



# St. Edward's Church of England Academy

Westwood Road, Leek, ST13 8DN

Telephone: 01538 714740

Principal: Mr. T. Hutchinson

<http://stedwards.academy>

17<sup>th</sup> July 2020

Dear Parent/Carer,

This is the final parent/carer update for a little while and I think it is important to acknowledge how, since March, life has been very different for us all: Academy staff, parents/carers and pupils.

I would like to begin by thanking you all – parents/carers and pupils – for the way in which you have dealt with this situation. Special thanks should go to the parents/carers who as honorary teachers have had an insight into what I think is the most amazing job in the world: teaching! You have had first-hand experience of the highs, the lows and challenges of the job and I personally applaud you for a job well done.

Thanks must also go to the pupils for remaining so positive and for amazing us with all their wonderful work, crazy plans, ideas and adventures. We can't wait until you are all back with us at school in September, ready to learn and embrace new challenges, but we also want you to have a great holiday too. I'm sure that you will return refreshed and ready for the new term with lots of stories to share.

Secondly, I would publicly like to thank the staff and Governors of the Academy for the way they have worked throughout this period. They have maintained a provision within school every day bar weekends since March and have built a virtual remote learning provision to support those at home. Thank you also to the often unsung heroes who are the support staff: they 'keep the lights on' in every sense. You know who you are and I am personally grateful for all you have done and continue to do.

Additionally, I would like to wish good luck to all the Year 8 pupils as they begin their next step on their journey through education. You are all super stars, true 10:10 people and will go on to achieve great things. We will see you again and I look forward to saying a proper goodbye, hopefully in the autumn term.

Finally, as we prepare for the summer holiday, I will endeavour to keep you informed of any further developments as and when they become available. Our preparations and plans to safely welcome back all pupils in September are in place. If anything changes during the summer holiday, I will write to you and update you ahead of our reopening. To alleviate any concerns or anxieties, please be reassured that we will contact you if and when required with any information you need. However, if you do need to contact us, please use the contact form on the Academy website.

I thought I would leave you with two quotes for you to ponder. The first is from one of my favourite authors and the second is from Philippians 4:13:

"I wish it need not have happened in my time," said Frodo.

"So do I," said Gandalf, "and so do all who live to see such times. But that is not for them to decide.

All we have to decide is what to do with the time that is given us."

— J.R.R. Tolkien, *The Fellowship of the Ring*

"I can do all things through Christ who gives me strength."

Philippians 4:13

I wish you all a lovely summer.



Companies House number: 08316327

Please see the below updated version of the information shared on Friday 10<sup>th</sup> July. **Updated information has been highlighted in yellow for ease.**

### **Guidance:**

Following Government guidance published on 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2020, I am delighted to be able to write to you to provide further information about our arrangements for bringing our school community back together in September.

I am sure that you have many questions about your child/ren returning to or starting at our school, and many of you may feel anxious about this. This letter clarifies certain changes that will be in place in order to ensure a safe and happy start to the new academic year.

I have referenced Government guidance in each section. Quotations from Government guidance can be found at the start of each section, with quotation marks and italics used. For your information, the full publication can be read here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/actions-for-schools-during-the-coronavirus-outbreak/guidance-for-full-opening-schools>

### **Opening**

*"It is our plan that all pupils, in all year groups, will return to school full-time from the beginning of the autumn term."*

We will be welcoming our new Year 5 pupils to St Edward's from Wednesday 2<sup>nd</sup> September. The Academy will be open to all pupils from Monday 7<sup>th</sup> September.

**We will not be able to provide any additional provision for key worker pupils in September.**

### **Attendance**

*"Schools should be clear with parents that pupils of compulsory school age must be in school unless a statutory reason applies."*

The Government have clearly outlined their intention for the compulsory return of all pupils in September. Consequently, daily attendance will be a statutory requirement. Any reasons for absence should be made clear to the school office either by leaving a message on the pupil absence line or by using the contact form on the Academy website on the first day of absence and on each subsequent day of absence. Fixed penalty notices may be issued for periods of unauthorised absence, in keeping with our Academy Attendance Policy.

### **Health and safety**

*"Schools will be asked to minimise the number of contacts that a pupil has during the school day as part of implementing the system of controls outlined below to reduce the risk of transmission."*

The safety of our pupils and community will remain at the forefront of all actions taken. Systems around our site have been adjusted due to the COVID-19 Government guidance. The duration of the school day will remain as six and a half hours (including a one-hour lunch) but in order to limit the number of people on site at one time, there will be allocated 'line up' places and marked playground areas for each year group in their year group bubble.

A one-way walking system will be implemented on site to facilitate social distancing measures and hygiene stations will be in place, which pupils must use before entering the building. Photographs of these measures will be available on our website in the 'Return to School' section in the coming weeks. Daily site checks will be carried out to ensure that high standards are upheld.

Key changes will include:

- One-way systems around the school site (a site map for each key stage will be provided)
- Identified areas for year group bubbles to spend lunch time and break times
- No assemblies or large gatherings in the hall
- Different classroom layout – pupils will be front-facing
- Increased hygiene measures
- Limited movement around communal areas of school
- Limited movement around the building – year group bubbles using a limited number of classrooms will be allocated

### **Assessing risks**

*“Schools must comply with health and safety law, which requires them to assess risks and put in place proportionate control measures.”*

A number of measures are already in place to reduce risk to all stakeholders, including enhanced cleaning arrangements. Risk assessments have been written in conjunction with Trustees and have been verified by external health and safety providers.

### **Curriculum**

*“Schools will teach an ambitious and broad curriculum in all subjects from the start of the autumn term, but make use of existing flexibilities to create time to cover the most important missed content.”*

Pupils across our Academy are provided with a curriculum that is relevant, purposeful and enables them to develop the knowledge and skills to help them to succeed in society and their future lives. We recognise that the mental health and well-being of our pupils may have been affected during the COVID-19 pandemic and therefore we will incorporate an increased number of pastoral sessions throughout each teaching week.

Although remote learning has been effective in continuing with education during the lockdown period, we acknowledge that some pupils may need to access catch-up interventions upon their return to school. During our initial transition period, teachers will assess all pupils and identify those needing additional support. Where necessary, details of catch-up plans will be communicated in September.

### **Pupil groupings**

*“There cannot be a ‘one-size-fits-all’ approach where the system of controls describes every scenario. School leaders will be best placed to understand the needs of their schools and communities... if class-sized groups are not compatible with offering a full range of subjects or managing the practical logistics within and around school, they can look to implement year group sized ‘bubbles’.”*

Pupils will return to their normal class sizes from September (approximately 30-32 pupils per class), however, year group bubbles will be established in order to effectively support pupils. Staff will work with pupils across year groups.

Year group bubbles will not mix with other year group bubbles: lunch time and break times will be arranged so that only one bubble at a time is using an area of school. Assemblies and other large gatherings will not take place during the first autumn half term. Government guidance will be used to review all processes regularly.

### **Classrooms and teachers**

*“Teachers and other staff can operate across different classes and year groups in order to facilitate the delivery of the school timetable. Where staff need to move between classes and year groups, they should try and keep their distance from pupils and other staff as much as they can, ideally two metres from other adults. Schools should make small adaptations to the classroom to support distancing where possible. That should include seating pupils side by side and facing forwards, rather than face to face or side on.”*

To ensure that social distancing is maintained, teachers will minimise face-to-face contact with pupils and will remain in a two-metre zone at the front of the classroom whenever possible. A forward-facing seating plan will be implemented until guidance permits us to return to more typical classroom layouts.

### **Uniform**

*“Uniforms do not need to be cleaned any more often than usual, nor do they need to be cleaned using methods which are different from normal.”*

Pupils will wear school uniform in September. The Academy Uniform Policy continues to be available in the 'Policies' section on the Academy website. On days when pupils are timetabled for PE, they will bring their PE kit in their bag. PE bags will not be stored in school and will return home after each use. PE will not be taught on the first day of the autumn term for any year group, therefore pupils will not need to bring their PE kit on the first day. Pupil timetables will be provided on the first day to allow parents/carers to prepare the necessary PE kit ahead of PE lessons.

### **Equipment**

*“For frequently used equipment, such as pencils and pens, it is recommended that staff and pupils have their own items that are not shared...It is recommended that pupils limit the amount of equipment they bring into school each day to essentials such as lunch boxes, water bottles, coats and books. Pupils and teachers can take books and other shared resources home, although unnecessary sharing should be avoided.”*

We will aim to minimise equipment stored in each classroom in order to maximise the distance between desks. We have removed all non-essential drawer units and other equipment from classrooms. Pupils should only bring the following **named** items with them to school:

- **Coat** (weather dependent)
- **Sun hat** (weather dependent)
- **Water bottle** (filled at home to help with queues at the water dispensers)
- **Pencil case** (**see contents list below**)
- **Packed lunch/break time snack** (unless purchasing a meal from Aspens, our catering team)
- **Reading book**
- **Planner** (planners will be provided in the autumn term)
- **Hand sanitiser**
- Any **medication** pupils are required to keep with them at all times e.g. inhaler and spacer, Epipen
- **PE kit** (only on days when timetabled for PE lessons – see uniform section above for further details)

Bags larger than required to carry the listed essential items will not be permitted in school due to limited storage space. Lockers will not be used. All homework and resources for home learning will be allocated online via Go4Schools – this will be explained to pupils and parents in September. **Pupils will need to bring a pencil case containing: a pen, pencil, ruler, eraser, pencil sharpener, green pen, small glue stick, highlighter, coloured pencils, non-permanent whiteboard marker and rounded safety scissors** – these items will be solely theirs to use.

If your child takes any medication, please ensure that it is sent to school on the first day of the autumn term to hand over to their House Tutor on arrival. If your child took the medication usually held in the school office home at the start of the lockdown period or if the medication held in the school office may have expired since March, please ensure that your child is sent to school on the first day of the autumn term with replacement medication to hand over to their House Tutor on arrival.

### **Lunch**

*“When timetabling, groups should be kept apart and movement around the school site kept to a minimum. Schools should consider staggered break times and lunch times (and time for cleaning surfaces in the dining hall between groups).”*

If your child will be purchasing a hot lunch, you should ensure that your child has funds available on their account via ParentPay; on safety grounds, it will **not** be possible for pupils to add cash to their account using the 'top-up' machine in school. If your child will be bringing a packed lunch, a named lunch box holding their lunch will be required (please remember we are a 'nut-free' school). Details regarding lunches and payment information can be found on the Academy website.

Pupils will eat lunch in their allocated year group bubble lunch area. During the lunch break, lunchtime supervisors and cleaning staff will clean surfaces so that hygiene is maintained.

### **PE and extra-curricular clubs**

*"Schools have the flexibility to decide how physical education, sport and physical activity will be provided whilst following the measures in their system of controls...schools should consider the provision of pastoral and extra-curricular activities to pupils."*

PE is an important subject in our curriculum and is vital in supporting our pupils to maintain healthy bodies and healthy minds. Pupils will therefore continue to participate in PE lessons and teachers will aim to minimise the contact that pupils have with one another during these lessons.

However, extra-curricular clubs could compromise current social distancing measures as participation is usually across year groups. As a consequence, we will not run any extra-curricular clubs during the autumn term but will aim to reintroduce a wide-ranging programme during the spring term.

### **Wrap-around care/before and after school club**

*"Schools should consider resuming any breakfast and after-school provision, where possible, from the start of the autumn term."*

We have still do not have a definitive plan for this as yet. An update will be provided as soon as possible. You can also find a link to 'wrap-around care' on our website in the 'New Intake 2020' section.

### **Contact with the Academy and visiting the Academy**

*"Gathering at the school gates and otherwise coming onto the school site without an appointment is not allowed."*

Parents/carers should use the contact form on the Academy website for all questions and queries. The office phone system should be used in an emergency; please leave a voicemail message if our office staff are unable to answer your call. This will enable our office staff to prioritise supporting pupils in school.

Visitors to the school site – including the school office – will be strictly by appointment only. To request an appointment, please use the contact form on the Academy website stating the reason for the request in order for an appointment to be made with the most relevant member of staff.

### **Sickness procedures and 'Test and Trace'**

*"Schools must ensure they understand the NHS Test and Trace process and how to contact their local Public Health England health protection team. Parents and staff should inform schools immediately of the results of a test:*

- *If someone tests negative, if they feel well and no longer have symptoms similar to coronavirus (COVID-19), they can stop self-isolating.*
- *If someone tests positive, they should follow the 'stay at home guidance for households with possible or confirmed coronavirus (COVID-19) infection' and must continue to self-isolate for at least seven days from the onset of their symptoms and then return to school only if they do not have symptoms other than cough or loss of sense of smell/taste.*
- *Based on the advice from the health protection team, schools must send home those people who have been in close contact with the person who has tested positive, advising them to self-isolate for 14 days since they were last in close contact with that person when they were infectious."*

The creation of year group bubbles, clear staff timetabling and rigorous health and safety systems will provide an accurate picture of staff and pupils who have been in close proximity to each other each day. This will ensure that we are effectively able to trace any suspected COVID-19 related case in school. We can then take immediate action through guidance from Public Health England to minimise the risk to others.

**Please ensure the school office has your up-to-date contact information; changes to contact information can be provided via the contact form on the Academy website.**

Pupils must not attend school if they or a member of their household develops symptoms compatible with COVID-19. For further information and health advice regarding COVID-19 – including information about symptoms – please visit the NHS website: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/>.

### **In the event of an outbreak**

*“If schools have two or more confirmed cases within 14 days, or an overall rise in sickness absence where coronavirus (COVID-19) is suspected, they may have an outbreak...In the event of a local outbreak, the PHE health protection team or local authority may advise a school or number of schools to close temporarily to help control transmission.”*

In the event of an outbreak occurring at St Edward’s and/or locally, guidance will be sought from Public Health England regarding school closure.

### **Day Structure**

Each year group will be using classrooms along one corridor – they will have their own toilets and yard area.

Arrangements for each day will be as follows:

- Pupils walking or being dropped off by car:
  - Year 5 pupils will walk up the school drive from Westwood Road and enter the yard to the right of the main entrance
  - Year 6, 7 and 8 pupils will enter the yard via the Westwood Road entrance and then go to their allocated year group yard
- Pupils using school buses will be greeted by staff at the school bus park, enter via the bus park entrance and go to their allocated year group yard
- Gates will open from 8.25am
- Pupils will be asked to line up by 8.45am
- 8.45am - 8.55am: pupils will be taken to their tutor group rooms and registered
- Lesson 1: 8.55am - 9.45am
- Lesson 2: 9.45am - 10.30am
- Eating break in class: 10.30am - 10.35am
- Break on allocated year group yard: 10.35am - 10.55am
- Lesson 3: 10.55am - 11.45am
- Lesson 4: 11.45am - 12.35pm
- 12.35pm - 1.40pm: lunch in allocated year group lunch area and on allocated year group yard – pupils will line up at 1.40pm and will then return to their tutor group room
- Collective worship in tutor group room: 1.40pm - 2.00pm
- Lesson 5: 2.00pm - 2.50pm
- Lesson 6: 2.50pm - 3.40pm

Parents collecting pupils must adhere to social distancing guidance.

We would also request that wherever possible parents/carers walk to school and avoid arriving in their cars. The roads around the Academy are very congested at the start and end of the day and the fewer cars there are the safer everyone is.

## **Buses**

Information regarding the use of school buses will be shared once arrangements have been confirmed by Staffordshire County Council School Transport. Parents/carers will receive a letter directly from SCC School Transport in August with more details. Currently, information provided suggests that pupils will be using buses as normal and not in year group bubbles.

SCC School Transport have asked schools to pass on the following links to their website. SCC School Transport have requested that parents refer to the information in these links before contacting them, as they are receiving an exceptional number of queries at the current time.

<https://www.staffordshire.gov.uk/Education/Schooltransport/homepage.aspx>  
<https://www.staffordshire.gov.uk/Education/Schooltransport/SEN/home.aspx>

We are looking forward to seeing all pupils in September and we are confident that we can work collaboratively to ensure a safe and happy start to the new academic year. Many thanks for your continued support.

Yours sincerely,



Mr T Hutchinson  
Principal