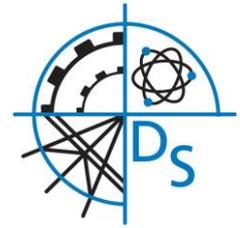


Denefield School

SUCCESS FOR LIFE

Long Lane, Tilehurst, Reading, RG31 6XY
www.denefield.org.uk Tel: 0118 9413458
Headteacher: Mr E Towill MA (Oxon)



28 August 2020

Dear Parents/Carers & Students

I hope you are well and that you had a refreshing summer break, with its mixture of blistering sunshine and spectacular thunderstorms. I would like to congratulate all GCSE and A Level students on their qualifications and I am very much looking forward to seeing all students back in school next week. Staff at school have worked extremely hard over the summer to ensure the school is Covid-19 secure and I am very confident that we have created a safe and effective learning environment. Our plans are based on the latest government guidance: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/actions-for-schools-during-the-coronavirus-outbreak/guidance-for-full-opening-schools>.

I very strongly believe that being back in school will not only benefit students educationally, but will also have positive social, physical and emotional health benefits. The information below is designed to help parents/carers understand how the school will operate, and ease the transition back to school for students themselves.

What Day Students Return

Thursday 3 September – Year 7 and 12 only

Year 7 start at 8.30am
Year 12 start at 9.30am

Friday 4 September – all year groups:

Year 7 start at 8.30am (as on Thursday 3 September)
Year 8 start at 11:00am
Year 9 start at 11:00am
Year 10 start at 10:30am
Year 11 start at 10:30am
Year 12 start at 9.30am (as on Thursday 3 September)
Year 13 start at 10.30am

The New Timetable

In order to reduce student movement around the school, and to give each year group its own eating, recreation areas and toilets, we will be operating staggered start and end times, and staggered break times. There will be no morning registration period and students will go straight to lessons.

Years 7-9		Years 10-13	
Start	8.30am	Start	9.30am*
Period 1	8.30am-9.30am	Period 2	9.30am-10.30am
Period 2	9.30am-10.30am	Period 3	10.30am-11.30am
Break	10.30am-10.50am	Break	11.30am-11.50am
Period 3	10.50am-11.50am	Tutorial	11.50am-12.10pm
Tutorial	11.50am-12.10pm	Period 4	12.10pm-1.10pm
Lunch	12.10pm-12.40pm	Lunch	1.10pm-1.40pm
Period 4	12.40p-1.40pm	Period 5	1.40pm-2.40pm
Period 5	1.40pm-2.40pm	Period 6	2.40pm-3.40pm
End	2.40pm	End	3.40pm

* A small number of Year 12 and Year 13 students will have lessons starting at 8.30.

Arrival and Departure from School

Students will be expected to be in full school uniform, or, for Sixth Form students, wearing business dress. Students should walk or cycle to school wherever possible, maintaining social distance with other students, and particularly students from other year groups. Students should enter the school gates five minutes before their lessons commence and not earlier.

Students should avoid using public transport if possible. Reading buses have today updated their timetable, showing a roughly half hour service on routes 15a and 16, and with two dedicated Denefield buses in the morning and two in the afternoon. Unfortunately, these times do not coincide neatly with the school's staggered start and end times and would lead to a considerable wait for many students. A summary of the Reading bus times can be found below and the detailed Reading school bus timetable can be found here www.reading-buses.co.uk/schools. If students use public transport, then they must wear appropriate face coverings.

Morning Buses		
Bus	Direction	Arrival time
915 (15A)	From Town	8.10am
916 (16)	From Town	8.05am
16	From Town	9.15am
16	From Purley	8.03am
16	From Purley	8.28am
16	From Purley	9.14am

Afternoon Buses		
Bus	Direction	Departure time
915 (15A)	To Town	3.15pm
916 (16)	To Town	3.10pm
16	To Town	4.26pm
16	To Purley	3.19pm
16	To Purley	3.39pm
16	To Purley	4.09pm

Buses highlighted are the dedicated buses, exclusive to Denefield students; at present the dedicated morning buses will drop off in Long Lane and the dedicated afternoon buses will pick up from inside school.

Zoning in School

Each year group will be in its own 'bubble,' with Years 12 and 13 in one combined bubble. Students in each bubble will have their own dining and recreation facilities, and their own toilets. The school has invested significantly to ensure this is possible, including the erection of a new toilet block, and a new, fully seated marquee, designed to accommodate 200 students for break and lunch. As far as is possible students will be taught in their year group zones, with minimal student movement around the site during the day. This is assisted by the staggered start times, break times, lunch times and departure times shown above.

Hygiene, Handwashing and Sanitising

We expect students and staff to wash their hands frequently for 20 seconds and to sanitise before and after every lesson, before and after eating, and when using the toilets. Each classroom has its own sanitiser dispenser and we encourage students to bring their own sanitiser in a small bottle as well. We have dramatically increased our cleaning schedule, especially of toilets, hard surfaces and the small number of classrooms that are used by more than one year group. In addition, students and members of staff will be expected to adopt the 'catch it, bin it, kill it' approach.

Lessons

We have remodelled our classrooms so that all student desks face forward. Students will sit in pairs, in a seating plan determined by their teacher. They may work together as directed by the teacher, but must not face each other. In order to maintain social distancing, the teacher will teach from the front. We have worked very hard on pedagogy in recent months, with a renewed focus on ambitious, knowledge-rich and engaging lessons. Lessons will be challenging and pacy. There will be no group work for the present.

Students will need to bring all their own equipment. This includes:

- Plain face covering to be worn in corridors and communal areas if preferred
- A small bottle of hand sanitiser
- Blue/black pen and red pen
- Pencil and colouring pencils
- Rubber and pencil sharpener
- 30cm ruler
- Scientific calculator and maths equipment
- Glue stick
- Round-ended scissors
- Highlighter

Our first priority, of course, will be to establish what students learnt during lockdown, and what gaps there might be. We will re-teach key topics as necessary, and move on as soon as we are confident the basics have been mastered. For example, in PE, we are considering starting with summer sports rather than winter sports, because many students will have lost out on summer sport during lockdown. Where students require extra support, either in lessons or separately, then we will provide it. In general, teaching assistants will work with individuals or groups of students outside of lessons, in order to maintain social distancing.

Catering

At present we are intending to have catering facilities available at both break and lunch times. There will be a more limited selection than in the past and food will be pre-packaged in order to reduce transmission. Parents/carers are advised to ensure that there are sufficient funds in their child's Scopay account www.scopay.com. Students are of course welcome to bring packed lunches if they wish.

Face Coverings

Students and staff are very welcome to wear face coverings in corridors and communal areas and I would encourage students who wish to do so to wear a plain face covering. Please ensure these are worn correctly: [https://www.who.int/images/default-source/health-topics/coronavirus/clothing-masks-infographic---\(web\)-logo-who.png?sfvrsn=b15e3742_16](https://www.who.int/images/default-source/health-topics/coronavirus/clothing-masks-infographic---(web)-logo-who.png?sfvrsn=b15e3742_16)

At present, neither the school nor the government is making the wearing of face coverings compulsory: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/face-coverings-in-education/face-coverings-in-education>

However, should rates of infection in the local community rise then it is likely that we will make the wearing of face coverings compulsory.

Support for Students

The school recognises the challenges that the past six months have presented to students, and the difficulties that the continuing presence of Covid-19 causes. Students will continue to be supported by their House Team – Head of House, Deputy Head of House and Student Manager – and, where appropriate, by the Edison Team. Teaching staff are sensitive to the difficulties students may have had during lockdown, and will tailor lessons appropriately. We have started to recruit a team of

Accelerated Learning Provision (ALP) Tutors, who will work with groups of students who have fallen behind with their learning, and we will be deploying these tutors early in the new term. If any students or parents have any anxieties, or anything they want to report, they should email these to listening@denefield.org.uk.

Student Conduct and Attitude/s

I am very proud of Denefield students and we will support all students to adjust to these changes. At the same time, being Covid-19 secure puts renewed responsibilities on students, and increases still further the importance of following the school's rules and instructions. Later this week I will send parents/carers further details of our behaviour expectations, including our 'Behaviour on a Page' and Covid-19 amendments to our behaviour policy.

Arrangements for those with symptoms or who test positive for Covid-1

a) If your child has symptoms of coronavirus

The symptoms of coronavirus are: a raised temperature, new and sustained cough, or loss of taste or smell. No student should attend school if they have any of these symptoms, but should follow government rules regarding self-isolation. Anyone with symptoms should get an immediate Covid-19 test. Please notify the school via the school app or by emailing absence@denefield.org.uk if your child has symptoms or has tested positive for Covid-19. Students should return to school if they have tested negative and they have no further symptoms. No student should attend school if a household member has symptoms but should follow government rules regarding self-isolation. If the household member tests negative then the student may return to school.

b) If a student develops symptoms during the school day

If a student or staff develops symptoms during the school day then they will be cared for, isolated and sent home to isolate with their households, following government guidance. If this happens then please ensure your child is tested for Covid-19 and inform absence@denefield.org.uk of the result. Students should return to school if they have tested negative and they have no further symptoms.

c) If a student or member of staff tests positive for coronavirus

If a student displays symptoms of coronavirus, then the parent/carer must book a test for them. Parents/Carers must inform the school via absence@denefield.org.uk if their child tests positive for coronavirus. The school will engage with NHS Test and Trace and West Berkshire's Health Protection Team, who will conduct a rapid risk assessment. The school is likely to be asked to send home those who have been in close contact with the person who tested positive, advising them to self-isolate for the required period. At present, close contact means:

- Face to face contact with an infected individual for any length of time, within 1 metre, including being coughed on, a face to face conversation, or skin to skin contact.
- Contact within 1-2 metres for more than 15 minutes.
- Travelling in a small vehicle, like a car, with an infected person.

In some cases, the local Health Protection Team may recommend that a larger number of students self-isolate at home as a precautionary measure – perhaps the whole site or year group. I am confident that the measures we are taking will avert this, but we will always follow the advice of the local Health Protection Team.

Setting of work if a student or group of students are isolating

The school is currently working on plans for the remote education of students unable to attend school. Where small numbers of students are unable to attend school, for short periods of time, we will set independent learning tasks on Show My Homework. If any part of the school was to go into lockdown, we would aim to rapidly move to a system of live teaching for as many year groups as possible. Our intention would be to follow the current timetable, but with slightly shorter lessons to allow for time to log on.

Communication

During the first day back we will be holding assemblies and tutorial periods with each year group in turn, explaining how the new arrangements will work. We will share this detailed information with parents/carers at the end of the first week back. We will naturally be repeating this information regularly in lessons, tutorial periods and assemblies, as students get used to these new arrangements.

Review and Evaluation

We live in an uncertain and changing world. The changes I have explained above are significant and school-wide. We will constantly review our arrangements to ensure they are both practical and effective. For example, it is quite possible that over time either the government, or this school, will make the wearing of face coverings compulsory. We are not at that point yet, but I would ask parents/carers to ensure that their children are familiar with the correct procedures for fitting and wearing face masks <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/face-coverings-in-education/face-coverings-in-education>, and would emphasise that I support the right of students to wear a plain face mask in school.

Thank you, as ever, for your support of the school. If you have any questions, please email office@denefield.org.uk and we will update our Frequently Asked Questions page. I am very excited by the prospect of Denefield students returning to school, full-time next this week.

Yours sincerely



Mr E Towill MA (Oxon)
Headteacher