



Colchester
High School

BACK TO SCHOOL

A guide to a smooth and safe transition





Colchester
High School

MESSAGE FROM THE HEADTEACHER

The events of recent months have proven what I have always believed; that Colchester High School's greatest strength is the dedication and commitment of its pupils, parents, and staff members. Each have risen to the challenges posed by the arrival of Covid-19, and in doing so allowed us to smoothly navigate whatever difficulties the pandemic has thrown our way.

I would firstly like to pay tribute to the outstanding efforts of our dedicated educators whose commitment enabled such a smooth transition to online teaching and learning. I wish also to thank you – our parent community – for adapting to this new reality, for sharing your views so we could improve, and for being our partners in coming out of this situation stronger.

While a return to normality remains some way off, the decision to reopen the school buildings is an important step in this direction. However, it is not a decision that has been taken lightly. Government guidance has heavily influenced our approach and all regulations have been adhered to stringently. We have also drawn heavily upon expertise from Cognita colleagues around the globe.

Both myself and my Senior Leadership Team have been in daily contact with the Cognita European Operations team, ensuring that everything from social distancing measures to the provision of hand sanitisers

have been meticulously planned and documented. During my 15 years as a school leader with Cognita, I have never felt more benefit to being part of a truly global and expert team.

This document is the result of extensive inputs, discussion, and planning. Parental survey responses have been a core aspect of those inputs and I hope this document reflects our aim to tailor the reopening plan to best meet your needs and assuage your concerns.

In closing, I wish to stress that the safety of our pupils and staff has been at the heart of our decision making process throughout and we are leaving nothing to chance in our reopening preparation. I hope you will be reassured by the comprehensive plans in place because it is the social interactions – what may be termed the 'hidden curriculum' – that ultimately make school life a truly memorable experience.

David Young
Headteacher

RE-OPENING APPROACH & TIMELINE

In developing the plan for our return to school we have followed government guidelines, listened to your views through our Parent Survey and built on learnings from other Cognita schools across the world.

The staggered return by year groups helps us to welcome the school community back through our doors in a safe, orderly and effective manner.

The schedule for return is set out clearly below, together with new timings for the school day.

There will be hand sanitisers in the lower playground and all children will be required to clean their hands before entering School.

Years	Date of return	School day	Entrance
Nursery	Monday 1 st June	08.30-15.00	Nursery
Reception	Monday 1 st June	08.30-15.00	Lower School Playground
Year 1	Monday 1 st June	08.45-15.15	Lower School Playground
Year 6	Monday 1 st June	09.00-15.30	Lower School Playground

A COMBINED TRANSITION TO TEACHING & LEARNING

As a school we are committed to balancing the needs of both the students in our physical classrooms and also those who remain in our virtual classrooms.

To do this we will:

- Continue the online educational provision for students who are not yet in the 'returning' year groups.
- Provide resources and support, combined with regular check-ins with their teacher, for those students who have actively decided not to or are in a vulnerable category and are unable to return to school for the time being despite being in the 'returning' year groups.
- Please note this will be on a 'best endeavours' basis. Our teachers are now spread across smaller physical classrooms (micro-classes or bubbles) so their capacity to also provide online teaching for these year groups is limited.



NEW GUIDANCE DURING THE SCHOOL DAY

We will all have to adapt our behaviour during the school day to ensure everyone's safety.

SOCIAL DISTANCING IN THE CLASSROOM

We are following the government advice: *...early years and primary age children cannot be expected to remain 2 metres apart from each other and staff.*

We know young children will not stay apart whilst playing, especially after not seeing each other for such a long time. To mitigate the risk we are following the advice that students are split into 'micro-classes'.

Government guidance stipulates a maximum size of 15 per class. Our classes will be significantly smaller than this. This means that students will be assigned a class group and will stay within it for the whole day, including at lunch and breaks. The teacher will also stay with them.

BREAK TIMES

We will stagger break times to avoid classes mixing. It's not something we do happily as playtime is a key part of learning, but it is a significant risk mitigation.

MOVING AROUND SCHOOL

We will be operating a one way system to manage the flow of people around the building. We have added signage and floor markings to help everyone maintain social distancing.

PERSONAL HYGIENE

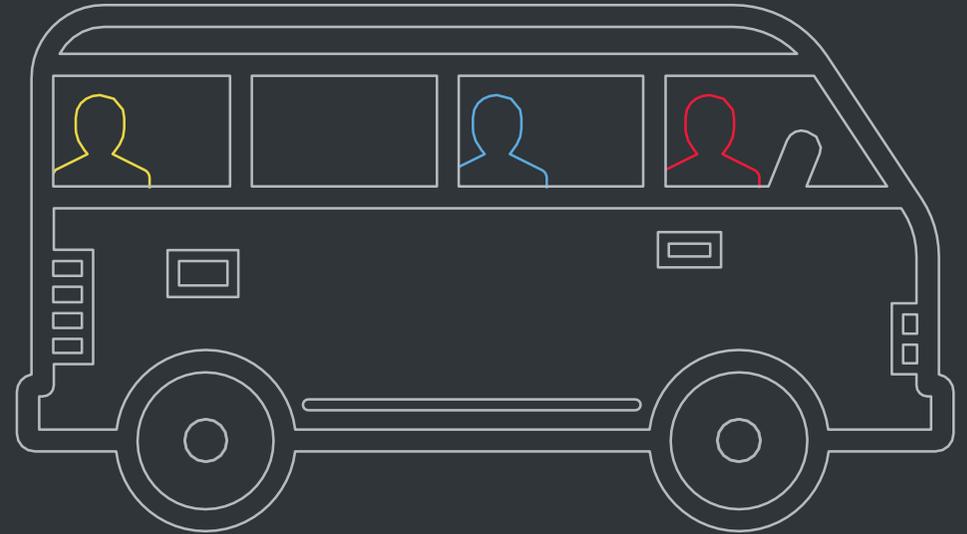
We will continue to urge children to regularly wash hands just as we did pre-lockdown. We have enough bathrooms to support this.

Extra supplies of soap and paper towels have been purchased.

You can help by reminding your children of the need to regularly wash their hands for 20 seconds by singing Happy Birthday twice.



SCHOOL SERVICES



Transport

- As per government advice we urge you to avoid public transport, if possible. If not possible please follow guidelines around face coverings and carry hand sanitiser with you or wear gloves.
- Please follow drop off and pick up times carefully. They are designed to avoid crowding.
- Only one parent or guardian should bring a child to school and collect them – please do not wait for your child in groups, and always respect social distancing.
- There will be no parking on the school site.
- We have decided not to provide buses during this period due to the very small numbers.

Catering:

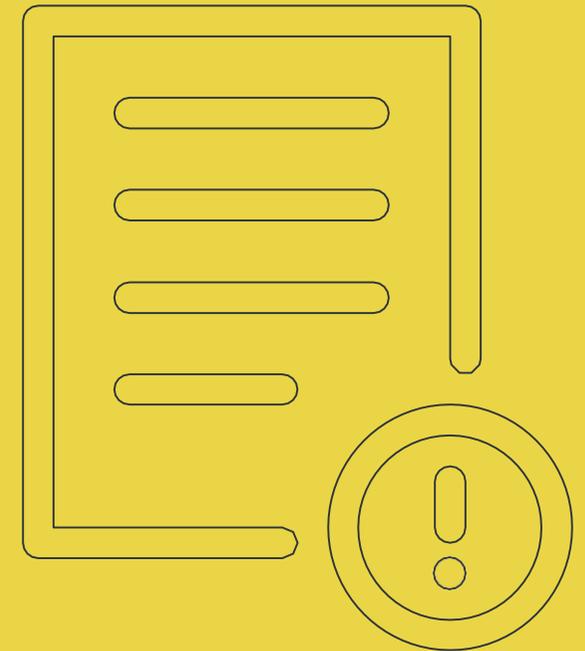
- We request that all children bring in snacks, packed lunches in a cool bag and a filled water bottle.
- Lunch will be consumed in classrooms.
- Please consider the allergies of other children and avoid packing nuts, shellfish or sesame seeds into the lunches.

Extra Curricular:

- We will not be offering before and after school care for the time being, although we are eager to offer this service as soon as is feasible.
- There will be no extra curricular clubs or events such as sports fixtures.
- Extra curricular activity is an important part of the educational experience and we hope to return to a normal schedule as soon as government guidance allows.

PARENT GUIDE AT A GLANCE

1. Talk to your child about the new measures in this guide
2. Take note of any changes to the timings of the school day for your child
3. Please provide a packed lunch for your child until further notice
4. If you have decided not to send your child back, please confirm this. If you subsequently change your mind, please give us 48 hours notice



FAQS



WILL THE SCHOOL FEES DISCOUNT BE REMOVED?

No. Although we did communicate previously that once schools re-open we would revert to normal fees we have decided to waive this for the remainder of the summer term. The exceptional circumstances, the economic situation, and the value we place on our relationship with you – our parent community – means we have decided the existing discount continues for this academic year. The fee freeze for next year remains too.

WHAT'S YOUR POLICY ON VISITORS?

Visitors are welcome to the school but are required to book in advance and we will be following social distancing guidelines.

As parents you are always welcome to contact us and arrange a (socially distanced) face to face meeting.

WHAT IF I CHOOSE NOT TO SEND MY CHILD BACK TO SCHOOL?

We understand that some parents and students may be wary about physically returning to school and others may not be able to due to being in a vulnerable category. We will do our best to deliver a suitable provision for these students. This has to be on a 'best endeavours' basis.

HOW ARE YOU RECORDING ABSENCE OF PUPILS WHEN SCHOOL RE-OPENS?

If you choose not to send your child back to school for the time being, for those in the 'returning' year groups, this will be recorded as an 'Authorised Absence'.

WHAT IS YOUR CLEANING REGIME?

We have a robust cleaning regime throughout the school day with a focus on bathrooms and high-touch areas. At the end of the day we also repeat this and pay particular attention on the common areas of the school. On a Friday evening we do a weekly enhanced clean of all rooms in the school.

In the instance of a confirmed COVID-19 case we do a deep clean which includes all surface areas and carpets. In all cases we use coronavirus approved disinfectants/aerosols, and our cleaners have ordered sufficient stocks.

DO I NEED TO PROVIDE MY CHILD WITH ANY EQUIPMENT?

No. Children should only come to school with water bottles and lunch boxes. No bags or additional items from home. Laptops will be provided to Year 6 pupils.

WILL CHILDREN AND STAFF BE EXPECTED TO WEAR FACE COVERINGS ON SITE?

No. This is the government advice: *Wearing a face covering or face mask in schools or other education settings is not recommended.*

Face coverings are primarily worn to prevent the wearer from spreading the virus rather than catching it. Primary age children are likely to be distracted and discomforted by the wearing of such an item and cannot be expected to do so safely.

If a student or member of staff wishes to wear a face covering they will be allowed to do so. We request they follow guidance on the safe method of using and when removing it should be placed carefully into a sealed plastic bag.

DO OUR CHILDREN NEED TO WEAR UNIFORM?

Children can wear either the summer or winter uniform. No blazers or regulation caps and hats. Sunhats are permitted. PE Kit should be worn on PE and Games days. We would appreciate it if pupil's uniforms were washed daily.

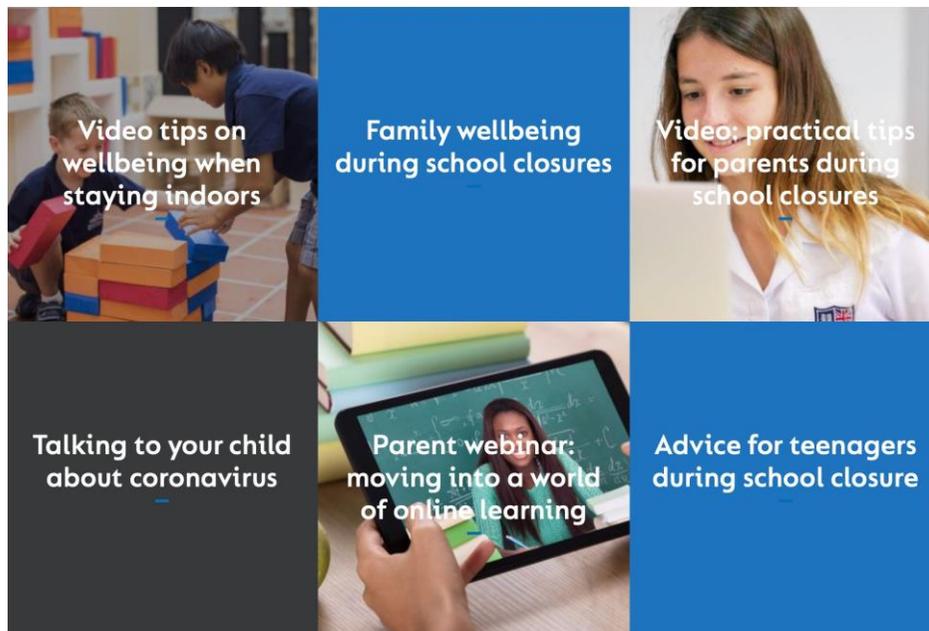
WHAT ABOUT SUN PROTECTION?

Nursery children should bring in new sun cream bottles that remain at School. For all other year groups, please apply sun cream in the morning.

WELLBEING

The transition back to school will still be a challenge for all of us trying to adjust to a new way of 'being', coping with fear of the unknown and in some cases balancing a mix of online and face to face learning. The wellbeing of our students, parents and teaching staff is our highest priority and we are lucky to be part of Cognita who have been able to provide lots of resources to support our school communities since the start of the lockdown.

This includes live webinars with our education experts, podcasts, and a series of videos and resources on wellbeing in these strange times for both students and parents. Members of our parent community have even shared how they have coped with lockdown. This evolving set of content can all be found at www.cognita.com



POSITIVE FEEDBACK

It was great to hear some of your feedback about how the school responded during lockdown. **Here are a few of the comments that make us feel proud.**

"All staff should be commended on the hard work and effort they are putting into getting the lessons planned, dealing with the technology to make it work, all whilst having to juggle their own family lives at home too"

"Our son really enjoyed your lessons this week. He said that it was almost like being back at school because the teaching was so interactive".

"The enthusiasm from all the teachers is clear & the lessons are still very engaging even in this different format"

"CHS is going above and beyond in terms of work set, online lessons and wellbeing! Very happy with all aspects of the online learning."

"We really appreciate that you are trying your hardest to provide as good a replica of the "normal" school day, with the educational and emotional support that is incorporated in to that "

"Both children have huge smiles at being connected again with teachers and friends "

You have "knocked it out of the park".