

Monday 10<sup>th</sup> August 2020



**Orchard Mead Academy**

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**Executive Principal:** Ms R Hindocha

**Principal:** Mr I Patel

Dear Parent/ Carer,

**Ref: Parent/ Carer September 2020 School Reopening – Newsletter 1**

I hope this letter finds you and your families well and in good health. Following on from the letter dated 3<sup>rd</sup> July from Ms Hindocha, please see below further guidance and reminders of key messages for school reopening in September. I will break the key messages down over the next 3 weeks.

We are informed by the Government that the balance of risk is now overwhelmingly in favour of students returning to school with the many benefits of being back in school far outweighing the very low risk from coronavirus (COVID-19). Whatever your view in this regard, and we understand that there may be some apprehension, what is certain is that we are looking forward to welcoming back our students for the new academic year. At school, we are working tirelessly to plan following the latest Government guidance to balance and minimise any risks from coronavirus and to provide a full educational experience for our students.

**Systems of control - Prevention**

1. We will minimise contact with individuals who are unwell by ensuring that those who have symptoms, or who have someone in their household who does, do not attend school
2. Everyone will sanitise and clean their hands thoroughly and regularly
3. We will ensure good respiratory hygiene by all individuals, closely following and promoting 'catch it, bin it, kill it'. We have introduced enhanced cleaning, including cleaning frequently touched surfaces often, using approved cleaning products
4. We will minimise contact between individuals and maintain social distancing wherever possible – teachers will maintain distance from students, staying at the front of the class within an allocated 2 metre staff only zone and keep any close face to face contact within a minimum distance of 1 metre. We have made adaptations to classrooms to support this distancing which includes seating students side by side and facing forwards in most instances. Support in lessons from the Teacher or via Teaching Assistants will be provided as normal, however SEND students will, for this purpose, be located at the front of each class
5. Please note that we will not take temperatures on arrival. Public Health England is clear that this is an unreliable method for identifying COVID-19
6. Personal Protective Equipment: Public Health England does not currently recommend the use of face coverings for children in schools because misuse can inadvertently increase the risk of transmission and have negative effects on communication and consequently education. Whilst face coverings will not be worn in school by students, they are required at all times on public transport (children over 11) and in shops. Students must travel directly to school (strictly no shops), washing their hands before they leave and remain on the way in their household group only. Students travelling on public transport must follow the 'safer travel guidance for passengers' document and remove and dispose of temporary face coverings in the covered bins provided or place their reusable face covering in a

sealable plastic bag for their return home. The vast majority of staff (excluding catering and cleaners) interacting with students will not require PPE but will be needed:

- where an individual child or young person becomes ill
- where a child has routine intimate care needs that involves the use of PPE

### **Breakfast Club/Breaks/Lunches/Assemblies**

In line with government guidance, we will sadly not be in a position to commence large gatherings for the duration of half term 1. Students will remain in their year group 'bubbles' for assemblies and recreational times. Whilst the kitchens will be operational from the start of term, it is likely that only packed lunches and cold refreshments will be available for the duration of Half term 1. Provision of food will be available for all students, including for those eligible for free school meals. Furthermore, to ensure distinct groups remain apart, lunchtimes will be staggered and students will remain in their designated indoor and outdoor areas of the school. Breakfast Club will only be open to Year 11 initially but I am hopeful we will be able to cater for more students as the term progresses. I will keep all stakeholders updated.

### **Attendance expectations**

It is vital for all children to return to school to minimise as far as possible the longer-term impact of the pandemic on children's education, wellbeing and wider development. School attendance will therefore be mandatory again (unless a statutory reason applies) from the beginning of the year. Therefore, we will continue to maintain an up to date record of attendance and will follow up on absences and punctuality concerns. Where necessary, we will be required to issue sanctions, including fixed penalty notices in line with local and national guidance. In line with government guidance from the DfE, parents and carers should be aware that the usual rules on school attendance will now apply and your duty to ensure that your child attends regularly at school and on time.

#### Students who are shielding or self-isolating

In line with the guidance, the majority of students will be able to return to school. Shielding advice for all adults and children will pause later this month, subject to a continued decline in the rates of community transmission of coronavirus. This means that those previously on the shielded patient list can return to school, as can those who have family members who are shielding. Please see the government's latest advice on shielding for more information.

Where a student is unable to attend school because they are complying with clinical and/or public health advice such as isolation, we will immediately provide access to remote education and these absences will not be penalised.

#### If you are anxious about the return to school

We hope that the above information communicates both our systems of control and our clear and consistent expectations around school attendance. If you or your child have any worries about returning to school, we are more than happy to discuss this further.

If you have any concerns, feedback or suggestions, please feel free to email [info@orchard-tmet.uk](mailto:info@orchard-tmet.uk). I will be in touch again next week with more details regarding the reopening of our school.

Best regards



Imtiaz Patel  
**Principal**