



July 2020

Dear Family

The past few months have been a strange time – the Academy is missing an important part of our community when staff and students are unable to be in the building, but we have been very impressed and very grateful for your engagement with online lessons and your support for our work as a whole. We have seen many interactions with our online sites accessing thousands of live learning opportunities and engaging with work prepared by our staff. We have delivered hundreds of care packages to families and made thousands of welfare calls to families whilst still ensuring that we provided face to face care for children of key workers and those that needed to be in the academy to support their learning. An amazing collaborative effort and I would like to thank everyone who has been involved and supported us!

It is now time to return. The Government has indicated that attendance at school is now compulsory from September. This letter will set out return to school arrangements for September, with a separate section for each year group, as well as some general principles.

### **Return dates and times:**

We have two training days for staff on September 1st and 2nd in order to provide training on aspects of Health and Safety and also on new processes and procedures that we will have in place to ensure social distancing and to keep everyone safe.

Return times are as follows:

Year 7 – Thursday 3 September at 8.45am. Use the Pedestrian Gate and meet on the Basketball Courts.

Year 8 - Thursday 3 September at 10.45am. Use the Vehicle Gate and go onto the MUGA.

Year 9 - Thursday 3 September at 10.45am. Use the Pedestrian Gate and meet in the main playground

Year 10 - Thursday 3 September at 10.30am. Use the Pedestrian Gate and meet on the Basketball Courts.

Year 11 - Thursday 3 September at 8.45am. Use the Vehicle Gate and go into Main Playground.

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**Each student will be sent their timetable through the Edulink App before September 1. Please remember this information. A print-out will be provided upon our return. If you have not yet logged into this app, a guide will be sent out to you shortly.**

We now need to give you some key information about September.

### **The things which will not change**

We are not changing:

- The start and finish times of the day
- You will still need to phone Reception to report absence as normal
- Full, normal uniform – blazer, tie and all other equipment as normal
- Shoes as per school footwear policy
- No mobile phones on site
- The quality of teaching and the experience your child will get

**However, it is important that some elements of Academy life change to keep you all as safe as possible. We have detailed this below:**

### **COVID-19 symptoms**

You should not attend school if you have symptoms of COVID-19 – the most common are a temperature or a new and persistent cough. If in doubt, seek medical advice. Please inform us immediately if this is the case.

### **Increased hygiene and cleaning**

We have placed hand sanitiser around the Academy site for student use, and we would ask that parents provide their own where they feel this will be helpful for their child. Additional cleaning will

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occur around the site as frequently as possible. The Government has advised that no extra precautions around uniform need to be taken. Government guidelines on the return to school can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/actions-for-schools-during-the-coronavirus-outbreak/guidance-for-full-opening-schools>

### **Social Distancing**

Government advice is that staff should continue to physically distance in all practicable situations – students are expected to support staff with this, and remain conscious of the need to keep a distance.

### **Bubbles**

To protect students, the Academy has organised Year Group Bubbles. These will be given an area of the building to remain in, and their lessons will be in that area.

These areas are:

Year 7: the L4L block

Year 8: the English and Mathematics classrooms

Year 9: the mobile classrooms and the L4L block

Year 10: top floor of the main building

Year 11: the Science classrooms

### **Lessons**

To minimise movement around the site, there will be two lessons per day. These will be in one room, with suitable breaks built into the day. Key Stage 4 option classes may move to specialist teaching rooms for their options lessons where applicable. On the day when a student has P.E., they are asked to arrive in their PE kit, because government guidance is to avoid using changing rooms. .

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**Please ensure your child has snacks with them, as we will not be operating a breakfast or breaktime food service.**

### **Lunchtimes**

One Year Group will have lunch at a time.

Lunchtime will last half an hour.

Lunch times will be:

Year 7: 11.30-12.00

Year 8: 12.00-12.30

Year 9: 12.30-13.00

Year 10: 13.00-13.30

Year 11: 13.30-14.00

### **Leaving the Academy**

**There will be a staggered finish to the day, between 3 and 3.10, with year groups being spaced out to support social distancing.**

We would ask that students disperse immediately, and go home, rather than waiting around the top gate as this prevents us from properly socially distancing. Please support us with this aim.

The Government have also asked to us to emphasise being sensible and following guidelines around travel to the Academy – the most up to date guidance will be issued nearer to September.

### **BMS and Behaviour**

Our standards have not changed. We will be working hard to support students in their return to learning, and to build their wellbeing. However, students are expected to perform to the best of

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their ability at all times. Repeated incidents of poor behaviour will result in communication with parents and may result in a removal from lessons to a socially distanced space.

### Meetings and Visitors to School

- All external school meetings involving visitors to the school will be re-evaluated and as many as possible will be conducted by telephone
- Heads of Year, the Senior Team and I will conduct as many future parental meetings as possible by telephone, as opposed to face to face
- Reception will be closed to all non-essential external visitors, including parents – please be sensitive and thoughtful in deciding if you need to come into Reception
- Any non-essential contact with the school should be conducted via email [info@thorns-s.dudley.sch.uk](mailto:info@thorns-s.dudley.sch.uk) or by calling reception: 01384 816 225
- We will continue to review guidance about upcoming sporting events and trips

These measures are not intended to cause any disruption to learning but are simply to minimise the risk of infection and safeguard both the staff and students of Thorns Collegiate Academy.

We will continue to follow the guidance from Public Health England and the Department for Education. We hope that this situation will be temporary, and these measures will be relaxed, allowing us to move to a normal timetable as soon as is safe.

Our priority for now is twofold – protect our staff and students, and move our learning journey forward as purposefully as possible. We look forward to your return. I hope that you all have a wonderful summer break. Please keep an eye on our Twitter and Facebook pages for regular updates on the academy re-opening in September.

Yours sincerely

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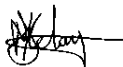
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Mr M Kelay  
**Principal**

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