



BENFIELD SCHOOL

PRIDE IN PERFORMANCE

Headteacher: Mr Richard Carr



Dear Parent/Guardian

15 July 2020

Re: Information regarding re-opening arrangements in September 2020

I am writing to you with an update and to provide details of our anticipated start to the new academic year for September now that the updated Department for Education guidance has been published. Please be aware that these arrangements are subject to change if government guidance alters over the summer holidays. In the event of this taking place the Benfield School website will carry information which will inform parents/carers of any alterations to the details outlined here.

Please also find enclosed in the envelope the following documents:

- Benfield School Term Dates 2020-21
- Benfield School uniform information 2020-21
- Copies of the Benfield School Behaviour for Learning System Ladders

How has Benfield adapted to COVID-19?

As the summer term draws to a close, I am reflecting on the significant impact that the virus has had on the learning and lives of all of our students. Our priority for Benfield over the autumn term is to support every one of our students in their learning and well-being as we try to return to a 'different' normal. I am proud to say as Headteacher that throughout the COVID19 pandemic, Benfield School has never closed, remaining open since March to supervise those students who are vulnerable or who are the children of essential key workers. At the same time, Benfield staff worked daily alongside NEAT staff and Newcastle United Foundation to deliver hundreds of meals to our Benfield families and also wider families in our local community. Benfield also joined many other local schools in producing hundreds of face visors and PPE equipment which were then delivered for use by healthcare workers in the NHS. On the 15th June, Benfield then also opened its doors to welcome the return of all students in Years 10 and 12 as part of a wider re-opening.

To enable us to check in with our students we were pleased with our recent Form Tutor meeting days last week which allowed all students in Years 7-9 to attend the Sports Centre to meet and speak with staff and most importantly, to re-engage with school and have questions answered about learning next year.

This week here in school, I am pleased to say that we have had an exceptionally high turn out of Year 6 students who have attended sessions as part of our reduced Transition experience. This has also been hugely successful and has allowed our new Year 7 students to access the site now, instead of waiting until September. All new Year 7 students have also received telephone calls from their Form Tutor and have had the opportunity to meet key staff here in school this week. Please also see the Transition section of the school website for further information.

Details of return to school in September and full re-opening

We are excited here in school to be able to welcome all students back after the summer holiday, but this must be conducted in a planned and staggered way that is safe for both staff and students. There are lots of new systems, rules and expectations for everyone to get used to, which will come in to effect from September 1st. We will therefore be welcoming students back carefully in different groups on different days



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across the first week back, which is our normal approach to every new school year in Benfield. Students in different Year Groups will also have staggered start times and different departure times which are off-set slightly at the start and end of each day in order to allow safe distancing to take place and help reduce large groups of students mixing outside of bubbles.

This is more significant than ever before this year as we see our largest ever intake of Year 7 students joining the school (230 students) and our largest ever student numbers on site. To keep everyone safe the school site will be split into different zones for students in each Year Group and each Year Group will then be kept in separate bubbles as much as possible to ensure social distancing and help mitigate risk. Students in different Year Groups will not mix.

We have full detailed plans of our safe approach towards full reopening which are outlined in the **Benfield School Risk Assessment** document. This will be available for all parents/carers to read on the school website from next week. Here you will find details and assurances of our health and safety measures including hand washing procedures, details of how we will support student progress and well-being. We have carefully planned to make sure that every student receives a full curriculum offer and all access subjects as part of their timetable.

On **Monday 7th and Tuesday 8th September only staff will attend school for two Staff Training days** and school will not be open to students. It is important that staff can undertake full health and safety training in relation to the systems which will be in operation from 1st September and are familiar with them before all students return.

The remainder of the first week will then run as follows:

Year Group	Key Information for First Week (<i>First day highlighted</i>)
Year 7	Return Wednesday 9th September – 11 th September Students should arrive at 8:30am at the Cherrywood Student Entrance and into own zone area Students will leave school at 2:50pm onwards via Cherrywood Exit
Year 8	Return Thursday 10th September – 11 th September Students should arrive at 8:30am at the Cherrywood Student Entrance and into own zone area Students will leave school at 3:00pm onwards via Cherrywood Exit
Year 9	Return Thursday 10th September – 11 th September Students should arrive at 8:30am at the Main Entrance side gate (right of reception) Students will leave school at 3:00pm onwards via the Main Entrance side gate
Year 10	Return Thursday 10th September – 11 th September Students should arrive at 8:50am at the Cherrywood Student Entrance Students will leave school at 3:15pm onwards via Cherrywood Exit
Year 11	Return Thursday 10th September – 11 th September Students should arrive at 8:50am at the Cherrywood Student Entrance Students will leave school at 3:15pm onwards via the Main Entrance side gate
Year 12	Return Friday 11th September All students will receive details of start times and outlines of the day
Year 13	Return Friday 11th September All students will receive details of start times and outlines of the day

All students will attend every day at the start times and locations above in the following week of Monday 14th September and this will continue until further notice.

Recovery Curriculum

When school fully re-opens in September, and after students have been made aware in the first week back of the many new changes, health and safety systems and how the school will operate, Benfield will launch our '**Recovery Curriculum**'. Further details about this will be posted out to all parents/carers next week.

Remote Learning

Throughout the school closure Benfield students have been supplied with weekly work to complete at home provided by all subject areas. This has been accessible via the school website.

Students have also been able to access our SENECA on-line learning software to support learning as well as make use of the Oak National Academy on-line resources as a further means of support.

We have also provided work for completion at home for our new Year 7 students.

Use of technology and wider use of remote and distanced learning will continue to be a method used by Benfield staff and students to help address gaps in learning and support students in making progress next academic year.

School uniform in September

All students in Years 7 – 11 must attend school in full school uniform.

Students this year have been exceptionally good at wearing the correct uniform and we expect this to continue next year. There is only one change to the current Benfield School uniform for September-coloured ties which are different colours for each year group. You can help us by reminding your child of the school's expectations regarding appearance and conduct, particularly taking note of the fact that mobile phones must not be used inside school and that only a single pair of stud earrings are an appropriate piercing set for students to wear whilst on the school premises. I would also like to request your continued support with students not attending in leggings which are not part of the Benfield uniform. Please see the enclosed uniform guide which addresses all areas of uniform.

Students should bring a bag containing their own water bottle, stationary (pen, pencil, ruler) and PE kit.

Health & safety and student behaviour expectations

All students are expected to follow strict social distancing whilst on site and follow the clear floor markings, signage and student movement systems which will be in place in school and around the site. Students are also expected to conduct themselves at all times in line with school expectations and conform to health and safety guidelines in relation to handwashing and following the instructions of staff. For any student failing to follow the school systems or meet school expectations the updated school behaviour policy will be applied.

Detailed information about the school behaviour policy and our 'Behaviour for Learning' and rewards systems can be found on the school website.

Students must not attend school if feeling symptomatic or displaying flu-like symptoms. Benfield will also be fully applying the NHS Track and Trace system if required in the event that an individual on site displays symptoms and we are advised by Local Health.

Student attendance and punctuality

All students from September **must** continue to remain on the school premises at lunch-time, which promotes good punctuality and attendance and which has strongly impacted positively towards further increasing standards of teaching and learning this year up to the point of the closure.

May I please request that doctor or dental appointments are made after 2:00pm wherever possible, ensuring that you provide medical evidence (letter or appointment card) for any medical related absences. I must also stress that in line with DfE guidelines that students must not be taken out of school during term time for holidays as permission cannot be given.

Break time and lunch time – Student catering and refreshments

A new on-line app will allow students to add funds to their lunch accounts and a pre-ordering system for ordering lunch upon arrival be in operation. This will help support improved safety and reduce the need for queuing during lunch and break times in school. We will write to you in the summer holidays to provide further and more detailed information about the system and how it can be used.

I can confirm that the cost of a school meal for paying students from September will be £2.30. for a full daily meal.

Looking ahead to the summer

Meanwhile, we eagerly await examination results from our Year 11 and Year 13. We are confident that we will continue to demonstrate a rising trend of improvement, despite no formal exams taking place this year. In the current climate all schools have instead been asked to input Centre Assessed grades.

There continues to be a lot of excitement about the future for the school as we enter our fifth year as an Academy as well as for our new group of Year 7 and Year 12 students who will be joining us in September. With your appreciated and on-going partnership, I look forward to sharing further successes and updates with you throughout the coming months. The current challenging circumstances may continue to impact on the life and function of the school, but you will always be kept updated and we will continue to work together to support all of our students.

Please take the time to read through the detailed **September Full Re-opening Benfield Risk Assessment** which will be published on the school website next week.

End of year academic reports for all students in those Year Groups who are still to receive them due to the closure caused by the pandemic will be received next week.

I hope you have a safe and enjoyable summer break and we look forward to your child/children starting or returning in September as Benfield fully and safely re-opens.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "R Carr". The signature is written in a cursive style and is underlined with a blue horizontal line.

Mr R Carr
Headteacher

