

The Swan School - September 2020 Reopening - Summary for Parents

13th July 2020

Overview

In line with government guidance, it is our intention to re-open our school to all students in September 2020. We are excited to welcome our students back as we recognise that, despite the excellent work of staff and parents during partial closure, school is the best place for our students to receive a world class education.

The government guidance states that:

- The risk to children themselves of becoming severely ill from coronavirus (COVID-19) is very low and there are negative health impacts of being out of school.
- Lower academic achievement also translates into long-term economic costs due to having a less well-qualified workforce. This affects the standard of living that today's pupils will have over the course of their entire life.
- Staff in educational settings tend not to be at any greater risk from the disease than many other occupations.

It is our intention that, where possible, all of our students will continue to benefit from the aspects of Swan life that make our school special, including our rigorously academic curriculum, entitlement to enrichment, family dining, and clear routines/behaviour expectations. We understand that the reopening of schools can never be entirely risk-free, however for the vast majority of children, the benefits of being back in school far outweigh the low risk from coronavirus (COVID-19). This document outlines the key measures that we will be putting in place to ensure that any residual risks can be minimised and reopening can be achieved in the safest possible way for students, staff, and our wider community.

Attendance

All students are expected to return to school in September. Absence from school will only be authorised where:

- A child has been advised to self-isolate due to experiencing symptoms of coronavirus or having been in close proximity with someone who has. We expect families to fully engage with the government's test, track, and trace protocols.
- A child has received specific advice from a specialist medical professional to avoid school. This will only be in extreme situations; the government's shielding advice will end in August 2020.

Good Hygiene Routines

Excellent hygiene habits, e.g. hand washing and "catch it, bin it, kill it", will be introduced to students during matriculation week and reinforced using our behaviour policy. Signage around the school will reinforce these messages and sufficient resources, e.g. hand sanitiser and tissues, will be available in school to make good hygiene routines practical. Specifically, the following measures will be in place:

- Sanitiser available at entry points to the building; everyone to sanitise hands when they enter the building.
- All students will sanitise hands when they arrive at their classroom (this will replace their hand-shake).
- All students are encouraged to wash their hands thoroughly after visiting the toilet and before eating.
- All students will wash hands/sanitise after eating.
- Tissues, sanitiser, and bins with lids available in all classrooms.

Where possible, we will ensure good ventilation inside, for example by opening windows and doors.

Increased cleaning will be arranged for throughout the day to ensure that high-traffic and high-touch areas can be frequently sanitised.

Grouping of Students

There is no requirement for students to practise social distancing in school. It is suggested that, where possible, schools should restrict contact between students to year group 'bubbles' of maximum 240 students. At The Swan, our site and staffing restrictions mean that it is not possible for us to maintain complete separation between our year groups therefore we will be enforcing a school-wide 'bubble' of 240 students (which is within the maximum number suggested by the government). Students will be largely contained within their year groups when inside the school building, but will be allowed to interact with each-other at other times.

During the school day, we plan to reduce the risks of mixing by:

- Teaching students in tutor groups for all subjects where possible. There will be some mixing of tutor groups for PE, intervention classes, and electives; we feel that the educational benefits of continuing with this outweigh the risks in these cases.
- Students will remain in the same classroom, except for PE and music where specialist equipment is required, with teachers moving between classes.
- Students will sit in the same seat for all lessons with minimal equipment being shared. Any equipment that must be shared will be sanitised between uses.

Toilet facilities will be zoned for different year groups at break times. If a child has to use the toilet during lesson time, they will use the toilet on the same floor as their class base.

During break times, students will be encouraged to be outside at break-times where possible. Detentions, use of the library, and 'social club' will continue inside as normal. The dining hall will be closed at break.

Academic Curriculum

We remain committed to delivering our broad and balanced curriculum for all and will therefore not be narrowing our offer of subjects. We recognise that some children may have developed learning gaps whilst schools have been closed and we are confident in our teachers' ability to assess the understanding of students and adapt their lessons accordingly. Where necessary, interventions and some additional catch-up classes will be provided for targeted students.

Students will continue to be seated in rows facing forward and teachers will deliver lessons from the front - this is normal practice at The Swan. We will encourage staff to avoid prolonged close contact with students.

Students will remain in their own class base for all lessons except PE and music where specialist equipment is required. We recognise that this will have an impact on teachers' ability to teach practical aspects of the curriculum (for example experiments in science) and will support staff to overcome these challenges, for example by purchasing additional equipment to help with moving between classrooms.

PE will take place outside, where possible, and focus on non-contact sports. Students will wear PE kit on the days they have PE to avoid the need to change in relatively close proximity.

Enrichment/Electives

Good quality enrichment is important for children's personal and social development and will therefore remain an entitlement for all. Our academic electives (Monday for year 7, Tuesday for year 8) will continue. Students will be able to choose these electives and they will be taught in smaller groups.

Our creative, physical, and community electives on a Wednesday will NOT be able to take place in September. This is due to the amount of mixing between year groups, external facilitators, and educational visits that happen during this time. The way that many of these electives are taught means that they are potentially more risky than our academic electives, which are delivered in a more traditional way. For most students there will be an early finish at 3.40pm on a Wednesday. Some students may be invited to attend catch-up classes as necessary during this time.

Breakfast club will continue to be available to all students. Catering staff will serve all food and duty staff will help to ensure that students are appropriately spread around the dining space.

Extra-curricular morning clubs, e.g. choir and sports team training, will be cancelled until further notice.

Peripatetic lessons will continue where possible with shared equipment being cleaned between uses.

Pastoral/Behaviour

Our strong culture of high expectations and clear routines mean that we are confident that our students will rise to the challenge in following our new systems. Line-ups and silent transitions help us to avoid crowded and chaotic spaces where appropriate distancing may be difficult. Our behaviour systems will be applied as normal. Where necessary, we will use our behaviour policy to reinforce expectations if students willfully choose to not follow social distancing and hygiene rules.

Assemblies play a vital role in developing school culture. During matriculation week, assemblies will take place outside (weather permitting) and in smaller 'house' groups. After matriculation week, virtual assemblies will be shown to students in their class bases to reduce the need for large group gatherings.

Family Dining

Family dining brings significant benefits in terms of ensuring all students have a healthy meal, teaching children about responsibility, and developing their social conversation skills. We will therefore maintain the principles of family dining whilst reducing risks by:

- Ensuring children wash/sanitise their hands before eating.
- Reducing the number of students in the dining hall at one time - we will have four sittings of approximately 60 students.
- Reducing the number of people sitting at each table and seating students so they do not sit opposite each-other.
- Packaging each meal individually, with cutlery, so that students do not need to serve each-other.
- Asking students to drink from their own water bottles, rather than from shared cups/jugs.
- Reconfiguring student 'roles' so that close contact is avoided.
- Cleaning tables using antibacterial spray and fresh cloths between each sitting.

Breakfast club will continue to provide free porridge for all staff and students from 8.15 to 9am. Students may also purchase additional snacks for breakfast and break during this time. The dining hall will not be open at break to encourage all children to play outside. There will be a specific zone where students can eat outside the building.

School Events

All large school gatherings, including the year 7 garden party, will be postponed until further notice. Visitors to the school will be limited and contact details must be provided. Parents should not arrive at school without making an appointment.

Contingency Planning

The school will engage fully with the government's Test, Track, and Trace procedures. No one should enter the school if they have symptoms of coronavirus or have been in contact with someone with symptoms.

In the event of a suspected or confirmed case, we will follow advice from Public Health England. Flow charts will be developed to make it clear what actions need to be taken in these cases. Clear records will be kept of which other students children have been in close contact with.

If a child is absent from school due to self-isolation, a pack of work will be provided at the start of the absence to ensure that he/she can continue with their learning at home.

In the event that the whole school is instructed to close, distance learning will be implemented using Google Classroom. This will follow the highly successful model we have used so far. Chromebooks will be loaned to all students to ensure that there is sufficient IT access for them to engage with the work set.

Staff Expectations

All staff are expected to return to work in September. We will work with more clinically vulnerable staff to ensure that appropriate additional measures are taken to reduce risks.

Staff must not come to school if they are displaying any symptoms of coronavirus or have been in close contact with someone who is. All staff should engage fully with Test, Track, and Trace.

Staff should take precautions to minimise the risk of infection in school, for example by:

- Maintaining excellent hygiene habits in line with guidance above
- Maintaining appropriate social distancing in shared spaces (e.g. staff room, offices)
- Avoiding sharing of equipment
- Avoiding close contact with students by teaching from the front of the class
- Making use of PEE if in close contact with someone displaying symptoms of coronavirus