



Charles Darwin School

Operated by the Charles Darwin Academy Trust

Headteacher: Sunil Chotai, BSc

2nd September 2020

Dear Parents/Carers,

I hope that your final preparations at home for recommencing school are all going well.

Over the last few days we have been putting the final touches to our arrangements in school; ensuring that we have put in place as many pandemic related precautions as possible, ready to welcome back our students.

I am writing to update you on a few issues and to reassure all students and parents/carers that the vast majority of protocols are now in place.

Masks

I wrote to parents regarding our position on masks a few days ago. I outlined that although the wearing of masks is not mandatory there is a very strong expectation that all students will wear an appropriate mask in the school building when they are not in their classrooms e.g. in corridors, in other communal spaces such as the canteen, toilets etc. If a student cannot wear a mask for medical or other such reasons we will of course understand.

Please remember that masks should be:

- Plain in appearance, no logos or motifs;
- Stored in a plastic bag when not in use on the student's person
- Washed or replaced regularly
- Worn appropriately

It will be unusual and may be even awkward for our students to wear masks initially but I am confident that they will all soon become accustomed to these new practices quickly.

Water

A reminder that each student will need to come into school with a water bottle, with enough water to see them through the day. Our water fountains and vending machines will not be available for use - unfortunately they are a causality of our virus transmission reducing measures. Other means of filling water bottles will be very awkward and risk unsafe practices and therefore it will be very helpful if all students could make provision for themselves.

Lunch arrangements

Our canteen service will be available as normal from the first day to all Year 8-13 students who already have accounts. Canteen staff are still in the process of organising the new cashless system however they assure me that they can still operate; looking up students' accounts manually for the time being.

Year 7 students will need to bring a packed lunch for the first few days, until their accounts are all up and running.

Please remember that the canteen will not be serving food at break time or before school.

Pupil induction/start of term

During the first day in school students from all year groups will be inducted into the new pandemic related procedures and practices. It will be helpful if parents/carers could reinforce at home the importance and seriousness of this induction and the fact that it is crucially important for health and safety reasons that all students adhere fully to the requirements that will be explained.

Also because we will be operating our new two week timetable it would be helpful if parents could devote a bit more attention to ensuring that their children are fully organised for their lessons each day in a slightly more complicated context.

Remote Learning

Over the last few days we have been clarifying our procedures for remote learning should there be a need for a further local lock down or partial school closure. In the eventuality of any further school closure (some year groups asked not to attend school or whole school closure) we will be facilitating remote learning. This will be as before via Showmyhomework and MS Teams and other subject specific software.

It was evident during the last lock down that a number of students were not familiar with their login information for the various online resources they needed. As part of the preparation for any future school closure we will be asking all students to ensure that they are in possession of their login details for all necessary software.

Lockers

A reminder that lockers will not be available for any students, this again is a measure that is necessary to reduce virus transmission possibilities.

Reminder of the staggered start arrangements

Reintegration of Years 8-13 September 2020 following COVID-19 school closure

Year 8, Year 10 and Year 12 reintegration	First day in school is Friday 4 September. This is a reintegration day for Year 8, 10 and 12 only. <i>Monday 7 September – Year 8, 10 and 12 are not in school</i> Tuesday 8 September – Whole school return
Year 9, Year 11 and Year 13 reintegration	First day in school is Monday 7 September. This is a reintegration day for Year 9, 11 and 13 only. Tuesday 8 September – Whole school return

New Year 7 Induction days September 2020

Year 7 Induction days	First day in school is Thursday 3 September. This is Year 7 Induction day (1). They are the only pupils in school on this day. <i>Friday 4 September – Year 7 are not in school</i> Monday 7 September – Year 7 Induction day (2) Tuesday 8 September - Whole school return
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Front of school

Please may I remind families that the front of school (the school's driveway) will not be available in future for parents to drop-off and pick up. If you are driving children to school please do be aware of this and drop off children at the top of Jail Lane. Due to the ongoing construction works the main gate will be closed and access limited to the bus services. Sixth Form students will not be able to park on site.

Please do remember to be mindful of not adding to the congestion on Jail Lane; congestion in the vicinity of the school is likely to cause significant delay for bus services and compromise safety and social distancing between year groups and we want to minimise this. Whilst we realise this might feel inconvenient for some parents, we want to avoid potential problems and encourage as many students to walk at least part of the way to school in-line with government guidelines.

Please be aware that Jail Lane is currently closed immediately beyond the school for road maintenance.

Bus services

We have been working closely with Transport for London to resolve some of the concerns around bus services to school. TfL have been provided with some extra funding from the government to increase capacity across the London bus network. Whilst we do our best to advise and influence TfL, the school buses are the total responsibility of TfL and not the school.

Upon return we will have some extra capacity that is outlined below. Students must of course wear face coverings at all times on bus services unless there is a good reason not to. Students may be mixing with other year group 'bubbles' and as such, not taking responsibility for themselves puts the health and safety of other students and staff at risk. Students must use their Oyster/Zip cards as TfL will be monitoring these services closely. Where students do not tap-in, they will not be registered as using the service, meaning when we explain that bus services are overcrowded, TfL respond with data suggesting the buses are not full to capacity.

As of the time of this letter, we do not have a full timetable from TfL, which should be published on their website in the next 24 hours.

664 Bus service from New Addington

There will now be three 664 double decker bus services. The arrival times at school will be 8.15am, 8.35am and 8.50am at the school gates. It is important that students are on the correct bus as we are operating staggered start times. Year 11/12/13 should aim to use the first available service, Years 7 and 10 the second service and Years 8 and 9 should aim to use the service arriving at 8.50am.

684 service from Orpington/Green St Green

There will be double capacity on this double decker service. One service will arrive at 8.20am and the second at 8.25am at the school gates.

464/R8/320/R2/246

No extra capacity on these services.

Attendance to school

From the start of the autumn term 2020 pupil attendance will be mandatory and the usual rules on attendance will apply, including:

- parents' duty to ensure that their child of compulsory school age attends regularly at the school where the child is a registered pupil
- schools' responsibilities to record attendance and follow up absence
- the ability to issue sanctions, including fixed penalty notices, in line with local authorities' codes of conduct

Although school attendance is mandatory from the start of the autumn term, there are some circumstances where students should not attend. These are:

1. When they are experiencing symptoms that may be Covid-19 related, such as a higher than normal temperature. In situations such as these we advise parents to inform us that they are not sending their child into school and explaining the symptoms.
2. If the family are self-isolating because they have been asked to do so by the governments Test and Trace mechanisms - usually because they have had contact with an infected person.
3. Students whose families are returning from a vacation to areas deemed by government to require national quarantining.

It would be really helpful for us if parents could adhere to the above requirements, If you are in doubt please contact our Attendance Secretary, Nicola Freeman, on 01959 574043 ext. 257 or at nfr@cdarwin.com who will be able to assist.

Finally I would like to take this opportunity to thank all parents and carers for their fantastic support, kind messages and good wishes for the new academic year. In turn I would like to wish all our students all the best for this coming academic year. We are really looking forward to seeing you all over the next few days.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Sunil Chotai', with a horizontal line underneath it.

Sunil Chotai
Headteacher