



# WALTON HIGH

*Leading Learning*

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1 May 2020

Dear Parents

## Covid-19: Update 12

I hope you and your families are well and managing to stay home as much as possible and enjoy each other's company most of the time!

Students continue to engage well with the activities set by their teachers and we are all very grateful for the support parents are giving their children to help them keep on track. We appreciate that this is not easy with families having to juggle so many responsibilities but the time you spend encouraging your children really does make a difference. Thank you.

As many of you will know, one of the excellent resources used to support students studying for their GCSEs is GCSEPod. Over the coming weeks there will be a series of Webinars aimed at explaining to parents the benefits of the site. For more information, and to sign up, please visit <https://www.gcsepod.com/news-gcse-learning-revision/podup-presents-parent-webinars/>.

### When are schools reopening?

In the media there has been much speculation about when and how schools will re-open. It is becoming increasingly clear that schools will probably partially re-open for some students at some point after half term if the death rate falls and the reproduction rate of the virus in the community continues to decline and remains securely below one.

However, as the Secretary of State made clear earlier this week, when schools do re-open this will be in a phased way over a period of time. Yesterday, the Prime Minister said he would give more details at the daily Government briefing next Thursday.

Obviously, the Senior Team has not been waiting for the Government to communicate its intentions before starting our planning for the school's reopening, especially as it is clear we are all going to have to adjust to a new normal for some significant time. In Update 11, I said I would keep parents informed of the action we are taking to ensure that students and staff remain as safe as possible whilst on the premises. Below is an overview of our **current thinking** but please be aware that **these things are not set in stone and may need to change** depending on the extent to which the Secretary of State dictates how schools should re-open and/or updated guidance is issued by Public Health England.

### How will Walton High reduce the risk of my child contracting the virus at school?

Current scientific opinion indicates that a degree of social distancing will be required until a vaccine is developed, manufactured in huge quantities and administered to billions of people worldwide. This is clearly not going to happen before schools are expected to re-open in some form. However, social distancing on campuses with over a thousand students and over one hundred staff is going to be a challenge.

Consequently, we are giving considerable thought to how to minimise the risk of people contracting and transmitting the virus whilst on the premises or when travelling in the minibuses.

### **Social distancing**

The only way to create more space per person, to allow for appropriate social distancing, is to reduce the number of students in the building at any one time.

This will involve changes to the way we operate and, for this to work, we will need the support of our colleagues, students and parents.

The Secretary of State has stated that not all year groups will return to school in the first instance. However, even if only one or two year groups return, there will still be a need to reduce the number of students in a class from an average of 30 to 15. To achieve this, students would attend on rota basis, i.e. either Week A or Week B. If more year groups are allowed to return, in order to ensure social distancing, our current thinking is there would also be a need to introduce a shift system as well as a rota, e.g. half of Key Stage 3 and Post 16 have lessons in the morning and half of Key Stage 4 in the afternoon. To accommodate this, the length of lessons would be reduced from 60 minutes to 45 minutes.

This reduction in teaching time, and the one week in school and one week at home rota, means teachers will need to adjust their schemes of work to take account of this as well as the restrictions on the range of learning activities they can use. As a result, this would not necessarily result in insufficient time to cover the content of either the National Curriculum or accredited qualifications in Key Stage 4 and Key Stage 5. Students studying for their Level 2 qualification also benefit from the school's three year Key Stage 4 which gives them significantly more lesson time than recommended by the exam boards to cover the course.

Those students not scheduled to be in school would usually be expected to complete the same work as those that are in school, but in some subjects students might be set theory work to do at home whilst completing practical work when in school. It may be possible to live stream and/or record some lessons for students working at home to access.

Vulnerable children and some others would not be on the rota and therefore expected to attend both Week A and Week B but the school would no longer be able to provide childcare for most critical workers.

### **Classroom layout**

Most of the classrooms in the school currently accommodate up to 30 students and are arranged in blocks to facilitate discussion and group work.

To ensure social distancing, all classrooms and laboratories would need to be rearranged in rows as shown below, with only one student sitting at a double desk.



### **Behaviour Management Policy**

The school's behaviour management policy will be amended to make clear that failing to comply with social distancing measures, and other practices designed to protect everyone's health and safety, will be considered serious disciplinary matters that may result in fixed term exclusion and, for persistent offenders, permanent exclusion.

### **Other changes to usual working practice**

Students will not be allowed to borrow equipment such as pens and pencils or items of uniform from Student Services. Parents will need to ensure their child(ren) is wearing the correct uniform and has the right equipment.

Students will not be allowed to use their lockers but will be allowed to take a bag with them to lessons.

There will be no Tutor Group sessions. Tutors would track and touch base with their tutees remotely.

There will be no assemblies.

All parent consultation meetings will take place remotely. This is being trialled before May half term.

In 2020/21 Academic Year there will be no off site Advanced Learning Days to further reduce risk and workload.

### **Supporting children with SEND**

A protocol for supporting students with SEND, that protects staff and students, will need to be drafted and implemented following consultation.

### **ILA**

With fewer classes being taught at any one time, with half the usual number of students, the number of students in the ILA, even with the possibility of increased staff absence, should be manageable and safe. Only every third computer would be used to ensure social distancing.

### **Use of thermal cameras on entering the building and during the day**

The use of fixed or handheld cameras checking the temperature of staff, students and visitors entering the building and during the day is being investigated (<https://www.hikvision.com/en/products/Thermal-Products/Thermography-thermal-cameras/temperature-screening-series/>).

These cameras will help pick up people with an elevated temperature who would then be asked to go home until their temperature returns to normal.

If the country's capacity to test has improved by the time schools re-open, people with a high temperature may also need to have a test and only be allowed to return if the test is negative or they have remained at home for at least seven days and are no longer presenting with symptoms.

### **Changing rooms**

Students will be managed in such a way as to ensure social distancing in changing rooms.

### **Café**

Social distancing will be observed in the café with seating arranged in a way that keeps people at least 2m apart. The corridor floor will have tape lines indicating the distance people should keep from each other when queuing.

### **Students and staff with a cough**

Students and staff will not be allowed to attend school if they were coughing or sneezing unless they have tested negative for COVID-19.

### **PPE**

PPE will be made available (subject to availability!) depending on a person's role and how close they need to get to others to carry out their duties.

### **Wearing of face masks**

Students and staff will be allowed to wear face masks should they choose to do so or will be required to if the current guidance changes.

Accompanying this letter is written guidance on how to make a face mask and at the end of this letter there are links to videos that show them being made<sup>1</sup>.

### **Moving around the building**

A one way system will be introduced with lines marking the distance students and staff should keep from each other. Stairs will be either up or down.

This may require students and staff to initially walk in the opposite direction and change floors to get to their destination.

In areas where a one way system is not feasible a taped line will divide the corridor with students expected to keep to the left and walk in single file at least two metres apart.

### **Hand wash stations**

Hand wash stations will be fitted in various places throughout both campuses to ensure increased handwashing takes place throughout the day.



Students will continue to be expected to wash their hands at the beginning and end of lessons in rooms where there are sinks.

All classrooms will continue to have alcohol based hand sanitiser and tissues.

### **Water fountains**

All water fountains will be removed and replaced by bottle refill stations. All students will be issued with re-usable bottles. These will be the only bottles allowed in classrooms.

### **Enhanced cleaning**

High touch areas will be cleaned throughout the day using appropriate cleaning materials and areas deep cleaned in the event of someone testing positive for COVID-19.

Teachers will be provided with cleaning materials in their classrooms to use should they consider it to be necessary.

### **Minibuses**

No student will sit in the front next to the driver. A plastic sheet barrier will be installed (if possible) between the driver and passengers. Students will use an alcohol based hand gel as they get on the minibus and will be expected to wear a face mask/covering during the journey. The drivers will wipe down all surfaces with appropriate cleaning materials at the end of each journey.

As mentioned above, this is our current thinking and is all subject to change once the Government provides more information and is also dependent upon staff agreeing to work differently and more flexibly. However, given the speculation in the media, we thought it would be helpful to share our current thinking with parents.

### **And finally . . .**

A massive thank you to Ms Bavister, Assistant Subject Leader for Music, for her work in organising the virtual Lipsync battle between staff at our two campuses <https://waltonhigh.org.uk/waltonhighathome/1386-lipsync-battle> and all the staff that were brave (or foolish) enough to take part. Please share the link with your children. I hope they enjoy the performances as much as I did!

Thank you for your continued support.

Stay in, keep your distance, wash your hands, don't touch your face and look after each other!

Best wishes



Michelle Currie  
Executive Principal

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<sup>i</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tPx1yqvJgf4>

<https://youtu.be/CPA-NnyIreU>

<https://youtu.be/9tBg0Os5FWQ>