

2 November 2020

Dear Parent / Carer,

## New routines to maintain a Covid-19 secure environment

We have been reviewing our measures to maintain a Covid-19 secure environment and to ensure we are doing everything we can to support the national effort against the spread of Coronavirus. Following the Prime Minister's briefing on Saturday 31 October, highlighting increased transmission across the country and consequently a new national lockdown was announced, and further guidance from Public Health England over the half term break, we have changed our model for working to further reduce the risk of virus transmission.

### Current Covid security

All schools in our Trust are following the same Covid security measures and just before half term, the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) inspected the measures at one of the Trust schools. The HSE endorsed the measures in place and there were no recommendations for us to implement anything further.

However to be absolutely certain, we have taken advice from representatives of Public Health England and Environmental Health and our systems will be changing quite significantly from Wednesday of this week (4 November).

### New routines

We will be moving to a system whereby **students remain in a single teaching group, in a specific classroom for tutor time and all lessons**, the only exceptions being KS3 Drama, KS4 options lessons and all PE lessons.

From Wednesday, all students will be asked to go to a new tutor group which will be their "base" classroom and they will remain in that group and room for all lessons, except Drama, PE and KS4 options but including form time each morning. Staff will move around the classrooms so that students continue to be taught by subject specialists. In order to create single teaching groups for all subjects some students may find they are working in different groups for some subjects to the ones they have been working in up to this point (with the exception of KS4 options). There will be some changes to practical subjects at KS3 as they adapt to teaching in non-specialist rooms but we will be working hard to make lessons engaging and subject specific. There is no confirmed end point for this measure but health professionals are clearly concerned about the winter months. We will continue to review the situation and make changes as and when it is safe to do so.

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To support staff in moving around the school and setting up their lessons in different classrooms, all students will start every lesson with silent reading of a book of their choice. All students are required to bring to school their own book, every day.

Break and lunchtime for all year groups will remain unchanged with each year group having dedicated inside and outside spaces to socialise in. These are located as near to the teaching bases as possible. It is important that students in each year group remain in their own social spaces and practise social-distancing whilst there. Teachers will be escorting students to and from this area at particular changeover times to ensure the safe transit of students around the site.

At the end of the day we will be staggering the release of students to enable more effective social distancing as students walk home. Those travelling by bus will be able to board as they arrive. It is important that those students who walk or who are collected by car do leave the school site and make their way home as soon as possible and do not wait at the front of school. Departure times are as follows:

- 2:50 – Year 7
- 2:55 – Year 8 & 9
- 3:00 – Year 10 & 11

## Face Coverings

We have sought further advice with regards face coverings in school and professionals support our request that everyone wears a face covering in corridors and indoor communal spaces. They confirmed that they are not recommending the use of face coverings in classrooms and highlighted that no schools, even in areas with very high transmission, are being recommended to do this. That said, if students or staff feel more comfortable and confident to wear a face covering during lessons, we will fully support this as long as the face covering is worn safely, is functional and is not offensive in design.

Norfolk County Council have also reaffirmed their position that face coverings should be worn for all journeys to and from the school be that in a bus or taxi. Face coverings should be worn before boarding the bus/taxi and worn throughout the journey, only being removed once the student has disembarked.

## Personal equipment

As a reminder, please do ensure that your child is fully equipped each day with their own supply of hand sanitiser and stationery including pens, pencils, eraser, sharpener, ruler, blunt ended scissors, glue stick, highlighters, whiteboard pens, colouring pencils maths equipment and a scientific calculator.

Please also remember that your child will need to bring a reading book every day.

## Next steps

We will share detailed plans and maps with students tomorrow morning so that they all know where to go on Wednesday morning.

All after school clubs and support sessions are cancelled this week whilst we evaluate the current measures. We hope to offer extra curricular clubs and academic interventions again next week but these will require further planning and risk assessment.

We have set up a new, dedicated email address **covid19@downhammarketacademy.co.uk** should you have any questions or concerns regarding these new measures.

Please also use this email address to **notify us of any positive Covid-19 test results** as this will be monitored constantly and will allow us to take any necessary action in coordinating a response to prevent any further transmission within the school.

Thank you for your ongoing support.

Kind regards



Mark Eastwood  
Senior Deputy Headteacher