

1 September 2020

Dear Parent / Carer

RE: Return to School

I hope this letter finds you safe and well and that you have had an enjoyable summer break.

As promised, I am writing to you today ahead of your child's return to school in a few days' time. Within this communication I would like to remind you of key information regarding your child's return and also draw your attention to key aspects of our carefully considered Health & Safety plans.

Key Information

Phased Return Dates

Please see below the dates of return for students in different year groups across the school.

Monday 7 Sept	Tuesday 8 Sept	Wednesday 9 Sept	Thursday 10 Sept	Friday 11 Sept
Year 7 - induction	Year 7 - Induction	Year 7 – full timetable	Year 7 – full timetable	Year 7 – full timetable
	Year 11 - Induction	Year 11 – full timetable	Year 11 – full timetable	Year 11 – full timetable
		Year 10 - Induction	Year 8 - Induction	Year 9 - Induction

Our decision to operate a phased return to school is based upon the need for all students to have the opportunity to be inducted back into school and learn, in an environment with reduced student numbers, the various systems and procedures that we have put in place to keep everyone safe. Additionally, the phased return will give our new Year 7 students the opportunity to experience secondary school and build their confidence in an environment that initially has far fewer students than normal.

All students in all year groups will return to school full time from **Monday 14 September 2020**.

The School Day

As you will be aware, the Government has indicated its preference that wherever possible schools operate staggered start and finish times. The Ruth Gorse Academy is a large secondary school with nearly 1300 students on roll. As such, we have taken the decision to provide each year group with a 15 minute 'arrival window'. It is exceptionally important that students are on the school site before the end of their arrival time. Additionally, finish times have been staggered to allow different year groups to leave site separately.

The arrival times for different year groups are shown below.

Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10	Year 11
8.15am	8.30am	8.30am	8.15am	8.00am

Students will be required to enter and leave the site via specific entrance and exits. These are shown below:

Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10	Year 11
Chadwick Street	Chadwick Street	Black Bull Street	Black Bull Street (Yr 10 will exit via Chadwick Street)	Black Bull Street

The finish time for each year group is shown below.

	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10	Year 11
Monday	2.50pm	3.10pm	2.50pm	3.30pm	3.40pm
Tuesday	2.50pm	3.10pm	2.50pm	3.30pm	3.40pm
Wednesday	2.50pm	3.10pm	2.50pm	3.30pm	3.40pm
Thursday	2.50pm	3.10pm	2.50pm	3.30pm	3.40pm
Friday	2.50pm	3.10pm	2.50pm	3.00pm	3.00pm

As is evident in the table above, students in Year 10 and 11 will attend after school 'catch up' sessions, Monday-Thursday. All students are expected to attend these sessions in the first half term. It is our intention to review the impact of these sessions at October half term.

A full copy of the school day will be shortly available on the academy website.

School Uniform & Equipment

From their first day back in September we expect all students to attend in full school uniform with a full set of equipment. We are, however, aware that in a small number of cases parents have experienced delays in their uniform arriving from our supplier. Should this be the case for your child, please contact the academy via our email address (info@ruthgorse.leeds.sch.uk) to let us know.

Full details of our uniform and equipment expectations for September 2020 can be found on our school website.

Health & Safety

Transport to and from School

Wherever possible, we encourage students to walk or cycle to school. Where you intend to drop your child off on a morning, it is important that you arrive within your child's allocated time slot, bearing in mind that we are anticipating a large increase in the number of parents choosing to drop their child off. Where a student arrives late as a result of traffic issues, they will be required to wait until all year groups have entered school before joining their form. Additionally, they will be required to serve a break time detention. On an afternoon, we ask that parents do not arrive earlier than their child's finish time as we are not able to accommodate large numbers of vehicles waiting within the local area.

Where the only mode of transport possible is via public transport, it is **mandatory to wear face coverings**. Any student who arrives at school wearing a face covering will be required to store this in a sealed plastic bag. Transport providers also encourage passengers to carry their own hand sanitiser to use on leaving the bus.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding transport arrangements, please contact the relevant pastoral team in the academy. Alternatively, please check www.wymetro.com for the most up to date information.

Hand Washing

Upon arrival to school all students will be required to wash their hands at one of our mobile hand washing stations. Once they have washed their hands students will normally go straight to their form room, however, on the first day all students will be greeted and escorted to their classrooms by their form tutors and respective year teams. Whenever a student enters or leaves a room they will be required to either wash their hands or use the readily available hand sanitizer.

Student Movement

At Key Stage 3 (Years 7 & 8), students will remain in the same classroom for the majority of their lessons. They will also sit in the same seat at the same desk for the majority of their day. This is to reduce the movement of students on corridors and ensure that the number of different people touching surfaces is kept to a minimum. The table below provides an overview of exceptions to this rule.

	Remain in the same Classroom	Move Classrooms
Year 7	Form Time, English, Mathematics, Science, History,	ICT, PE

	Geography, RE, MFL, PSHCEE, Art, Drama, Music, Technology.	
Year 8	Form Time, English, Mathematics, Science, History, Geography, RE, MFL, Art, Drama, Music, Technology.	ICT, PE

For Key Stage 4, students in Years 9 and 10 will be in the same classroom for Form, English, Mathematics and Science. Students will move classrooms for Option Subjects.

Year 11 will move classrooms for all of their lessons. This decision has been taken in order to ensure that students are able to access specialist classroom spaces and also to allow them to be in different sets for English, mathematics and science.

Break and Lunch

Each year group will operate within a 'bubble'. This means that wherever possible, throughout the school day, one year group bubble will not come into contact with another. Alongside reducing movement, we will also be moving to individual year group breaks and lunches. In all cases in September, students will either have sole use of the canteen and outdoor spaces or will have designated spaces that only their year group will access.

Visitors

For the foreseeable future, visitors to the academy will remain on an appointment only basis. Visitors who arrive without an appointment will unfortunately not be allowed access to the school site. If you require a meeting with a member of staff, we politely ask that wherever possible, this is completed over the phone. If a face-to-face meeting is required, a member of staff will arrange for your name to be added to our approved visitor list.

Face Coverings

Following the government's amended guidance in relation to the wearing of face coverings in schools in August 2020, if students wish to wear a face covering at The Ruth Gorse Academy this will be permitted providing that the wearer agrees to abide by the following:

1. Face coverings should cover the wearer's nose and mouth and loop around each ear. Face coverings must be appropriate; bandanas and scarves are not permitted and face coverings should not have slogans or logos on them. Patterns are acceptable, however, these must be non-offensive and will be permitted at the discretion of the Senior Leadership Team.
2. Face coverings should be provided by the wearer.
3. Face coverings should not be worn when wet / damp. It is recommended that, if a person wishes to wear a face covering, they bring more than one into the academy each day and that these are changed and washed regularly. Each face covering must be in a clear, resealable plastic bag which should itself, be kept in a bag.
4. In line with government guidance face coverings will not be worn in the classroom, where protective measures already mean the risks are lower, and where they can inhibit learning.
5. At the end of a lesson the teacher will invite anyone who is about to leave the room and who wishes to wear a face covering, to sanitise their hands prior to taking their face covering out of its resealable bag. Once the face covering has been positioned on the wearer's face the wearer should place the resealable bag back into their overall bag and sanitise their hands again.
6. Once a face covering is in place on the wearer's face it should not be removed and the wearer should refrain from touching the covering/their face as much as possible. Where the wearer wishes to remove their face covering to eat they may do so, providing that they sanitise their hands prior to removing their face covering to place it in the resealable bag and then sanitise their hands again once the covering is back in the resealable bag and the resealable bag has been placed in another bag. If the wearer wishes to reapply the face covering after eating they may do so (providing they follow the sanitise – apply - sanitise rule), however, the face covering should not be removed until entry into a classroom for the next lesson.
7. Inappropriate use of face coverings will be treated seriously and will be sanctioned in line with academy policy.

In summary, providing The Ruth Gorse Academy does not fall within an area defined as an area of 'national government intervention' as listed on [gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk) **then the wearing of face coverings when moving around the academy e.g. in corridors and communal areas, will be optional.** Parents/carers will be informed if an academy is designated as being within an area

of national government intervention; where this is the case the wearing of face coverings will become compulsory in communal areas, in line with the government's guidance.

Risk Assessment

A full copy of the academy risk assessment will be available online by Friday 4 September 2020.

Summary

As we move into what I believe will for some time now be the 'new dispensation', I hope that you are reassured that every step possible has been taken to keep your child safe. As educators of young people, this period of lockdown has been challenging for us and we could not be more thrilled that once again our school community will be coming back together.

If you have any questions or concerns about our return to school, please do not hesitate to get in touch.

Yours faithfully

Mr B Mallinson
Principal