

The Joseph Whitaker School

An Academy specialising in Sport and Performing Arts



11th September 2020

Dear Parents and Carers,

Quite unbelievably, we already find ourselves at the end of the second week back at school; I do hope that you are well and that the new ways of working are becoming increasingly familiar. Students have settled in to the new routines and timings, responding well to the procedures put in place to ensure everyone's safety. It really is wonderful to be able to walk around the school, seeing it full of students learning with their teachers, once again.

Settling Back in to Routine – Over these first two weeks, we have focused our attention on getting all of the students back into school, safely. We have prioritised ensuring that students understood the procedures in place whilst trying to maintain a sense of normality, in terms of the ethos and culture of the school. The majority of our students have had over 5 months out of the classroom environment, for a few the return to school, with all of our systems and routines, presents a challenge. As senior staff we are continuously keeping a high presence around the school – before school, afterschool, at breaks and lunchtimes and throughout the school day; it is imperative that we re-establish our high expectations of behaviour for learning and calm environments quickly. Once we are confident that the new ways of working have been embedded successfully, we will be in a position to prioritise addressing any gaps in learning that may have resulted from the Spring/Summer school closure.

Keeping The Joseph Whitaker School Open – The media has already reported that in a few schools across the country, groups of students are being asked to stay at home due to a positive Covid-19 test in a particular group/bubble.

Students have already missed a significant amount of time at school; we simply do not want this to happen again.

The measures that we have in place in school will limit the ability of the virus to pass from one person to another but it is vital that any student, or staff member, displaying any of the symptoms of Covid-19 does not attend school.

All information is available under the September Re-opening tab on our website and read the [Stay at Home Government Guidance](#)

The following guidance **must** be followed by everyone please:

1. If a **student develops symptoms in school**, we will isolate them and request that they (and any siblings) are collected and taken home.
You will all need to **follow our [Stay at Home guidance](#)** (available on our website).



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2. If your **child develops symptoms at home**, please keep them and their siblings at home. You will all need to **follow our [Stay at Home guidance](#)** (available on our website). Telephone the school absence line to report your child's absence: 01623 392327 (option 1)
3. If anyone in your **household has symptoms** or has a **positive test**, then you must keep all your children at home. You will all need to **follow our [Stay at Home guidance](#)** (available on our website). Telephone the school absence line to report your child's absence: 01623 392327 (option 1)
4. If your **child is returning from a country on England's quarantine list**, you must follow the rules of quarantine and not send you child into school. Telephone the school absence line to report your child's absence: 01623 392327 (option 1)

If students are isolating or quarantining at home, work will be set (predominantly through Google Classroom) for the duration of their absence. If you have any difficulties with accessing the necessary ICT devices or internet access please could I request that you contact your child's Head of House in the first instance.

Collective Responsibility - Everyone has a part to play in limiting/stopping the spread of this virus to ensure that The Joseph Whitaker School can remain open to all students. Whilst many of the rules are restrictive they are there to keep us all safe. Our behaviours matter and if someone chooses to disregard the guidance then it jeopardises other people's health and makes our work in school even more challenging.

Many of our students **travel by bus** to and from school. Nottinghamshire County Council Transport Team have provided additional buses at this time to ensure that we can keep year groups apart. During the first week back staff from the school travelled to school on the buses each day to ensure that students were clear regarding the rules on travelling on buses. At the end of each day staff supervise students getting onto the buses. **Facemasks must be worn** for the entire journey (unless your child is exempt from wearing a mask). We are currently seeing a small number of students boarding the buses wearing a mask and then removing it once the bus leaves the bus park – this type of behaviour must be rectified or those students identified will need to find alternative transportation during this time.

For those students who are **transported to and from school by car** you will recall that we sent an email earlier this week to request that you do not use The Archer (public house) car park unless you are actually a patron.

In order to help alleviate the pressures of the roads around school please could we ask that where possible you **use our bus park** in the morning (ideally before 8.20am when the buses arrive).



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We will also permit use of the bus park for after-school collection by car, but **strictly after 3pm only** please (once the school buses have departed).

Minimising the impact of staff absence on learning. Whilst we have numerous measures in place to protect our staff whilst they in school, including encouraging the use of facemasks in communal areas, there are likely to be instances when staff members are faced with the need to self-isolate. Therefore it is anticipated that staff absence will, unfortunately, be higher this year than in previous years.

We will do everything that we can to keep any disruption to learning to an absolute minimum, schools across the country will all be facing this challenge and we do not have lots of extra teachers somewhere ready to step into the breach. Should we face instances of staff absence in the future then I ask for your patience and understanding. Please be reassured that we will be doing all that we can.

Communication. It is important that we have your current email address and that you refer to our website for additional information, on a regular basis. I will endeavour, for the next few weeks and months to communicate with you (via Insight email) on a weekly basis to provide reminders and guidance as the local and national picture changes.

Should you have any concerns or queries you may email your child's tutor, Head of House or Student Services for additional information. All contact details are available on our school website.

Thank you, once again, for your continued support in the education of your child. The way in which they have returned to school over the past two weeks has been incredible and your part in making this a success is very much appreciated - thank you.

Warmest regards

Carey Ayres

Headteacher



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