



Westcliff High School for Boys

Designated Outstandingly Successful on four occasions (Ofsted)
Headmaster: Mr M A Skelly, M.A.

27 August 2020

Dear Parents,

Re: Arrangements for Re-opening School to All Pupils in September 2020

I hope you have had a pleasant break during the summer so far and that your son/daughter is looking forward to returning to full-time education in September. The Autumn Term is fast approaching and the arrangements to facilitate pupils' return at the start of term are, of course, going to feel rather different this year due to the need to reduce the risk associated with the pandemic.

Staff have been working hard during the summer break to prepare for the return to School, taking into consideration a range of guidance from the Government on how schools must operate in relation to the management of pupils and staff on the School site. There is a great deal of information to cover and, therefore, rather than include the detail within this letter, I have enclosed a Q&A-style Appendix addressing a range of matters of which you will need to be aware prior to the return of your son/daughter to School and I hope you will find that format helpful.

To provide some important context for the detail included in the Q&A Appendix enclosed, you may be aware that the Government has notified schools that when re-opening to pupils in September they should avoid there being any direct contact between pupils in different Year Groups. In summary, pupils in different Year Groups will not be permitted to mix during the School day, whether for lessons, extra-curricular activities or breaks and lunchtimes. We are, of course, aware of some of the practicalities regarding siblings in different Year Groups, travel on school buses and pupils' socialising outside of School which might lead one to question the extent of the benefits of segregating pupils during the School day; I raise this point as I appreciate those same questions might also occur to you. Nevertheless, the School is bound to follow the Government's guidance and therefore much planning has been undertaken during the summer to ensure we can adhere to that guidance.

Additionally, it is important to emphasise that the most significant steps pupils can take in reducing the risk of contracting or transmitting infection is to maintain the recommended high standards of hygiene now well promoted (this is addressed in the enclosed Appendix) and to fully respect the guidance on social-distancing outside School, and in relation to adults within the School buildings (again, this is explained in the enclosed Appendix). There is some evidence to suggest a larger than anticipated number of people in our society have become rather complacent with regard to the need for social-distancing, showing an absence of understanding for the highly infectious nature of COVID-19. I am sure you will agree that, aside from the irresponsible nature of this behaviour, it does not provide a helpful moral compass for our young people who are so easily influenced and who may not always fully appreciate the level of risk. To that end, the School will work hard to reinforce good hygiene practices during the day and I would be most grateful for your continued support in emphasising those key messages in order to protect the staff who will be working alongside the pupils each day, and members of your own families, some of whom may be extremely vulnerable.

We had the pleasure of welcoming back some Year 10 and Lower Sixth students in June and, as a result, many of the measures necessary to manage the risk associated with the spread of infection were put in place at that time. The associated arrangements proved most successful and therefore we have been able to build on those in order to develop our strategies for a wider re-opening of the School this term. We are confident that the arrangements we have put in place will minimise risk as far as is possible and we hope we shall be able to continue educating pupils directly in School for the entire Autumn Term and beyond. That said, we have contingency arrangements in place should it prove necessary to return to online teaching, either for one pupil, a Year Group or the entire School. I have not addressed those plans in this letter as we sincerely hope those measures will not be necessary. However, should we encounter such a situation, I shall provide further guidance at the time.

As I have made clear in so many of my communications with parents during the past six months, the guidance provided within this letter and the accompanying Appendix is based on current Government guidance. That guidance is subject to continual review and change and therefore, should any update be received by the School, it may be necessary to write to you again with further information.

On a separate matter, I would also like to take this opportunity to notify parents and pupils that due to the current circumstances, it has been necessary for the School to move the dates for the 11+ examinations this year. **The impact of this change is that 11+ examinations will be taking place on Monday 9 November 2020 and therefore the School will not be open to pupils.** Remote learning will take place on that day and teachers will liaise with pupils nearer the time regarding the arrangements.

We are delighted that we shall see all pupils back at School in September and we shall work hard to make the transition for them as smooth and enjoyable as possible. Thanks to the hard work of the pupils, the energy and commitment of the staff and your superb support we are a resilient community and we shall work together to make this unusual experience for our young people as positive and exciting as we are able in the face of these challenges.

I hope the enclosed Appendix is helpful and, in the meantime, I wish you well for the remainder of the summer.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "M A Skelly". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the printed name "Headmaster".

Headmaster

Encs.