



9<sup>th</sup> August 2020

Dear parents

I trust you are enjoying the summer and are finding safe ways to relax and recuperate with your families.

As I am sure you are aware, the government announced that schools should fully reopen from the start of the upcoming autumn term. They have decided this on the basis of:

- The prevalence of coronavirus decreasing
- The new NHS test and trace system being in place
- More clarity about the measures that need to be in place to create safe environments in schools
- Time out of school being detrimental to children's development
- The low risk to children of becoming severely ill from coronavirus

This means we are planning to open to all of our students in September. All Leicester schools are following the same guidance and expect to be in-line with the rest of the country at the start of term. Obviously Leicester has been a focus for infections and if there is a change in guidance and expectations it will be communicated to parents before the start of term.

This letter explains what you can expect from us and what we will expect from all of our parents and carers. The Avanti Fields plans follow the government guidelines for return to school published in July 2020. Our aim is to provide a welcoming, supportive return that helps all students return to in-school learning and of course, keep them safe within the guidance given. We are looking forward to welcoming everyone back, and we are working hard to make the school a safe, enjoyable environment.

### **Attendance**

Attendance will be mandatory in September, as the government expects all students to attend school. The usual rules will apply, meaning we will be recording attendance and following up on any absences. If you have received clinical or public health advice that your children should still remain at home, please let us know and continue to follow that guidance. We will be offering remote education to these students.

No student or member of staff should come into the school if they have coronavirus (COVID-19) symptoms, or have tested positive in the last 7 days.

COVID-19 symptoms currently include:

- A new continuous cough
- A high temperature
- A loss of, or change in, their normal sense of taste or smell (anosmia)

The school will also ensure that anyone who becomes unwell and displays symptoms - A high temperature, a persistent cough, or a loss or change to the sense of taste or smell - are sent home and advised to follow 'stay at home: guidance for households with possible or confirmed coronavirus (COVID-19) infection'.

### **Start of term**

In order for the school to be fully prepared and to give students time to readjust and learn the new protocols and procedures we will be staggering the start of term as follows.

Tuesday 1 <sup>st</sup> September 2020	Year 7 only
Wednesday 2 <sup>nd</sup> September 2020	Year 7 only
Thursday 3 <sup>rd</sup> September 2020	Year 7 and Year 8 only
Friday 4 <sup>th</sup> September 2020	Year 7, 8 and 9

### **Safety measures**

When your children come into school, we will have the following protective measures in place. The full details of our plans are in the attached summary, however there are points I would like to highlight:

- Students will be kept in year group bubbles and spend the majority of their time in teaching groups of 30 students or less.
- The timetable has been re-written to minimise the movement of all students – keeping lessons as doubles where possible and keeping students in the same room where possible.
- The building will be marked out to keep safe distance for everyone and break and lunchtimes will be staggered to keep bubbles separate.
- Classrooms have been set out to keep distance between students and everyone will use sanitiser as they enter every room.

Naturally there will be new rules and procedures – we will share these with students in the first few days and continue to reinforce them in lessons and through visuals around the school.

### **Travel to school**

We strongly encourage all students to walk or cycle, however we appreciate that many will still need to take the school bus.

Students who take the school bus will need to adhere to the following expectations:

- Wash or sanitise hands before getting on the bus (using own sanitiser)
- Wear a face covering for the duration of the journey
- Sit in the year group bubbles as set out by the school
- Sanitise their hands when coming into the school grounds (provided by school)

For parents who bring students to school please consider the safety of all when dropping off:

- Parents who do use cars will be asked to remain in their cars and not approach the school gates
- Parents who walk are asked to remain on the other side of the road and not approach the gate

## **Uniform**

The government guidance has clarified that uniforms do not need to be cleaned any more often or differently than usual. Correct uniform is an important element of readiness for learning at Avanti Fields and we will expect students to be full in uniform, including tie and blazers, from the start of term.

## **Equipment**

To avoid the risk of cross contamination we will minimise the use of shared resources and equipment. All students will need to bring their own equipment: pen, pencil, ruler, rubber, scientific calculator, exercise books / workbooks.

Students will not be able to use lockers and therefore will need to bring everything they need for each day according to their timetable.

On days when students have PE they will need to come to school in the Avanti Fields PE kit and wear that throughout the day.

## **Lunches**

School lunches will still be provided but lunchtimes have been adapted.

Lunches will be in pick-up bags to avoid use of utensils.

The Biometric system will still be used - students will sanitise their hands before use and the reader will be cleaned between uses.

Students will come to lunch in year group bubbles to collect lunches and eat lunch in designated areas away from other groups.

## **Curriculum**

Although there will need to be some changes to reflect the teaching time that was affected during the lockdown, we will still be doing our best to provide an ambitious, broad curriculum.

Our current plan is:

All lessons will be taught within the timetable.

Teachers will assess and gauge student understanding to identify their starting points and gaps in their knowledge created over lockdown using questioning and low stakes testing.

Recap work will be phased in during the first half term in the first instance.

Feedback and marking will be verbal during lessons with assessment pieces submitted on paper and returned on a fortnightly basis.

We continue to make ourselves ready for any future lockdown situation and using what we have learned from remote learning to plan contingency curriculum.

## **Pastoral support**

We are aware that the lockdown has been a difficult time for many of us, including our students.

Please let us know if you think your children might need extra support when returning to school, such as if they feel anxious about coming back or they are experiencing bereavement. You can get in touch with your child's tutor or Miss Bigginton to do this.

We will support students' wellbeing during this time through a planned transition programme, spending time reflecting on their lockdown experiences and building confidence and resilience in the initial transition days and

beyond. We are confident that although some students may be nervous and uncertain returning to routine, familiarity of school life will also be a key step in student recovery.

Attached with this letter is a briefing paper that outlines how the school day and building will be organised, which I hope will answer any queries you might have.

You can also find the school risk assessment on the school website – here: <https://avanti.org.uk/avantifields/risk-assessment/>

If you have any questions or concerns about the points we have set out above, please get in touch through the school email [avantifields@avanti.org.uk](mailto:avantifields@avanti.org.uk).

We have all had a very difficult time over the last few months but we are whole heartedly looking forward to welcoming the students back in September. I am confident that security of routine and the warm and welcoming nature of Avanti Fields will help all students to re-adjust quickly and regain some sense of normality that has been missing for so many.

Kind regards

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Emma Taplin', written in a cursive style.

Emma Taplin

Principal