



BEESTON HALL SCHOOL

26th August 2020

Dear Parents,

I trust you have been having a terrific summer break in, most probably, one of the loveliest parts of the UK. You may, or may not, have been distracted by the mounting media attention on the 'return to school' challenges. The unfolding national changes in guidance have illustrated very clearly the danger in sending information and decisions too early! Without wishing to pander to this, I felt a brief update might be reassuring.

Though I have been determined that our staff should have a proper time away from the screen and the working environment, there has been a good deal of activity, especially from the Senior Leadership Team. The great benefit of almost all children attending Beeston last term is that we have already stress-tested the Covid-19 based organisation of school life, such that September will start pretty close to new normal and certainly reflect the protocols we implemented last term. There will be more detailed information following but, in brief, we will have:

- year group bubbles and classroom-based teaching to minimise circulation
- a boarding pod of full boarders only
- the same 'drop and go' operation at pick up times, as last term
- an appointment-only approach to visitors, supplemented by Zoom meetings on request (Zoom tutor evenings to come)
- one-way systems, hand sanitising stations, ventilation and hygiene and cleaning protocols (which have been bolstered by more permanent equipment)
- winter uniform will be in place
- controlled use of changing rooms
- outdoor storage lockers
- senior prep and limited junior activities
- senior evening scholarship sessions
- limited senior activity programme (e.g. socially-distanced tennis but not chess beyond a year group bubble)

Activities will be organised at the start of term, rather than prior to it, as usual, since there is no flexi-boarding to organise this around. The arrangements of lunchtimes will be modified – with a cafeteria service, I am afraid, in Year 5 upwards.

Specialist staff will carry out socially-distanced teaching to allow teaching of multiple bubbles but will be in PPE while in communal areas. In the wake of the recent conflicting advice I would reiterate that Year 7 and 8 children requiring masks is not mandatory at this time. However, as per guidance, in the event of a local lockdown we would introduce mask-wearing across these two year groups, not least to illustrate the fact that mask-wearing is part of our everyday life at present.

The purpose of all these arrangements is to maintain small enough bubbles so as to avoid a case, or rather two, having undue impact of the school's operation, whilst continuing with a structured, but flexible, programme that best supports Beeston life. As always, all activities will be risk-assessed with Covid-19 considered. Common sense remains uppermost, particularly when balancing the guidelines with the best outcomes for the children. There will be a likelihood that ventilation and outdoor learning opportunities become even more major factors of the term ahead – this is where Beestonian hardiness may well come in handy, as the mercury drops!

Our extensive planning reiterates and develops upon the work completed in May and June, and outlines most aspects of the protocols to come, including – importantly – actions in the event of a case and the potential threat of a further lockdown, where we may have to return to either a partial or full programme of remote learning. Confident though we are in this option, our absolute priority is to remain open, providing 'as normal as possible schooling' whilst ensuring the safety and welfare of staff, families and children.

On that most important score, while some overseas pupils have opted to defer entry to Beeston, we still have families continuing to enquire over the holidays and discuss starting at Beeston this term or next. A local swimming club has been able to make good use of the school's swimming pool over the summer and great works have been afoot on the Dean Courts. Some surprises in store!

Have a terrific final ten days of holiday!

Best wishes,



Fred de Falbe