early can they go straight to their Tutor room?

Upon arrival at school, students should go to their year group before school area. Each year group has been designated an area to congregate before school, with a wet weather alternative should this be required. Students requiring breakfast will be able to visit the 'Pershore Kitchen' following the one way system in operation and the social distancing measures in place whilst queuing, taking their food to their year group area and not remaining in the dining room. Students should not go to their Tutor rooms until the warning bell sounds at 8.47am from when the rooms will be supervised by their Tutors.

For students (who would usually walk to school in groups), will students be expected to walk on their own to school or social distance?

Students in the same year group pod are able to walk to school together though should still maintain social distance where possible. Students with friends from other year groups should look to minimise contact and only mix with those in their year group pod, where possible.

How will you police that what you say will happen actually does?

Firstly, the important step is to ensure all members of the school community are fully aware of our plans and expectations. An online meeting for staff was held on Monday 17th August and a comprehensive documentation has been produced for staff detailing all our protocols and procedures and give them an appropriate time to digest the information prior to the start of term. All year groups will receive our student protocols during their first, and subsequent, Tutor Time periods when in school to supplement information already published via the Student Bulletin last term.

Secondly, monitoring will take place through our usual line management practices and other procedures. Other monitoring practices and responsibilities have been allocated to colleagues in light of our new arrangements. When implementing new procedures, they will be under constant review from the beginning and tweaks made as appropriately.

Will parents be able to see the Risk Assessments completed by the school?

Yes. The school's COVID related Risk Assessment will be available on the school website from Tuesday 1st September.

If a child does misbehave, what can you do to ensure learning is not impacted?

As explained in an answer to an earlier question, our usual behaviour policy strategies, including sanctions and detentions, will be in place to ensure learning is not adversely impacted.

How will you adhere to a minimum distance of 1m with a full class of students?

Government guidance advises that distancing between students should be maintained, where possible, but recognises this may always be possible. In a classroom, the students will be spread out as much as they can

and face forward where possible, however a distance of 1m cannot be guaranteed. The main focus within school is on minimising contact between different year groups and between adults and students.

Will D of E still go ahead either for Year 11 or Year 10?

We have plans to run D of E expeditions for Years 10-13 in the spring and summer of 2021. We will be advised by the DfE and DofE as to whether this can take place.

Is there any news yet about whether public exams will be delayed in 2021?

The outcomes from Ofqual's consultation into the summer 2021 examination series have been published. For those pupils with public examinations during the new academic year, the Government is planning on the basis that GCSEs and A levels will take place in summer 2021, with some adaptations, to help pupils catch up. Further information can found at:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/906173/Consultation_decisions_-_proposed_changes_to_the_assessment_of_GCSEs_AS_and_A_levels_in_2021.pdf

Appendix A in the above document gives the summary of decisions for each individual GCE and GCSE Level subject

Can you clarify the position on streaming in year 9 please?

Year 9 class allocations follow the model in Year 8. The year group are divided into three bands (X, Y & Z) and within each band are two mixed more able groups (P & H) and one group benefiting from some additional support or reduced class size (S). Thus a student's class code is a combination of these letters e.g. XS or ZP, etc.

Will the public and coaches reduce the number of students they transport each journey and are the teaching staff all returning in September so pupils have consistency?

Although we are awaiting final information from Worcestershire School Transport, our understanding is that public and school service buses will be running at usual frequency and capacity.

On public transport, face coverings are required at all times (for children over the age of 11) and further guidance on using public transport is available here:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-safer-travel-guidance-for-passengers#public-transport>

Worcestershire School Transport will confirm requirements with students, which are also likely to include seating plans with students sitting with others from their year group. We are expecting further guidance on face coverings from Worcestershire School Transport in the coming days and will update you as soon as possible.

Changes to teaching staff were outlined in the 17th July communication to parents/carers; the vast majority of teaching colleagues are returning in September.

Any SEND specific concerns or issues raised by the FAQs, or our other planned arrangements, should be addressed to Mr Campbell, Director of Learning Support & Inclusion who can be contacted at:

dc@pershore.worcs.sch.uk

Finally, the government has launched a *#backtoschoolsafely* campaign, intended to reassure parents and students that schools and colleges are ready for their return in September. Newspaper and billboard advertising was launched on Tuesday, with radio and digital adverts live from Monday and running until early September.

Parents/carers are being encouraged to visit the link below for information and practical guidance, some of which has been used in the answers given above:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/what-parents-and-carers-need-to-know-about-early-years-providers-schools-and-colleges-during-the-coronavirus-covid-19-outbreak/what-parents-and-carers-need-to-know-about-early-years-providers-schools-and-colleges-in-the-autumn-term>

We have worked hard to put in place a range of protective measures for September for all members of the school community to help control the spread of the virus. Of course, there will still be risks whilst coronavirus (COVID-19) remains in the community and I would like to thank you in advance for your support with the measures we have put in place. It is vital that all students return to school and attendance at school is mandatory from the beginning of the new academic year and so the legal duty to send your son/daughter to school regularly will apply unless they are unable to attend following public health advice.

I do hope you and your families have been able to stay safe and well during the summer. My staff and I look forward to welcoming all students back on Monday 7th September, with Year 8, Year 11 and Year 12 having joined us during the previous week.

Best wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'PH', written in a cursive style.

Phil Hanson