



BENFIELD SCHOOL

PRIDE IN PERFORMANCE

Headteacher: Mr Richard Carr



Dear Year 6 Parent/Guardian

16 July 2021

Re: Information regarding end of term and re-opening arrangements in September 2021

I am writing to you with an update and to provide details of our anticipated start to the new academic year for September. ***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 2021-22
- Benfield School uniform information 2021-22

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 continue to support every one of our students in their learning and well-being as we try to return to a 'different' normal in September. I am proud to say as Headteacher that throughout the COVID19 pandemic, Benfield School has never been required to close and has remained open since September to supervise those students who are vulnerable or who are the children of essential key workers during each lockdown.

Benfield also overcame barriers such as short-notice announcements from government to quickly introduce remote learning for all students remaining at home at various points across the year and we also ensured that every student was able to undertake lateral flow testing on the school premises in line with government guidance.

A downside of the pandemic has been the lack of opportunity to have parents/carers attend the school site for our usual Year 6 Open Evening and Parents' Evening events. It is very much hoped that we can return to normal with more people on site during next academic year.

Unfortunately, we are also currently affected by rising infection levels across Newcastle and surrounding areas. This has resulted in an increasing number of positive cases of Covid-19 amongst students in some year groups across the school over the past three weeks. In some instances, staffing levels have also been affected.

I have liaised daily with Public Health England to keep them informed of the levels of positive cases experienced amongst students and I have been informed that they are assured by the consistency of which staff and students are following our systems of control to mitigate transmission and also that our school risk assessment document remains effective and robust.

Regretfully, we have had to take the decision at this time that our usual Year 6 Transition days for students joining us in September can no longer take place on site during the final week of term in the current climate. We will be counteracting this through the offer of a Summer School to Year 6 students during the school holiday.

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www.benfield-school.co.uk

Details of return to school in September

We are excited here in school to be able to welcome all students back after the summer holiday in what hopefully will be under no Covid-19 restrictions. There are new school systems, rules and expectations for everyone to get used to which will come in to effect from September 1st here in school for the new academic year.

As outlined in the recently published DfE COVID-19 Operational guidance for schools for September, schools are once again able to operate a staggered start to the first week of the new term. Benfield will be undertaking this in order to conduct two lateral flow tests for students in compliance with government guidance.

We will run student induction days across the week for all year groups on designated days to enable all students to receive a full induction process where we will establish new routines, systems and expectations. **Students will only be required to attend school for their induction day prior to full lessons beginning on Friday 10th September.**

Year 7, 12 and 13 will be invited into school on **Monday 6th September** for their initial lateral flow test at the following times:

Surname A to L: 10:30 am
Surname M to Z: 11:30 am

Year 7, 12 and 13 students should report to the main school office on arrival and do not need to be in school uniform. Students can leave once the test is completed – this process should only take 20 to 30 mins.

Over the summer holiday, we will also request parent/carer consent for students to allow testing to take place on the school site.

The first week of return to school for students in September will operate as follows:

Year Group	Key Information for First Week (<i>First day highlighted</i>)
Monday 6th September	Teacher Training Day (School Closed) Year 7, 12 and 13 students to attend school for first lateral flow testing only. Students are not required to attend in school uniform on this day.
Tuesday 7th September	Year 7, 12 and 13 students only attend from 8:35am for Induction Day.
Wednesday 8th September	Year 8 & 10 students to attend school from 8:35am for first lateral flow testing. Year 8 & 10 students then remain on site for Induction Day. Students in all other year groups to complete set work at home.
Thursday 9th September	Year 9 & 11 students to attend school from 8:35am for first lateral flow testing. Year 9 & 11 students then remain on site for Induction Day. Students in all other year groups to complete set work at home.
Friday 10th September	All students attend from 8:35am. Pd1 with Form Tutor. All lessons from Pd2. Year 7, 12 & 13 students will receive second lateral flow test.
Monday 13th September	All students attend from 8:35am. All lessons from Pd1. Year 8 & 10 students will receive second lateral flow test during morning session.
Tuesday 14th September	All students attend from 8:35am. All lessons from Pd1. Year 9 & 11 students will receive second lateral flow test during morning session.

School uniform in September (Please see sheet included with this letter)

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. You can help us by reminding your child of the school's expectations regarding appearance and conduct, particularly taking note 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 attending school in incorrect school uniform will be accommodated in a holding room until correct school uniform can be brought into school by a parent/carer or the issue can be rectified.

Students should bring a bag containing their own water bottle, stationary (pen, pencil, ruler) and PE kit. Year 7 will be provided with a fully equipped pencil case on their first day.

Student attendance and punctuality

All students (Year 7 – 11) 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.

Health & safety and student behaviour expectations

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

Mobile telephones and other technical equipment

From September all technical equipment must be switched off and unseen whilst students are on the school site. This includes in the outside social areas. Benfield is keen to support student safeguarding and in particular, prevent issues which can arise through inappropriate use of social media. If such equipment is in view then the incident will be logged and students will be asked to return the equipment to their bag/pocket. Incidents will be monitored and this may result in equipment being confiscated by the pastoral team. In this instance students are to collect a letter from reception and give to parents/carers. The equipment will be placed in the school safe until a parent/carer comes in to school to collect the device.

Break time and lunch time – Student catering and refreshments

Our on-line app will continue to allow students to add funds to their lunch accounts. Further and more detailed information about the system and how it can be used will be given to students on their induction day.

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

Sexual Harassment and conduct – Response to DfE Report

You will be aware that there has been a large amount of attention focussed upon the subject of sexual harassment and abuse recently in the news and featuring on various media platforms. Sexual conduct is a key area of focus in education presently. Ofsted's national '[Review of Sexual Abuse in Schools and Colleges](#)' has recently been released and this report identifies a range of issues that all schools need to be aware of and respond to in order to help address the case that some young people are normalising behaviours that are not acceptable.

Benfield school have in place an effective and robust Relationships and Sexual Education programme that all students access, (Benfield became an early adopter last academic year of this requirement,) but as a school we want and need to do more to address this issue and best support our students.

In relation to how we intend to develop our support and provision from September 2021, Benfield intends to implement the following:

- We will continue to work with external agencies such as Northumbria police to give our students the most up to date information
- We will continue to train our staff around safeguarding issues and how they can be dealt with correctly
- We will follow DfE guidance and continue to teach our students age appropriate information so they can make informed choices.
- We will educate all of our students about how they report concerns or issues to the relevant people or agencies

Looking ahead to the summer

Meanwhile, we eagerly await confirmation of our Centre Assessed Grades from our Year 11 and Year 13 students. We are confident that we will continue to demonstrate a rising trend of improvement, despite no formal exams taking place this year.

There continues to be a lot of excitement about the future for the school as we enter our sixth 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 valued 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.

Myself and the staff here at Benfield have been so appreciative of the patience, understanding and support of our parents/carers throughout the school year as we have all had to deal with very difficult circumstances. 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



Richard Carr
Headteacher