

Dear Parents and Carers,

As the new Executive Principal, it is my pleasure to welcome you to the new school year. I will be working for the school as we move forward following Mr Bell's resignation in July.

It has been a busy summer for the Trust, you will be delighted to see that our merger was successful and we now form part of Hope Sentamu Learning Trust; a partnership of 15 schools.

This letter is written to inform you of the latest information regarding COVID 19 and to also help you understand some of the new systems set up for the school year. I apologise that it is long, but there are a number of important things to share, so grab a drink and give this a good read please.

## COVID 19

We have been instructed by the Department for Education to return to "near normal" in school. There will be no bubbles, students will return to moving around the school. Classroom layouts will return to arrangements that best suit learning. There is to be no contact tracing carried out by the school, nor isolation of contacts managed by school.

The school has been asked to "kick start" the Lateral Flow Test (LFT) procedure by giving each child two tests in school at the start of term. After this, twice a week testing is expected by parents and children at home throughout the Autumn term. Your child will be sent home with tests to use, please be diligent with this and **notify school if a test is positive (see below part b)** on [hello@asa.hslt.academy](mailto:hello@asa.hslt.academy) or via phone on **01482 781912**. Your child is advised to take part in school testing (you were sent a letter in July and can check this letter on the website) but it is not compulsory and will not stop your child from attending school.

The Department for Education has laid out their expectation that **all pupils should be in full time education** and that no child should be isolating at home **unless the child themselves has tested positive**. Because all educational professionals have been asked to vaccinate and because the remainder of the school population is under 18, should anyone contract COVID, whilst it may be unpleasant for them, there is deemed not to be a serious risk to their health.

The only times a child should be absent from school is if:

- a) they have tested positive using a PCR for COVID, in which case they must isolate for 10 days after the test result or from when symptoms began. Your child/you will be contacted by Track and Trace to indicate any known contacts;
- b) they have tested positive using a LFT for COVID. Please arrange a PCR and await for results. If your child is positive see a) above, if negative they can return to school;
- c) they are showing symptoms - Loss of taste and/or smell, high temperature, persistent unrelenting cough, severe headache - in which case they should get a PCR test and await the result, return to school if the test is negative;
- d) if a hospital consultant has written to indicate extreme medical exceptions. In this case, please share this letter with the school;
- e) if the child has any other serious illness. Please call the school on the number above and report to the attendance team. I stress serious illness here; we would rather a child try to start a school day and support them to do this comfortably (we can provide a quiet place for a time out, or extra drinks etc.) than have them miss any time in school. One day off a week equates to 1 grade less than they could otherwise get in every subject they study.

Should your child be contacted by Track and Trace **as long as they do not have symptoms**, they **should continue to attend school**, but arrange a PCR at your earliest convenience, outside of school hours if possible please. Once the result is known, see a)-c) above. Children are no longer required to isolate if family members test positive, **but must get a test themselves**. It is likely Track and Trace will notify you in this instance.

I would also like to state for the record that, unless guidance changes significantly the school will not be vaccinating children and this should not be a barrier to attending school.

Therefore we are looking forward to welcoming back all our students, everyday, unless of course other guidance is issued.

The Department for Education has asked that facemasks not be worn, unless children and staff are coming into contact with wider groups of people. Clearly this is the case in the corridors and in the dining hall. As such **facemasks will still be worn when inside the academy although are not mandatory in the classroom.**

### **Summer upgrades**

As part of the merger, the new Trust has committed substantial money to fully upgrading the school IT, CCTV and phone systems. The equipment in school was originally installed over 10 years ago and was very outdated. Your child will return to brand new computers across the school. This also means that there are new passwords and account details for your child and new email addresses too.

Please help your child to remember their account information as the Google Drive system has transformed the way we all work and communicate. Our new Year 7 students will get their account details and be shown how this works in the first week. All other students have been using this for the past year.

Since all the equipment is new and CCTV improved, it will be very easy to track if damage is caused. As per policy we will charge parents whose child causes damage to technology, I do hope you will speak to your child about respecting the new school environment and keeping the equipment feeling new for as long as possible.

### **5 Period Day**

Just a reminder that we have moved to a 5 period school day and a 1 week timetable. Each school day will consist of five, 1 hour lessons (and 2 tutor sessions). This has enabled us to boost time for option subjects and widen and deepen our curriculum offer. It will also mean that children will get shorter, sharper lessons, more regularly, which will serve to help to improve their ability to recall prior learning. The extra 15 minutes from 4 lessons over the last few years often made it hard for pupils to keep concentration levels high. Students should arrive at school at 08:35 at the latest ready for school to start at 08:40 each day, and finish at 15:00.

### **Split Lunch**

Did you know that we have nearing 1500 pupils and 300 staff? Catering for 1800 people has been a significant challenge and meant some children weren't able to get the lunch of their choice. As such lunch is now split:

Years 7-9	12:20-12:50 (Lessons 1-3 before lunch, lessons 4-5 after lunch)
Years 10-13	13:20-13:50 (Lessons 1-4 before lunch, lesson 5 after lunch)

This means only half the school requires serving in any given time. Pack ups are still permitted, but **MUST** be eaten inside. Please may I remind parents that we have a no fizzy drink policy. Drinks too can only be drunk inside. This applies to break and lunch.

### **Homework**

Each secondary school week has 25 hours of learning, each year 39 weeks. In a standard school year only 16% of your child's time is actually spent in school if I allow for a bit of travel time! If you extend that to a life of 70 years, Year 7-13 counts for less than 2% of your entire life! To think that this 2% and the results you achieve at school can have the potential to affect the remaining 74% of your life after you leave school, you will understand why we need to make every second of school count.

This is why we say what your child does with you at home can have the biggest influence, it is **you** that can have the biggest impact with your child. As parents your role is key to the success of your child. As a mother of three who worked full-time throughout my children's upbringing, I know that's not an easy thing to hear, parenthood is demanding, but now my girls are grown up and are all successful happy adults, I promise you it is all worth the effort.

We will be taking a firm line with homework this year. Extending the time your child spends learning will help us to influence that very small amount of time in school. It is essential your child gets into good learning habits and understands that learning is for them, the only one who benefits from good learning is the child. Your child will have a homework timetable; please look at it in their planner. **Do** email school if you think your child isn't being set work to do. Very shortly we should have the homework system set up where you can see online what has been set for your child each day - please bear with us whilst we iron out some niggles with this - please check and support your child to complete the work on time and where possible please carve out a quiet space at home, with good ventilation, light and resources so they can complete their work effectively.

Unlike in previous years, to facilitate homework your child will be required to take their books home and return with them to school for lessons. Your child will therefore need a good school bag to carry books and equipment. All books are provided free of charge in the first instance. Should your child lose their book they will be expected to pay for a replacement and to copy up all work that is missing - it is vital children have full and complete books for the time when they revise for assessments. There are no exceptions to this, so please help your child to keep their books safe. If your child is younger or slightly disorganised please take the time to check their timetable and help them pack their bag for school each day.

## Planners

The school is launching a new behaviour policy (which can be found on the website) and central to this is the planner. All children will be given a newly-designed planner free of charge. This planner must be with the child at all times of the school day.

Because the policy requires the planner to reward and sanction the children, any child who attends without their planner will not be able to take part in lessons. If this is the case, in the first instance they will have a planner sheet issued for one day only (only one sheet per half term). After this they will be removed from lessons until a parent or guardian can bring their planner into school. If their planner is lost, a new one can be bought for £3.

The planner is a vital communication link between home and school. Please look at this regularly. You will be able to see where rewards are being issued - a chance for you to say "Well done!". You will also see where your child has slipped up with a series of codes and comments:

**H**= Homework, **U**=Uniform, **L**=late, **E**=Equipment, **B**=Unsatisfactory behaviour in class, **P**=Unsatisfactory participation or progress made in lesson, **AS**=Unsatisfactory behaviour out of class (around school).

We are all human and mistakes can be made, so when you look at their planner and see that your child has been given a code, please talk to them about what happened for them to get this code. If you think the school can help with this in any way, contact your child's Head of Year or Student Liaison Officer.

May I thank you in advance for the efforts you will be making this year to help your child be the best they can and make the most of their very limited time in school. If you have any concerns or queries please use the email address at the start of this letter (which is new and replaces the old one).

Many thanks for your time and support,



Mrs H Dowds, Executive Principal