



Kingswinford Academy

A part of the Windsor Academy Trust

Headteacher: Mr T Macdonald, BA Hons, MA

Water Street
Kingswinford
West Midlands
DY6 7AD

Tel: 01384 296596

Email:
info@kingswinford.windsoracademytrust.org.uk

Website:
www.kingswinford.windsoracademytrust.org.uk

Twitter: @kfordacademy

Company registration no: 07523436
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Letters for TM/Y7-10

Tuesday 14th July 2020

Dear Parent/Carer

Plans for Reopening Kingswinford Academy in September

I wanted to write and tell you about our plans for September following the latest guidance that has been released by the Government.

As you will no doubt be aware, schools have been permitted to reopen to students from September and you will be pleased to hear that we wish to bring all of our students back to school for lessons with their teachers at the start of next term. However, there remain significant restrictions on the way in which we are able to support and teach students and so there will be some significant changes to the way in which we approach school life at Kingswinford. In this letter I would like to draw your attention to some critical changes we have made to meet with the government advice, regulation and guidance.

The key features of the government advice, which is intended to reduce minimise risk to students and staff as far as is possible whilst enabling education to proceed, are to minimise contact between students of different year groups and between students and staff. This will, inevitably, make school life more challenging for us all, but we fully intend that all of our students will be able to engage in a rich, full and vibrant curriculum nonetheless.

I will apologise in advance for any inconvenience these changes present and the relatively short notice, but I am sure you will understand the critical nature of prioritising student and staff safety and meeting the government's guidelines and thank you for your support in making these essential changes.

Start Date

To allow us to prepare properly for these new approaches and any further changes that might be required by the government over the holidays, we are taking 2 INSET days at the start of term and



staggering the start of school for different year groups. This will allow us to conduct a transition programme with Year 7 students and enable Year 11 students to get started in their exam preparations as soon as possible for this critical year.

1st & 2nd September - Staff Training and Preparation - School Closed to Students

3rd & 4th September - School open to Year 7 and Year 11 students only

7th September - School open to all students in all year groups

Arrival and Times of Day

We are required to stagger the start and finish of each day to prevent different year groups mixing in the school. Furthermore, we require students to enter by particular gates and entrances each day to maintain distance between the groups of students. To support this and address the challenges with congestion on Water Street we ask that those travelling by car pick up and drop off their children from adjacent streets, rather than directly at the school gates. These streets are a very short walk away and are considerably less congested.

Year 8 - Should arrive at 8.30pm and depart at 2.50pm each day through the East gate

Year 9 - Should arrive at 8.40pm and depart at 3.00pm each day through the East gate

Year 10 - Should arrive at 8.30pm and depart at 2.50pm each day through the West gate

Year 11 - Should arrive at 9.00am and depart from 3.20pm each day through the East gate

(N.B. Year 11 Achieve Excellence lessons will begin at 3.20pm and will involve a majority of students in preparation for their examinations)

The East gate of the school is closest to the Main Hall and DT block. Parents arranging to collect students by car should arrange to pick up and drop off from Wartell Bank, Cottage Street or the High Street end of Water Street (beyond Cottage Street).

The West gate of the school is closest to the Sports Hall and Humanities 4,5,6. Parents arranging to collect students by car should arrange to pick up and drop off from Penzer Street. Where there are siblings in different year groups, please arrange drop off and collection at the appropriate location for the youngest child.

Attendance

To date attendance for students under Coronavirus restrictions has been relaxed, but the usual requirement for all students to attend education every school day will return from September. Of course our team will work closely with those for whom this represents a challenge, but our expectations return that students attend every school day in line with our Attendance policy. The government have confirmed that schools are expected to follow normal attendance procedures and follow up absences in the usual way from September, including issuing penalty notices and other similar actions for non-attendance.

Our usual absence procedures should be followed if your child is unable to attend for any reason, but please be note that if your child is absent due to displaying COVID-19 symptoms, you should inform us specifically and as soon as possible so we can engage with NHS Track and Trace effectively.

Year Groups

Year groups will be assigned 'zones' across the school in which they will study most of their lessons and spend their break and lunchtimes. We are required to keep year groups apart in school and this will allow us to do so. To make this possible we have had to alter some of our practical arrangements:

- Each Year group will be allocated particular facilities (toilets, lunch service areas, outdoor space etc.) to use
- Each Year group will be assigned a 'Year Leader', either a Head of House or Member of Senior Leadership Team who will be based within their zone to manage day to day pastoral matters.
- Year Groups will have staggered start and finish times and will be allocated a specific entrance gate to use when arriving and departing the school site

Form Groups

Students in Key Stage 3 will be taught in form groups through the day to reduce the degree of mixing between students. At Key Stage 4 this will not be possible because of the nature of their curriculum, but there will be adjustments to the groupings for English, Maths and Science lessons. To enable this to happen, and to create effective zones across the school, we have to reduce the number of form groups in each year group. This will mean that all students will be assigned a new form group. We recognise that this is disruptive and aim to revert to original form group structures as soon as we are able.

Teaching Arrangements

To reduce the number of times students have to move around the school, we are extending the length of all lessons (other than English and Mathematics) from 50 minutes to 100 minutes and spreading the timetable across 2 weeks. This will allow all students to have the same amount of time for each subject, but will limit the requirement of students or staff to move around the school. Teaching in classes will be somewhat different as teachers will need to maintain greater distance between themselves and students.

Student Equipment

We will be less able to lend equipment to students who have forgotten it on a particular day as all equipment requires cleaning after use, so it is imperative that students bring their own equipment and planner each day. I must stress the importance of students bringing all of their equipment into school each day. I have attached our equipment guide to this letter and must stress the importance of students bringing all of their equipment into school each day. Please note that we are expanding the equipment list to include a **small whiteboard marker** to use on the whiteboard page within their planner as this will allow better interaction with teachers at a distance.

Uniform & PE Kit

Full school uniform will need to be worn every day from September with one exception: to avoid the use of changing rooms, students should wear PE kit to school on days when PE is scheduled. School Uniform standards must remain high. Students should, if necessary, purchase appropriate uniform for the start of the year. We most often receive questions regarding shoes and to offer some general advice about whether an item of footwear is a trainer or a school shoe, please ask yourself 'If these were white, would they be trainers?'. If the answer is yes, they are not really appropriate for school! We would rather avoid significant challenge around this issue: there are plenty of reasonably priced, comfortable school shoes available and there is no need for any student to wear 'trainers' to school. For further information, I have included our Uniform policy with this letter.

Lunch arrangements

As students have to have lunch within their year group zone, the lunch offer will be restricted to 'Grab and Go' food offers. We will retain a hot meal service, but it will be provided in pots and boxes to enable students to sit at outdoor tables or move to appropriate rooms to eat their lunches. Furthermore, we are reducing the length of the lunch period to 30 minutes.

Students are, of course, welcome to bring packed lunches and/or break time snacks to school should you wish. It is, however, essential that students bring water to school (we recommend 1 litre per day) as we may not be able to make use of the school water fountains through the day. Drinks will be available to purchase from our caterers, and we will provide water to students in emergencies, but we strongly recommend students bring their own water each day

Transport

We strongly recommend travel to the school by car, walking or cycling where possible, in accordance with government guidelines. Should you require public transport you should follow the [government guidance](#) (which at present requires all travelers to wear a face covering). Please note if you are travelling by car, it is inappropriate to stop on Water Street directly outside the school, and we ask instead that you drop off and pick up students from Penzer street a very short walk away. Staff will escort all Year 7 students to Penzer Street for departure initially. Please do not be offended if staff request you move your car away from the school entrance and understand that we must manage the safe and socially distanced departure of 900 students from a small area.

Communication & Calendar

We will communicate further during August to reconfirm our arrangements in case there are further changes to the national guidance. Within this August communication we will highlight any updated government advice relating to safety precautions and arrangements, as well as confirm our updated Attendance, Behaviour, Exclusions and Safeguarding policies, all of which we are required to amend to accommodate the changing national guidance. Furthermore, whilst we have prepared a draft Calendar at this point - many of the events are subject to change. We are reviewing the entire calendar in the light of the current guidance and will release an updated version on our website and through our August communication but please be aware that it is likely to remain subject to change as the national situation develops.

I do hope you understand the challenges of both running a complete educational offer whilst limiting the mixing of different year groups is incredibly challenging and we hope that these restrictions will not be in place for too long. We hope and expect to revert to normal running sooner rather than later, but need to await a further lowering of the restrictions before we are able to do that. That being said, by putting these changes in place we are able to ensure that every child is taught by a specialist teacher and fully supported through the day whilst being kept as safe as possible in these challenging times.

Thank you all in advance for your understanding and we look forward to welcoming your child back to us in September.

Yours faithfully



Tom Macdonald
Headteacher