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Headteacher: Mrs S. King

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Dear Parents and Carers

I hope you have enjoyed the summer holidays and Bank Holiday weekend. A lot has happened in the last six weeks so I thought it would be helpful to outline the arrangements for the start of the new school year. I would like to explain the changes the Department of Education has asked schools to put in place to enable a less disrupted academic year ahead.

It is important that you read this information carefully alongside the second letter attached today which gives details of the two Lateral Flow Tests schools have been asked to supervise at the start of the new term.

I have enclosed a number of links to the DfE's website, providing much more detailed guidance for parents and carers. This information is updated at the same time as the information provided to schools so, as we find out more information, parents and carers can too.

Key changes affecting schools moving to Step 4 of the government's roadmap include:

'Bubbles' and consistent groups to be removed from schools

It is no longer recommended for schools to 'bubble' students in school. The lifting of this restriction means that 'normal mixing is permitted'. At BFS this will mean that year groups will be able to interact more freely. However, for logistical reasons we have decided to maintain staggered lunchtimes between Year 7, 8 and 9 and Year 10, 11 and Sixth Form. In the event of a localised outbreak, we may be required to reinstate measures for a temporary period in order to reduce mixing between groups.

Face coverings and social distancing will no longer be advised

The need for face coverings for all students, staff and visitors in communal areas and classrooms will be lifted. However, people are still permitted to wear face coverings if they choose to or are advised to by a healthcare professional. This change does not extend to dedicated or public transport to and from school where face coverings are still recommended.

Test and Trace will be 'significantly scaled back' in schools

Schools will no longer be responsible for Test and Trace close contact tracing. This will be taken over by the NHS Test and Trace service, who will inform staff and students if they have been in close contact with a positive case and advise them to take a confirmatory Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR) test.

We will continue to have a role in working with local Health Protection Teams (HPTs) in the case of a local outbreak. If there is an outbreak in school the NHS will contact us and the local Director of Public Health may advise us to temporarily reintroduce control measures.

The rules on self-isolation are changing

From September, there will be significant changes to the rules around self-isolation. Students under 18 will **only need to self-isolate if they have tested positive for coronavirus**, meaning that students in this category will not need to self-isolate if they are identified as being a close contact of a positive coronavirus case. Individuals who are 18 years old will be expected to follow the same self-isolation rules as those under 18, until four months after their 18th birthday when they must follow the same rules as adults – this is to give them enough time to get fully vaccinated.



Enhanced hygiene and ventilation to continue for Autumn term

The current guidance on enhanced hygiene and ventilation will continue to remain relevant for the Autumn term. We will continue to encourage frequent and thorough hand cleaning with soap and water, or hand sanitiser, with regular reminders of the 'catch it, bin it, kill it' approach. Students and staff will be encouraged to make the most of outdoor spaces at regular intervals throughout the day and doors and windows will be opened to improve natural ventilation where possible.

Regular testing was paused over the summer holidays once the school had closed. Schools have been tasked with providing students with **two on-site** lateral flow device (LFD) tests, three to five days apart, on their return to school in the Autumn term. The participation rates are much higher in on-site testing centres and the DfE wish to ensure that students returning to school after the summer have every opportunity to take part in asymptomatic testing. In order to do this it will be necessary to stagger the return of students to school (please see dates on the accompanying letter). Students will be advised to then continue to test twice weekly at home until the end of September, when the guidance on testing will be reviewed.

As you will appreciate, there are huge logistical challenges involved in setting this process up for so many students. We will be in close contact with both the Department of Education and Public Health England and will notify parents and carers of any changes. We understand the effort and disruption that the changes to the start of term may bring and thank you, once again, for your patience and support as we work through the process of testing students and bringing them all back together to school.

School day timings from start of term

Year Group	Arrival time	Start of Day	End of day
7, 8 & 9 Concorde Drive gate	From 8:00 am	8:30 am	2:55 pm
10 & 11 Concorde Drive gate	From 8:00 am	8:30 am	3:00 pm
Sixth Form Car Park gate	From 8:00 am	8:30 am	3:00 pm

Useful links

- [Transport to schools and colleges during the COVID-19 pandemic](#)
- [Guidance for parents and carers of children attending out-of-school settings during the coronavirus \(COVID-19\) outbreak](#)
- [Actions for schools during the coronavirus outbreak](#)

Thank you for your continued support as we work together to provide the best possible experiences and opportunities for the young people in our care.

Yours sincerely



Mrs S King
Headteacher