



17 July 2020

As we head towards the end of another year, I would like to take this opportunity to say thank you to all our staff, parents and wider community for coming together to support our students through this difficult period.

A reminder, that if you need to contact the academy over the Summer break, please do so by emailing office@castlehall.com.

SIMS parent app

Please ensure you have activated your account before we return in September. If you have not received an email or are having any issues, please contact the school via the email address above.

Return to school in September

As you will be aware, the Department for Education released their guidance to schools last week to support the preparation for having all children back in school in September. We have been working with this guidance to finalise what this will look like for children when they return to Castle Hall.

Our guiding principles for returning remain unchanged:

1. The obligation to ensure the safety of children, parents and staff;
2. A commitment to the welfare and wellbeing of children and staff;
3. Approaching the planning task to reopen in a calm, caring and consultative manner; and
4. Making measured and reasonable decisions on the basis of the evidence we have and within the unique contexts we face in our academies.

We want our students to return to as much normality as possible, whilst taking absolute precautions regarding their health and safety. We will be putting students back into all of their normal lessons with their normal teaching staff, ensuring that no subjects are missed out.

Although we are very much looking forward to our students returning to as much normality in school as possible, we have to also acknowledge the risk that a second lockdown may occur and that we may have a number of students self-isolating during the Autumn term. We will therefore be ensuring that we have a Remote Learning Strategy in place to support students in both of these circumstances.

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Students will return in a phased manner from 7 September and all students will be in the academy from 14 September. The following table details this return:

Year Group	Return Date
Year 7	Monday 7 September
Year 8	Friday 11 September
Year 9	Monday 14 September
Year 10	Thursday 10 September
Year 11	Wednesday 9 September

All students should arrive at 8.25am and will be directed by staff to the appropriate entrances. Our Senior Leaders and staff team will be on the entrance points to welcome the students back, provide a friendly face and support them with finding their way.

There is a need to limit the contact that students have with each other in order to adhere to the health and safety guidance. We will therefore be supporting students to remain in 'year group bubbles' whilst in school. Staff will obviously cross these bubbles due to teaching across all year groups. Wherever possible, they will keep a 2-metre distance from the students in the classroom. Rest assured though, if we have an emergency and our students need staff support, we will prioritise the need to help our children over the 2-metre rule. It would be naïve to suggest that our students can be in school and never come into contact with a student from another year group, but we do feel that we can work hard to ensure that wherever possible, they are only in contact with their own year group. There are a number of measures that have been put into place to ensure that happens, including:

- Minimising transition around the academy for students
- Ensure all classes and interventions are taught with only single year groups in the room
- All classrooms will only have the necessary furniture in them in order to support students being socially distanced in the classroom. They will be taught facing the front.
- Staggered break and lunchtimes for each year group so that they have lunch in their bubbles
- Social areas for each year group so that they only socialise in their bubbles
- Cleaning down of all resources and tables after each lesson to avoid cross contamination
- Sanitisation stands to ensure that students can keep their hands clean at all times
- 'Catch it, bin it, kill it' mantra for cleanliness and increased number of bins, tissues and wipes in school
- Cleaning routines for resources in practical areas such as sport and technology
- Year group specific toilets to ensure that students are using sanitary facilities in bubbles
- Ventilation increases across the site

The guidance from the DfE confirms that PPE is not necessary in the school building for staff and students, unless it is ordinarily used. However, students who are travelling to school using public transport will need to wear face masks. Therefore, students will need to remove their face mask on

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entry to the school, touching only the ear pieces of the mask and either disposing of the mask in the bin, or storing it in a plastic bag in their school bag for home time.

In terms of students travelling to school, we ask all students to consider walking or cycling if it is safe to do so. We are also asking parents wherever possible to bring students to school by car. However, we totally understand that some students will need to travel by public transport to get to school. We are expecting updates from Local Transport throughout the summer and we will keep you updated as parents as much as we can.

I really hope that the measures that we have talked about in this letter serve to reassure you as parents that we are doing all that we can to keep our children safe and socially distanced whilst also ensuring that they have a normal timetable with specialist staff to close their gaps in learning.

The last few months has shown us that the situation is ever changing and often very fast paced decisions need to be made when we are updated about local or national outbreaks. All of the measures discussed above have been put in place with the information that we currently have. It may be that, should the situation change, we need to adapt or change some of these measures. If that happens, we will keep you updated as parents through are usual communication channels.

Finally, thank you for your patience and support over the last months. We are looking forward to welcoming our students back in September and starting the journey back to normal life. Until then, I wish you all a restful, peaceful, happy and safe summer break

Yours sincerely,



Mr P Brook
Headteacher

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