



BEDFORD  
FREE SCHOOL

[www.bedfordfreeschool.co.uk](http://www.bedfordfreeschool.co.uk)

17<sup>th</sup> July 2020

### **Newsletter and information about the full opening of BFS from September**

Dear parents / carers

As we approach the end of term and the academic year, I'm delighted to write to you with our latest newsletter, and provide detailed information about our plans to fully re-open BFS in September. I'd like to start by thanking pupils, families and all of our staff. We have been faced with unprecedented challenges this year but despite this adversity pupils, families and staff have responded with relentless courage and determination, patience and overwhelming compassion. I'm really proud of our school community; it has embodied our values and gone well beyond the extra-mile.

#### **Staff changes**

We are saying goodbye to a small number of staff, to whom we are grateful for their hard work and contribution to our success:

- Mrs Priddle – Spanish
- Mr Brown – Maths
- Mr Burnage – History
- Mrs Shahani – Computing

We know that some of our pupils and families occasionally offer small gifts or cards to teachers who are leaving. This is a lovely gesture in line with our values. However, due to the pandemic, we are not able to accept any leaving gifts or cards at this time but if you do want to share any messages with staff who are leaving please email [info@bedfordfreeschool.co.uk](mailto:info@bedfordfreeschool.co.uk) and we will pass these on to them.

We have also made the following appointments and are looking forward to the following new colleagues joining us in September:

- Miss Smith – Teacher of Science
- Mr Johnson – Teacher of Science
- Mr Li – Teacher of Maths
- Miss Dunstan – Teacher of English
- Mr Normanton – Teacher of History
- Miss Collins – Teacher of MFL (French)
- Miss Ripalunga - Teacher of MFL (Spanish)

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**RESPECT • HONESTY • HIGH EXPECTATIONS**

It is worth noting that the school has invested in teaching staff in order that we can ensure that we protect subject-specialism. We believe that our teachers should be highly knowledgeable about their subject.

### **Y11 and collection of GCSE results:**

A reminder that our provisional plans for GCSE results day (Thursday 20<sup>th</sup> August) have been published and shared with Y11 families. A copy of the letter sent out can be found here:

<https://www.bedfordreeschool.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/Y11-Results-day-plan.pdf>

Please be aware that these plans are subject to any changes in government guidance and any local restrictions being put in place. We will endeavour to email all families of Y11 the week before results day to confirm and finalise these arrangements.

Last week the Prime Minister recorded an address to congratulate pupils in Y11, this can be viewed here: [The Prime Minister's address to school leavers](#)

### **Head Boy and Head Girl**

I'd like to say congratulations to our new Head Girl and Head Boy, Hannah and Cameron. I look forward to working with them and the student leaders next term.

### **The start to the autumn term**

A quick reminder of the dates for the start of the new academic year:

- Staff training days: Tuesday 1<sup>st</sup> September & Wednesday 2<sup>nd</sup> September
- New Year 7: start on Thursday 3<sup>rd</sup> September
- All other pupils return: Monday 7<sup>th</sup> September

*N.B. please see below for more details about our plans for full re-opening in September.*

## **Information about the full re-opening of BFS from September**

The prevalence of coronavirus (COVID-19) has decreased since schools and colleges restricted their opening to most pupils back in March, the NHS Test and Trace system is up and running and we understand more about the measures that need to be in place to create safer environments in schools. As a result, the government has asked schools to plan for all children and young people to return from the start of the new academic year.

The government has provided a useful guide for parents about the re-opening of schools, this can be found here: [What parents and carers need to know about early years providers, schools and colleges in the autumn term.](#)

It must be acknowledged that in order to effectively manage the remaining risk, BFS will look and feel a bit different in September. Reopening the school in these circumstances, whilst attempting to retain the amazing things which make BFS such a unique school, as well as continuing to hold pupils to the very high standards that we rightly demand, will require a monumental effort from everyone. I know together, as an already incredibly strong school community with relentless drive and ambition, we will succeed.

I am also acutely aware that many families will be anxious about their children returning to school in September, but I want to assure you that our priority is keeping staff, pupils and families as safe as possible while making no excuses and continuing to work towards exceptional outcomes and great experiences for our pupils.

I hope this information will help to reassure you. We have also created a new page on our website for quick reference to any documents and useful information related to re-opening, including this letter. Please visit: <https://www.bedfordfreeschool.co.uk/full-school-opening/>

### **Attendance**

It is vital that children and young people return to school for their educational progress, for their wellbeing, and for their wider development. The government has confirmed that school attendance will again be mandatory from the beginning of the new academic year. For parents and carers of children of compulsory school age, this means that the legal duty on you as a parent to send your child to school regularly will apply once more.

Shielding advice for all adults and children will pause on 1 August, subject to a continued decline in the rates of community transmission of coronavirus (COVID-19). This means that the small number of pupils who will remain on the shielded patient list can also return to school, as can those who have family members who are shielding. See the guidance on [shielding and protecting people defined on medical grounds as extremely vulnerable](#) for the current advice.

Many families will want to take a holiday over the summer period, which may involve travelling abroad. As ever, parents must plan their holidays within the school holidays and should refer to current government guidance. We are strongly discouraging families from visiting countries which currently require quarantine restrictions upon return.

### **How can families help make our school as safe as possible?**

Pupils and families must continue to play an important role in keeping the whole school community safe.

- It is vital that anyone who has coronavirus (COVID-19) symptoms, or has someone in their household who does, does not attend school - this means if your child, or someone in your household, has symptoms you should not send them to school and you must notify the

school of this - please follow the usual absence reporting system by ringing reception by 8:15am

- Families must engage with the [NHS Test and Trace process](#) so that cases can be identified and action taken - this means if your child develops symptoms, you must arrange for them to get a test and you should inform us immediately of the results of that test. Families must self-isolate if they have been in close contact with someone who develops coronavirus (COVID-19) symptoms or someone who tests positive for coronavirus (COVID-19)
- Families must remind their children to travel to and from school avoiding contact with others, not mixing between year groups (except for siblings) and to strictly adhere to social distancing guidelines (*considerable effort has gone into timetabling the bubbles to protect pupils, staff and their families, which will be undermined if students are mixing freely outside school. We request that families, by adhering to government guidelines, are entirely considerate of this*)
- Parents are requested not to come to the school to drop their child off or for any other reason. Please telephone reception with any enquiries and we will respond as soon as possible
- Pupils must wash their hands thoroughly before leaving the house each morning and upon returning at the end of the day. This should be done using soapy warm water and for at least 20 seconds
- If pupils have PE they must arrive at school in PE kit and will remain in PE kit for the full day
- Talk to your child about the need to minimise contact and maintain distance whilst at school

### How will we minimise the risk at school to pupils, staff and all of their families?

We have designed a plan which follows the system of controls which the government has put in place for schools.

- Pupils will be grouped in protective 'bubbles' based on year groups. This prevents pupils from mixing more widely and reduces the risk of transmission
- Staggered arrivals and departures will be in place to limit the flow of pupils at any one time (pupils must arrive exactly at their allocated time). Pupils will enter via an allocated arrival gate. **We need you to support us in this by ensuring your child arrives to school AT their designated time.**

Arrival times:

Year group	Y7	Y8	Y9	Y10	Y11
Arrival time	8:15	8:25	8:35	8:45	8:55
Gate	2	1	2	1	2

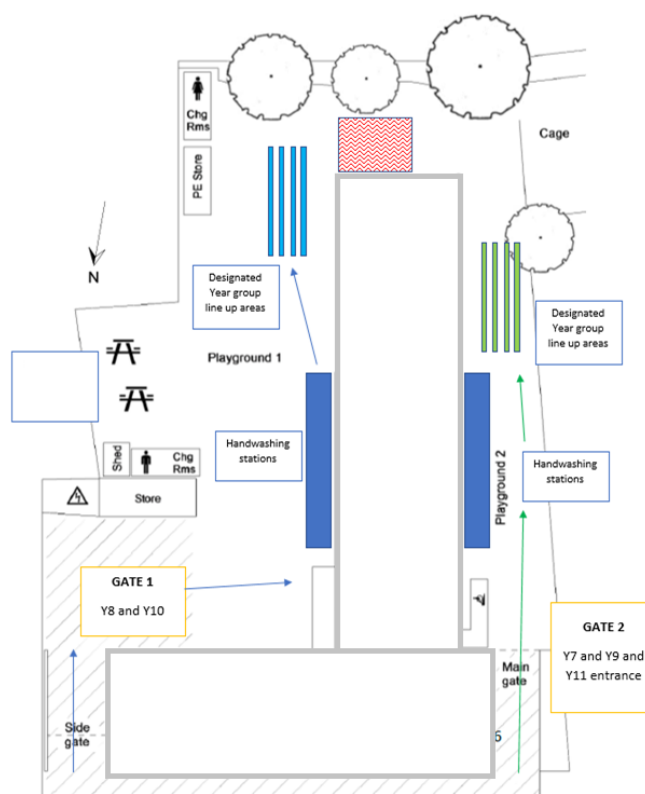
Departure time: Monday-Thursday

Year group	Y7	Y8	Y9	Y10	Y11
Departure time	16:00	16:05	16:10	16:15	16:20
End of corrections	16:30	16:35	16:40	16:45	16:50

Departure time: Friday only

Year group	Y7	Y8	Y9	Y10	Y11
Departure time	15:50	15:55	16:00	16:05	16:10
End of loss of Golden Time / End of corrections	16:20	16:25	16:30	16:35	16:40

Arrival map:



- Increased hygiene and cleaning regimes including pupils washing their hands upon arrival at school, at break and lunch
- Minimising potential contact between pupils by keeping pupils in the same classrooms for different lessons where possible and by reducing the number of transitions pupils need to make. (Some pupils will have to move around the school in order to utilise subject specific classrooms)
- Pupils will use hand sanitiser provided when entering and exiting classrooms. Where pupils cannot use hand sanitiser they will be directed to wash hands in the toilets instead
- Members of the senior leadership team will oversee arrival and pupil entrance to the site
- Where possible doors will be kept open and pupils should not touch any handles or surfaces such as the handrails of the stairs as they make their way to their designated classroom
- Break and lunch will be staggered so that no more than two-year groups will be on at the same time and these will be allocated and contained in separate areas of the playground
- Use of the canteen will be tightly controlled so that year groups do not mix. Food will be available to purchase but we will be operating a reduced menu from our school canteen

for safety reasons. Pupils will also be issued with a catering card instead of using their biometric finger print

- Rooms, equipment and areas that have been used will be cleaned and disinfected at the end of each day
- When pupils have a PE lesson they must arrive at school in full PE kit and they will remain in PE kit for the rest of the day
- We will ensure good respiratory hygiene, by promoting the 'catch it, bin it, kill it' approach at school
- Classrooms and the canteen will be reorganised so that pupils always face forward. There will be no face-to-face seating arrangements

### **What if my child or someone in my child's group falls ill?**

- Children who become ill during the school day will be taken from the room and kept in the medical room away from others.
- First Aiders dealing with children who are a suspected case of COVID-19, including showing symptoms of a having a very high temperature, a persistent cough or other symptoms, will have PPE to make sure everyone near the child is as safe as possible and is prevented from contracting an illness as best possible.
- Parents will be called and required to collect children who fall ill immediately
- Parents must follow government guidance and ensure their child self-isolates and is tested. Parents must inform the school of the test result
- If someone tests negative, if they feel well and no longer have symptoms similar to coronavirus (COVID-19), they can stop self-isolating. They could still have another virus, such as a cold or flu – in which case it is still best to avoid contact with other people until they are better. Other members of their household 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 7 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. If they still have a high temperature, they should keep self-isolating until their temperature returns to normal. Other members of their household should continue self-isolating for the full 14 days.
- If a child in a group tests positive for COVID then will we follow government guidelines and seek advice from the local health protection team. The health protection team will carry out a rapid risk assessment to confirm who has been in close contact with the person during the period that they were infectious, and ensure they are asked to self-isolate. We will notify relevant parents if this is the case and provide further details.
- The school will carry out additional cleaning of potentially infected areas
- At all times we will follow government guidelines and advice from relevant agencies

### **Remote learning:**

- We have prepared contingency plans in the event that we do need to activate our remote learning curriculum once again, for example as a result of a local lockdown
- In the event that individual pupils need to self-isolate due to COVID-19 symptoms a remote learning curriculum will be provided. Whilst we will continue to use SMHW for the regular setting on HW, from September we will be utilising Google Classroom as our predominant platform for remote education. Further details will be provided to pupils and parents in September

- Teachers will set and provide work according to the school timetable and mirror the curriculum being taught in school. Pupils will need to utilise any booklets or resources provided and teachers will supplement this with further tasks, quizzes, activities or information on Google Classroom
- Any pupil who is absent due to COVID-19 must register each morning using the online register and complete the work set. Parents/carers must support this and ensure their child is completing the necessary work at home

#### **Uniform:**

- The expectation is that all pupils will wear uniform as usual. There is no need for additional laundering or to change (eg) blazers every day
- Please note that pupils should arrive in full PE kit on the day they have a PE lesson. They will remain in PE kit for the full day. This must be standard BFS PE kit from the school supplier (Josens)

We are very proud of our pupils' appearance; it is one of the key features of the school and one of the things which makes our pupils distinct from other schools. Please ensure your child has all of the correct uniform ready for September. Many of our pupils will have grown over the last couple of months and will need new items of uniform. From the very start of the academic year we will be having a renewed focus on uniform standards so please ensure your child is properly and fully equipped. As always, we will reinforce uniform and equipment expectations daily, issuing corrections if pupils are not fully equipped.

#### **Pupil equipment:**

- Pupils will unfortunately not be able to access lockers so they should minimise the number of belongings they bring with them. A simple school bag should contain only the required equipment for that day
- Pupils should bring with them their basic equipment (including pencil case, pens, ruler, pencil, calculator, geometry set) and **a pack of tissues at all times, kept in their blazer pocket**
- Pupils must bring booklets or other resources as directed by their teachers
- If pupils have PE then they will need to come to school in FULL PE kit and remain in PE kit for the full day
- Pupils must bring a drink (WATER ONLY) with them in a large, clear bottle. Pupils will only be allowed to use the outdoor water fountains
- The full uniform and equipment list can be found here:  
<https://www.bedfordreeschool.co.uk/school-uniform-equipment/>

#### **Travelling to school:**

Pupils are encouraged to walk or cycle where possible and avoid public transport. You can refer to the government's guidance on safe travel, particularly on public transport:  
<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-safer-travel-guidance-for-passengers>

Parents have been asked to remind their children to travel to and from school avoiding contact with others and to strictly adhere to social distancing guidance. Pupils must not linger around school or congregate in groups on their way home.

Face coverings are required at all times on public transport (for children over the age of 11). If your child has been wearing a face covering before arriving at school or college, it will be important that they understand how to remove it safely. Further guidance can be found here:

[Face coverings](#). The government has asked schools to ensure all face coverings are removed when pupils arrive at school.

### **How will staff manage behaviour?**

As you would expect, BFS will always hold the highest expectations of our pupils. As safety is paramount, we are expecting full cooperation from pupils at all times. Failure to comply places others at risk and will have serious consequences, dependent on the seriousness of the breach, up to and including in extreme cases permanent exclusion. We will outline all the new rules, routines and behaviour expectations so pupils are really clear about how they must conduct themselves.

If the conduct of a pupil falls below that which is expected this will initially result in an isolation with a member of SLT and a phone call home. Where repeated incidents occur or behaviour compromises the safety others, this may result in more serious sanctions being applied.

We expect pupils to strictly adhere to social distancing outside of school, especially on their journey to and from school. The school will not hesitate to sanction pupils for their conduct outside of school.

### **Pupil reminders:**

You will help to keep yourself, your friends, family, teachers and community well 🤝  
if you follow this guidance AT ALL TIMES

- ✓ Stay Alert!
- ✓ Follow all school rules and the code of conduct as normal
- ✓ Do not enter the teacher's zone at the front of the classroom
- ✓ Observe social distancing by staying apart from other pupils in your year group where possible and never mixing between year groups
- ✓ ALWAYS follow the one-way system
- ✓ Avoid touching hand rails/door handles etc.
- ✓ Make sure you wash your hands thoroughly and more regularly including upon arrival, at break and lunch before consuming food. You should wash your hands for at least 20 seconds, using soap and water
- ✓ Use hand sanitiser on entrance to the building and on entrance and exit from your classroom
- ✓ Use your own equipment only AT ALL TIMES
- ✓ Avoid touching your face
- ✓ If you cough or sneeze do so into a tissue which you must then place immediately into a rubbish bin
- ✓ Use hand towels to dry your hands in the toilets and use the Same towels to then open the toilet door so you don't touch it - place the hand towels immediately into a bin on return to the classroom
- ✓ Follow instructions at all times to keep everyone safe

### **Other information:**

Due to the need to prevent the mixing of pupils between year groups we are currently unable to run homework club, our after-school provision in the library. Electives, trips and sports fixtures will also be suspended. We understand some families will be disappointed by this and we hope to review these decisions later in the term, but the safety of all pupils is paramount.

It is vital that we have your up to date contact details. We are regularly sending out text messages to families about pupils completing the online register and we have recently posted reports home. If you have not been receiving these or you have recently changed your contact



details or address please can you email these to [info@bedfordfreeschool.co.uk](mailto:info@bedfordfreeschool.co.uk) so we can update our system accordingly.

Please be aware that no visitors will be routinely accepted at school as the reception area must be kept clear at all times. Any unexpected visitors including parents will be requested to leave the site immediately. All enquiries should be via telephone or email instead.

### **Further questions:**

We are aware this is a great deal of information to read. If you have urgent questions, you can email [info@bedfordfreeschool.co.uk](mailto:info@bedfordfreeschool.co.uk) or contact the relevant pastoral leader.

### **Thank you**

It is often unnoticed, but the work of Governors and Trustees is voluntary and carries significant responsibility. Governors and Trustees put in countless hours and have significant legal responsibility for the running of the school. The governors at BFS are the finest I have come across in my time in education. I am regularly very heavily challenged by them to ensure that BFS is the best it possibly can be. I want to thank the Governing Body, and the Trustees of Advantage Schools, for being so brilliant.

Finally, I'd like to take the opportunity to thank parents, carers and families for your ongoing support. The past few months in particular have been very difficult. We appreciate everything you have done for your child at home and the love and care you have provided over the past few months. I know that some pupils and particularly Y10 will have some studying to do over the holiday period, but when it arrives I also hope that you have some time to spend with loved ones and on hobbies, and that you have a really enjoyable and restful summer holiday.

I look forward to welcoming all pupils back to BFS in September.

Yours sincerely,



Tim Blake  
**Principal**