



from Tom Lawson MA (Oxon), Headmaster

6 July 2020

Dear Parents, Pupils and Staff,

September return

We are delighted to say that, at last, we have had the [guidance](#) for September that allows us to confirm definitively **the return to school of all years in September**. (Quotations from the guidance are in *italic script*.)

The risk to children themselves of becoming severely ill from coronavirus (COVID-19) is very low and there are negative health impacts of being out of school... Given the improved position, the balance of risk is now overwhelmingly in favour of children returning to school. For the vast majority of children, the benefits of being back in school far outweigh the very low risk from coronavirus (COVID-19).

As has been the case at St Andrew's Prep throughout the summer term as pupil numbers have increased, a suite of measures will be in place to reduce the risk of transmission during the school day. Over the next month we will be working out the details and conducting a thorough risk assessment to support the measures we put in place. To keep pupils as safe as possible we will employ a: *'system of controls', building on the hierarchy of protective measures that have been in use throughout the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak. When implemented in line with a revised risk assessment, these measures create an inherently safer environment for children and staff where the risk of transmission of infection is substantially reduced... the way different schools implement some of the requirements will differ based on their individual circumstances.*

This 'system of controls' will include:

1. **Management of anyone ill**, including the requirement for day pupils not to come in to school with a positive diagnosis or signs of any illness at all. For any pupil showing symptoms during the school day there will be initial self-isolation in school until they can go home or be cared for in self-isolation as boarders. Test and trace measures will be in place in the school, and we will also have testing kits available so we can rapidly respond to any suspected cases.

Please note that children on the shielded patient list, and those with family members shielding, are now advised also to go to school. If you are concerned and there are particular risk factors for your child then you should seek medical advice and then get in touch with the school's medical centre to discuss special arrangements.

2. **Enhanced cleaning and logistical changes:** there will be frequent and thorough cleaning of all parts of the school, in particular any shared spaces such as bathrooms and shared equipment, eg laboratory apparatus, sports, or playground equipment. Classrooms will be arranged to avoid face-to-face contact, ie in rows facing the front with the teacher at least two metres away from pupils wherever possible (back to the old days, then, I'm getting out my old chalks and mortar board!). Strict visitor policies, one way systems, control measures for pinch points and queues will also be arranged where practicable. There will be, hopefully

minor, adjustments to stagger timings and avoid congregation of different bubbles at mealtimes and drop-off/pick-up in particular.

- 3. Grouping children together:** at all levels where specialist teaching is required, ie throughout the College and at St Andrew's from Year 5 onwards, the 'bubbles' are now likely to expand to a whole year group. With such big bubbles, pupils will be asked still to avoid touching, coughing, close contact, etc to minimise the risk. Pupils will be asked not to mix outside their bubble, so there will be no physical whole-school assemblies, chapels, or other avoidable mixing outside the bubble. The guidance does allow, where necessary, pupils to mix in other defined groups (we are calling them 'side-pods' as a working title) for example the other pupils on their bus route and, in the College, others in their house. Expect further details in August on the implications for co-curricular activities, which will be able to go ahead with some modification to meet these requirements.
- 4. 'Personal protective behaviour':** the key to making all this work is the cooperation and common sense of everyone in the school community. Pupils will be asked to adhere to the highest standards of hygiene with frequent hand washing, use of sanitiser and a 'catch it, bin it, kill it' approach. Their cooperation in maintaining distance from those outside their bubble, especially when passing in corridors and so on, is crucial. Pupils travelling in on public transport should wear a face covering and dispose of it on entry to the school observing 'one-metre-plus' distancing. Social distancing is not, however, required on dedicated school buses. Other than in designated close contact situations, such as the work of the school nurses, face coverings are not recommended: *they are not required in schools as pupils and staff are mixing in consistent groups, and because misuse may inadvertently increase the risk of transmission.*

Pupils and staff may, if they wish, wear face coverings provided that they do not allow themselves to take lesser other precautions as a result.

There is much more detail we could share, and still some things that we need to work out and communicate to you before the beginning of term. (NB for College parents: the online White Book (calendar) will now be delayed until late August to allow firmer inclusion of these new arrangements. The St Andrew's calendar will not be printed as a hard-copy for the Autumn term because of too many uncertainties. It is available online via the school website and will be updated regularly.)

However, we hope that the above provides reassurance and the main ways with which we can bring pupils back to school in September, carefully and thoughtfully balancing risks to keep them safe while allowing for a full and varied curriculum.

Overseas pupils / family holiday destinations

We are delighted to confirm that pupils travelling from a list of countries including **Hong Kong, Germany, Spain, Switzerland, and Italy**, can return at the scheduled start of term without needing quarantine. For the full list of countries with this allowable 'travel corridor' please see: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-travel-corridors#travel-corridors-countries-and-territories-exemption-list>.

Unfortunately, at present, **China (mainland), USA, Nigeria, Malaysia and Thailand**, among others, are not currently included in this list. Pupils travelling from those countries might require self-isolation in school if they arrive in the UK at the beginning of term or arrange isolation with a guardian for the two weeks prior. Anyone in this situation should confirm their arrangements with their College hsm or Mr Tomsett at St Andrew's.

By September, the travel corridors will have been reviewed and countries may move on and off the list. Please keep an eye on the link above if you are concerned.

All pupils who enter the UK from abroad will be required to fill in a form saying where they are resident. Details of this form and what is required are here: <https://www.gov.uk/provide-journey-contact-details-before-travel-uk>. Please note the school address (in the footer of this letter, for example) for use in this form if you are an overseas boarder. All pupils travelling through transport hubs, eg on aeroplanes and through airports, are requested to wear face coverings and maintain the strictest hygiene and personal protective behaviour.

A-level and GCSE grades

A-level and GCSE results day are on Thursdays 13 August and 20 August respectively. Pupils may be able to come into school if they have a problem and need advice, providing they are not unwell, but otherwise should collect their results online. Detailed arrangements have been communicated previously in this letter: <https://www.eastbourne-college.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/For-Ys-10-11-U6-Exam-results-information-for-public-exams-2020.pdf>

Re-take exams in all subjects will be available in October and November. The timetable for this is not yet available. The College will, of course, arrange for any pupil not enrolled at a school elsewhere to be able to sit these exams at the College. For regulatory reasons, ex-pupils will not be able to be resident at the College, so boarders / pupils at a distance may need to arrange for hotel accommodation or to stay with friends. The provisional deadline for entry to A-level re-takes is 4 September so, having received their results, any pupil considering a re-take should discuss with their hsm, Miss Gordon and other staff as necessary to assist in making their decision. Deadlines for entering re-take GCSEs are well into term time (provisionally 17/18 September) so conversations can wait until return.

Appeals against Centre-Assessed Grades can be made at the level of the school against the awarding body, not, currently, on an individual level and must be on the technical grounds that cohort levels or rankings have been incorrectly entered.

Enjoy the summer holiday

Unless there are major changes, we do not plan to write again until the week commencing 17 August. Thank you to everyone who watched along with our Speech Days. If you missed them, the links to watch are:

St Andrew's: <https://vimeo.com/standrewsprep>
Eastbourne College: <https://vimeo.com/429674626#t=192s>

Thank you for your patience reading to the end of this long letter! Have a great summer.

Best wishes,



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