

# Back to School

Our plans for the September return



# MESSAGE FROM THE HEAD



Dear Parents

Well, what a term! How I have wished for a crystal ball these last few months. We have made detailed plans, updated them and reviewed them as guidance has changed, often in the space of a day or two. We have guessed, second-guessed and then guessed again what the government guidance would be and how it would impact our school community. I do hope that one thing has been constant during this period however: our unwavering dedication to do the very best for our pupils.

I was so pleased that the efforts made to re-open school safely for the selected year groups have been recognised by you. In the recent survey 100% of you agreed that your child benefited from going back to back to school, 100% agreed that that the return to school process was well managed by the school, and 100% thought that every possible risk mitigation that the school could have taken was taken. Some of your lovely comments are included at the back of this document. Thank you also for the ideas and requests some of you made as we turn our attention to September.

We do not know for certain what September will bring but we have made plans based on a number of scenarios and have closely followed the evolving government advice. By imagining and then planning for the different possible scenarios we will be faced with in September I believe we are set up to step into the new academic year with confidence and vigour.

We will, of course, be continuing with our enhanced cleaning regime next year and you can help by making regular hand washing a part of your daily routine during the holidays.

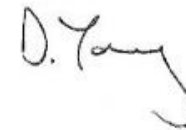
One overall reflection I have is that I want our school to preserve the best that came from this period – how the staff adapted their educational methods, how we embraced a new way of doing things, how the pupils coped with uncertainty and change, and how we built a new and deeper relationship with you, our parent body.

With that context in mind I am pleased to share with you some exciting new initiatives, as part of the Cognita family of schools, later on in this booklet. These initiatives will capitalise on what we have learned over the last few months, take our educational and wellbeing provision for your child to the next level, and prepare us should a second wave require a localised lockdown.

Thank you once again for your support of the school this Summer Term, and for your encouragement and feedback. I wish you all a happy and safe summer and look forward to an exciting new academic year.

As ever, please let me know if you have any questions.

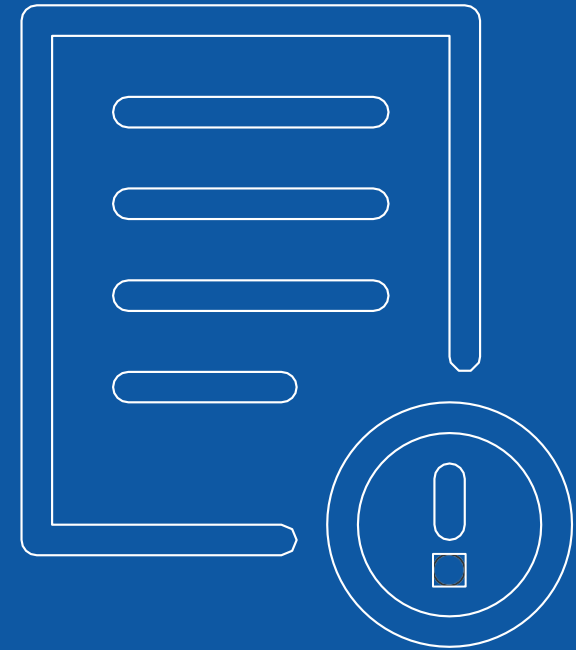
Kind regards



Mr Young  
Headteacher

# HIGHLIGHTS FOR NEXT YEAR

1. Back to normal - this means open and running a normal day for all year groups, within the government guidelines.
2. Catch up support - for any pupils who feel that they would benefit from revisiting any subject post lockdown.
3. Wellbeing - a focus on both pupils and staff to help them emotionally process the lockdown experience.
4. Safety – risk mitigation to include enhanced cleaning and hygiene measures with new procedures for confirmed cases and outbreaks
5. Growth mindset - taking the lockdown experience and continuing to innovate and grow from what we have learnt.

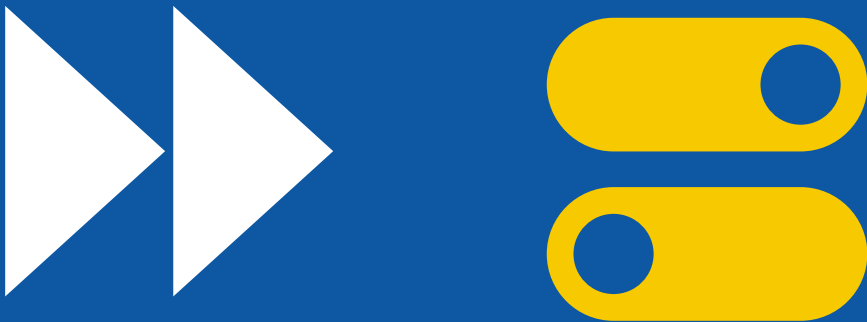


# HOW WILL IT WORK?

**We have done a large amount of scenario planning and we're confident we can get back to normal.**

The latest government guidelines have significantly reduced the need for social distancing and as a result schools will be encouraged to return to a full timetable for all year groups.

This is great news and to the right is a summary of what we know now. This is, of course, conditional on the continued downward trend of the infection rate.



# GUIDANCE SUMMARY

*Based on the government guidance released on 2 July this is what we are basing our planning on:*

- Primary - the bubble concept will be increased from a maximum of 15 to 30. This means our classes can return, and we may even have the flexibility to create larger bubbles for a whole key stage for example.
- Senior - the bubbles will be increased to incorporate 'whole year' bubbles. This will enable us to deliver lessons as per normal with full classes. Specialist teachers will be able to move between classes provided they maintain social distancing.
- Some of the features from this term may need to remain such as staggered timings and one-way systems, as will a focus on hygiene and cleaning. More detail will follow before the start of next term.
- School services such as catering and transport can return to relative normality with some adaptations to mitigate viral spread.
- Track and trace in schools will be a focus.

# NEW INITIATIVES FOR NEXT YEAR

*As part of our drive to ensure that all pupils have an uninterrupted educational experience with us, we are giving every pupil in Year 3 and above their own touch-screen laptop.*

Personal devices open the door to combining online study with face-to-face teaching and learning so the best of each is adopted. It can transform many areas of the education process: pupil agency and digital portfolios (how can I best showcase my learning?); collaboration (how can I develop my interpersonal skills when working with others in class and around the world); assessment and feedback (how can I learn from immediate and meaningful feedback?)

On a more practical level we need to ensure pupils are prepared should there be a need for remote learning next academic year; for example, due to a second peak of Coronavirus or the need to self-isolate. In addition, there may be a new scenario next year, with teachers self-isolating at home and delivering lessons remotely to pupils in classrooms. We need pupils to be on a level playing field and have access to a dedicated, suitable, safe and reliable device that can enrich their learning experience.



# NEW INITIATIVES FOR NEXT YEAR

## 1-2-1 Devices – How it will work

- The school will fund this in the next school year. The cost will be added to school fees from 2021/22 onwards for the year groups who have these devices
- It will work out at approx. £4 per week from 2021/22 onwards – we are able to get such a low cost because we have negotiated at scale for all the European schools in the Cognita family
- This device will be dedicated to school work at home and in the classroom
- It will be set up with software to make it age appropriate and safe, allowing support to be offered remotely, and ensuring all the required educational applications are included
- Devices will be insured so lost or broken devices are replaced quickly, and schools will have spares
- Investment in our infrastructure will be made over the summer and year ahead
- Teachers and pupils will have access to training and support materials to help them get the most benefit from the device and how it can contribute to a blended education
- Devices will be rolled out from September – more details to follow on the exact timings
- The device we have chosen is a HP X360 because:
  - It's a 2-in-1 Laptop/Tablet; Flip and fold with 360° hinge
  - It's durable –it passed 19 US Military Spec durability and reliability tests
  - It has fast charging – 50% in 30 minutes
  - It has long battery life –10-14 hours for typical usage
  - It has dual web cams (screen cam plus keyboard cam for taking videos in tablet mode)
  - It has a full keyboard
  - It has a 13.3" Touchscreen: pupils can use their finger or a HP PRO Pen to digitally write



# NEW INITIATIVES FOR NEXT YEAR

*During the lockdown period we also took action to develop a number of other initiatives which have enabled us to lead the way in online learning and teaching and we intend to build on this next year.*



- **Masterclasses** - our teachers have benefited from working with global experts on how to build curriculums that offer a **blended educational experience** and how we can approach **assessment** of pupil's progress in new ways
- **Partnerships** - with innovative learning platforms that use artificial intelligence to create adaptive and personalised learning paths for pupils – more 'books' on our shared 'virtual bookshelf'
- **Wellbeing monitoring** – we will introduce **AS (Affective Social) Tracking**, an adolescent mental health tracking tool that enables schools to identify pupils' hidden risks early. This equips teachers with targeted action plans to reduce pupil mental health and wellbeing risks and is part of our global commitment to putting mental health and wellbeing at the centre of a well-balanced education.
- **Inspiring Futures programme** - developed for our Year 11 and 13 cohorts to help them get prepared for the future. The programme focused on non-academic character development such as leadership, communication, teamwork, creativity and emotional intelligence. We will continue to develop this working with some expert partners to stretch and challenge all those involved in the programme.
- **Collecting the best content from our global family** - as a Group we are developing an online platform which will host bespoke content curated from our expert educationalists from across our 80 schools. It's early days for this exciting project so more to follow soon.

# FAQS



## **WILL THERE BE AN ANNUAL INCREASE TO FEES NEXT YEAR?**

No. Given the exceptional circumstances, the economic situation and the value we place on our relationship with our parent cohort there will be no fee increase for the 2020/21 school year.

## **ARE SPORTS, CLUBS & TRIPS RETURNING?**

Yes, where possible. We are keen to return to 'business as usual' as much as possible, and this component of education is important.

Certain non-contact sports are approved, and clubs can generally re-start, although there are some restrictions in the latest guidance that we will work through over the summer. We are also planning to have the wrap around care offer of before and after school clubs.

Domestic trips are permitted, but not residential. Overseas trips are not yet permitted. We keep a sharp eye on government advice on these topics as guidance changes frequently.

## **WILL SCHOOL TRANSPORT RESUME?**

Yes. We are following government advice closely on this and working with our transport suppliers. Risk mitigations we are investigating are the suitability of face coverings (like on public transport), cleaning regimes, and route reviews.

## **WILL CATERING RETURN TO NORMAL?**

Yes. We may need to operate staggered mealtimes, and apply some other operational safeguards, but we intend to return to catering as it was before as far as we can, within the guidelines.

## **WHAT ABOUT LOCAL LOCKDOWNS?**

We are planning in detail what happens if the school needs to temporarily close in the case of an outbreak or localised lockdown. If the call comes we can respond quickly, following a pre-agreed plan.

## **WHAT ABOUT INFECTION CONTROL?**

We will continue our robust cleaning regime next year and work closely with our cleaning staff to ensure every possible risk mitigation is taken.

We are also reviewing our infection control procedures over the Summer to allow us to track confirmed or suspected cases and communicate with parents in the smoothest way possible.

## **CAN MY CHILD USE THEIR OWN DEVICE?**

We have consciously and purposefully decided against a so-called 'bring your own device' policy. Research indicates that it can have a negative impact because the broad range of devices means teachers spend too much time supporting pupils to fix issues, a role teachers should not be doing. It also presents a security risk to the school network, will not necessarily be suitable for academic work, and will not always have replacement insurance.



# RETURN TO SCHOOL SURVEY RESULTS

**100%** of parents agreed that their child benefitted returning to school

**100%** of parents agreed that the return to school process was well managed by the school

**100%** of parents agreed every possible risk mitigation that could have been taken was taken by the school

# THANK YOU FOR THE POSITIVE FEEDBACK

“It’s so lovely to see the children excited to go in every morning and eager to tell parents about what they have done when they come out at the end of the day.”

“Our son has really enjoyed being back and he has taken the changes in his stride which only comes because all the changes have been well thought-out and well-planned.”

“Our daughter is so happy to be back at school and has really benefitted from being back with her teachers and friends in the school environment.”

“You have been wonderful, as a school, dealing with the whole situation. Your online support you provided was beyond my expectations!”

“Our son was so excited about returning to school and had a fantastic day - he was absolutely buzzing when he came out and couldn't stop talking about it!”