

11th September 2020

Dear Parents/Carers,

Welcome back!

Well – we’ve made it at last!

I hope that you all had an enjoyable summer break, whether at home or further afield.

Yesterday, we welcomed back ALL students for the first time since March. We were very confident that we had taken all reasonable steps to make the school environment safe, whilst maintaining at least some sense of normality and the ‘buzz’ of learning, but of course you simply cannot tell until the plans are put into action.

I have been amazed by how well the students and staff have responded to the new routines. Everyone has worked tremendously hard to adhere to these new rules, treating others with respect and courtesy. The whole school has been calm and purposeful, and I am sure this will continue as we settle into the Autumn term.

That said, we are not complacent and we may find that we need to tweak or add to some of the arrangements as we progress through the coming weeks. During the first couple of days, we identified the fact that we need ‘holding areas’ for those students who arrive at school early, in order to limit the mixing of year group ‘bubbles’. These are as follows:

- Year 7 – front of school
- Year 8 – quad area
- Year 9 – field area near French
- Year 10 – tennis courts
- Year 11 – Sports Hall/outside North Block

I will, of course, keep you informed of any other changes as necessary.

Our response to any infection

Parents and carers need to be ready and willing to:

- [book a test](#) if they or their child are displaying symptoms. Staff and students must not come into the school if they have symptoms and must be sent home to self-isolate if they develop them in school.
- provide details of anyone they or their child have been in close contact with if they were to test positive for coronavirus (COVID-19) or if asked by NHS Test and Trace
- [self-isolate](#) if they have been in close contact with someone who tests positive for coronavirus (COVID-19), or if anyone in their household develops symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19)

Anyone who displays symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19) can and should get a test. Tests can be booked online through the NHS [testing and tracing for coronavirus](#) website, or ordered by telephone via NHS 119 for those without access to the internet.

I ask that parents and carers inform me immediately of the results of a test and follow the guidance below:

1. If someone tests negative, if they feel well and no longer have symptoms similar to coronavirus, they can stop self-isolating. They could still have another virus, such as a cold or flu – in which case it is still best to avoid contact with other people until they are better. Other members of their household can stop self-isolating.
2. If someone tests positive, they should follow the [guidance for households with possible or confirmed coronavirus \(COVID-19\) infection](#) and must continue to self-isolate for at least 10 days from the onset of their symptoms and then return to school only if they do not have symptoms other than cough or loss of sense of smell/taste. This is because a cough or anosmia can last for several weeks once the infection has gone. The 10-day period starts from the day when they first became ill. If they still have a high temperature, they should keep self-isolating until their temperature returns to normal. Other members of their household should continue self-isolating for the full 14 days.

How we will manage confirmed cases of coronavirus

We will take swift action if we become aware that someone who has attended school has tested positive for coronavirus and will contact the local health protection team for assistance. This team will also contact us directly if they become aware that someone who has tested positive for coronavirus attended the school – as identified by NHS Test and Trace.

The health protection team will work with us in this situation to guide us through the actions we need to take. Based on the advice from the health protection team, I will send home those people who have been in close contact with the person who has tested positive, advising them to self-isolate for 14 days since they were last in close contact with that person when they were infectious.

The health protection team will provide definitive advice on who must be sent home. Household members of those contacts who are sent home do not need to self-isolate themselves unless the child, young person or staff member who is self-isolating subsequently develops symptoms. If someone in a class or group that has been asked to self-isolate develops symptoms themselves

within their 14-day isolation period they should follow [guidance for households with possible or confirmed coronavirus \(COVID-19\) infection](#). They should get a test, and:

- if the test delivers a negative result, they must remain in isolation for the remainder of the 14-day isolation period. This is because they could still develop the coronavirus within the remaining days.
- if the test result is positive, they should inform their setting immediately, and should isolate for at least 10 days from the onset of their symptoms (which could mean the self-isolation ends before or after the original 14-day isolation period). Their household should self-isolate for at least 14 days from when the symptomatic person first had symptoms, following [guidance for households with possible or confirmed coronavirus \(COVID-19\) infection](#)

If we have two or more confirmed cases within 14 days, or an overall rise in sickness absence where coronavirus is suspected, we will continue to work with our local health protection team who will be able to advise if additional action is required.

In other news....

On a much more positive note, our new Year 7 students have settled in extremely well already and we look forward to celebrating their success in the near future. They have had a busy but productive first few days and all seemed to have enjoyed their start of secondary school life, albeit far from our usual transition process.

We also welcome our new staff to Upper Wharfedale and hope that they enjoy all we have to offer:

- Mrs Doidge (Subject Leader for Food Technology)
- Miss Votsikas (Student Support Officer)
- Miss Maslin (Learning Support Assistant)
- Mr Armstrong (Cleaner)

GCSE Results

Amongst the national turmoil of exam cancellation, centre-assessed grades, failed algorithms, u-turns, more u-turns and delays, it was a great pleasure to see the majority of past year 11 students on 20th August to issue them with their well-deserved and long-awaited exam results. As I have said before, I was tremendously proud of the way they coped with this unprecedented situation.

Contrary to some media reports and the obvious inflation of grades given by some schools, we can hold our heads high knowing that we conducted a robust, fair and morally sound process in the best interests of our students. The outcome of this is that all have gone on to their chosen destinations and are now pursuing appropriate post 16 courses for their abilities, interests and aspirations.

It is a shame that, due to the latest restrictions, we will be unable to celebrate in person at our usual Presentation and Awards Evening, usually held in November, but we send our heartfelt congratulations to them all.

I also need to reiterate my thanks to all the staff involved, especially Mrs Hayton who worked tirelessly throughout the summer in preparation for the release.

Uniform

Students in all year groups have returned to school looking very smart and purposeful. Please take note of the uniform policy on the website and in particular footwear, which must be plain black with flat or low heels. Trainers and canvas shoes are not allowed unless covered by a medical note.

Please also note that make up should be “discreet”, which includes the use of nail varnish. False nails must not be worn and eyebrows ‘natural’.

I am aware, however, that there have been some issues with uniform shops being unable to source some aspects of our uniform. We will, of course, be lenient until this unavoidable problem is solved. If you have any items missing, please simply write a note your child’s planner.

Dates for diaries

16th September: VIRTUAL Year 7 Information Evening

21st September: VIRTUAL Year 6 Open Evening

7th October: Year 11 Parents’ Evening scheduled but will not take place. We will send alternative arrangements as soon as possible.

16th October: Deep Learning Day (alternative timetable)

23rd October: School closes for half term

Finally, I would like to thank you all once again for your continued support during these strangest of times.

Yours faithfully



Andrew Taylor

Headteacher