

Our Ref: SLT/FSC-0110WSL

Thursday 1st October 2020

Dear Parents and Carers

Full School Reopening

To say that we have been on a rollercoaster ride for the last few weeks is an understatement. After a successful phased return for the first fortnight, we opened fully for only seven school days before our first positive case of Covid-19. At this point we put our plans into operation and communicated to you quickly how the school would respond to this fact. For seven school days we have been operating on a reduced timetable as all of our English and Maths teachers have been self-isolating and we simply did not have enough teachers to open the school to all year groups. Thankfully, none of the staff or students that we sent home to self-isolate have developed Covid-19 symptoms, so we are now in a position where we can inform you about the arrangements for the full reopening of the school.

Baysgarth will reopen fully to all year groups from Monday 5th October. Students will be following their normal timetable - this will be a Week B.

Whilst we have been working on a reduced timetable, we have looked at ways to further improve our systems and reduce the risk of transmission. We have consulted with the Local Authority, polled our own staff and had representatives from Public Health visit the site to analyse our measures. We would also like to hear your views as parents and carers about what you would like to see at Baysgarth. You will have a short survey emailed to you or you can view it [here](#).

What we do know is that the current situation is going to get worse before it gets better. We know that restrictions are increasing across the country and we know that these will become more draconian in the coming weeks. We know that cases are rising in our area, as they are across the country. We know that most secondary schools in North Lincolnshire are dealing with positive cases of their own, and we know that Baysgarth will have more positive tests over the coming days, weeks and months.

We also know and have made it clear to you in previous correspondence that it is very difficult to put in place social distancing measures at Baysgarth. We have 900 students in a school built for 900 students, so we are already working at full capacity. The layout of the school is one of narrow corridors, small inside dining areas and central atriums that make it impossible to put into place one-way systems. The majority of our students arrive at school on buses, and therefore we have year groups mixing together all the time and we can't implement staggered starts or finishes. Our buses are all full to capacity and we have been lobbying Schools Transport to increase the number of school vehicles to allow students to socially distance more effectively on their journeys to and from school. We will write to you if we have any success in this area.

These facts cause concern to us as senior leaders, our staff, and you as parents and carers. We have had to base our approach on good hygiene rather than bubbles and social distancing. Our philosophy has been one of 'Keep Yourself Safe', educating students about the importance of sanitising, regular hand washing, keeping apart where feasible, and being outside as much as possible during break and lunchtimes. This is exactly the approach that Public Health England have confirmed this week is right for our setting and circumstances. However, our concern moving forwards as we expect more positive cases in school, is that more students could be

asked to stay at home to self-isolate. We are desperate that our students do not miss any more of their education so we now have to take further steps to minimise all risks.

Therefore, we have updated our rules. Even though this is not yet compulsory across North Lincolnshire schools, **from Monday 5th October, all Baysgarth students will have to wear facemasks in school.** They will need to wear them in all corridors and communal areas and can only take them off when they are sat down in lessons, sat down eating in dining areas, or when they are outside.

We need your support. Please reiterate with your child(ren) the importance of wearing a facemask on the school buses and from now on, around the school. Please ensure they come to school with a face mask and a plastic bag in which it should be kept when not being used. Please contact us if there is a medical reason why your child can't wear a facemask and we will make sure our staff are aware of this.

In our discussions with Public Health England about the effective use of facemasks we have been told that incorrect use of facemasks actually increases the risk of disease transmission. Therefore, we need all of our families to support us in the correct use of facemasks by following the below rules:

- Students need a clean facemask every day - to reuse them increases the risk of transmission so every student will need a supply of at least 5 facemasks and these must be washed after use.
- Facemasks can only be removed or put on via the side loops. Touching the face whilst wearing a facemask actually increases the risk of passing on the virus more than not wearing a facemask, so students must not touch their face or mask at any time.
- When not being worn, the mask must be secured in a sealed plastic bag.

Public Health England have also issued the following advice about sanitising and washing hands:

The moisturisers in hand sanitiser render it ineffective after it has been applied four times. Therefore, sanitising hands only works if students regularly wash their hands with soap and water in addition to using sanitiser.

All of our students must wash their hands for 20 seconds every break, every lunchtime, and every time they use the toilet.

Public Health England have also confirmed that the greatest risk of transmission is through contamination of surfaces. Therefore, we will be asking all students to clean their desk, chair and any equipment they have used at the end of every lesson with an antibacterial wipe, to make sure it is safe for the next class. We will also be ordering individual equipment packs for our students, which will contain essential equipment which must not be shared, including a mini whiteboard and pen.

These are further measures that we are using to try and limit transmission and keep everyone on our site as safe as possible. So far this term, we have had approximately 10% of our staff and students self-isolating and nearly 100 tests have been carried out on staff or students. Only one member of staff and no Baysgarth students have tested positive so far, so we know the risks are currently still low but are likely to rise significantly over future weeks. The measures currently in place are:

- Separate entrances for students in the morning to reduce queues
- Hand sanitiser at every entrance to the school
- Hand sanitiser at the entrance to every classroom
- Clear signage around the buildings reminding students about safe travel around the school and good hygiene practices
- Students sitting in rows in classrooms facing the same direction
- All classroom doors remain open and vents are set to maximum to increase airflow

- Students have to be outside at break and lunch unless they are eating in one of the two canteens
- Senior leaders inspect the buses at the end of the day to ensure students are wearing facemasks
- Limits to the number of students who can be in the toilet blocks at any one time
- Not using the PE changing rooms, so students are in PE kit for the whole day when they have PE lessons
- The cancellation of extracurricular activities, clubs and sports fixtures
- Employing extra daytime cleaners

From Monday 5th October, there will be some further structural changes, alongside the hygiene measures mentioned above, to help reduce risk. Sadly, we have come to the conclusion that we cannot continue to have vertical tutor groups operating this year. Although this is a big part of the family feel that we have at Baysgarth, we cannot afford the increased risks that come along with four year groups mixing in the same classroom. Therefore, new year-based tutor groups will be put in place for the rest of this year. Your child(ren) will still be in the same House, but their form tutor and the students around them will change. For most students, these will be the same tutor groups in which they started the year for the first two weeks in September.

We have also designed our Inspire Time activities on a Wednesday Week B around interest rather than age, so our groups contain mixed classes of Year 7, 8 and 9 students. Clearly, this increases transmission risks and with the worsening situation, this is also a risk we cannot take at present. We will write to you in the next few days with details of how this time will be used for the rest of the year.

These measures in themselves will not prevent more Covid-19 cases in school - it is inevitable that we will have students and staff who will catch Covid-19 outside of school and bring the virus into the building. When we do receive notification of a positive test, Public Health England have informed us that there is no need to send home entire classes or year groups. The school will determine who has been in direct close contact with the infected person and only those direct contacts will be asked to self-isolate. This will mean that whole classes will not be asked to self-isolate; in most cases it will just be the person sitting directly next to the person who contracted the virus. This should lessen future disruption and ensure the school does not have to close to certain year groups or other bubbles.

In these trying and frustrating times, I just want to say a big thank you to those many parents who have contacted us at the school to offer their support. It is really difficult to tread the fine line between keeping us all as safe as possible and keeping the school as normal as possible so that our students are relaxed, positive and can focus on their learning, and it is lovely to read messages of support from our community.

In Other News

It's easy to get wrapped up in the current crisis and pay less attention to the many wonderful things that continue to happen every week at Baysgarth. This week has seen the handover of our fantastic new Dance Studio. With a sprung floor, high quality integrated sound system and full-length mirrors along one wall, this is a brilliant space for our students and is also available as a community letting and will be a great asset to the community for dance and fitness classes. We will be adding this facility to our lettings list in the near future (Covid-19 guidelines permitting), and this will be bookable in the same way as all of our other lettings facilities, via Book A Pitch: <https://app.bookapitch.com/venues/371>

We are also really pleased with the launch of our collective reading strategy. Led by Miss Sach, who has recently been successful in achieving her Middle Leadership National Qualification, all of our students are reading together in their tutor groups from a carefully selected group of modern novels. It's been wonderful to hear them talking about these books around school and to see how inspired they are by the subject matter. Miss Sach has also been successful in winning

a bid to support reading further, and we have recently signed up to the Book Buzz, which will allow every Year 7 and 8 student to choose a reading book of their choice to take home. More details will follow about this scheme before half term.

We have continued to upgrade our dining facilities for our students. Our new canteen will be open after half term and we have purchased an additional twenty outdoor picnic tables so that our students have more seating options for the extra time that they are spending outside the building. We have also purchased an additional three laptop/Chromebook trolleys for the school to support students with learning in school and we know that many of you as parents are prioritising spending on laptops or Chromebooks for your children to support with the remote learning that will become a critical part of their education for at least the next six months.

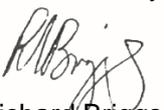
Whilst we can't hold our Open Evening as normal this year, there will be a host of online virtual events taking place which will contain a combination of practical information and fun activities, so if you have a Year 5 or 6 student at home, make sure you have registered for these events and tune in from Monday 5th October. [Register here](#) and be in with the chance of winning an array of prizes!

Next Friday, 9th of October, we are holding a non-uniform day. This is at the request of our Student Leadership team and will mark the end of a series of events in school all next week. We are supporting the charity [Young Minds](#) and their #HelloYellow campaign, which focuses on young people's mental health on what is World Mental Health Day. We are all encouraged to '*Dig out your neon socks, custard scarf and banana hat - let's show young people they're not alone with their mental health!*'. We want all of our students to wear something yellow next Friday and bring a donation for the privilege of wearing non-uniform.

Finally, Mrs Haynes has been busy contacting local businesses over the last few weeks asking for their support for our student rewards programme this year. We have been overwhelmed by the generosity of businesses in our local community who have donated nearly £3,000 between them for our students. Mrs Haynes will be writing to you soon to let you know how students can earn a share of these rewards and to list all of the individuals and businesses who have supported the rewards programme. If you would like to be part of this and make a donation, please contact lauren.haynes@baysgarthschool.co.uk.

Thank you for your continued support!

Yours faithfully



Richard Briggs
Head Teacher