



# Charles Darwin School

Operated by the Charles Darwin Academy Trust

Headteacher: Sunil Chotai, BSc

15<sup>th</sup> July 2020

Dear Parents /Carers,

I hope that this last newsletter of this academic year from me finds you all in good health and in an optimistic mood for the future. The last few months have been very testing for many in our school community; parents, students and members of staff have had to rise to many unfamiliar challenges. Thankfully the vast majority of our school community have coped very well. Hopefully we can now look forward to the resumption of nearer normal schooling in September.

Over the last few days, following the receipt of government guidance on the reopening of schools from September, members of senior staff have been considering plans for reopening in a manner that complies with the guidance, is practically achievable and maintains the breadth and quality of our curriculum offer. It is obvious to all of us, as we explore the practical implications that we are going to have to restructure nearly every aspect of how the school operates. We have considered the government's advice and have made a number of arrangements.

1. **Staggered student arrival and exit times** in order to minimise contact between children in different year groups. This is an important part of ensuring that students have a limited number of contacts and consequently it is important that students arrive to school during the allotted windows. Not before or after.
2. **Zoning the school** – different parts of the school will be used to teach different year groups of students. This will clearly have implications for the availability of specialist rooms and staff movement instead of student movement. Our students will find this strange and highly unusual however we believe that they will manage this well. It will be a test for them as our expectations about the levels of cooperation and maturity required will be very high.
3. **Minimising contact between different year groups at break and lunch** will make it necessary to have split lunchtimes. Unfortunately we are only be able to provide a limited canteen service at lunch and there will be no canteen service at break or before school.

The current biometric paying system will be replaced by fobs and these will be issued at the start of term. The cash-reval machine will be removed and students will need to pay on line. Food will be “grab and go” and served from three areas, two in the canteen itself and the outside food pod. There will be no sit-down eating in the canteen. Our recommendation is that students bring a packed lunch wherever possible.

4. **Playground and other communal space** will be allocated by year group. Each year group will be expected to report at break and lunch to their allotted space via a specified route inside/outside the building.
5. **Frequent and regular cleaning, particularly of key areas such as bannisters, toilets, specialist rooms etc.** These arrangements will make demands on additional cleaning hours – this will have significant financial implications. We have been informed by government that no additional funds will be available for this.
6. **Minimising the risks to staff** - *“All teachers and staff can operate across different classes and year groups to facilitate the delivery of the school timetable. It is strong public health advice that staff maintain distance from pupils.”* How we achieve this is going to be challenging.
7. **Induction of all year groups** in September on the new arrangements, which are substantially different, how this can be managed well so that we can ensure an ordered safe environment for the whole school community.
8. **Reorganisation of teaching rooms** (all desks facing the front) as far as is possible to ensure that the amount of time children are in face to face contact is minimised.
9. **Lockers and Resources** - unfortunately due to hygiene concerns and lack of full availability in zoned areas we will not be able to issue lockers to students whilst these pandemic related measures are in place. One of the key challenges facing all teachers from September will be that of classroom equipment, working in different zones without immediate access to their own classroom resources will be practically difficult. In order to assist with this we are asking all students to make sure that they are fully equipped for each lesson. So we are asking parents to make especially sure that children come to school equipped with the usual pen, pencils, ruler, calculator, glue stick etc. Obviously children will not be able to share their resources with each other for transmission risk reasons.
10. **Assemblies** - ensure that large gatherings such as assemblies do not occur with more than one group.
11. **Ensure that hand cleaning (sanitising) stations** are available across the school, in each room.
12. **Transport to and from school** - we have had discussions with bus companies, unfortunately they are not in a position to provide additional capacity to compensate for that lost to the need to be socially distanced whilst on public transport. This will mean that the bus service capacity to and from school will be very limited indeed. We will continue to work with them to see if solutions can be found. Please see a survey request from Bromley Council at the end of this letter. The school minibus service has been suspended.

13. **Toilets** - these will be allocated for year groups, each year group will only be able to use toilets allocated to them. In addition each set of toilets will be cleaned very regularly throughout the day.

14. **School Reception – visitors, including parents, will not be allowed on the school site without an appointment and parents must not gather at the school gates.** The Duty Pupil system will be suspended and therefore we will be unable to send messages to students during the day. If a student has forgotten their lunch parents may drop this off (having already notified the school) for their child to collect from reception during their break/lunch time. Parents should ensure that students are aware of this procedure.

Despite the nature and scale of the changes we will need to implement I am still confident that given the commitment of our staff, the maturity of our students and the support of families we will be able to open safely in September for all year groups. This will obviously mean that we will need to count on full cooperation and support from all students and families.

The new school day is indicated below:

#### Temporary School Day for Reintegration – September 2020

	Arrival 1 for 8.30am start <i>*entry doors</i>	Arrival 2 for 8.50am start <i>*entry doors</i>	Arrival 3 for 9.10am start <i>*entry doors</i>	Period 1 Staggered start (to include registration at start of lesson)	Period 2 9.50 - 10.50 Leave in waves as indicated	Break 10.50-11.10	Period 3 11.10 - 12.10	Period 4 or lunch 12.10 - 1.00 <i>*12.50 from lunch</i>	Lunch or Period 4 1.00 – 1.50 <i>*1.40 from lunch</i>	Registration 1.50 - 2.05	Period 5 2.05 – 2.45 Or 2.05 - 3.00	Dismissal Time (in wave)
Year 7		From 8.40 for 8.50 <i>*Science doors</i>		8.50 – 9.50 1 hr	1hr Wave 2 10.50 1 <sup>st</sup> bell	Tennis courts	1hr	*LUNCH Tennis courts	Period 4 50 mins	Year zone	2.05 – 2.45 40 mins	2.45 (1 <sup>st</sup> )
Year 8			From 9.00 for 9.10 <i>*Understairs doors</i>	9.10 – 9.50 40 mins	1hr-5 Wave 1 10.45 leave	Tennis courts	1hr	Period 4 50 mins	*LUNCH Tennis courts	Year zone	2.05 – 2.45 40 mins	2.45 (1 <sup>st</sup> )
Year 9			From 9.00 for 9.10 <i>*Student services doors then via gppsh</i>	9.10 – 9.50 40 mins	1hr Wave 2 10.50 1 <sup>st</sup> bell	Tennis courts	1hr	Period 4 50 mins	*LUNCH Tennis courts	Year zone	2.05 – 3.00 55 mins	3.00 (3 <sup>rd</sup> )
Year 10		From 8.40 for 8.50 <i>*Student Services doors</i>		8.50 – 9.50 1 hr	1hr+5 Wave 3 10.55 2 <sup>nd</sup> bell	Quad	1hr	*LUNCH Quad	Period 4 50 mins	Year zone	2.05 – 2.50 45 mins	2.50 (2 <sup>nd</sup> )
Year 11	From 8.15 for 8.30 <i>*Music over Quad</i>			8.30 – 9.50 1hr 20 mins	1hr Wave 2 10.50 1 <sup>st</sup> bell	Back Canopy	1hr +5	*LUNCH Back canopy	Period 4 50 mins	Year zone	2.05 – 3.00 55 mins	3.00 (3 <sup>rd</sup> )
Year 12 and 13	From 8.15 for 8.30 <i>*Science doors</i>			8.30 – 9.50 1 hr 20mins	1hr-5 Wave 1 10.45 leave	6 <sup>th</sup> form hub	1hr	Period 4	*LUNCH Hub	Year zone	2.05 – 2.50 45 mins	2.50 (2 <sup>nd</sup> )

In order to ensure that all students are inducted properly into the new way of working before school commences fully we have made provisions for a staged start to the year. These are indicated in the start of year arrangements below:

### **Start of term arrangements September 2020**

A slower, more staggered return, allowing each year group a more intensive induction, based on reintegration areas/bubbles and expectations.

Year 7 in school first day (Thursday 3<sup>rd</sup> September), three year groups only the second day (Friday 4<sup>th</sup> September), four year groups in on the third day (Monday 7<sup>th</sup> September) and all year groups in school on Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> September.

*[Tuesday 1<sup>st</sup> September and Wednesday 2<sup>nd</sup> September are staff training days]*

<b>Year Group</b>	<b>First day in school</b>	<b>Structure of day</b>
Year 7 only	Thursday 3 September	8.45-9.00am arrival With form tutors in Year 7 zone all day
Year 8, 10, 12 only	Friday 4 September	8.30am staggered arrival Year 8, 10, 12 with tutor/assembly until the end of P3 then lessons.
Year 9, 11, 13  Year 7	Monday 7 September	8.30am staggered arrival Year 9, 11, 13 with tutor/assembly until the end of P3 then lessons Year 7 extended tutorial until the end of P3 then lessons
All year groups in school	Tuesday 8 September	8.30am staggered arrival, lessons all day

### **Front of school**

During the summer break the front of the school is going to be remodelled. New gates, entry system and new fencing are going to be installed to ensure the wellbeing and safeguarding of our students. The funding of this work is through the government's School Condition Improvement Fund. We made an application to this fund to enable improved safety for our students and staff at the end of each school day. This work is going to take about 7 weeks. Vehicular access to the school site will be very limited.

Parents will be aware from my previous communications (22.11.2019 Link newsletter) that student safety at the end of the day at the front of the school is a major cause of concern for us. Very often the lack of care shown by some parents as they drive onto our premises directly impacts on the safety of our pupils and staff.

You may recall that in my communication last November I referred to a schools' Health and Safety expert whose advice was that we ban all vehicles from coming onto our school site during the period 2.30pm- 3.30pm to ensure the safety of students as they exit the school, as they board buses and as they leave the site. The written report was very critical of the chaotic scenes at the front of school and the behaviour of individual drivers as parents/carers waited on the school drive often blocking the way for other cars and buses. This report underlined the risks faced by students and staff by the heavy congestion and discourteous manner of some.

Consequently from September we are intending to follow this advice and not allow parental vehicles onto the site during this period. The only exceptions will be vehicles for our disabled

students. I am aware that this will be very inconvenient for some parents and that it may lead to significant congestion on Jail Lane. However, I am sure that most parents will understand that safeguarding the wellbeing of our children as they arrive and leave the school site is of paramount importance and must take precedence over the inconvenience that this change may cause to some drivers. I am sure that those parents who have witnessed the chaotic scenes at the front of school on a daily basis will agree that this course of action is necessary.

As I also said in November the practice of allowing parents and carers to drive onto school premises to drop and pick-up children in the way that currently occurs is very unusual amongst secondary schools. The vast majority, for safety reasons, do not allow parents/carers to drive onto the premises at all.

To alleviate some of the said potential congestion issues on Jail Lane that may arise from this change I am asking parents/carers to:

1. Please drop off your children well away from the school gates - at the top of Jail Lane is best so that congestion on Jail Lane can be avoided and our local residents not inconvenienced.
2. Please be considerate when you are deciding on alternatives to picking up children after school. I regularly get complaints from local residents about parents parking in front of their drives.

I look forward to your support in this matter.

### **Critical Worker children's provision**

All parents will be aware that whilst the school has been closed since 20<sup>th</sup> March for most children, it has been open for many children of Critical Workers and those that are looked after or have an EHCP plan. The children attending, from different years, some full time, some one or two days per week have all been superb. They have worked diligently and they have forged a friendship with each other that has been a delight to witness. In years to come, despite the pandemic, I am sure they will look back at this time fondly.

My thanks to all of these children for being excellent throughout, being so kind and considerate to one another and generally being thoughtful and mature.

### **Year 10 and 12 support provision**

Over the last three weeks or so it has been wonderful to welcome back Year 10 and 12 students for their support sessions. Seeing them come into school keen and enthusiastic for the most part has been personally uplifting for me; a school without students is not an inspiring place.

These support sessions have gone very well, the feedback from staff and pupils who attended has been very positive. My thanks to all those who attended and to their families for their encouragement. Hopefully in September we can build on this and ensure that any disadvantages arising from this closure are addressed quickly.

### **Two week timetable**

Parents will be aware that our plan for this coming academic year was to move to a two week timetable cycle from September. This is an important change for us; moving away from a weekly cycle will, we believe, contribute much to better balancing of curriculum time devoted to subjects and quality of teaching and learning over the coming years. Despite the complications arising from the pandemic related closure and the impacted reopening in September our plan is to go ahead with this two week timetable structure change.

In the first few weeks of its operation there will of course be a need to induct students properly into the workings of the two weekly cycle and how to ensure good organisation in a situation that is slightly more complex. The timings for the lessons and breaks have altered as part of this new two week cycle. I will share the details of this at a later date.

**Of course in September we will start the academic year with an interim school day arrangement (indicated above) designed to accommodate the pandemic related staggered starts and different break and lunch arrangements.** Once this period is over I will share with everyone the permanent new school day, this will save any confusion in the minds of students and families.

### **Remote learning and live lessons**

As we come to the end of this much longer than anticipated period of school closure, I would just like to say a big thank you to all parents for their support and encouragement during the lockdown. We have received so many generous, appreciative and supportive messages from families. Your support is always valued; at seriously challenging times as the past few months have been it means even more - so thank you. Thank you also for encouraging your children to maintain a positive and optimistic outlook whilst they have been away from school; the work missed will be caught up with, this is reasonably straight forward to deal with as long as the students maintain their emotional wellbeing - particularly their sense of optimism and buoyancy. Making up ground with this aspect is the most challenging.

### **Sixth Form taster sessions**

Many parents will be aware that over the past three weeks members of staff at the school have recorded and made available to all our prospective Year 12 students some Microsoft Teams facilitated taster lessons in preparation for their Sixth Form subject study choices. This recording of taster sessions is an onerous task, many members of staff have spent hours recording and then rerecording so that students are not too disadvantaged in this pandemic affected recruitment period into the Sixth Form. My thanks to all the teachers involved and a reminder to prospective Year 12 students to access these taster lessons if they have not already done so.

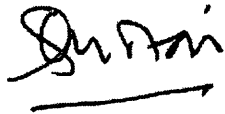
### **Exam results day arrangements**

This year the examination results days are 13<sup>th</sup> August for Key Stage 5 and 20<sup>th</sup> August for KS4. The procedure for collection of examination results is different this year due to the social distancing arrangements that we have to put in place. All Year 11, 12 and 13 students will receive a separate communication outlining the procedures for the results day from Mrs. Kearney and Ms. Kelly.

Attached to this letter are communications we have received from Oz Schoolwear, our uniform supplier and also from the transport department at Bromley Council.

And finally, as this school year draws to a close I would like to wish all students and their families a peaceful, safe and enjoyable summer break.

Yours sincerely,

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

Sunil Chotai  
Headteacher

## **School Uniform – message from our suppliers**

*Dear Parents,*

*I hope you are well.*

*We now have an online appointment booking system available on our website [ozschoolwear.co.uk](http://ozschoolwear.co.uk), you will find this just below the main header on the home page. You can start booking now for the 6th July onwards for any of your school uniform needs.*

*You will be unable to enter the shop unless you have an appointment. Click and collect and home delivery will still be available.*

*Spaces are limited so please book as soon as possible.*

*Please note, you are unable to book appointments over the phone.*

*All the best*

*Jon and the Oz School Wear Team*

## **Message from Bromley Council**

*Dear Head Teacher,*

*Following the announcement from the Secretary of State for Education that schools and further education colleges across the country will reopen for all year groups from the beginning of the autumn term, we are keen to work with schools to understand the travel habits of pupils, especially where they are using public transport.*

*In order to gauge demand for public transport in our borough and assess where there might be capacity to walk or cycle instead, the DfE have requested we survey our school communities. I appreciate we are nearing the end of term, and currently not all pupils are back but your cooperation on this matter is much appreciated.*

*Please could you send the link below to all of your parents as soon as possible? We have set a return deadline for **Monday 20<sup>th</sup> July** for Secondary Schools:  
<https://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/SecSchool/>.*

*Kind regards,*

**Joanna Ball | Travel Plan Advisor**

**Place Department | Bromley Council, Civic Centre, Stockwell Close, Bromley BR1 3UH**