



WEST SUSSEX COUNTY COUNCIL

IMBERHORNE SCHOOL

Headteacher: Mr Martin Brown

Compassion
Achievement
Respect
Endeavour

*The cornerstones of our
learning community*

3rd July 2020

Dear Parent/Carer

A number of our Year 9 students have now been able to visit the Imberhorne Lane site as part of their transition experience. It has been good to see them all and, hopefully, helps them put aside worries they may have had about changing site. In addition to this I was also able to welcome to school today a small number of new teachers starting with us in September, they are excited about being here and keen to meet our wonderful students. They have heard much about the school and welcome the chance to start teaching here next academic year.

I would like to take this opportunity to remind you that the school year finishes on Friday 17th July. This will be a shortened day for teachers because there are certain procedures we will be following including saying goodbye to departing colleagues. Students in Years 9, 10 and 12 have set work for the week which they manage, as appropriate. For students in Years 7 and 8 work will not be set on Friday 17th. The pods (for selected students in Year 7 – Year 10) on both sites, will not run on this date either.

Today we received the Government's guidance for starting the school year in September. We are pleased to finally have some clarity on this matter. As anticipated we are expected to ensure the school is fully open for all students in September.

We are advised, in the Government guidance, that the risk to children of becoming severely ill is judged to be very low, this along with a reduced prevalence of Covid-19 now means that students will no longer be expected to routinely maintain social distancing. Schools are, however, expected to have in place certain control measures to ensure any possible illness can be swiftly contained.

These control measures include the following:

- Ensuring that students are kept in contained groups, in a secondary school this means a whole year group 'bubble'. These contained groups must be kept apart, where possible
- Contained groups/Year groups will therefore have severely limited interactions with students in other year groups. They will be kept separate on the school site (teaching and social spaces, where possible)
- Strict hygiene practices, including regular hand cleaning, enhanced cleaning practice both during the day and after hours along with active engagement with the Track and Trace system
- Limiting large gatherings. We are able to hold single year group assemblies but may choose not to initially, assemblies are likely to be broadcast, by video link, to classrooms
- Ensuring corridors and social spaces are carefully managed with limited student movement



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Adults in school setting are, however, required to maintain social distancing, both from each other and from students. Teachers can operate across different classrooms and different year groups as long as social distancing can be maintained. This means that we will try to operate a full curriculum across the school and utilise, as best we can, our specialist teaching rooms.

Our initial plans suggest that we will try to retain separation, on both sites by housing different year groups in different parts of the school. Students will not be allowed inside the buildings unsupervised and will have to get used to queuing, in designated spaces, ready to be escorted to and from lessons. We are planning to open our canteen but have a combination of staggered breaks and lunch as well as separate food distribution points for each year group (to limit as much interaction as possible). We are likely to offer a limited menu or 'takeaway' food (hot and cold) that students can collect and then take back to their designated social space.

The guidance recognises that whilst students should be kept separate in school they may mix outside of school, particularly on school buses for instance. We are told that partial separation (ie during the school day but not at other times) still helps reduce the possibility of transmission and therefore needs to be instigated.

We are pleased to see that the guidance offers us a fair degree of flexibility and encourages us to use our 'local knowledge' to make the right decisions for our students. Clearly, we will continue to be guided by the government, health professionals and the teaching unions.

We want to make sure the school feels as normal as we can make it in September. All school rules and expectations will apply, students will need to be in full school uniform and ensure they have the correct equipment for lessons. We encourage students to walk or cycle to school. Those travelling by bus are expected to wear face coverings to protect themselves and others.

We appreciate that there is still a great deal of anxiety in the community and many of you will have concerns about your sons or daughters returning to school. I hope to share with you, before the end of term, a comprehensive list of measures we will take to minimise risk and reduce the possibility of transmission. We have set in place a series of precautions for the students currently attending school, these seem to work well and have quickly become embedded in our routines. I note that students do not seem to be able to walk past a bottle of sanitiser without spraying their hands! They understand the limitations being placed on them and seem, overwhelmingly, to be very accepting of these.

We note that fines have been threatened for non-attendance. I would ask that you speak with us if you have significant concerns or worries, we think that opening dialogue with families is always the most helpful approach.

Term starts on Friday 4th September for students in Year 7 and Year 10 only. This gives both of these year groups a chance to adjust to the changes they will encounter and an opportunity to become familiar with the school sites they are on. Students joining Year 12 and those continuing into Year 13 will also attend on Friday 4th September to enrol or re-enrol on courses.

For students in Years 8, 9 and 11 term starts on Monday 7th September. We will advise you of timings for this. Because of the need for many students to travel by bus we will keep to the normal length of the school day for all (3.00pm). Students in Years 12 and 13 commence lessons on Monday 14th September.



Finally, I have a request. We are searching for someone to be an independent examiner for our charity account (overseen by the Governors). This fund receives donations such as school fund and supports the school in providing equipment and resources that we cannot afford through our dedicated budget. We effectively require someone to review these accounts, this may amount to a couple of hours work. If you are able to do this or would like further detail please contact our Business Manager Mrs Cooper Jcooper@imberhome.co.uk.

My letter today is necessarily rather long, I hope to provide further detail next week. For now, I wish you all a lovely weekend, I am hoping for something as simple as sunshine at the moment.

Yours faithfully

Mr M Brown

Headteacher