

1 July 2020

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Dear Parents

The phrases “*unprecedented times*” and the “*new normal*” have been often used in the past few months. I am writing to give you a broad vision of what next term and beyond may look like. Our priority is to manage a successful and happy return of the whole Princethorpe community, getting the pupils back into school, re-establishing healthy routines and offering as wide a range of opportunities as possible. This is a common goal, I am sure, for parents, pupils and staff alike.

As you can imagine, we are putting considerable time and energy into our planning for the start of next term, based on the government’s public assertion that all schools will re-open to all pupils from 1 September.

For this to happen, the current guidelines from the DfE will have to be drastically changed, but there will undoubtedly still be some restrictions and extra measures we are going to have to put in place. We are expecting new guidelines for September by the end of this week, which previous experience tells us will be updated and further revised many times.

Our approach has been to anticipate now the likely guidelines and measures that will be needed to make re-opening possible and to be prepared to react swiftly to further guidance nearer the time.

The basic principles on minimising the spread of the disease are unlikely to change:

- minimising contact with individuals who are unwell;
- cleaning hands more often than usual;
- ensuring good respiratory hygiene;
- cleaning frequently touched surfaces;
- minimising contact and mixing.

The following section gives you an outline of the various current aspects of our planning, and **measures that we are considering**. We will, of course, respond to the situation as it develops both nationally and locally. More concrete details will be sent to parents after we have received new DfE guidance in August.

In the classroom - our aim is for 1m distancing in all classes. We have measured all our rooms and know the pupil numbers of each set; we have re-roomed our timetable from September on this basis. Some classes are less straightforward, particularly where there are practical subjects; for these we will have specific risk assessments to include use of equipment, specific cleaning regimes and pupil movement within the classroom.

Curriculum - we want to minimise disruption to the curriculum but are necessarily looking at all the activities and learning in each subject through the lens of COVID 19 and minimising contact. Our proposed new BYOD policy will help with sharing resources, submitting work and getting teacher feedback within the classroom.

Senior School (11-18 years) at Princethorpe College

Junior School (4-11 years) at Crescent School

Junior School and Little Crackers Nursery (2-11 years) at Crackley Hall

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We will be issuing a new and extended equipment list for all pupils that they must have each day. This is essential as we will not be able to supply equipment to pupils during lessons and they will not be able to share resources with fellow pupils.

School Uniform

We are expecting that all pupils will be back to full school uniform in September, although on days when pupils have Games it is likely they will be allowed to wear official school kit to school to minimise changing on site.

Movement around the school - we are fortunate that the campus is pretty well spread out with lots of wide corridor spaces, but in addition to a strict “keep left” policy, we will also be introducing a one-way system around many areas of the school to minimise passing contact between pupils.

Break and Lunchtimes - this is quite a difficult area for us to manage as currently the whole school take their breaks and lunches simultaneously. What we would do, should it be necessary, is to split both lunch and breaktimes. So, for example, around half the school would have early lunch at 12.15pm, whilst the other half have their period 4 lesson. Then at 1.05pm, the “early lunchers” would have period 4, whilst the rest of the school have lunch. This would create fewer bottlenecks and pinch points in the school and reduce pressure on non-classroom spaces, eating areas, toilets and washbasins over break. We have already written the timetable for this, should we need it and the early lunches are rotated evenly across the year groups. Break and Tutor Time are rotated in a similar way.

Provision of Food - at present we think that it is likely that, initially, we will have to start with a limited food choice for pupils based on cold pre-packed food. We will increase the provision as soon as we feel it is safe to do so.

Creative Use of Spaces - we have already used the Clarkson Theatre, the Sixth Form Atrium and the Library as classroom venues recently. We will continue to look at the best way of using all spaces across the campus and this may include hiring marquees.

Enhanced Cleaning Regimes/Methods - we will ensure we follow all current guidance on cleaning and will have specific cleaning regimes for higher-risk areas, such as the Medical Centre. We are investigating a number of commercial products, such as those used in commercial aircraft, that may be used in addition to traditional cleaning materials.

Bus Services – for over half of our pupils getting the bus to and from school is an integral part of the school day, giving them the chance to be independent and to socialise with fellow pupils. Getting back into this regular routine will be key to a successful return to school for many of them in September.

School transport will be an important factor for the government to consider in returning all schools to normal in September and we are awaiting guidance as to the exact requirements. In the meantime, we are in close liaison with the bus companies. As you would expect the bus companies will be implementing enhanced cleaning regimes for September and as with public transport and school children currently, in all likelihood, our pupils will be asked to wear masks and maintain a social distance as much as possible whilst on board.

We would therefore advise all families to stock up on facemasks for September.

Parents with children joining the school who have requested to use the buses will be contacted shortly to confirm availability and any current families wishing to switch to the buses should email buses@princethorpe.co.uk as soon as possible, so they can be taken into consideration. A Bus Briefing will be issued as normal towards the end of August including further information, any necessary COVID related guidelines and any alterations to the services.

Staggered Start/Finishes

One idea we are considering to ensure the best possible staggering of traffic both before and after school is the possibility of putting restrictions as to when cars are allowed on the main drive. This would allow us to manage pupils safely off and on to the buses, and get the buses in and away as a priority

Before/After School Prep

We will continue to offer morning prep between 7.30am and 8.15am in the Sixth Form Centre.

After school prep will continue to be available between 4.00pm and 6.00pm, although the exact venue and pick-up arrangements are still to be decided.

Enhanced Handwashing - we have installed several wall-mounted hand sanitisers across the school in strategic locations and in addition over the summer will be plumbing in extra washbasins. Regular handwashing will become part of the pupils' timetables. We are also looking at hiring extra temporary toilet and handwashing facilities.

Medical Support and Temperature Checks - we are very fortunate to have an expert medical team on site in the shape of our wonderful matrons and we have isolation areas and procedures in place. However, one of the absolute key factors is that parents monitor their children's health at home and **do not** send them into school if in any way unwell or displaying any of the COVID symptoms and **book a COVID test immediately**. We therefore think that regular temperature checks **at home** are essential and ask parents to ensure that they have a suitable thermometer available; if you do not, please do purchase one now.

The main symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19) are:

- a high temperature – this means you feel hot to touch on your chest or back (you do not need to measure your temperature)
- a new, continuous cough – this means coughing a lot for more than an hour, or three or more coughing episodes in 24 hours (if you usually have a cough, it may be worse than usual)
- a loss or change to your sense of smell or taste – this means you've noticed you cannot smell or taste anything, or things smell or taste different to normal

To protect others, do not go to places like a GP surgery, pharmacy or hospital if you have any of these symptoms. **Stay at home (self-isolate) and get a test. Tests can be booked by following the link below or calling 119**

<https://www.nhs.uk/ask-for-a-coronavirus-test>

We are hoping that government guidance and the availability of tracking and tracing is more advanced by September and will share full details with you as soon as we have them.

Calendar - with the amount of uncertainty there will be no paper calendar next term, but all events will be added to the on-line calendar accessible from My School Portal and the website.

Co-curricular Activities - we are looking forward to getting this important aspect of Princethorpe life up and running again in September; the staff have missed it as much as the pupils! In sport, the aim is to focus initial on the summer sports, Outdoor Education and fitness during the Games afternoon programme - with the winter “invasion games” being prioritised after school. On Saturdays we are planning to run two Sports Days and have a programme of competitive intra-school tennis and cricket fixtures. After October Half Term we would then look to play the traditional winter sports.

In Drama, we have three days of LAMDA examinations scheduled and will be using the November performance window to showcase the A-level, GCSE and PALS pieces which are currently being refined.

In Music, the Trinity College examinations are in the calendar, as too are Orchestra, Choir and the Jesus Christ Superstar (JCS) production rehearsals. Below is the draft plan for after-school Music and Sport with the usual array of activities, drop-ins and clinics being added around them.

Sport	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Music	JCS	Orchestra	JCS	Choir	
Rugby		Seniors	U12 & U13	U14 & U15	
Hockey	U14 & U15 Boys	Senior Boys & Girls	U12 & U13 Girls	U14 & U15 Girls	U12 & U13 Boys
Netball	Seniors		U14 & U15	U13	U12
Football		U14 & U15		U12 & U13	Seniors

School Trips - the busy October Half Term trip window has been scaled back with the hope being to use the Easter Holidays to rearrange some of the annual trips which will not be able to take place this Michaelmas Term. We are planning to go ahead with the Senior Sports Tour to South Africa next summer. As a country they have done a very good job of containing the coronavirus and once World Rugby have confirmed the new dates for the British and Irish Lions Tour we will be able to finalise the itinerary and formally be able to send out the invitations to the current Year 10 and 11 pupils.

Pupil Wellbeing – this is of course at the very heart of all the measures we will be taking. We know that for many pupils the lockdown and being away from school will have put a considerable strain on their mental wellbeing. Staff have been undertaking extra training to support pupils: if any parents are concerned about this now, please contact us, do not wait until September.

We will put additional measures in place to provide extra support for pupils and are planning on organising “pre-term picnic visits” to school for next academic year’s Year 8, 9 and 10 pupils, in addition to the Year 7 Activity Day and Lower Sixth Induction Day. These will be as follows:

- Year 8 11.00am - 1.00pm Monday 24 August
- Year 9 3.00pm - 5.00pm Monday 24 August
- Year 10 3.00pm - 5.00pm Tuesday 25 August

Public Exams in Summer 2021

It might seem very early to be mentioning next summer's public exams, but you may have seen media reports that it is possible that examinations may start later and run through to July. The government and exam boards have not released any definitive decisions on this yet, but it would be prudent for families with children who will take GCSE or A-level exams next year to make sure that they do not book holidays until mid-July at the earliest.

In the event that examinations were pushed back, we would revisit the current timing of study leave and look to provide as much support for the pupils as possible before giving them time to prepare for their exams.

Finally...

Many thanks in advance for all your support. I hope this letter has given you some reassurance of the type of measures we are likely to be taking for the re-opening of the school in September. If you have any comments, feedback or suggestions, we would be really pleased to receive them, please do so by completing the [brief form here](#).

With all best wishes for the summer and all that lies ahead.

Ed Hester
Headmaster