

Information for Parents and Guardians

RETURN TO SCHOOL DAME ALLAN'S SENIOR SCHOOLS - SEPTEMBER 2020

Infection, symptoms, tests and reporting

Pupils should not come into school if they, or any members of their household, are showing any of the COVID symptoms - a high temperature; a new, continuous cough; a loss or change to sense of smell or taste. Schools should immediately be notified if any member of a household is showing symptoms of the virus or has come into contact with anyone who has received a positive COVID test via absence@dameallans.co.uk. In this situation, parents should arrange a COVID test and must let the Schools know of the result, whether it is positive or negative, as soon as possible by calling the school on 0191 275 0608 or emailing the medical centre la.procter@dameallans.co.uk.

If a pupil has travelled abroad and requires a period of quarantine (see www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-travel-corridors) then that child must not return to school until the quarantine period is complete. Please make contact as soon as possible to inform the school of any quarantine requirements and the expected date of return to school.

In the event that a pupil develops COVID symptoms in school, they will be taken to an isolation room until they can be collected and taken home, so please ensure our home contact information is up to date (contact data@dameallans.co.uk with any updates).

The Schools will be operating in full cooperation with NHS Test and Trace and local public health teams.

Personal hygiene, face coverings and behaviour expectations

Good personal hygiene practices, especially frequent washing of hands and use of hand sanitiser, will minimise virus transmission. Face coverings are not required in school although pupils are permitted to use them, taking care to practise sanitary storage and disposal. Except with those in their year group bubble, pupils should practise social distancing of 2 metres wherever possible. All pupils will also be frequently reminded of the need for considerate behaviour around all other pupils and staff in their social distancing as well as hand and respiratory hygiene, remembering the "catch it, bin it, kill it" approach.

Pupil induction on return

The first day of term will start with extended form time with induction sessions for pupils to explain routines, timings and procedures as well as expectations around safe and considerate behaviour. Pupils will be provided with details of these arrangements in verbal and written form, with posters and signs displayed around the school to remind and guide them. Form teachers and tutors will be available to answer questions and reassure pupils about the new arrangements.

Uniform, sports kit and classroom equipment

All pupils are expected to attend school wearing full and correct uniform. We would also encourage parents to ensure that uniform is cleaned regularly and in accordance with the manufacturers' guidelines. Pupils should bring and use their own set of classroom equipment including coloured pencils, glue sticks and scissors, to avoid sharing with others and every day they should bring in their Chromebooks, fully charged, with a set of earphones. On the day when pupils have their games afternoon, they should come to school wearing their school sports kit, including tracksuit, and wear this throughout the day as the Schools' changing facilities will be limited. On days when pupils have sport outside, a waterproof layer is required. On other days when pupils have PE or extra curricular sports activities, normal school uniform should be worn and sports kit should be brought into school for changing on site. On Thursday 3rd September, Year 8 pupils will have games and should therefore arrive in school sports kit, as should Year 7 on Friday.

Arrivals, buses, end of day, breakfast and after-school

Children, young people and parents are encouraged to walk or cycle where possible and avoid public transport at peak times. There are no changes to the start and finish times at the senior Schools so that bus transport can operate as close to normally as possible. The bus services provided by the Schools will run as usual and government guidance excludes such services from the requirement to wear masks, although we would recommend them. Masks worn on buses must be kept in a ziplock bag during the day if retained to be worn on the return journey, or disposed of in school bins upon immediate entry to school if not. End of day timings will be as normal. Breakfast and after-school care will operate largely as normal, in the dining hall with pupils separated by year group.

Bubbles, rooms, movement around the school, visitors

Pupils will be operating in year group bubbles throughout the day so that, particularly indoors, their interaction with other years is minimised. In the lower school, classes will remain in form rooms for many lessons in order to reduce movement around the school. We will be operating a one-way system around the school in order to reduce congestion and close face to face contact indoors. It will not be possible for the Schools to receive substantial numbers of visitors and so parents will not be able to enter the site except by special arrangement in order to meet staff. Alternative arrangements for parents evenings and open days will be made.

Assemblies, lessons, breaks, lunchtimes

The overall structure of the school day, in terms of lesson timings, will remain largely unchanged. The need to keep year groups apart will mean that morning assemblies will take place in form rooms. We will be operating staggered break and lunchtimes in order to reduce contact between year groups. This will mean some changes to lesson arrangements for Years 7 and 8 during period 3 and altered dining arrangements for Year 12 and 13 pupils. Lunch choices will be somewhat restricted in order to speed up queues and accommodate all pupils within a tighter schedule. We aim to continue offering hot lunches throughout the term with these arrangements but we may need to make further changes as we review them over the early part of the term.

Recreation and study spaces, library

Even with staggered break and lunch times, there will be pressure on recreation spaces during the day so, aside from access to form rooms, we will have rotas of allocated indoor and outdoor space

for each year group in order to accommodate year group bubbles separately. In order to alleviate pressure on the 6th Form centre, Year 13 pupils will be allocated recreation and study space in the Newsom Hall. The school library will have a rota system for year groups to enable all pupils to use library facilities weekly.

Activities

The requirement to keep year groups apart will have an impact on the Schools' extra-curricular provision. After an initial period of settling in, we expect a wide range of activities to recommence. Some activities will necessarily be limited to particular year groups in order to prevent mixing. We will keep arrangements under continual review to ensure that we are offering the greatest possible range to all pupils, within the constraints of the guidelines. Staff in charge of activities will publish detailed arrangements and risk management procedures before commencement.

Sport - commencing with preseason training this week, the sports department have planned the fullest possible programme subject to the constraints in the guidance. There will necessarily be a limited number of fixtures, and contact sports will face greater restrictions than others. **Music** - Instrumental/vocal lessons will take place from September. Vocal, wind and brass lessons will happen with a perspex screen between the Visiting Music Teacher and the pupil. Pupils must bring their own equipment and not share with either the Visiting Music Teacher or other pupils, this includes guitar leads, guitar picks, sheet music, drum sticks and instruments other than pianos, drum kits and guitar amps. Any pupil receiving wind or brass lessons will need to bring a small mat with them and a bag to safely store the mat during the school day. **Drama and Dance** - will both work with special arrangements to allow operation as close to normal as possible.

Cleaning and hygiene

The Schools have put in place additional cleaning staff and enhanced systems in order to ensure that the school site is as safe as possible. There are hand sanitation facilities throughout the Schools and pupils will be reminded to use these frequently during the day. Arrangements will also have a particular focus on shared equipment and frequently touched surfaces for additional cleaning and other measures.

Striking a balance

The government guidelines have been written in recognition that it will not always be possible to achieve ideal distancing between pupils in schools. These arrangements will all bring benefits in managing the risks of transmission but they will at times be subject to practical difficulties and the logistical challenges of managing large numbers of people on one site. The risk assessments that have been drawn up, with the provisions made for managing transmission risks, will be reviewed on an ongoing basis and changes made as needed to help with the smooth running of the Schools and effectiveness of all of the measures. **Government guidance states all pupils should be in school, even those who may have previously been shielding, unless there is a statutory reason for absence such as illness.** The Schools, working closely with public health, will ensure regular communication with parents to keep them informed of local developments.

Alan Hopper
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Bursar and Clerk to the Governors