



Colchester County High School for Girls

Norman Way, Colchester CO3 3US

Our ref: WJA/AAD

May 2020

Dear Parent

As you are aware, following the UK government's announcement on 11 May, secondary schools in England have been asked to open to Years 10 and 12 for some face to face contact at some point before the school summer holidays; this will not be from 1 June as this date applies only to some primary school children. The timing of the return to school of the remaining year groups in September has yet to be announced. We receive information from the government at the same time as the general public; circumstances and advice change regularly and rapidly.

We are working towards a return to partial opening for Years 10 and 12 in the latter part of June and early July. The plan for these year groups will be sent out separately once they have been finalised after half term. At the moment travel by public transport is not being recommended and some school buses will not be running. Whether to send students in to school is a parental choice, and may be dependent upon the ability to transport your child to school safely. Some departments may be planning to present new content in lessons during the re-opening, however online lesson materials will still be provided for those who are unable to attend.

We have been preparing for re-opening since general school closure back in March and we guarantee that the key to our planning and actions since then has been 'safety first'. The school has remained open for key worker children. We all want to re-open our schools but we must do this without risking health and safety; careful decision-making is necessary and we are sending out with this letter the relevant 'action' sections of our detailed school re-opening planning grid for parents to view and give feedback. This document forms part of our whole school comprehensive risk assessment. We hope that you will agree that this is the product of a realistic assessment of CCHSG's ability to resume operations safely and that these are positive, practical and proportionate measures.

The operational challenges for the return to school are vast; staff members may be shielding and may not be able to be in school with students. The school will only be able to be open if there are sufficient staff available. We can assure you that we will prioritise the safety of students, staff, their families and the wider community and in order to do this we are taking the following into consideration:

- We have and will always follow UK government advice and apply it in our school context
- We also follow the advice of professional educational bodies, including for example Essex County Council and the Confederation of School Trusts
- As CEO of Alpha Trust, Mrs Marshall has consulted and collaborated with the other schools in the Trust on the wide range of issues that surround the wider opening of schools

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- Our planning is categorised with safety in mind and is both thorough and detailed. The plan is much more comprehensive than the summary given here
- Due to the length of time we have been planning, we are working to ensure we have plentiful supplies of hand sanitiser, general cleaning products, PPE for certain staff, barriers etc.
- During general closure, the entire school has been deep cleaned and large areas of it subsequently sealed with no access allowed. Limited access to the buildings has been maintained as only very few members of staff have been attending on a daily rota basis
- We have embedded hygiene routines and social distancing safety procedures with those students and staff who have been attending CCHSG during lockdown
- We are conducting individual risk assessments for all staff and vulnerable students

In brief, what you can expect from us:

- **Prioritising the safety of all** – the key to moving forward
- **Teaching and learning** – evolving and developing online systems with consolidation during partial school re-opening to include pastoral care, form tutoring and continuity of learning. It is likely this will remain a key feature of the educational provision for our students
- **Communication** – timely, considered and accurate

When the school re-opens there will have to be many changes to the way we conduct ourselves and to how we manage the school day. These changes centre on hygiene, social distancing and staggering the timings of break, lunchtime and the end of the day. There are also adjustments to those students and staff who are expected to attend, and there has already been a fundamental shift in how we all manage our teaching and learning.

'We're all in this together' describes the essential role students, staff, parents and carers will play in allowing the school to reopen safely. COVID-19 is highly contagious; everyone in the school and its wider community must do their part. The measures we will put in place will only succeed if everyone involved is compliant and co-operative.

To ensure safety and compliance with our requirements for safe operating of the school when students attend, we have developed a Covid-19 Student Code of Conduct which all students are required to have read, understood and acknowledged. Parents will also be asked to read and acknowledge a similar document. The draft documents are attached for you to read and give us feedback.

In brief:

Attendance

- Nobody with coronavirus symptoms should attend for any reason
- Parents will not be fined for the non-attendance of their daughter
- We encourage sign up to the 'track and trace' App when this is available

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Shielded and clinically vulnerable children and young people and adults:

- Any child or adult who is clinically extremely vulnerable due to pre-existing medical conditions should not attend school
- Clinically vulnerable people are those considered to be at a higher risk of severe illness from coronavirus. Students who are clinically vulnerable should continue to work online from home

Getting to and from school:

- The government is asking children to avoid using public transport on their return to school. We suggest that students travel to school by alternative means

Coronavirus symptoms:

- Any student or staff member showing the symptoms of Covid-19 will be isolated, sent home and their contacts in school traced and notified. They will be expected to have a test and follow government guidelines regarding self-isolation. In the case of students, their families will be notified and parents must collect their child immediately
- Where the student or staff member subsequently tests positive, anyone in their contact group will be sent home and advised to self-isolate for 14 days. The other household members of such people do not need to self-isolate unless the student or staff member they live with in the 'sent home' group subsequently develops symptoms
- Where the student or staff member tests negative, they can return to their normal setting and their household members can end their self-isolation
- Any student or staff member who has been sent home sick must remain at home for 48 hours, even if testing negative for coronavirus

Hygiene

- Hand washing – more regularly than normal. The school will provide access to soap and hand sanitiser but we advise that students also bring in their own hand sanitiser
- Good respiratory hygiene – we will promote and ensure the 'catch it, bin it, kill it' approach and although we advise students to bring their own packet of tissues, tissues will be available in every classroom
- If a student becomes unwell during the school day we have a fully equipped isolation room with a separate toilet facility where they can wait until collected. Staff attending the student will be wearing PPE
- Frequently touched surfaces (handles, chairs, desks, switches, door frames, keyboards, etc.) are regularly bio-cleaned throughout the school day by cleaners who are employed specifically for this purpose
- Windows will be open to keep rooms and all spaces well ventilated even on chilly days; students should bring their cardigans and PE sweatshirt
- School uniform requirements will be slightly relaxed in that students do not need to wear their blazer and may wear their PE long trousers and PE top instead of school shirt and trousers/skirt, to facilitate more frequent washing of uniform
- We recommend school uniform is washed daily on return from school

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- The site team and school cleaning team clean the school at the end of every day, however there will be more frequent cleaning of key areas such as door handles, light switches, toilets etc.
- Screens will be in place in key areas, including between canteen staff and students in the Dining Room
- Although wearing a face covering in schools is not recommended by the UK government at the moment, we are allowing students to wear a face covering if they wish to, provided they follow our Covid-19 Code of Conduct hygienic handling rules
- Staff may choose to wear PPE, including face coverings and/or visors
- Parents, carers and educational settings do not need to take children's temperatures every morning. Routine testing of an individual's temperature is not a reliable method for identifying coronavirus. (UK Government advice, May 2020). The school has a number of hand held thermometers to take a student's temperature if they are feeling unwell
- If there is a confirmed case of coronavirus in school, all students and staff who have had any contact with that person will be traced and contacted immediately

Social Distancing

- We are planning some interaction for Year 10 and 12 before the end of term but all students in these year groups will not be able to be in school at the same time. An adjusted timetable will be produced
- Students will be in smaller groups and will stay away from other groups, including at break and lunchtimes. Students will sit next to the same person, as far as feasible, whenever they attend
- There will be no mass gatherings of any sort
- All greetings are to be modified with no handshakes, high fives, fist bumps or hugging
- Classroom layouts will be altered; seating will be distanced and classes spread across two classrooms if necessary
- Queuing will be socially distanced and one-way corridors will operate during staggered movement times
- No sharing of any resources – including items from a student's pencil case
- Break and lunchtimes. We are considering the arrangements for access to school meals. Access to the Dining Room may be controlled, and in some circumstances food may be delivered to students in classrooms. Students will be outside, even if chilly or damp. Please bring appropriate waterproof clothing and shoes
- Extensive signage and markings throughout the school, inside and outside, will reinforce social distancing messages and one-way systems
- No visitors, parents or meetings in school will take place

Timings

- Break and lunchtimes will be staggered
- Movement times will be staggered
- The start and end of the school day will be staggered

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Apart from doing all we can to reduce the transmission of coronavirus whilst students are in school, the fundamental purpose of the school is the education of our students. Teaching and learning online will continue for the foreseeable future and will develop further as we get feedback from students and parents and as the whole idea of online learning becomes central to teaching. School staff are receiving training in order to develop on-line even further, including 'live lessons'.

Communication

- We are communicating our plans to staff, parents and students now in order to obtain feedback
- The Covid-19 Student Code of Conduct must be adhered to. A draft is being issued for consultation, but may change according to the latest guidance
- Normal sickness absence reporting procedures for staff and parents must be maintained; please keep us updated with any relevant information

The school will have to become a differently styled community but it will still remain CCHSG in essence. We are committed to doing the best we can to ensure staff and student safety within the current guidelines. We are extremely proud of our community. We very much wish to see the students back in school and miss the daily interaction with them but the safety of all comes first. Ultimately, we acknowledge that it will be a parental decision whether or not to send students to school.

We are asking parents to complete an initial survey to ascertain the numbers of students who will be attending from Years 10 and 12 to aid our planning. This is not binding, and we are aware that factors which determine whether a student attends school or not may change. The link to the Year 10 survey is here:

https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=la3pq0GH7kuhsVbSrAP_KgkqPLFGxhtDnsR3sw_iaZFUNFFTUFCVUFBNzYRUQ1WVFVNIIdMVEdMMi4u

The link for the Year 12 survey is here:

https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=la3pq0GH7kuhsVbSrAP_KgkqPLFGxhtDnsR3sw_iaZFUNjE4NTg2UjNPNEw2QkixU01WS0dUTDIKOS4u

Please complete the survey via the links by Wednesday 3 June.

If you have any feedback regarding the proposals outlined above and attached please send your feedback to office@cchsg.com marked 'Reopening Feedback' by Wednesday 3 June.

We would like to thank all our governors, staff, parents, carers and students for their positive attitude, offers of help, the encouragement given and support provided.

Yours sincerely



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Executive Principal



Mrs W Jackson
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