



BEDFORD
FREE SCHOOL

www.bedfordfreeschool.co.uk

1st September

Reminders & Information about the full re-opening of BFS from September

Dear parents / carers

I hope you have had a restful summer holiday and are enjoying the last few remaining days. We are very much looking forward to seeing existing BFS pupils again from Monday 7th September. Below you will find reminder and information about the full re-opening of BFS. Please ensure you read this information carefully and your child is fully informed about the changes which we have introduced. 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. 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, 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.

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R E S P E C T • H O N E S T Y • H I G H E X P E C T A T I O N S

Shielding advice for all adults and children was paused on 1 August, due 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.

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

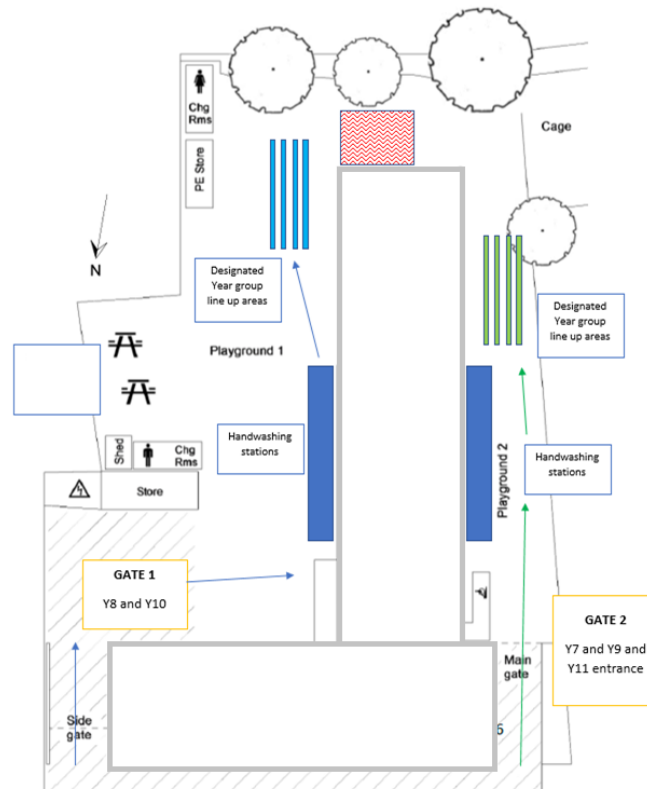
Departure time: Monday-Thursday

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 10 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 we will 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:

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 general guidance can be found here: [Face coverings](#).

Nationwide, the government has said that it is not necessary to wear face coverings in schools, especially in the classroom, where protective measures already mean the risks are lower, and where they can inhibit learning. However, following an update to guidance, schools will have the discretion to require face coverings in communal areas if they believe that is right in their particular circumstances. Only in the event of a local lockdown they will become compulsory in these circumstances.

At this stage we have taken the decision that staff and pupils can choose to use a face covering **in communal areas ONLY (in the canteen and on transitions)** if they wish. This decision will continue to be reviewed and may become mandatory in the event of a local spike in cases or local lockdown being put into effect. All pupils will have to remove any face coverings when entering classrooms.

Reusable face coverings should be unbranded and in plain simple colours. Pupils must also bring with them a suitable bag (Ziploc bag) to store their face covering when not in use.

Pupils must be instructed not to touch the front of their face covering during use or when removing it and they must dispose of temporary face coverings in the waste bins (not recycling bins) provided or place reusable face coverings in a plastic bag they can take home with them, and then wash their hands or use hand sanitiser again after removing a face covering.

This video demonstrates how pupils can safely apply a facemask:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NMSqc9SpbJc>

Further information about face coverings in educational settings can be found here: [Face coverings in education](#)

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:

<p>You will help to keep yourself, your friends, family, teachers and community well 😊 if you follow this guidance AT ALL TIMES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Stay vigilant and 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 and never mixing between year groups✓ ALWAYS follow the one way system✓ Transition in silence and keep to the left-hand side at all times - do not cross the central marker line✓ 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 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✓ Only those with a lift pass can use the lift - only one person is allowed in the lift at one time. Use the hand sanitiser provided before leaving the lift.✓ Follow instructions at all times to keep everyone safe
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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 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 or contact the relevant pastoral leader.

We are really looking forward to welcoming all our existing pupils back to BFS on Monday 7th September.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'T Blake', written in a cursive style.

Tim Blake
Principal