



8 July 2020

Dear Parent,

I hope this newsletter finds you well, and I hope it provides you with the information you need in order to support your son/daughter in advance of their return to school in September. I apologise in advance that it reads as a list of dos and don'ts. I am confident that if we all work together the return in September will be a successful one.

The recently released government guidance advises that we should limit (as far as possible) interaction between different Year groups in school. This is in order to avoid a whole school shut down should there be a Coronavirus outbreak within the learning community. Therefore, we will be creating year group zones and staggering departure from lessons between sessions and at break time and lunchtime, in order to minimise inter-year group interaction.

One of the key messages from the government is that students do not need to observe social distancing in their 'Year group bubbles'.

Attendance at school

The government advice in this regard is very clear; all students must return to school in September unless they have a letter from a GP or the NHS making explicit reference to there being a requirement to not attend school. We cannot authorise absences if parents or students are nervous about Coronavirus. I understand some parents and students will be anxious; let me reassure you we are doing all we can to limit transmission of the virus in line with government guidance.

Return to school in September - timings

Please read the following carefully as different year groups start back on different days.

Tuesday 1st September

Year 7: Arrive at 8:35am for a brief assembly followed by a day of induction activities with Base Tutors. Students will finish at 3.05pm.

Year 10: Arrive at 8:35am for a brief assembly followed by a session with form tutors. Students will finish at 12:30pm. This is aimed at introducing Year 10 to the upper school.

Year 12: Arrive at 10:00am for a brief assembly followed by induction activities with Academic Tutors. Lunch at 12:30pm. Students can finish after lunch unless they have any timetable or other admin enquiries.

Wednesday 2nd September

All Year groups attend.

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Years 7 through to 12 start at 8:35am and will commence normal timetables after a Period 1 session with form tutors.

Year 13 to arrive at 10:00am for a brief assembly in the hall. Lessons will start from Period 3 onward.

Return to school in September - General guidance

Getting to school

As far as possible, students should avoid travelling to school with students who are not in their Year group. Students are advised to get on an early bus because social distancing measures might still be employed by bus companies in September and there might be limited space on peak time buses.

Keeping year groups separate

We are partitioning areas of the school for each year group from their arrival to school, during break and at lunchtime. We are also operating a one-way system around the school and allowing different year groups to leave lessons at staggered times.

Facial coverings / masks

Students have to wear face coverings or masks if they are using public transport to get to school. If students intend on removing their facial covering or mask on arrival at school, they must either bin it (facilities will be provided) or secure it in a seal-able container in their school bag. Hands must be sanitised immediately after mask removal. Public Health England does not currently recommend the wearing of masks in school. I am happy for students to wear plain masks in school if it makes them more comfortable. We will not be providing face masks to students whilst in school.

Uniform

Government guidelines suggest that there isn't a reason for uniform not to be worn; we are therefore asking that students continue to follow the uniform policy.

If you are facing financial difficulties due to the current crisis and wish to discuss any support with uniform, please do not hesitate to contact the school. Kim Brown, our Business Manager will be happy to assist (kab@hallcrossacademy.co.uk).

Other news

Term dates 21-22

There has been some confusion after the latest release from the local authority. The 22 primary schools who opted for a two week October half term will operate this pattern from September 2021, although I believe at least one primary school will follow this format from this September. As a school, like many other secondary schools, we have a concern about following this pattern. It removes a vital curriculum week for all students but particularly for those in Y11 and Y13. The fixed Easter fortnight is, however, something we are looking to discuss further.

Princip

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Governor news and opportunities

In June, our Chair of Governors Dave Cox decided to step down after providing a long service to the school. I'd like to take this opportunity to thank Dave for his contribution to Hall Cross. Dave's stepping down, and one or two other developments on the governing body, means that we are looking to recruit new governors. If you are keen to support the school in this way and want more information, please email my PA, Laura Evans (lev@hallcrossacademy.co.uk).

Please contact Laura if you have any questions at all.

Finally, I would like to thank you once more for all of your support and positive feedback during the last few months. I wish you and your family good health and an enjoyable summer.

Kind regards,

Simon Swain

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