



from Tom Lawson MA (Oxon), Headmaster

23 June 2020

Dear Parents, Pupils and Staff,

I do hope you are looking forward to Speech Day from 10am on Saturday (27 June). The link to follow along with the broadcast is:

<https://vimeo.com/event/108597>

The rest of this letter lays out in broad strokes the current plan for school return in September with a special section aimed at answering questions for overseas pupils at the end.

We plan for **all pupils to return at the scheduled beginning of term in September**. New pupils should stand by for specific instructions as there may be some minor changes to the timings of the new pupil induction day (Wednesday 2 September), meeting and greeting and so forth, because normally we would intentionally mix parents from all over the country and the world together for social reasons, which may not be appropriate. Otherwise, the timings [are as published](#) **Wednesday 2 September 6pm for existing boarders, and the morning of Thursday 3 September for day pupils**.

Our current planning assumption is for pupils to be wearing school uniform. We will undertake a risk assessment at the start of term concerning the practicalities of wearing blazers/long sleeves and hand-washing requirements. Whatever the circumstances, pupils will need full uniform at the very least for occasions and for when the weather turns cold. A letter on the new school uniform, including how to order, will go out to parents this week.

The College will assess the risk of all its activities in conjunction with the latest data on the prevalence of SARS-CoV-2 and government guidance to make appropriate arrangements to maximise the safety for pupils and the wider community. My letter of 10 June outlined the actions taken to mitigate risk with the return of some Year 10 and 12 pupils as well as links to the guidance. I do not want to repeat that here, but a similar and even more thoroughgoing exercise will be undertaken prior to opening so that we can make the arrangements necessary to operate as fully as possible in a safe way. That risk assessment will be published on the website or parent portal.

The level of restrictions required is an unknown at the present time. To help visualise what you might expect, I have drawn a very rough 'radio dial' of the kind of measures that will be considered depending on the level of risk in September. (See over page).

The pointer below is roughly where we are now; we can fully expect the dial to move close to one or two 'o'clock', into the green zone, by September unless there is a significant second wave. We will continue to keep our IT infrastructure and curriculum policies ready in case there is a second wave and we have to abruptly tighten arrangements or shutdown the school again (I am sorry to raise this: a horrible scenario, but we will be ready just in case).

The important message is that **we will be ready to open fully in September and will implement such measures as necessary and fulfil guidance applicable to our setting to keep our pupils safe.** I will write again during the holidays if there is a significant change to the expected scenario in September. Otherwise, I will communicate again at a minimum to update you on these two dates:

**Thursday 2 July** – when, in theory, the first review of the UK quarantine measures will have been announced

**Saturday 15 August** – following the meeting of the ECI board of governors the day before when we are in the two week run in to the start of term and final decisions must be made.

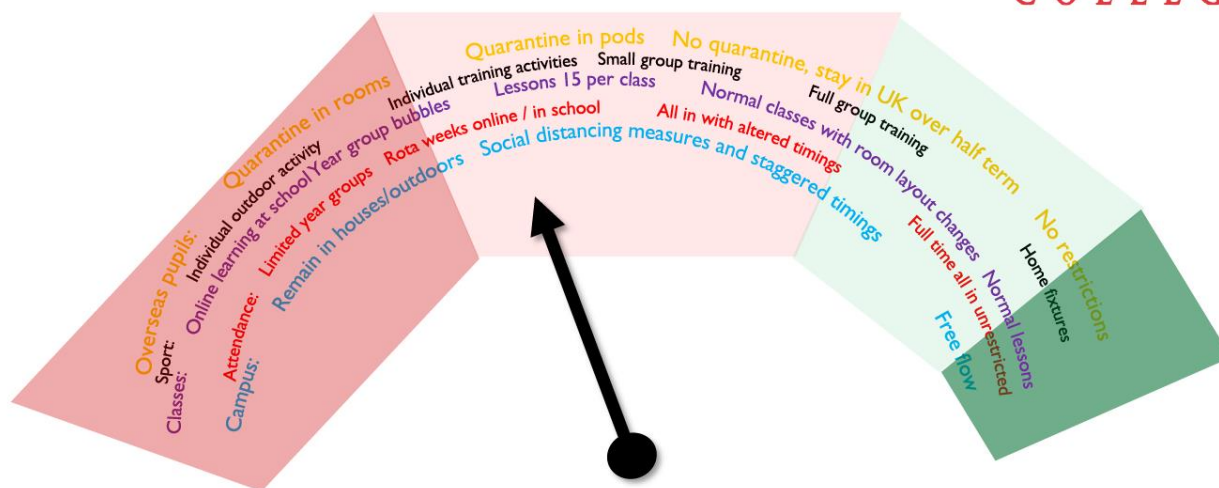
I do hope that you feel safe and secure in the knowledge that the College is well prepared with equipment, planning, goodwill, a commitment to safe practice in hygiene, and a felicitously spacious site, so that we can confidently open in September.

With very best wishes,



Tom Lawson  
Headmaster

Radio dial for planning September return



# Q&A for pupils travelling to school from overseas

## What is the current position?

As of the date of this letter, anyone travelling to the UK from overseas needs to quarantine for 14 days. This means travelling to a named destination and staying there without contact with others for that period. The details are in this government document:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-how-to-self-isolate-when-you-travel-to-the-uk/coronavirus-covid-19-how-to-self-isolate-when-you-travel-to-the-uk>

Exemptions cover the likes of diplomatic and military families, but exceptions to this rule are not otherwise likely to apply to Eastbourne pupils.

I hope that the Q&A below is helpful. First, let me say that I know it has been very difficult (and expensive) to plan flights and get hold of them with this uncertainty and under these difficult conditions. I am so sorry and I wish we were in the position to give firmer information. I will continue to keep you informed.

## What will be the position in September?

We do not know whether this policy will be rescinded by September. The 'mood music' from most in the government and the press is that **it will be liberalised, at least for some countries, by the time term starts.**

## When will we know?

The government has promised to review the policy at 3-week intervals. The first review therefore should be around 30 June, which is why **I plan to write, hopefully with some good news, on 2 July.**

## Will the school provide quarantine for overseas boarders if required?

Yes, if still required from the first day of term (Wednesday 2 September) the school will provide quarantine for the first two weeks of term.

## Will the school provide quarantine for the two weeks before term?

No, the school is not currently planning to provide quarantine on campus for pupils in the two weeks prior to term. This is because:

- (a) by the time we get there, it may be unnecessary for pupils from most or all of the destinations that our pupils come from;
- (b) if the worst comes to the worst, it will be better to be locked down in school while the school is running so quarantined pupils have work to get on with and lots of touchpoints (online, talking through the door) with friends and staff throughout the day.

## Can pupils stay with their guardians for the two weeks prior to term?

Yes, if they wish. They can self-isolate there and if free of symptoms return to school on day one along with UK boarders.

## What is the school's advice on booking flights?

If you book for the scheduled start of term, your child will certainly be able to start and the school will provide quarantine arrangements only if necessary. Parents **may** wish to book flights for two weeks prior to the beginning of term **if they have a guardian on standby**. However, this may also be unnecessary.

## What about half term?

If desired, pupils may stay in school over the Michaelmas Term half term (16 October 2020 – 1 November 2020) or they may go to guardians which is the normal way for many overseas pupils.

## What about Exeats?

Pupils should go to their guardians or a friend's house for the short Exeat breaks in the Michaelmas term. Hsms are aware that this may take some arranging for one-year pupils from Germany, who are the only overseas pupils not required to have a nominated guardian in place.

## If quarantine is rescinded, how will the school keep pupils safe?

The College will follow government guidance and also risk assess itself the locations pupils are travelling from. If the incidence of SARS-CoV-2 is low in the country of origin, and the law allows, it will be safe for these pupils to mix in controlled ways with others. If those conditions are not met appropriate quarantine either individually or in pods (depending on the rules at the time) will be arranged.

**All pupils travelling to school through airports or public transport should take maximum precautions, including face coverings, during their travel.** The College can arrange safe taxis from the airports in the normal way.

The school will put in place measures to ensure safety, health and hygiene so that your children's safety is our top priority. If necessary we can manage pupil bubbles to reduce the risk of spread and ensure effective tracing and tracking. We have an excellent medical centre with a permanent staff, and school doctors who attend to pupils on site. We can immediately access testing for no charge and have all the equipment necessary for temperature checks. Currently the incidence of SARS-CoV-2 in Sussex is very low. We continue to monitor and we will respond according to the level of risk in the area.

Staff involved in personal care (eg school nurses) will wear PPE. Pupils and staff may wear face-coverings if they wish. Face coverings will not be obligatory for all staff and pupils, but 'personal protective behaviour' including social distancing, heightened hygiene and changes to room layouts will reduce the risk of transfer.

We will continue to review our policies in the light of updates to the legislation and the level of risk.