**St. Peter’s Catholic High School**

**Update & Frequently Asked Questions**

**28th August 2020**

Ahead of opening our school to all pupils in September we have asked parents and pupils to submit any questions so that we can have as much clarity as possible about what will happen over the first few weeks. With changing government advice and as the situation around Covid-19 is a moving one, we will need to keep this guidance under review and may need to make changes as we experience the wider opening of school.

All of our decisions are based on trying to find the right balance between mitigating the risks of transmission of Covid-19 (these cannot be completely eliminated) and providing as rich and as normal a school experience as possible. We are mindful that the arrangements we put in place have to be manageable and create an acceptable experience for the medium to long term that we may have to manage this situation for. These questions should be read in conjunction with the letter sent to parents in July 2020 where I explained in detail how we intended to open up. I have attached a copy of this letter to this message.

I have grouped questions under themes. Where there were a number of similar questions, I have summarised the main points together. I have left the questions pretty much as the parents or pupils asked them as I think this gives you an insight into what others are thinking.

**Transport**

Q: Do pupils have to wear masks on the school buses?

A: Yes. The law requires that passengers wear masks or face coverings on public transport and we are making it a school rule on school buses as social distancing is not always possible. Pupils should also sit in year groups on the buses. (N.B. as in all situations there are some people who cannot wear a face covering and other pupils should be understanding and tolerant of this).

Q: I am very concerned about the new 973 bus route going on the motorway without seatbelts.

A: We also have concerns about this and have represented these to TFGM and the LA. It is legal for this to happen, but we will continue to ask for a change to this; parents may wish to contact these authorities directly to add to our concerns. School does not have direct control of the transport arrangements.

**Start times, school day and Staggered finishes, start arrangements**

Q: Start and finishing times, are they going to be staggered by 5 mins per year?

Q: What time does school start?

A: The arrival of pupils at school is already quite staggered. Pupils should arrive as normal and go either to their outside zone or their canteen if buying breakfast items (sitting in Year group zones). All pupils should be in school by 8.50am to register at **9.00am** after this they will be classed as arriving late.

Groups will be dismissed from 3.10pm to 3.30pm to stagger leaving the building.

Q: Is the plan to run 3 extended lessons per day going to run? The timetable published doesn't reflect this.

A: Yes. The published timetable shows 6 lessons a day as this is our normal pattern and how our timetable software is set up. Until further notice we are spreading this out over 2 weeks with Blue and Yellow weeks. Pupils will colour code their timetable as part of their induction in September. Blue weeks will consist of ONLY the odd number periods (1,3,5) as doubles. Yellow weeks will have ONLY the even number periods (2,4,6) as doubles. The week beg. 2nd September will be a Blue week, the week beg. 7th September will be a Yellow week. We will add a document showing how this will work over the autumn term to our website so people can check and we will remind pupils regularly. We have chosen to do this to reduce movement BUT to keep the broad and balanced curriculum experience.

Q: Y9 are just in on Thursday if the first week... will they be doing lessons that day or not? If yes, which week’s lessons will they be?

A: Y9 will have a form period for the first double lesson on Thu 3rd Sep. They will then follow the 2 Blue week lessons (3 and 5 on their timetable).

Q: Can the children bring school bags? Will there be different entrance/exit points?

Would also appreciate clarification on what the earliest time is that children can arrive in school to plan journeys. E.g is 8.20 am too early?

A: Pupils should bring a school bag. To avoid this becoming too heavy (they will not have access to lockers) they should pack this daily with only what is needed for the 3 lessons that day as well as their independent learning book, a reading book and their pencil case. The pupils should enter at pupil reception (any queues should be socially distanced). They will exit by the door at the top of the Maths corridor. We would ask that pupils try not to arrive too early. There are always staff in school from around 8.15am but our formal supervision of pupils starts at 8.50am. Pupils should be in their outside zone or canteen only and sensible behaviour is required.

Q: I haven't yet been told what room my form is in.

A: Pupils will gather on their yard on their first day and will be collected by form tutors and taken to their form room.

Q: Even though movement is limited, there will still be A LOT of children moving between lesson, breaks and lunch. How is the school going to control this?

A: We will be taking steps to stagger movement. There will be no bells, so teachers will dismiss groups at slightly staggered times. A one-way system operates throughout school and movement from the end of lessons will always be to an outside space. Lunchtimes will be in staggered sittings by year group. Following changes to government policy we are asking pupils to wear face coverings on change-overs as an additional measure.

**Uniform**

Q: My concern is as we all want out children to look smart for school but is it going to be practical in the longer term to wash a blazer or a uniform every day for return to school the next day! Washing clothes to stop the spread is a must when being in such crowded places.

Q: Could you tell me if girls are allowed to wear black trousers

Do the pupils need a clean uniform every day, just thinking about the Blazers mainly, washing and drying for the next day or can we use Dettol spray (kills cold and flu viruses) in between washes.

Q: Perhaps school could have said black trousers ok for this school year?

A: We are following the government advice that schools should “return to their usual uniform policies” and that “Uniforms do not need to be cleaned more often than usual” Good hand and respiratory hygiene are the most important steps. If you have concerns, then some of the steps in the questions seem sensible. The routines you ask your children to follow on returning home (hand washing, getting changed promptly) may also provide some reassurance.

Any pupil who cannot get hold of brown trousers (girls and boys) can wear black trousers to start the year. We will review this as we go forwards and will not introduce a cut-off date for the end of this that would cause unreasonable financial pressures on families.

**Hand Sanitiser and Cleaning**

Q: What hand sanitiser are you using?

A: We have alcohol-based hand sanitiser at many points around school and outside every classroom. Pupils can also bring their own and are recommended to if they have sensitive skin conditions. We expect everybody to respect this as a safety measure and to behave sensibly in its use.

Q: What extra cleaning is being undertaken between groups?

Q: What cleaning of toilets takes place? Do year groups have separate toilets?

A: Cleaning between groups will occur at the end of each lesson. Concentrating on hard surfaces such as desks and door handles. Extra hours have been secured for lunchtime cleaning between sittings in the dining room and a whole site clean takes place daily.

The regular cleaning of toilet areas throughout the day has been prioritised, year groups have designated toilets which they will be asked to use except in an emergency. We have a policy of no more than 2 people in a toilet block.

**Face coverings**

Q:Are the children going to wear face coverings when moving around the school, between classes?

Q: If the say the kids have to wear masks, do I have to get certificate or letter for my daughter not to wear one?

Q: Do students need to wear face masks in communal areas? If not, do they need to have one with them?

Q: Are staff being given the option to wear masks if they wish to? Will families be given the opportunity to wear masks even if it is not mandatory?

A*:* During the school day Any pupil or member of staff can wear a mask / face covering if it helps them to feel more confident, though we would not recommend pupils wearing them in lessons.

Pupils will need to bring a face covering. Pupils and staff will be asked to wear a face covering inside the building during change-overs in corridors and at any time where a corridor or inside space gets very busy. They should not be needed during other times of the school day as our plans stagger movement and create social distance. There will be an ‘emergency’ stock of disposable face coverings kept in school.

There will be people who cannot wear a face covering for a variety of reasons. These reasons should be shared confidentially with form tutors by an Edulink message or a note from parents. If we need more detail around this, we will follow this up. Members of our school community need to be understanding of this in keeping with our ethos of being a 'caring community'. Face coverings should be appropriate for a school setting - pupils may be asked to change any that we do not feel are appropriate."

**PE**

Q; Is the any option for PE or some form of outside walkabout?

Q: What sort of PE activities will take place?

A: It is highly likely that most PE will take place using indoor facilities for the first ½ term. This will involve non-contact activities where provision can be made for the cleanliness of all equipment used and we will not be reliant on the weather to prevent pupils from becoming wet/dirty. Examples could be Table Tennis, Badminton, Bench Ball. By doing this, there will be no need for pupils to change into additional clothing as exercise levels will be light to moderate. On occasions, weather permitting a supervised walk may be possible to allow pupils an opportunity to be outside.

Q: If children aren’t able to change and are expected to wear their PE kit all day, can they wear the school hoodie and tracksuit trousers over shorts& t-shirts? If so, what is the requirements for the bottoms as I cannot see a school standard?

A: Pupils can wear their school hoodie and tracksuit trousers over their PE shorts. We do ask that it is a school hoodie or else their blazer and that your child’s tracksuits pants are plain black. It is not compulsory to purchase new tracksuit pants, although these are available from all school suppliers. Please do not allow your child to attend wearing a branded sports hoodie.

Q: If they have a school badged PE hoodie, are they still required to wear a blazer on top of this and bring an outdoor coat? Or can the blazer remain at home providing the hoodie is worn?

A: There is no requirement for pupils to wear the school blazer over an official school hoodie. In this instance we would recommend that the pupils just bring their school coat in case of poor weather whilst travelling to and from school and breaktimes.

Q: With regards to the wearing of the PE kits, with his lesson being first thing is there anything in place for children to clean themselves if needs be? Are they able to remove dirty clothes and are they able to take deodorants into school?

A: Due to the nature of the activities being delivered within PE, there should be no need for pupils to physically clean themselves. As usual, roll on deodorants are permitted. Please note that sprays are NOT allowed under any circumstances.

Q: re students allowed to wear their PE trainers to come to school or is the expectation that they will wear school shoes with the PE kit and that they bring trainers to change into?

A: There is no expectation that pupils would wear shoes on the day that they have PE. Pupils would arrive in full school kit including suitable trainers.

Q: This isn’t very hygienic also what types of PE will they be doing?

A: Given current circumstances, the aim of each PE lesson will be to provide all students with an opportunity to take part in recreational activities as part of their weekly timetable. Activities will be non-competitive and therefore there should be no concerns regarding hygiene.

Q: I’m taking GCSE PE, so I also have pe theory lessons as well as practical lessons, does this mean I have to come in my pe kit on the days that I have pe theory lessons?

A: No, during your first lesson, your teacher will explain what day your practical lesson will take place. You will not need PE kit for theory lessons.

Q: Do you know if Year 8’s are coming in their PE kits on Friday 4th of September as it is our PE day ?

A: As this will be there first day, there will be no need for pupils to attend in PE kit.

**Books and Equipment**

Q: Do pupils need to bring their old school books and art folders into school on the first day back?

Q: I was just wondering for year 10s soon to be year 11s should we take in our year 10 books that we need for that day also are we missing Periods 1&2 like normally or something different this year during the circumstances.

Q: Will teachers be taking in books to mark?

A: No, teachers will not expect them to do this. Books from previous years should be kept at home and teachers will explain what they want pupils to bring in. Year 11 should take particular care to keep their Year 10 books safely at home.

A: All pupils should bring their own stationery equipment in a pencil case and their calculator to avoid having to share these items (list on my previous letter).

A: Teachers will be able take in work to mark. They will need to leave exercise books for 24 hours before touching them and 24 hours before returning them; so this may mean they need to be more selective about what / when to mark or ask you to submit some work electronically or on separate paper. For this year we will not be issuing plastic covers for books and ask that you do not back them in plastic as this creates more problems

**Nurture / SEND support**

Q: I just wanted to ask whether the nurture rooms and staff will be available?

Q: With my child having SEND how will his support lesson be done. Also, he needs handouts BEFORE his lesson- how will the school do this?

Q: Will support from the school Chaplain still be available?

A: The Nurture / SEND team will be supporting pupils across our school. They will need to operate differently, and we have allocated extra spaces so that they can work with year groups separately, including at break and lunchtimes. This situation will put some additional strain on the team, so we ask for your understanding and patience. Resources can be provided as before (but see the above answer regarding paper resources / marking).

Kirsty, our school Chaplain will also be available but again, may need to work a bit differently and in different spaces.

**Food**

Q: What will be the food menu now you have adjusted it and can you also send prices and details of how to prepare order BEFORE school starts

Q: I haven’t had payment details for lunch for year 7 yet - do they go in with cash on the first day?

Q: Is breakfast available?

Q: I will need to drop my sons off in the mornings on my way to work. I understand they will still be able to go sit in canteen and have breakfast then? They are year 7 and year 9. Will they be able to sit together in the canteen?

A: Some details re food have been sent out by Mr. Roberts. More may follow.

A: For Y7 Pupils only:

SCOPAY accounts will not be set up yet. Previously we had planned to circulate SCOPay details to all Y7 parents before the start of the new term, however due to technical issues out of our control we can no longer do this. Instead Y7 pupils who wish to buy food from the canteen still can, the canteen staff will take their name at the till and we will charge the pupils account £2.36 later on when their account has been set up. We intend to give Y7 pupils a letter at the end of their first day. Parents will be asked (in the letter) to set up their child's SCOPay account online by the end of the first week. Once set up, pupils/ parents should be able to top up their food accounts online. The canteen staff will continue to take Y7 pupil names until accounts have been set up.

A: Breakfast is available, pupils will need to sit in Year groups (even if they are siblings).

**Changes to GCSE content**

Q: What is the school doing with GCSE poetry after the Government announced it no longer needs to be done?

A: The English department will explain this on your return to school. Other changes to GCSE content / requirements will be explained by your teachers on your return.

**Covid-19**

Q: What is in place if a student or a member of family is in any of the risk groups.

A: Our precautions have been designed to keep everyone as safe as possible whilst still offering a full school experience. If you have specific concerns regarding a child or family vulnerability, please raise these with the relevant Head of Year. We have already had a number of these conversations about some of our most vulnerable pupils.

Q: Temperature and symptoms.  What if any action is being taken to check all persons on school premises? Parents, support staff like social workers and other visitors who would enter the school premises.

Q: What authority do you have to remove and ensure if they have symptoms that they stay off for the legal recommended isolation, for example a spreadsheet of date off to date expected back in?

A: The most important message is not to attend if you or anyone in your household has any symptoms. Visitors will be reminded of this at reception. This will be constantly reinforced.

We are not proposing to check all temperatures on arrival. If we suspect someone has symptoms (pupils, staff, visitors) they will be asked to go home, isolate and book a test. We will keep records to ensure that if positive, they complete the required period of isolation before returning to school. We expect that for everyone’s benefit people will comply with this; but the headteacher does have authority to insist that they do so.

Q: Discipline. Is there a clear message being sent out to parents about how the new normal relating to being physically distant? How do staff discipline pupils and how could any form of isolation be managed?

A: All our communications on this have emphasised the social distancing applies to all, including parents. We will need to continue to remind everybody about this as it is easy to forget. We hope these reminders do not cause any offence.

We have written a new annex to our Behaviour Policy to deal with Covid-19 related issues and we will need to operate any sanctions, detentions etc. with this situation in mind. We remain committed to our school being a calm and orderly environment where everybody can achieve their best.

Q: Will we get a weekly update so that if questions or information is needed to be circulated its one circulation? So exactly like this Friday?

A: Regular communication is really important. If you have any questions, please feel free to send an Edulink message (but please do so on school days between 7.30am and 6.30pm). I it is an individual issue we will reply, but we will send updates like this when we feel there are a number of people asking the same questions or we have some important new information, so perhaps not weekly but you can expect a few updates as this half term goes on and we learn more about how to run our school in these exceptional times!

Thank you for your support and understanding.

Mr. A. McGlown

Headteacher