

Dear Parent / Carer,

As we head towards the final week of term, I wanted to update you on a few items, as well as the progress we're making in firming up our plans for full reopening from September.

We still have much of the logistics to finalise at this stage, but Mrs Purnell and I hope to be in a position on Wednesday of next week to publish full details of the plans for full opening to all students from September.

To give you a bit more detail around the information we are grappling with, I am also including below a summary of some of the key aspects of the official DfE guidance for the full opening of schools which can be found in full [here](#) for your reference.

Before that, please note the following updates:

## **Results Days**

Full details about the plans for our remote results days will be issued to Year 11, 12 and 13 imminently.

A reminder that A Level Results Day is Thursday 13th August; GCSE Results Day is Thursday 20th August.

## **Autumn Exam Series**

For those students who may elect to take an exam in the Autumn series following publication of subject results in August, the key dates can now be seen below. These will be communicated to students on results day too, along with further information and guidance about the process, should students be unhappy with their awarded grades.

- GCE AS and A-level examinations start on Monday 5 October and finish on Friday 23 October
- GCSE examinations start on Monday 2 November and finish on Monday 23 November
- The deadlines for entry are:
  - (GCE AS & A-level) – 4 September
  - GCSE (except English Language and Mathematics) – 18 September
  - GCSE (English Language and Mathematics) – 4 October

## **Trips & Visits Refunds**

We are pleased to confirm that the majority of our insurance claims for the cancelled trips and visits have now been approved, although not all of the money from the claims has arrived in our bank account. However, we are able to start our refund process in batches over the coming weeks starting with the Year 8 London trip followed by the KS3 trip, Year 10 Alton Towers, Year 7 Big Mix and Year 8/9 local trips. The remaining trips will follow as soon as possible; trips involving air travel are taking longer to process and we hope that the USA ski trip will be the first of the overseas trips to be refunded. Thank you for your continued patience with this process and rest assured that we are processing the refunds as quickly as possible.

## **Celebration Assemblies**

These will go ahead next week online for Years 7-10 and 12, to celebrate the work of students throughout what has been the most challenging of years. Students will have been sent details by their Head of Year and I look forward to seeing the many awards being issued in each year group!

## **Key Elements from the DfE Guidance for September Opening**

This is in 5 sections. The first section sets out the actions school leaders should take to minimise the risk of transmission of coronavirus (COVID-19) in their school. This is public health advice, endorsed by Public Health England (PHE).

The rest of the guidance is focused on how the DfE expects schools to operate in this new context. This includes:

- school operations
- curriculum, behaviour and pastoral support
- assessment and accountability
- contingency planning to provide continuity of education in the case of a local outbreak

The guidance states that “While coronavirus (COVID-19) remains in the community, this means making judgments at a school level about how to balance and minimise any risks from coronavirus (COVID-19) with providing a full educational experience for children and young people. Schools should use their existing resources to make arrangements to welcome all children back.”

It goes on to say “The measures set out in this guidance provide a framework for school leaders to put in place proportionate protective measures for children and staff, which also ensure that all pupils receive a high quality education that enables them to thrive and progress. In welcoming all children back this autumn, schools will be asked to minimise the number of contacts that a pupil has during the school day as part of implementing the system of controls outlined below to reduce the risk of transmission. If schools follow the guidance set out here, they can be confident they are managing risk effectively.

While our aim is to have all pupils back at school in the autumn, every school will also need to plan for the possibility of a local lockdown and how they will ensure continuity of education.”

“All elements of the system of controls are essential. All schools must cover them all, but the way different schools implement some of the requirements will differ based on their individual circumstances. Where something is essential for public health reasons, as advised by PHE, we have said ‘must’. Where there is a legal requirement we have made that clear. This guidance does not create any new legal obligations.”

“There cannot be a ‘one-size-fits-all’ approach where the system of controls describes every scenario. School leaders will be best placed to understand the needs of their schools and communities, and to make informed judgments about how to balance delivering a broad and balanced curriculum with the measures needed to manage risk. The system of controls provides a set of principles to help them do this and, if schools follow this advice, they will effectively minimise risks.”

“Schools must comply with health and safety law, which requires them to assess risks and put in place proportionate control measures. Schools should thoroughly review their health and safety risk assessments and draw up plans for the autumn term that address the risks identified using the system of controls.”

This system of controls therefore includes a number of mandatory elements; the fifth item of the system of controls (minimise contact between individuals and maintain distancing wherever possible) is one which schools are required to consider properly and then put in place measures that suit their particular circumstances:

## **The New Coronavirus Schools' 'System of Controls'**

Please see DfE [guidance](#) for full details.

Essential measures include:

- a requirement that people who are ill stay at home
- robust hand and respiratory hygiene
- enhanced cleaning arrangements
- active engagement with NHS Test and Trace
- formal consideration of how to reduce contacts and maximise distancing between those in school wherever possible and minimise potential for contamination so far as is reasonably practicable

How contacts are reduced will depend on the school's circumstances and will (as much as possible) include:

- grouping children together
- avoiding contact between groups
- arranging classrooms with forward facing desks
- staff maintaining distance from pupils and other staff as much as possible

## **What Does this Mean for Ilkley Grammar School?**

At this stage, we are clear that for Ilkley Grammar School, social distancing in classrooms and for use of our catering facilities, with a full cohort of students on site from September, will not be possible - even at only 1 metre. The mandatory hygiene measures will therefore become ever more critical, as classes will need to operate at their usual full size, with catering areas also near to capacity at social times. Social distancing will therefore be maximised by creating timetabled year group bubbles, as per the guidance, with staff maintaining social distancing as much as is possible in classrooms.

Further details of what this will look like will follow next week but for now, some likely features are that:

- in years 9-13, students will mix only in their year group bubbles – any passing contact will be transitory and will be minimised wherever possible
- in years 7-8, students will be tutor group based for almost all of their lessons in order to significantly reduce movement around the building. For their tutor group lessons, they will mainly be zoned in a specific area on site, with staff moving rather than the students to further reduce movement. They will mix in band-based bubbles for PE and technology
- there will not be social distancing in classes - this is because even with one metre social distancing, we would only be able to have half the school on site at any one time which is not permitted under the guidance

- the full curriculum will be delivered, although use of specialist classrooms will be prioritised to years 10-13 to reduce movement
- split lunch and breaktimes will be in operation with specific year groups allocated specific times and areas - there may be passing transitory contact
- break and lunch services will provide only a limited offer and only at breaktime if possible
- where possible, one way systems will be in operation
- where possible, classrooms will be arranged to be forward facing. This is not possible in rooms with fixed desks/tables e.g. in technology, although these tend to be larger spaces with smaller class sizes which allow more distancing within the rooms
- year groups will be allocated one of the three main entrances to the site, with hand sanitiser points available throughout the school and in every classroom
- start and end times for the school day will be staggered within the parameters of what is possible with the school bus services - where year group bubbles will not be possible due to limited capacity across the system. N.B. On secondary school services, all children will therefore be required to wear a face covering unless exempted for medical or other reasons

## **Risk Assessments**

We will fully update our risk assessments to reflect the final details of the range of mitigations we will be putting in place to ensure that we have reduced the risk as much as possible. There cannot be zero risk to any school being open, but we are confident that we will have done everything possible within the context of IGS to minimise the risks, in accordance with the DfE Guidance. Our risk assessment will include details about how we will respond in the event of confirmed cases / a local outbreak as per the guidance and system of controls and will be published in summary format in due course. As our risk assessments are always dynamic documents, we will continually amend these to account for any emerging or growing risks over the coming weeks and months.

## **Last day - Friday 17<sup>th</sup> July**

A reminder that the school will break up for the summer at 12.30 on Friday 17<sup>th</sup> July.

## **Start of Term Dates**

A reminder that the first day for Year 7 and Post 16 students will be Monday 7th September, with all other year groups' first day being Tuesday 8th September.

Well I think that's it for now. Thank you for your continued support and patience as we now work through the final details for September and have a pleasant weekend all - I hear we may have some signs of summer weather returning over the weekend, though I find that hard to believe as I look out of my office window at the rain falling in Ilkley currently - anyway, fingers crossed!

Kind regards,

[Helen Williams](#)

**Headteacher / CEO**