



Hanley Castle High School

and Sixth Form Centre

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Headteacher: Mrs Lindsey Cooke

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Dear Parent / Guardian

As we approach the end of this strangest and most difficult of school years I wanted to write to thank you for your support, kindness and patience.

Last September seems to be a dim memory of a very different and simpler world, while the 'new normal' of lockdown and social distancing has become a routine, if unwelcome, way of life.

Looking back

Of course, Hanley Castle has never closed, and staff have worked exceptionally hard to support the children of key workers and vulnerable children (including throughout school holidays), as well as welcoming back students from Years 7 to 12, albeit on a very reduced basis.

We have been faced with the challenge of adapting our teaching, quite literally overnight, to support remote learning. Teachers and students have got to grips with new technologies such as TEAMS. Like many parents, teachers have become multi-taskers, providing lessons for students in their classes, teaching their own children at home, responding to the huge volume of e-mails – and sometimes caring for toddlers and babies who have occasionally intruded into videos and on-line teaching sessions!

It has been an incredibly steep learning curve, and it is important to recognise that some teachers have been more confident than others in adopting a more technological approach. Interestingly, recent research indicates that the traditional, low-tech approach often has the same or even greater impact on learning.

The vast majority of our students have responded magnificently to the changed circumstances in which they have found themselves. Children are adaptable, imaginative and flexible. Some of the work that has been completed at home has been of a wonderful standard. Other students have struggled without the close support of teachers and have fallen behind a little. We will be sending home information regarding how we believe your child has performed, and how they can catch up over the summer if required.

Our Year 11 and Year 13 exam cohorts have had a strange and unsatisfactory ending to their GCSE and A level courses. They too worked hard during the first months of lockdown to allow their teachers to submit the best possible estimated grades to the exam boards. It will be for the exam boards to determine final grades, but we are proud of the way in which our senior students responded at a key moment in their academic lives. Sadly, we will be sending exam results out to Year 11 and Year 13 students by e-mail this year. However, school staff will be manning the phones (and computers!) to ensure that every student receives the individual help and support they need to secure their correct progression route.



Looking forward – plans for September

As a school, we share the Government's aspiration to welcome back all students on a full-time basis in September.

We have drawn up detailed plans which, if the situation remains stable, will allow this to happen with the minimum of risk. The overriding priority is to keep all members of the school community safe. This will necessitate a number of changes to the way in which we normally operate.

I attach a separate document which sets out the detail of these changes, but I think that it is worth highlighting a number of key measures:

- All students will belong to a bubble consisting of the students with whom they share a tutor group and their lessons. On average, this will give a bubble of around 100 students (the Government maximum is 240).
- There will, however, be times when students will come into contact with students from outside their bubble – on the journey to and from school, at break and lunch time and on the corridors between lessons.
- If these contacts take place in an enclosed space, for example on our narrow corridors, students will be required to wear masks.
- Every student will therefore need to bring to school every day their own personal supply of hand sanitiser, a mask and a plastic bag in which to store the mask.
- Students will be taught the '**SMS Protocol**' – Sanitise / Mask / Sanitise. This protocol will ensure that they put on and take off their masks safely (a mask can only be effective if it is used and stored correctly).
- School buses are another enclosed space where students will come into contact with students from outside their bubble. Masks are mandatory on public buses but we strongly advise their use on school coaches also.

Obviously, hand sanitising and wearing masks for travel and as part of the school day will be a major change, but we hope that it will rapidly become second nature. A guidance video is under production and will be shared with parents and students in due course.

The SMS Protocol is just one of a whole host of new hygiene measures designed to protect the school community. There will, of course, be other changes. It will no longer be possible to hold face-to-face parents' evenings or parent information evenings. We are looking at using technology to ensure that the important personal contact with parents is not lost, as well as more frequent on-line reporting to ensure that parents remain well-informed about their children's progress.

Celebrating the success of our wonderful students will also look different this year. The necessity to continue social distancing will mean that we cannot hold the annual 'Celebration of Achievement' evening in September in the traditional way. Work is already well underway to ensure that our hardest working students receive the recognition and rewards they so thoroughly deserve.

Parents will also have seen the Government's announcement about its new catch-up programme. This is targeted predominantly at disadvantaged students, and full details will follow in the new academic year.

As you will see from the attached document, our plans are well advanced for every possible scenario for next year. I will contact parents again later in the summer to confirm the arrangements for September, which may be amended in the light of any new advice which is received from the Government.



I have been a headteacher for over fourteen years, and headteacher of Hanley Castle High School for over ten years. Nothing in my career had prepared me for the challenge of the Coronavirus pandemic. This has been a time of great challenge and uncertainty, and far too many families have faced enormous sadness and loss. We must not underestimate the impact that this situation has had on both children and adults. This uncertainty is continuing, but as every week goes by we learn more and become better prepared for whatever the future will bring.

I do hope that you and your families are able to find some peace and rest this summer. My staff and I will look forward very much to welcoming students back to school on Friday 4th September, with our new Year 7 and Year 12 cohorts joining us a day earlier on Thursday 3rd September for induction.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'L. Cooke', with a long horizontal line extending to the right below the signature.

Lindsey Cooke
Headteacher



Hanley Castle High School - Operational Plan for September 2020
Essential information for parents and students

Overarching principles

- Students (and staff) who are ill **must** stay at home
- Robust hand and respiratory hygiene are essential
- Enhanced cleaning arrangements have been implemented
- Contact between individuals must be minimised and social distancing maintained
- There will be active engagement with NHS Test and Trace
- Students who have previously shielded will be expected to attend school from 2 September, subject to a continued decline in community transmission rates

Uniform

- It is more important than ever that uniform is worn and that it is different from home clothes
- Any non-uniform items (e.g. hoodies) will be confiscated and placed in a plastic bag for collection by the student at the end of the day
- Uniforms can be cleaned as often as usual using normal methods
- Students who have PE should wear PE kit on that day (no PE before Monday 7th September)

Equipment – including additional mandatory items which every student must bring to school

- **Hand sanitiser** – free top-ups will be available in school
- **A face mask** - to be worn in all enclosed spaces apart from classrooms (e.g. on corridors)
- It must be purpose-made / removable / washable or disposable – no scarves / biker masks / novelty masks / inappropriate masks etc.
- **A plastic bag** in which to store the face mask
- Parents may wish to buy a selection of masks for students to test for comfort over the summer
- Training will be given on safe use and removal of masks (see SMS protocol below)
- If masks are washable this must be done daily
- Students should only bring in essentials – e.g. lunch boxes / coats / books / stationery
- Mobile phones and head phones must not be used - and will be confiscated if seen
- If students do bring a mobile into school it must be switched off and stored in the student's bag

Transport

- Children should walk or cycle where possible
- Car drop off - new one-way system on the school field accessed via Church End
- Face masks **mandatory** on public buses / **highly recommended** on school coaches
- Hand sanitiser on entry / exit of bus
- Students proceed directly to registration rooms on entry to school site
- If bus arrives late students must go straight to registration or timetabled lesson – not Key Stage.
- Individuals arriving late should sign in in Key Stage as usual

Behaviour

- All students and parents must agree to comply with all school rules, including the Covid Code of Conduct – a child's attendance in school is dependent on this
- This includes the mandatory wearing of masks in school buildings until instructed to remove them by a member of staff
- No student who endangers themselves or others will remain in school
- Punctuality is particularly important



Amended day

Tutor period / DSB	8.45 – 9.15 (tutors will welcome students to classroom from 8.30 am)
Lesson 1	9.15 – 10.15
Lesson 2	10.15 – 11.15
Break A	11.15 – 11.45
Lesson 3	11.45 – 12.45
Lesson 4	12.45 – 1.45
Break B	1.45 – 2.15
Period 5	2.15 – 3.15

Arrangements for Thursday 3rd September - Year 7 and 12 Induction Day

- Year 7 tutors will meet students on school field as they arrive
- Year 12 students should go straight to tutor rooms
- External Year 12 students will be met by buddies at front of sixth form centre
- All students must wear masks in school buildings until instructed to remove them following the SMS Protocol (see below)
- No practical PE

Arrangements for Friday 4th September

- All pupils proceed straight to tutor rooms to be received by tutors
- All students must wear masks in school buildings until instructed to remove them following the SMS Protocol (see below)
- No practical PE (will be in uniform and unable to change)

Grouping / movement

- Each student will belong to a 'bubble' which comprises the other students in their tutor group, in the classes in which they are taught (and with whom they come into contact with in Aspire)
- This produces a bubble for each child which is smaller than a year group (and much smaller than the 240-pupil maximum in Government guidelines), but acknowledges that secondary students will be in bubbles larger than those for primary pupils if they are to access a full range of subjects
- Students move between lessons as normal, but must wear masks when inside buildings
- Masks will **not** be worn in lessons - when students enter classrooms and are seated they will be invited to follow the SMS Protocol to safely remove their masks
- Students must never stop, wait or queue on corridors – they should either enter their teaching room or leave a building directly
- Students must comply with entry or exit arrangements to buildings, including one-way systems

School textbooks / equipment

- Students must sanitise their hands before and after touching textbooks, library books and any school equipment or materials



Breaks

- There will be two half hour breaks during the day (rather than a shorter break and longer lunchtime as previously)
- Year groups will be allocated outside zones for their use during breaks – they must not mix with other year groups
- Masks will **not** be required during breaks
- Initially no ball games allowed (to maximise space / minimise contact)
- There will be food outlets in each zone
- However, only cold food will be available so students may wish to bring a packed lunch
- Those students entitled to free school meals will be supplied with a packed lunch
- Students **must** bring their own water – our water fountains will be closed off for hygiene reasons
- In very poor weather students will be supervised in classrooms
- Students will be allowed out of lessons, one at a time, to use the toilets to reduce queuing during breaks

PE

- On days when students have PE they **must** wear their PE kit to school and for the whole of that day
- Girls must wear leggings under their skorts and the school PE hoodie over their PE tops
- Boys must wear their school rugby tops over PE tops
- Both boys and girls must bring a waterproof top

Other essential information

- The library will no longer be available either before or after school
- There will be no face-to-face parents' evenings, information evenings, extra-curricular activities, sports fixtures, non-essential trips and visits for the time being
- Contact with parents will be organised remotely wherever possible

Student illness / injury protocol

- No Sick Bay provision will be available
- Students must not come into school if they are unwell, if they have Coronavirus symptoms or have tested positive in the last 7 days
- Coronavirus symptoms include a new continuous cough, a high temperature, a loss of taste or smell
- If a student becomes unwell in any way parents will be required to remove them from school immediately
- If a student develops Coronavirus symptoms they must self-isolate for at least 7 days and arrange to have a test
- Other members of the household should self-isolate for 14 days



The 'SMS' Protocol

Students and staff will not wear facemasks in lessons or outside during breaks. However, due to the need to preserve safe 'bubbles' for all members of our community, all will be required to wear facemasks inside buildings when moving between lessons.

- All students and staff must bring with them their own hand sanitiser, a face mask and a plastic bag in which to store the face mask.
- Face masks are useful in situations where social distancing and other protective measures are difficult – such as on busy corridors.
- They do not provide 100% protection, but used properly (with hand sanitiser) they can significantly reduce risk.
- Hand sanitiser must be used before removing the face mask from its plastic bag and putting it on.
- Hands must be sanitised again after putting the mask on.
- A similar process must be used when removing the mask – sanitise hands, remove mask and place in its plastic bag, sanitise hands a second time.
- In summary, sanitise hands before and after touching your face mask.
- Remember - if you do not follow this procedure the benefits of the face mask to yourself and to others will be lost.

S Sanitise

M Mask

S Sanitise

