

3 September 2020

Dear Parents and Carers,

I hope that you all have time to read the Okehampton College Corona Virus Full Return Plan, the most recent version of which can be found following this link:

[https://www.okehamptoncollege.devon.sch.uk/uploads/6/1/4/4/61443371/oc\\_coronavirus\\_full\\_return\\_planning\\_v7\\_02092020.pdf](https://www.okehamptoncollege.devon.sch.uk/uploads/6/1/4/4/61443371/oc_coronavirus_full_return_planning_v7_02092020.pdf)

Thank you to those that fed back following the letter that was sent out last week. I have been touched by the thoughtful way you have chosen your words to share your concerns whilst being careful to express your understanding of the unprecedented situation we find ourselves in.

It is clear to me from this feedback that, although most students are very keen to return to College next Wednesday, there are those families and students who still have some anxieties about how students will conduct themselves around the College site. Having considered all that you have shared with me, I would be grateful if parents could take the time to discuss the need to be mindful of other members of the community and be aware of other students who may not be as confident about the return to next week. Please could I ask you to talk about the College CORE values of Community, Opportunity, Respect and Equity in the context of the return to College.

**Everyone within the community of Okehampton College has a part to play in ensuring that the return to College is successful for everyone and that students feels safe and supported.** This is a responsibility that none of us should take lightly as our consideration of others will make a difference to their experience. These are the values that we at the College espouse at all times but they are even more pertinent now and it is imperative that we are all looking out for each other and respecting one another's sensitivities, requirements and personal space at this time. I know that I can count on the students to respond to the situation with maturity and consideration of others. We will be addressing this theme in tutor time on the first day, however any conversations you can have at home to reinforce this message would be greatly appreciated. Thank you for your support.

### **Transport by Bus and Taxi**

Please can I bring to your attention again the section of the re-opening plan regarding Transport.

### **Travelling to College**

*Students should walk to College wherever possible.*

If students cannot walk to College, they should be driven (by members of their household) wherever possible. If sharing a car with people outside of their household, it is advised that windows are open, face coverings are worn (unless exempted: see DfE 2020d, DHSC 2020a), and seats are left free (if possible) to social distance.

*If travel to College must be by coach or taxi:*

Students should clean hands before boarding.

Students must wear face coverings.

Students should sit next to other students in their year, or siblings.

*If travel to College is by public transport:*

Students must wear face coverings.

Students must sit in seats that have been marked as available.

Everyone on the bus or in a taxi has a part to play in making the transportation to school a success. It is important to me, that students on the buses consider the other bus users and follow the rules outlined above.

## **Canteen Food**

I have been asked to clarify the position regarding canteen food and the availability of this. Hot and cold food will be available to purchase for everyone at the College from the start of term. The food will be available, ready wrapped in a container to prevent infection. Students are of course able to bring a packed lunch if they would like. Year 7 students will have their fingerprint ID processed on the morning of Wednesday 9 September, provided that we have received the required consent form.

**If you have not returned the relevant permission form, please can you send this in with your child on Wednesday 9 September.**

If you do not yet have a school gateway account you can set one up using the link below.

<https://login.schoolgateway.com/0/auth/register>

Use the email address and mobile number you have given the College.

You will then receive a text message which contains a PIN code.

You then need to login with your email address and PIN code.

NOTE\* Adding money option may not appear until Wednesday when the student comes 'on-roll'.

## **Troubleshooting**

<https://schoolgateway.co.uk/help/>

If it does not recognise your email address and/or mobile number either check the details we hold via the SIMS Parent app or email us: [datacheck@okehamptoncollege.devon.sch.uk](mailto:datacheck@okehamptoncollege.devon.sch.uk)

## **Face Masks**

Since my last letter the government have given some guidelines of the use of face masks within schools. Forgive me for going into some detail over this but I feel it is important that everyone is familiar with the Dartmoor Multi Academy Trust position regarding this -

This updated guidance can be summarised thus:

- Although the government is still recommending that face coverings are not necessary in schools in areas unaffected by a local lockdown, schools now have the discretion to implement their own policy on face coverings in communal areas.
- In contrast, in parts of the country which are affected by a local lockdown or other restrictions be implemented, the guidance states that, "face coverings should be worn by adults and pupils in secondary schools when moving around the school, such as in corridors and communal areas where social distancing is difficult to maintain."
- In all areas, face coverings are still not necessary in the classroom due to the other controls measures in place such as the set-up of the room to avoid face to face positioning.

## **Use of face coverings in Dartmoor Multi-Academy Trust Schools**

In secondary schools, both staff and students - unless exempt for the reasons explained in the 'staff and pupils who may be exempt' section - are *strongly encouraged* to wear face coverings in all communal and circulation spaces where social distancing is difficult and students will be mixing with different Year Group populations. This will include corridors, entrance lobbies, and other shared enclosed spaces. This will also apply to staff meetings, unless a 2m social distance can be maintained.

All secondary age pupils travelling to and from school via either public transport or school transport are required to wear a face covering and follow all appropriate hygiene measures required by the respective companies.

Students should bring their own face coverings to school as they would for use on public transport, shops, and wider society. If any individual forgets to bring a face covering to school, a disposable mask will be provided.

### **Exceptions**

Face coverings do not need to be worn:

- By any member of staff or student who is exempt (please see the exemption guidance for further information).
- By students or staff in the classroom during lessons, but both are still free to do so if they wish.
- Whilst consuming food and drink at break and lunch times.
- Whilst students are mixing with students within their own year group bubble only - for example during segregated breaktimes.

### **How to wear a face covering**

*A face covering should:*

- Cover your nose and mouth while allowing you to breathe comfortably.
- Fit comfortably but securely against the side of the face.
- Be secured to the head with ties or ear loops.
- Be made of a material that you find to be comfortable and breathable, such as cotton.
- Made up from multiple layers of fabric – ideally 3.
- Unless disposable, it should be able to be washed regularly on the normal wash cycle for the fabric being used.

*When wearing a face covering you should:*

- Wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water for 20 seconds or use hand sanitiser before putting a face covering on.
- Avoid wearing on your neck or forehead.
- Avoid touching the part of the face covering in contact with your mouth and nose, as it could be contaminated with the virus.

*When removing a face covering:*

- Avoid touching the front face of the mask
- Do not give it to someone else to use.

- When not being worn, place the covering safely in a plastic bag. Do not place it on table surfaces where it may become contaminated.
- Wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water for 20 seconds or use hand sanitiser after taking the face covering off.

## **Staff and pupils who may be exempt**

At the present time, the wearing of face coverings is not mandatory in Trust schools but is *strongly encouraged*. The wearing of face coverings in communal areas *may* become mandatory should the infection rate rise locally. Even in this eventuality, there are still some circumstances where people may not be able to wear a face covering. Please be mindful and respectful of such circumstances, noting that some people are less able to wear face coverings, and that the reasons for this may not be visible to others.

This includes (but is not limited to):

- people who cannot put on, wear or remove a face covering because of a physical or mental impairment, or disability
- where putting on, wearing or removing a face covering will cause severe distress
- if you are speaking to or aiding someone who relies on lip reading, clear sound or facial expressions to communicate.

## **Equipment for Learning**

Please can I remind all students that it is part of the plan that all students should return to College equipped to take part in lessons without the need to borrow equipment. Equipment checks will be undertaken during tutor times to ensure students are ready for the learning they will be doing each day. Please can you ensure that students have all that they will need on their return so that we can begin the term as we mean to go on and be ready to take advantage of the teaching that we are all keen to get back to.

It has been a very unusual summer, with so much to plan for with last minute changes to the results and changes to guidelines. The College site staff have worked exceptionally hard to get the College ready for the new term as well as doing a fantastic job of repainting the College and the sports hall so that, after so long away, the students can return to a College they can be proud of.

As you will have seen from the plan for the return on Wednesday 9 September outlined in my last letter, all students will be waiting outside for the first 10 to 15 minutes of that morning whilst they are organised into their tutor groups. Can I suggest that, if the weather is at all inclement students bring a coat?

After so much planning and preparation I am really looking forward to welcoming them all back on Wednesday.

Yours sincerely,



**D Brett**  
**Principal**