



Thursday 16th July 2020

Dear Parents and Carers

I hope my letter finds you and your family well.

We are approaching the end of the term and we have agreed arrangements with the Board of Trustees, alongside our Risk Assessment, for how we can all be in school, safely, next year. Health and Safety have rightly taken precedence over Education for the 13 weeks and 4 days of missed on site schooling, while we have been operating distance learning. The next year has to be focused on moving forward academically and with respect to our students' personal development. Please be assured that we continually review our operation so that should we be in a similar position again, we can improve the experience for our students, families and staff.

As I have said before in communications to you during this challenging time, nothing has been ideal. All schools have been operating differently from each other and that will continue next year. For example schools have different buildings, layouts and capacity for social distancing; their contexts are entirely different. All these and many other issues conspire to direct operation in a certain way. Comparisons to other schools can therefore be misleading. We are a comprehensive school with the true and full force of that meaning. Some students have fared well with what has been in place and others less so. The differences have largely been outside of the school's control. Quite apart from student individual needs, family situations are polarised and understandably emotional responses to situations are quite different, with and without recognisable cause.

I am pleased that we will have the Guardian Email Summary facility with Google Classroom going forward. We will be in touch with all our families again in September to ensure everyone has received the invitation and that the communication set up is with a preferred email address. Of course we agree it would have been helpful to have it operational at the start of lockdown and even two years ago when we first started using Google Classroom in teaching and learning. However we did not and now we do. The important point is that it will be beneficial going forward as a one stop information point on what tasks have been assigned as home learning. As we find new ways to improve anything we will embrace them rather than expending energy on deliberating their prior absence. We will be working hard to support our students to have a healthy attitude to change and to be healthily aware that the present is largely only ever a poor version of the future.

During the period when we have been operating distance learning, there have been ways for Parents and Carers to monitor assigned tasks; they required a little more effort than Guardian Email Summary review but were no less profitable. Most families were able to periodically engage with their daughters to review their Google Classrooms and were separately able to communicate with their daughters' Teachers as appropriate. I would hope that the Guardian Email Summary facility would not deter families from continuing with direct communication with Teachers via email or via telephone calls in the future.

Our New Year 7 students will complete their CATS Assessments at the start of term. All other students should expect classroom assessments during the first two weeks of term. These will serve to inform a classroom teacher's planning for catch up and for teaching new content. The assessments will not be used for external reporting.

Staff training at the start of term will include training for teachers on catch up pedagogy and that will remain a focus in the year ahead. The school has engaged highly qualified graduate tutors in English and Mathematics who will work alongside teachers to support catch up. Google Classroom and online learning platforms will be used across the curriculum as usual. As a Leading Edge school, a PiXL school and a National training centre for Mathematics and Physics Teachers, we have access to a wide variety of learning and teaching platforms and opportunities. All of this will support the school to ensure that our students make good progress going forward.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank our staff, teaching and non-teaching who are leaving either to relocate to other areas or to relocate abroad. Two staff members are leaving to take up training to become teachers. They will all be missed. We bid farewell and send good wishes to Ms Barret, Ms Bass, Ms Calmet, Ms Davis, Ms Dixon, Mr Duguid, Dr Hames and Ms Hendlesby. We have engaged new high calibre staff who have already been inducted into school and I will introduce them in my start of term letter in September.

I would also like to bid farewell and send good wishes to our students who are leaving school this summer. It has been a pleasure to have them with us as part of our learning community and we are very sad not to have had our usual celebrations with them at the end of the year. We do still hope to have opportunity to come together again as soon as we are able and celebrate in an appropriate way. We look forward to seeing many of them in person on Results Days. We also look forward to welcoming back our Year 11 students into our Sixth Form in September.

I am including some key information here and some helpful reminders for a positive start to the new school year. I have attached infographics and further detailed information on new arrangements in response to current COVID-19 government guidance and other helpful information, at the end of my letter. Should the school receive changes to guidance in before the start of September, which impacts any of our arrangements, I will write to you again with necessary revisions.

This letter and its attachments will also be sent to all students via their school email address.

The following information is listed alphabetically for ease of reference later.

September

Academic Year Start

I am pleased that we are able to have all students start the new academic year as we always do:

Day 1 – Wednesday 2 September – Staff only on site – CPD Day

Day 2 – Thursday 3 September - New Year 7 and New Year 12 on site with all staff – Induction - staggered ends to the day, unique to this day – see detailed information in attachment below

Day 3 – Friday 4 September – All year groups and all Staff on site – Induction and wellbeing– staggered ends to the day, unique to this day - see detailed information in attachment below

From Monday 7 September the full timetable for all year groups will be operational with staggered starts and ends that will remain in place during the Covid 19 response period – see detailed information in attachment below

All arrangements and information below and in attachments will be shared with all students at the start of term as part of their induction process.

Arrangements - general

We will be operating with a number of staggered activities to support social distancing between year group bubbles who will be zoned in separate areas around the school sites. Each year group bubble will have its own designated social area and access to a room with computers. Regrettably, KS3 Year group bubbles will have little opportunity to use specialist teaching rooms. Their specialist teachers are modifying the planned curriculum to ensure necessary content is covered in appropriate ways – for example science teachers demonstrating experiments from front of class rather than students carrying them out while ensuring that lessons remain engaging.

KS4 and KS5 year group bubbles will have access to specialist teaching rooms. Year 12 and Year 13 will form one Sixth Form bubble.

KS3 students will have all their lessons in one room as a form or perhaps two nearby, depending on their movement for maths lessons which will still take place according to groupings. KS4 and 5 students will move a little more according to the need to use specialist teaching rooms available to them. Staff will move to different rooms across bubbles according to their timetable. All timetabled lessons will be taught as planned from the start of the academic year.

Drama, Music and PE are modifying planning to ensure appropriate activities can take place within the confines of the new arrangements. More information will be available at the start of September however there will be no changing in and out of PE kit. Students will not be able to use the Library which will be part of the Sixth Form bubble. However Pop up mobile libraries will be available for each year group bubble to borrow and return books according to strict guidance. Students will be told about all of this at the start of term.

All classroom furniture has been rearranged so that students sit in rows facing toward the teaching area and board.

Before School Breakfast

Regrettably students will not be able to come on site until their allocated arrival time. Therefore we cannot provide breakfast until further notice.

Behaviour – temporary arrangements during COVID 19 response in addition to the school's Behaviour Policy

The health & safety and safeguarding guidelines for protecting all personnel with good hygiene, social distancing and an ability to behave in a way that does not facilitate the spread of Covid 19, must be adhered to both rigorously and consistently.

Low level misdemeanours could result in removal from a classroom for a fixed period, to a Learning and Behaviour Support classroom designated for the year group bubble.

Under the Statutory Guidance on 'Searching, screening and confiscation' a school has the power to send a student home, not as a fixed term formal exclusion, should they fail to comply with health and safety and safeguarding guidelines such as walking through an archway when screening for prohibited items. By extension in these challenging times, student conduct deemed to pose a health risk, deliberate or persistent breaches of health and safety guidelines put in place to protect all against Covid 19 and to prevent its spread, will result in the student in question being sent home from the school site until they acknowledge, show an understanding of, and a willingness to implement consistently, the health and safety guidelines put in place for the protection of everyone. Re-integration meetings with Parents and Guardians will take place virtually or by telephone.

Canteen and Packed Lunch

Seating and tables in the canteen have been rearranged in long rows. Students will be seated on one side facing the same direction; with staggering, the next group will use the other side and so on. Lunch will be available for collection in pre-packaged containers for cold and hot options – students will collect from the choice available which may be limited compared to the caterers' usual operating practice. Students who bring their lunch from home will have a designated social area where they can also eat.

The lunch break has been reduced to 35 minutes to support all staggered timings throughout the day while maintaining our 5 period timetable.

Emergency Evacuation

Usual evacuation procedures will apply. The assembly points are on the Tennis Courts. Students will receive detailed information on induction.

External Exams – Results and Appeals Process

Year 11 and Year 13 students have received information about receiving results, guidance and support available on Results Days and how to enrol into our Sixth Form. We are publishing information on the results and appeals process on the school website and I am attaching that information with my letter.

Extra- Curricular Activities

Due to shortened lunch break, staggered ends of the day, the need to maintain year group bubbles and the need to preserve spaces for particular year groups, it will not be possible to run lunchtime or after school activities until further notice. There may be some provision for after school homework clubs for some students in KS3 until 4.15pm only.

Face Coverings

All students are required to bring an appropriate face covering to school. The appropriateness refers to the covering's suitability to provide necessary protection and also to cause as little distraction to learning as possible. Therefore please do not provide your daughter with any covering with pictures or slogans. They can be patterned or plain in any colours and must be worn from entry via the gates on Meadway or Gordon Way and at all times outside of classrooms, unless eating or drinking, including in emergency evacuation situations.

Students should have a plastic bag to store the face covering when not in use. During their induction process, students will receive information on the safe way to put their covering on and take it off.

Face coverings are a compulsory part of our school uniform until further notice. Medical exemptions from wearing face coverings/masks must be supported by medical evidence.

Staff will be wearing visors at all times unless eating or drinking and an added face covering/mask during emergency evacuation procedures.

Gate Supervision - Pre School and After School

School staff usually provide outside of school duty supervision for students to ensure smooth arrivals and departures. Due to social distancing guidelines we will not be able to provide this until further notice. For this reason we ask that students arrive “just in time” for their allocated arrival and that they leave school promptly and make their way home without congregating on pavements or waiting for friends in other year group bubbles.

Grounds

Weather permitting the grounds will be available at lunch times and for limited use in PE lessons.

Lockers

At the start of term students will be given opportunity to empty their lockers of items left in them at 20th March. Unfortunately we are not able to reissue lockers until zoning ceases to be in operation and Health and Safety guidance permits their use.

Reading Book

As has always been the case, all students must bring a reading book to school every day.

Shielding

If students are required to stay shielding at 1st September, families must provide medical evidence.

Tutors

From September, as usual Year 11 students are in re-formed groups with new Tutors. Tutor groups with a Tutor who has left this summer will have a new Tutor. All Tutor group information is on an attachment to this letter. Tutors new to school from September have their specialist teaching subject indicated.

Uniform

Students will have the option to wear either white ankle socks or opaque black tights until the 1st October at which time all students are required to wear black opaque tights.

Face coverings are part of the required school uniform until further notice.

- **Piercings** – a reminder that these are not allowed except for the wearing of a pair of small plain studs at the base of each ear lobe. Any other piercing jewellery will need to be removed prior to the start of school, even when the piercing is fresh and students /families believe it is unsafe to do so. Six weeks are often quoted by students as a safe length of time for new piercings before jewellery removal is possible. There is therefore no opportunity to have a new piercing now.
- **Nail Polish** – is not allowed. However students may use clear varnish to protect nails only but nothing coloured.

- **Nail Extensions** – are not allowed and students will be asked to remove them. Students should keep their own nails trimmed for Health and Safety reasons.
- **False Eyelashes** - are not allowed and students will be asked to remove them.
- **Make up** – is allowed when it is discreet, otherwise students will be asked to remove it.
- **Hair colour** – can only be colours that one might be born with.

Returning students should try on their uniform so that should they have outgrown it, replacements can be ordered in good time. Please be mindful of uniform requirements regarding skirt length and that trousers worn must be those specified on our uniform list at John Lewis. Other trousers are not acceptable.

The school will not be setting any holiday work other than encouraging students to read widely and take an interest in current affairs and the world around them so that they are engaging in topical debate and refreshed for the start of September. We know some students have not been able to keep up the pace of working according to tasks being assigned and so a break in assigning will give them opportunity to catch up with their peers should they choose to.


I will end by including a link to the school website www.gegschool.org.uk where there is much information on Policies and COVID-19 related information. Should government guidance change before the start of term, in ways that impact our arrangements, information will be available on the website and we will alert you by sending InTouch messages by text to your family's nominated contact as usual. For communication purposes it is vital that you keep the school updated of any changes to your contact details: address, email address, contact phone numbers and emergency contacts.

The school will be closed from Friday 17th July at 12pm. There will be no onsite provision for children of Key Workers during the holiday; necessary maintenance work will be commencing in buildings and on our grounds. Please check the Local Authority website for schools that are able to support with holiday provision that might be required for children of Key Workers.

I wish you all the opportunity to rest over the coming weeks and I hope you are able to share some time with family and friends and benefit from recently relaxed social measures, as far as guidance allows.

Next year will be purposeful with the aim to support your daughter to progress academically and to develop personally as we would have expected her to do pre COVID-19. Our school is one with a track record of supporting all of our students, regardless of circumstance or starting points, to achieve higher outcomes than prior data would suggest possible. We have always believed there are no limits to what is possible for any student and we remain resolute in that belief.

With all good wishes



Violet Walker
Headteacher