



WALTON HIGH

Leading Learning

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7 July 2020

Dear Parents

Covid-19: Update 16

I am sure you are all as pleased and relieved as we are that it appears Walton High should be able to return to a more recognisable way of working in September.

Although the virus still poses a threat, it is important to keep things in perspective and appreciate that nothing in life is risk free. For most children and young people the virus is a mild illness although we should never be complacent. The statistical evidence suggests that the biggest risk factor is age – something I am acutely aware of as someone who is nearer 60 than 59! Fortunately, Milton Keynes has so far not been as badly affected as some other areas of the country (Annex A) and we all have a role to play in containing the spread of the disease and protecting the most vulnerable in our community. The school, supported by MKET, has done everything possible to mitigate the risk of people contracting the virus on our site and thereby is doing its bit to keep everyone as safe as possible. A copy of the school's risk assessment and the mitigation measures in place is on the school's websiteⁱ. However, if we are to keep the virus out of the school, everyone will have to play their part.

Since last Thursday, when the Department for Education published its guidance on schools opening for all students in Septemberⁱⁱ, the senior team has been considering how best to implement this in Walton High's context.

One of the main recommendations is for schools to keep students in "bubbles" to reduce the number of contacts they have which can be either class or year based. The guidance currently advises that students in these bubbles should, as far as possible, be kept apart by staggering the start and finish times of the day as well as students having separate break and lunchtimes. This creates many challenges for secondary schools but set out below are the strategies we will be using to limit students mixing.

Revised structure of the day

The proposed revised structure of the day (Annex B) allows for a staggered start and end to the day, as well as staggered break and lunchtime.

To make a split break work, it is necessary to make Session 2 longer for Y10, Y11 and Post 16 (their first session of the day) and Session 3 longer for Y7 and Y8. Y7 and Y8 will follow a daily Read to Succeed programme in the additional 15 minutes allocated to this lesson.

By prior arrangement, we would allow siblings with different start times to be dropped off together; with the older students being allocated a place to work whilst waiting for their first lesson. If necessary, at the end of the day, the younger sibling will be allowed to wait for their brother or sister to finish Session 6 so they can travel home together.

Grouping students

To prevent as much mixing of students as possible, students in Year 7 and Year 8 will be kept in the same classes for all lessons. There will be a seating plan that will be consistent from lesson-to-lesson so the same students are sitting next to and near each other.

It is not feasible to keep groups in Years 9 – 11 the same because of the different combination of optional subjects they study. However, wherever possible, membership of groups will be kept as consistent as possible. Where students from different groups are combined, we will try to ensure that students sit next to and near students from the other group(s) they are in to limit the number of contacts.

To create “bubbles” of equal size, in September students might not have the same teachers or be in the same class as this year.

At break and lunchtime, students from different year groups will be allocated separate social space and expected to observe social distancing but will be allowed to play sports in their year group.

In order to limit mixing between groups, and to allow the cleaning company the maximum amount of time to clean the building, there will be no after school activities but this situation will be kept under review. This means that all students must leave the school at 16:00. However, subject areas will be offering virtual enrichment activities which are likely to be many and varied.

Training and Induction days

We want all students to return in September and successfully make the transition to this new way of working. For things to run smoothly, it is important that staff and students have a thorough and shared understanding of the changes and expectations. To achieve this, each year group (except the current Year 10 and Year 12 who are currently in school) will have a day in school to ensure they fully understand how they are to move around the building, the different way lessons will be delivered and their responsibilities to keep themselves, their family, staff, friends and wider community safe.

The provisional arrangements for the first week of the Autumn Term are as follows:

Tuesday, 1 September	Year 7 induction
Wednesday, 2 September	Year 8 induction
Thursday, 3 September	Year 9 induction
Friday, 4 September	Year 10 and Year 12 induction and any Year 11 who have not attended the summer term Year 10 sessions

From Monday, 7 September all students will attend.

Classroom layout

The Government no longer considers social distancing for students in a classroom context necessary.

To mitigate the risk of an infected student transmitting the virus to the teacher, all students will be seated at least two metres from the teacher’s area.

To mitigate the risk of a student transmitting the virus to other students, they will all face forward and, as far as possible, sit next to and near the same people. Students will clean the desk tops and chair handles before they leave the classroom. The Senior Team, in consultation with Heads of Year, will create the seating plan for every class.

Supporting children with SEND

With all students attending, there is insufficient space in classrooms for Learning and Behaviour Support Assistants to provide in-class support and still keep to the recommended distance. As a consequence, students needing support will be withdrawn from more lessons than is currently the case to allow them to work individually or in groups with either a Learning Support Assistant or teacher.

PE

Students will have all their PE lessons outside and will change either in a changing room or another space depending on the number of classes scheduled at any one time. Students should take their PE kit home in between use to ensure that it is always clean at the beginning of lessons.

Students' classwork and homework

All exercise books, sketchbooks etc. will remain in school.

Homework will form part of a blended learning approach where students complete activities at home, often, but not always, online. There will be no requirement for students, other than Post-16, to print work or bring anything into school.

Uniform

Parents should ensure students attend school in the correct uniform. As it will not be possible to loan items of uniform, students who arrive at school incorrectly dressed two days running will be sent home to change.

Good personal hygiene helps stop the virus from spreading; parents should ensure that, where possible, their child(ren) wears clean clothes every day. The school's uniform is designed to dry quickly and many items washed in the evening will be dry by morning. People often forget to launder the tie but this is possibly one of the most important items to wash frequently.

Lockers

Students will be allowed to use their lockers but in a controlled and socially distanced manner. This means that it may take students a little longer than usual to leave the site at the end of the day.

Parent consultation meetings

Following the positive feedback on the remote parent consultations, it is proposed that we continue this format throughout the 2020-21 academic year.

Students and staff with a cough

As the symptoms of COVID-19 are many and varied, parents are encouraged to err on the side of caution and should keep their child at home if they are at all concerned about their health and arrange for them to be tested the same day.

In line with current DfE guidelines, students and staff will not be allowed to attend school if they are coughing or sneezing, even if they have tested negative for COVID-19.

Wearing of face covering

Other than on the minibus or when travelling on public transport, face coverings are not currently considered necessary in schools. Anyone wearing a face covering must comply with the protocol for doing so hygienically (Annex C).

Face coverings should be removed if they inhibit teaching, learning or clear communication.

Moving around the building

A one way system will be in use 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.

Getting to and from school safely

Government guidelines suggest that there is a heightened risk of coming into contact with the virus on public transport and encourages children to walk, cycle or get a lift to school from someone in their household. Last year nearly 400 students attending Walton High came to or from school by public bus.

Walton High's minibus service is a safe alternative to the public bus service and, as a result of having the staggered start, we are able to double the number of seats available. If there is a good take up of this additional capacity, the school will be able to reduce the cost of a one way journey from £1.50 to £1 which given the convenience of the service is excellent value for money as well as peace of mind.

Should demand outstrip supply, we will look to add even more capacity as well as adding routes to and from the Walnut Tree campus. However, to do this we will need to hire more minibuses and recruit additional casual drivers able to do the morning and afternoon run.

If you are interested in either securing a seat for your child(ren) on the minibus or in the minibus driver position, please indicate this on the short feedback questionnaire and we will be in touch.

And finally . . .

I should like to acknowledge the work of Ms Turner, Vice Principal: Brooklands Campus and Mr Coates, Assistant Principal: Walnut Tree, who have been working late into the night on many days since the end of May writing next year's timetable. They have constructed several versions to meet all possible eventualities and I am extremely grateful for their commitment, resilience and good humour given the difficult circumstances created by the lack of clarity from Government.

As with all the information shared with parents in the COVID-19 Update letters, the arrangements set out here are all subject to change should the school receive revised guidance or instructions from the Department for Education. Who knows what September will bring!

For the proposed changes to work in practice, and thereby hopefully keep us all safe, they must have broad support as well as compliance. We should therefore be grateful if you would again give us your feedback by completing this short survey <https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/P2F2TMZ>.

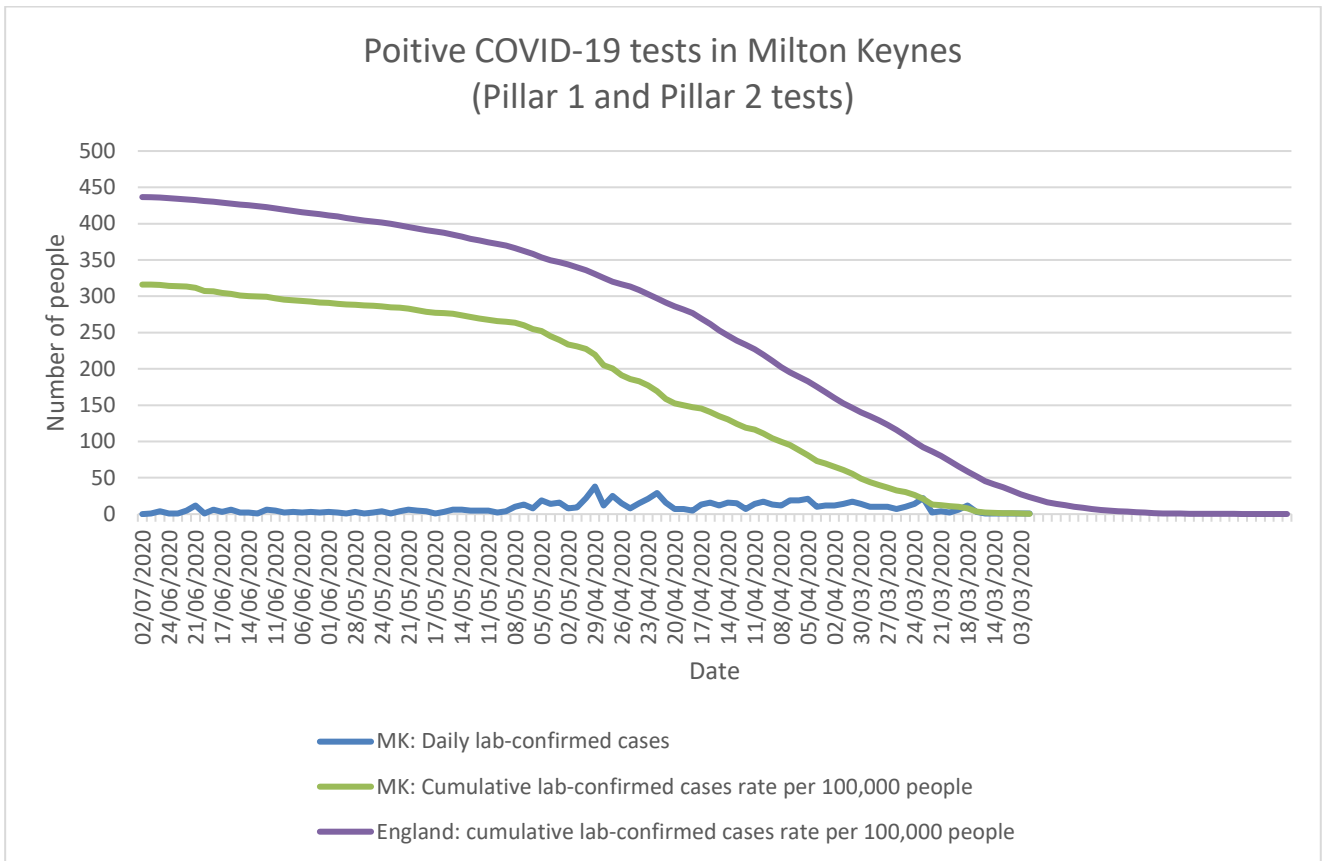
Thank you for your continued support – it is much appreciated.

Best wishes



Michelle Currie
Executive Principal

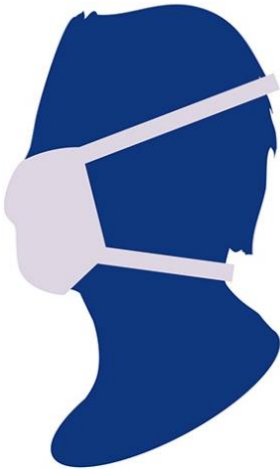
Annex A



(Source: Public Health England 02/07/20)

Annex B

		Session 1	Session 2	Break Read to Succeed		Session 3	Session 4	Tutor Lunch	Lunch Tutor	Session 5	Session 6
	08:10 08:30	08:30 09:30	09:30 10:30	10:30 10:45	10:45 11:00	11:00 12:00	12:00 13:00	13:00 13:30	13:30 14:00	14:00 15:00	15:00 16:00
Monday	Y7 Y8 Y9 Arrival	Y7 Y8 Y9		Break	R2S			Lunch	Tutor PSHE		
		Y10 Y11 P-16 Arrival			Break			Tutor PSHE	Lunch		
Tuesday	Y7 Y8 Y9 Arrival	Y7 Y8 Y9		Break	R2S			Lunch	Tutor PSHE		
		Y10 Y11 P-16 Arrival			Break			Tutor PSHE	Lunch		
Wednesday	Y7 Y8 Y9 Arrival	Y7 Y8 Y9		Break	R2S			Lunch	Tutor PSHE		
		Y10 Y11 P-16 Arrival			Break			Tutor PSHE	Lunch		
Thursday	Y7 Y8 Y9 Arrival	Y7 Y8 Y9		Break	R2S			Lunch	Tutor PSHE		
		Y10 Y11 P-16 Arrival			Break			Tutor PSHE	Lunch		
Friday	Y7 Y8 Y9 Arrival	Y7 Y8 Y9		Break	R2S			Lunch	Tutor PSHE		
		Y10 Y11 P-16 Arrival			Break			Tutor PSHE	Lunch		



Walton High's Protocol for wearing a face covering

The Government states that evidence suggests wearing a face covering does not protect the person wearing the mask. However, if the wearer is infected but has not yet developed symptoms, it may provide some protection for those they come into close contact with.

Face coverings are only compulsory for students using the minibus service or public transport. Two face coverings will be needed, one for the journey to school and a second for the journey home.

Students may choose to wear face coverings at other times but this is not considered necessary.

Students and staff using a face covering must comply with the following protocol:

1. A face mask must cover the mouth and nose whilst allowing the wearer to breathe comfortably
2. Before putting the face covering on, the wearer must wash their hands or use hand sanitiser
3. People wearing a face covering should avoid touching the mask, their eyes, nose, or mouth at all times
4. Before removing the face covering, the wearer must wash their hands or use hand sanitiser
5. Single use face coverings must be disposed of in a plastic bag that is tied closed and disposed of in a bin - a nappy or dog poo bag is ideal for this purpose
6. Reusable face coverings should be washed between use and stored in a closable plastic bag until it has been washed - a zipped sandwich bag that can be cleaned between use is ideal for this purpose
7. Those using a reusable face coverings that has a filter, such as a paper towel, should dispose of the filter in the same manner as a single use mask
8. After removing the face covering, the wearer must wash their hands or use hand sanitiser

i <https://www.waltonhigh.org.uk/images/COVID19-RiskAssessment-WaltonHigh.pdf>

ii <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/actions-for-schools-during-the-coronavirus-outbreak/guidance-for-full-opening-schools>