



# Kingswinford Academy

**A part of the Windsor Academy Trust**

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Letters for TM/Y6

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.

Firstly, I would like to apologise that we have not been able to run our usual transition process and I hope that the virtual transition booklet will have addressed many of the questions you may have had. This has been an unprecedented year in education and your understanding and support are greatly appreciated.

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 minimise risk to students and staff as far as is possible whilst enabling education to proceed, are to reduce contact between students of different year groups and between students and staff. This will, inevitably, make school life very different 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 full transition programme with year 7 students across Thursday 3rd and Friday 4th of September alongside the Year 11 students who will be preparing for their exams.

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

Please plan for your child to arrive at school at 8.40am on Thursday 3rd of September to begin the year, they will depart at 3.00pm.

## Year Group Zones

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:

- Year 7 students will have their own set of classrooms with associated facilities (toilets, lunch service areas, outdoor space etc.) to use away from other year groups.
- Year 7 have been assigned a 'Year Leader' Mrs Harrold (you can see her welcome in the transition booklet) who will manage day to day pastoral matters.
- Year 7 will start their day as normal at 8.40am, but will finish very slightly earlier than planned at 3.00pm

## Form Groups

Students in Year 7 and across Key Stage 3 will be taught in form groups through the day to reduce the degree of mixing between students. To enable this to happen, and to create effective zones across the school, we have had to reduce the number of form groups in each year group. This will mean that all students will be assigned a new form group. Great care and effort has been placed in constructing form groups that encourage students to make new friends as well as allowing them to maintain some of the friendships established in primary school. Of course, Year 7 students will be able to speak with and mix with their friends at break and lunch, even if they are not placed in the same class.

## 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 well 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. We have expanded 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.

Please note that this is in addition to the equipment list you will find in the transition guide and is in response to the update government guidance.

### **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. We will clarify these days with Year 7 students during their transition process, but we would appreciate it if all students could wear their PE kit on Friday 4th of September as part of the transition programme.

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, please refer to the uniform guidance in your transition guide.

### **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.

### **Transition Evening & Communications**

Whilst we had hoped to offer an in person transition evening in September as the restrictions relaxed, this is not currently possible. Instead, we will enable a 'virtual' evening event within the first few weeks of term to enable you to meet key staff and ask any questions you might have. In the meantime, should you have any questions about the transition programme, please contact [sfletcher@kingswinford.windsoracademytrust.org.uk](mailto:sfletcher@kingswinford.windsoracademytrust.org.uk). 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.

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, and will return to the original form group plans when this happens, 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 in September.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tom Macdonald', written in a cursive style.

**Tom Macdonald**  
**Headteacher**