



Monday 17th August 2020

Dear Parents/Carers and Students,

I hope this letter finds you well. As promised in my correspondence of August 13th I am writing again to update you on Breda Academy's restart arrangements.

Unfortunately, the fight against COVID-19 has had, and will continue for some time to have, profound implications for maintaining the safety of our society. However, fortunately due to the fairly low levels of COVID-19 community transmission in Northern Ireland recently, I am extremely pleased that I am in the position to write to you and outline the actions Breda Academy will be putting in place to ensure all our students can safely return to full-time education for the new academic term. The journey back to normality will not be one where schools operate on a business as usual basis from day one and the purpose of this letter is to outline the changes that will be in place to ensure a safe restart.

The New School Day guidance published by the Department of Education (DE) on Thursday 13th August provides a framework for the restart of schools, with a full-time return of Years 12 and 14 students from 24th August and for all students from Tuesday 1st September. DE's guidance outlines the need to establish procedures and practices which work to protect the school community from catching and spreading Covid-19, while at the same time provide all students with a high-quality education. This guidance will be reviewed regularly and amended in line with changes to Public Health Agency advice.

I acknowledge that there will be students and parents/carers who may feel a level of anxiety around the return to school and it is important that we work together to take all steps possible to keep the school a safe environment for all in our community. However, schools cannot deliver this successful return and safe environment alone – we will need your ongoing cooperation and support.

School building

All areas of the school building have been given an extensive clean during the summer break and the school continues to be cleaned daily in preparation for the return of students. Signage has been put in place in toilets to remind students to wash their hands and in all corridors to reinforce a 'keep left' policy when moving between lessons. There will also be a one-way system introduced in certain areas of the school to minimise students congregating in corridors. There will be a daily end of day cleaning service of school facilities and regular ongoing daily cleaning of touch points around the school and student bathrooms.

Start and end of the school day

The start and finish times of the school day will remain unchanged. Due to the varying arrival and pick-up times at school of the school and public buses, students will arrive and leave at different times allowing for a staggered, controlled and calm entry and exit of the school building. This will alleviate any potential for congestion and large gatherings of students.



Uniform and PE kit

Students are required to wear full school uniform, wear their full PE kit for PE lessons and carry a school bag for their stationery, learning materials and packed lunch if required. Years 8, 9 and 10 students will be allowed to wear their PE kit to school on a day when they have a PE lesson. Years 11 and 12 must bring their PE kit with them to school on a day when they have a PE lesson and change as normal in our newly refurbished changing rooms.

Travelling to and from school

Students will be able to travel to and from school using Translink school bus and public bus routes and services. However, there may be limited capacity on public buses and therefore it is advised that students may consider taking alternative travel arrangements such as, walking or cycling to school and parents/carers could bring students to school or drive them to a location within reasonable walking distance from the school. Please remember it is mandatory for all students aged 13 and over to wear a face covering on public transport. It is also strongly recommended that all students regardless of age, should wear a face covering on all buses, trains or taxis for their journey to and from school. It is also the responsibility of parents/carers to ensure that their child washes their hands before they leave home. Parents and carers will not be permitted to enter the school building beyond our reception area unless specifically invited to do so.

Student hygiene practices

Students will wash their hands with lukewarm water and soap immediately as they arrive at school and then regularly throughout the school day. Existing bathroom facilities will be used and washing stations will also be set up in entry/exit locations of the school and it will be the responsibility of each student to wash their hands. Disposable paper towels will be used for hand drying. Students will also be told and encouraged to use good respiratory hygiene practices of 'catch it, bin it, kill it' and discouraged from touching their eyes, face, nose and mouth. They will be shown how to cough into their elbow if they don't have a tissue and shown how to cough into a tissue and then dispose safely of it into the nearest bin. All classrooms will have a supply of tissues and a bin. DE's guidance states that students are not advised or required to wear a face mask, but, if a student wishes to wear a face mask in our school this will be permitted. I would also encourage all students to carry a small bottle of hand sanitiser and a packet of tissues for their own use.

Curriculum

All students in each year group will follow a full curriculum timetable including practical subjects. Classrooms will be decluttered and set up to ensure that students are not seated facing each other as this has been shown to reduce the risk of virus transmission. The opening of classroom doors and windows will also be encouraged to increase natural ventilation and to reduce contact with door handles.



Social distancing

Social distancing rules have been relaxed for students. However, social distancing of a minimum of 1m will remain in place between adults and students. Teachers will also be given the option to wear a clear Perspex face visor when teaching students. Students in Years 8, 9 and 10 will follow their curriculum as a class and therefore placed within a 'social bubble' for all their lessons. For Years 11, 12, 13 and 14 students 'social bubbles' are not required or possible as students change classes to engage in their options subjects. Students who receive Teaching Assistant support will continue to receive this arrangement as it is considered a 'social bubble' between the adult and student. Teaching Assistants will also be given the option to wear a clear Perspex face visor when supporting students.

School Canteen, break-time and lunch-time

The school canteen meals service will provide students a menu of hot and cold food from Tuesday 1st September. However, when schools reopen for Years 12 and 14 students on the 24th August school canteen meals service will not be available and students will need to provide their own packed lunch and refreshments. It is expected that a hot meal, served daily at lunch-time, will be available for free school meals students and any other students who wish to avail of them. However, it is likely that initially there will be a reduced choice of menu available. Students may also choose to bring a packed lunch and refreshments for their own consumption. There will be staggered break-times and lunch-times in which year groups will be assigned specific indoor and outdoor areas of the school to eat and socialise. Years 13 and 14 students will not be permitted to leave the school site at break-time or lunch-time.

Attendance at School

All students are expected to attend school on a full-time basis. However, those who have symptoms of coronavirus or a positive test, will need to stay at home for at least 10 days and inform the school as soon as possible. Where an individual has had a negative result, it is important to still apply caution, but they should return to school providing they are well enough and have not had a fever for 48 hours.

If a student develops symptoms of COVID-19 while at school, they should inform a member of staff and report to the school office immediately. Covid-19 symptoms can be:

- a new, continuous cough or
- a high temperature/fever or
- anosmia (a loss or a change in your normal sense of smell, which can also affect your sense of taste),

The first aider will then assess them and take their temperature with an infrared temperature thermometer. If the student's temperature and condition is in line with symptoms of Covid-19 their parent/carer will be contacted immediately to collect their child from school and they will be advised to follow the PHA guidance for households.

Students can return to school when they have completed the necessary period of isolation as advised by the Test, Trace and Protect service. This will help contain any potential transmission to those staff/students and will also assist in protecting the wider community.



The school will follow the latest guidance on attendance for children and young people who have health conditions or who live with individuals who have health conditions or are pregnant. The most up-to-date guidance and list of underlying health conditions that necessitate shielding should be checked on the NI Direct website <https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/publications> . If in doubt, specific advice should be sought from a Hospital Consultant or GP.

Where medical guidance is to stay at home, evidence should be provided to the school that the student is shielding due to underlying medical conditions. If this evidence is not submitted to school, then an unauthorised absence will be recorded.

If a child or young person lives with someone who is clinically vulnerable, they can continue to attend school. Students who have household members who were considered clinically extremely vulnerable (at high risk of severe illness and required 'shielding') should have an individual risk assessment conducted in school to determine the most appropriate plan. If this applies to your child please contact my Vice-Principal Mrs Scott gscott838@c2kni.net as a matter of urgency.

Expectations of Students

A welcome back to school assembly will be given to all students on their first day in school. It is expected that all students will return to school with a mature and responsible attitude regarding the serious nature and prevention of catching and spreading Covid-19 and with the appropriate focus and behaviour for learning. If a student flouts or ignores the safety arrangements and rules put in place to prevent the catching and spreading of COVID-19, such as, wilfully refusing to adhere to safety arrangements of social distancing and/or deliberately coughing or spitting at students or staff, this will mean they will be sanctioned, up to and including exclusion from school.

We are very much looking forward to welcoming our students back to Breda Academy. I would like to thank you for your patience and understanding in what has been a challenging time. I would very much appreciate your continued support as we move forward together and it will be essential that we work together to ensure that we can keep the school and wider community as safe as possible.

Yours sincerely

Mr P Perry - Acting Principal