



## September 2020 Re-Opening FAQs – for Students and Parents

### A return to full-time education for all – **Update 26<sup>th</sup> August**

#### Keeping yourself healthy

The best way to avoid infection when you leave your home is to remember the basics: keep a 1m+ social distance / regularly wash your hands for 20 seconds / use hand-sanitiser when you can / keep your hands away from face / wear face masks on public transport or in shops.

#### Face Masks

With regards to the change in policy on face masks in schools announced by the Government on 25<sup>th</sup> August, we will make the wearing of face masks **optional** for staff and students with a recommendation that they are worn in corridors. This is in line with the approach being taken by other local secondary schools. It is therefore important that you discuss this as a family and decide whether you want to wear a face mask at school. We have also taken a number of measures to reduce the risk of viral infection including one-way systems, year group recreation spaces, new outdoor eating spaces, additional daily cleaning and new sanitising stations (further details below).

The DfE have advised schools that the risk of serious illness by Covid-19 to young people is very low. The current incident rate of new infections in Bishop's Stortford and surrounding area is also low. If this changed, we would be advised by Hertfordshire County Council Public Health. At this point, face masks would become compulsory.

#### Q. When does term start?

In order for us to fully prepare for a return to the 'new normal', we are planning a staggered start for students. This will make sure that staff are fully prepared, that the school adheres to health and safety regulations and that new students are fully inducted:

- **Friday 4<sup>th</sup> September. Year 7 and 12 only**
- **Monday 7<sup>th</sup> September. Year 7, 12 and 13 only**
- **Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> September. Year 7, 11, 12 and 13**
- **Wednesday 9<sup>th</sup> September. All Year Groups**

I can speak on behalf of all our staff in saying that we are really looking forward to welcoming all our students back in September and we will work our hardest to catch up and ensure that these last few months do not affect things in the long-run.

#### What should I do?

In line with other local secondary schools, we are planning to fully open in September, but with an increased focus on cleanliness and hygiene.

The night before coming to school, you should check that you have:

- Your school uniform – that it is clean - although there is no need to wash it every day
- Your PE kit – you will change to do PE and we have made some modifications to ensure that you quickly get in and out of the changing rooms and are able to socially distance. Your PE teacher will tell you about these changes in your first lesson
- Suitable waterproof bag to carry your books and equipment – being waterproof means that you can easily clean your bag if required
- Clean face mask or disposable face mask
- Stationery – unfortunately we will not be able to loan out stationery so you will need to make sure you have your own set of pens / pencils / ruler / calculator / glue stick / protractor in a wipe clean pencil case
- You will be issued with your own goggles for Science practicals – you need to look after these and bring them with you to school when you have science.
- Although the school will have hand sanitizing systems inside and outside the buildings, you can bring your own hand sanitizer / tissues / disposable plastic bag for tissues – you will be able to use these throughout the day as required.

- If you intend to travel by public transport, you must wear a face mask. These should be carefully put on and removed – there is further video advice from WHO if you click on this link: (<https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/advice-for-public/when-and-how-to-use-masks>)
- If you walk, bike or come by car, you do not need to wear a face mask. If you come to school by bus or train, you will need to wear one. In terms of reducing your carbon footprint, see if you could walk or bike to school instead of being driven.

## Q How will I be taught?

**Your school day:** Following current government direction, our main priority for the Autumn Term will be getting students back and teaching them in a classroom setting. This will keep students in a classroom context with students in their year group for 25 hours a week. This is in line with other local secondary schools. The exact details of your timetable as well as breaktime and lunchtime arrangements will be explained to you when you return in September.

We will run a full curriculum and the school day timings will stay roughly the same. The school day will start at 8:45am in your form room. You will notice that we have introduced some subtle changes to the timing of school day and we will run through the Year Group Priority System for break and lunchtime as part of your induction process.

School Day	Time	Detail
Before School	8:30am	Students discouraged from arriving before 8:15am – can meet outside in Year Group ‘Bubbles’. Students not allowed inside until 8:40am unless wet and students should be allowed into form rooms at 8:30am
Form Time	8:45am	Tutor-led – no assemblies – messages delivered by form tutors
Period 1	9-9:55am	
Movement Time.	9:55am	To allow students to move calmly and follow one-way routes – local classroom management by faculties
Period 2	10-11am	
Break	11-11:30am	Year Group Priority System
Period 3	11:30-12:25pm	Period 3
Movement Time.	12:25pm	To allow students to move calmly and follow one-way routes – local classroom management by faculties
Period 4	12:30-1:30pm	Period 4
Lunch	1:30-2:00pm	Year Group Priority System
Period 5	2:00-3:10pm	Year 7-8 3pm dismissal Year 9-11 3:05pm dismissal Year 12-13 3:10pm dismissal

At lunchtime, each year group will have its own recreational space as follows:

Year	Recreational space	Social space
7	Back hard court	PLC Quad
8	Hard Court	Hard Court
9	RH All-weather Pitch	Lower Piazza (outside music)
10	LH All-weather Pitch	Back of Science Prep Room area
11	Hard Court behind D Block	Upper Piazza

Please keep social distancing in place before school (1m+). At the end of school, Year 7-8 will be dismissed from lessons at 3pm, Years 9-10 at 3:05pm and Year 11 and Sixth Form at 3:10pm. This will also give older students facing exams next year an extra 10minutes for Period 5 to help with catch-up.

**Trips and clubs:** Unfortunately, we will not be able to run a full programme of trips or after school clubs to begin with, but we will review this and take advice during the Autumn Term

**Getting around school:** We have introduced one-way systems throughout the school and these will be clearly marked using floor arrows. This will allow you to move from lessons to lessons in your year groups. We have introduced extra cleaning both after and during the school day. Every classroom will also have its own cleaning kit. You can do your bit by using hand sanitizer as required. This will also be available in corridors and outside. You can also wash your hands using soap in the designated areas and toilets.

You will be allowed to go straight into the classroom where possible once the room is empty rather than waiting in the corridor. The ends of lessons will be staggered to ensure that you can get to your next lesson on time and without over-crowding.

**Catering:** You will notice that there are some changes to the catering facilities and outside recreational spaces. The Café will continue to serve hot and cold food but there will be more outside serving hatches and more spaces to eat outside. To begin with, we will not be offering a breakfast service before school. Each year group will also have its own designated area for recreation & football. You may wish to check that you have topped up on parent pay if you wish to have food from the café.

**Assemblies:** Assemblies and large gatherings of students will be avoided. General messages will be conveyed by tutors using video or powerpoint presentations.

**Attendance:** You will be expected to attend full-time unless you are unwell. Parents will be told to keep you at home if you have flu-like symptoms – you should not return until you have been tested and self-isolated for 14 days.

**Sixth Form students** will be encouraged to work flexibly for the Autumn Term, working from home if they have appropriate study periods – these will be negotiated with their form tutor. We reserve the right to not give flexibility if the student falls behind with their studies.

### **Q What will happen if I have fallen behind and need help to catch-up?**

You may feel you have fallen behind during 'lockdown' – we believe that it will be important to get everyone back in classroom settings to begin with. By October half-term, we will ask teachers to identify student who they feel would benefit from catch-up opportunities or additional resources. We will then plan, organise and fund any additional support for the remainder of the academic year.

### **Q How is the school looking after my well-being?**

For many children, returning to school, seeing their friends and getting their lives back on track will be seen as a positive step forward. For some students with under-lying health concerns or those who feel anxious about returning to school, we are here to support you. Birchwood has an outstanding reputation for student welfare and wellbeing. Please let us know how you are feeling, and we will deal with this sensitively and appropriately.

### **Q What are the school's expectations of me?**

We have high expectations of students at Birchwood High School – we expect you to attend, behave and attain. These have not changed since lockdown. You may find re-acclimatising to school life to begin with but we will support you with this – we will also remind you if you need to improve or work harder. There will, of course, be zero tolerance of anyone who breaches our Health & Safety regulations – we need everyone to feel safe, secure and sagacious.

We will be launching a new home-school agreement in September which outlines our expectations of students, parents and the school – I have attached a copy of this for your information.

### **Q What do I do if I have flu-like symptoms?**

Please do not come into school – phone 111 and seek medical advice. You may be asked to get tested in a designated test centre. Please do not return until the test result is known. You should aim to self-isolate for

14 days during this period. We will then contact you to see how you are and how we can best support you including setting work for you to do at home.

**Q What will I do if I develop flu-like symptoms at school?**

If you have a high temperature, headache or continuous cough which develops at school, please inform your teacher. We will ask you to go with a trained first aider to a quarantined room which will be used to look after anyone with Covid-like symptoms. We will then phone your parents and 111 if required to assess what should happen next. It is worth remembering that the risk of serious illness to children from Covid-19 is low so other children should not be alarmed. The area the child sat in will be sterilized. Please do not return until the test result is known. You should aim to self-isolate for 14 days during this period. We will then contact you to see how you are and how we can best support you including setting work for you to do at home.

The school will check the outcome from testing – if positive – we will take appropriate action as directed by Hertfordshire County Council Medical advisors.

Students with other health concerns (eg. physical injuries) will be dealt with in the First Aid Room near Reception, keeping them away from anyone with viral symptoms.

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***As a general reminder - key symptoms of Covid-19: High temperature and headache / continuous cough (3 or more coughing episodes in 24 hours) / loss of sense of smell or taste. This link will take you some very helpful advice from the Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health (RCPCH):***

[https://issuu.com/joballrcpch/docs/covid19\\_advice\\_for\\_parents\\_when\\_child\\_unwell\\_or\\_in](https://issuu.com/joballrcpch/docs/covid19_advice_for_parents_when_child_unwell_or_in)