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19 May 2020

Dear Parents/Carers

I would first like to thank you all for the support that you have provided us with during these very difficult times. Over the past 8 weeks, all staff have worked tirelessly to provide online lessons to support the continued education of your children. However, as we have not been there to provide the ongoing encouragement and help that children invariably require, I greatly appreciate the support that you have provided in helping us to continue their learning.

We now move towards the next phase, and on Tuesday 12th May the Government published 'Actions for educational and childcare settings to prepare for wider opening' (link below) <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/actions-for-educational-and-childcare-settings-to-prepare-for-wider-opening-from-1-june-2020/actions-for-education-and-childcare-settings-to-prepare-for-wider-opening-from-1-june-2020>

One of the most significant paragraphs for us as a secondary school is *'From 1 June 2020, we expect that secondary schools and colleges will be able to offer some face to face contact with Year 10 and Year 12 pupils. This will not be a return to full timetables or pupils back in school or college full time, rather some support to supplement pupils' remote education'*.

As teachers, we are desperate for schools to reopen, so that we can continue your child's education, provide the pastoral care and offer the opportunities for social development that are key parts of school life. However, we also recognise that this may be an anxious time for some parents, pupils and staff, so we understand the need to proceed with caution.

Consequently, we have been conducting a detailed risk assessment, consulting with our own staff and governors and developing plans to allow the gradual reopening for Year 10 pupils in a safe and sustainable way.

It is our belief that returning all Year 10 pupils to the academy on a full-time basis by the end of the summer term is not an appropriate target, as this could create an unacceptable level of risk for staff and pupils. Therefore, our intention is to begin by providing face to face lessons to pupils in very small groups and on a part-time basis. The vast majority of learning will still take place online through Show My Homework, but we believe that this small number of face to face sessions will be crucial in supporting your child. As we evaluate this approach and feel confident that it is safe to progress to the next stage, we can then gradually increase the amount of time that pupils attend school each week.

In this letter, I wish to set out our plans to support online teaching with face to face lessons for Year 10 pupils, and also outline the additional health and safety measures that we will implement to keep everybody safe.

As part of our plan, we have identified a number of different stages that will allow a gradual reopening of the academy for Year 10 pupils. The first stage will begin on **Tuesday 9th June**. From this date, we intend to have one quarter of Year 10 pupils in the academy each morning of the week. The vast majority of pupils would then leave at lunch time, with a very small number staying into the afternoon for additional support. This equates to roughly 20 Year 10 pupils in the academy each day.

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This would mean that:

- Pupils are in the academy for only a short period of time.
- Pupils would be taught in very small classes that allow social distancing – Never more than 12 pupils to a class, but more typically around 10 or even lower.
- All pupils would receive the face to face support from their subject teachers that is a vital component of teaching and learning.

This cautious approach will also allow us to evaluate the systems and procedures that we have in place to ensure the safety of all people in the academy. It will also enable us to take a more informed decision about when is the right time to move onto the next stage of the gradual reopening.

Whilst I recognise that any increase in pupils and staff to the academy will increase the risk of infection, I am also aware that this will be true regardless of the stage of the Covid-19 pandemic. Until vaccinations or effective treatments are widely available, this risk will always exist. Therefore, we need to ensure that our actions minimise the risk to all people in the academy through changes in our working practices, changes in expectation for pupil behaviours and limiting the number of pupils in the academy at any time. The measures that we are taking are extremely detailed, but I do want to share with you some of the things that we will be doing to help reassure you that it is now safe to open the academy in this very limited way.

Effective infection prevention and control – Any staff or pupils who are suspected to have Covid-19 or live with somebody who has Covid-19 symptoms will not be allowed onto the school site. Furthermore, the academy expects that all staff and pupils will follow the seven- or fourteen-day isolation protocols and we will monitor adherence with these whenever we become aware of cases.

Deep cleaning measures - The site team have introduced enhanced cleaning regimes which focus on frequently touched surfaces using antiviral products. These will be advanced as more pupils and staff gradually return to the academy.

The expectation of frequently washing hands will continue. However, as more pupils return to the academy, this practice will be formalised so that pupils wash their hands between all lessons. Additional portable sinks are also being purchased along with extra hand soap and antiviral hand gel.

Class sizes and social contact - Ensuring that class sizes remain very small (typically 10 or lower) will ensure that we can ensure social distancing within the classroom. Furthermore, as pupils will only be in school for one morning per week, we are removing morning break so that we eliminate the risk of infection during social times.

Staggered start times – Whilst school has been closed for the many, we have remained open to support vulnerable children and the children of key worker parents. To avoid contact between different populations of pupils, we will be asking for Year 10 pupils to arrive at 8.55am, with lessons beginning at 9am

Use of resources and the built environment – The way in which we use the building and other resources is crucial to reducing the risk of spreading infection. As more pupils and staff return to the academy, a revised one-way system will be introduced to help promote social distancing in corridors. As the weather allows, more windows will remain open throughout the daytime to ensure that the building achieves maximum levels of ventilation. We will also be running our air circulation system at all times. During this time, the use of textbooks as a resource will not be allowed as this potentially poses a risk of the spread of infection amongst staff and pupils. Instead, we will ask that staff photocopy the pages of any texts that they require. For the same reason, the borrowing of stationery will not be allowed. To support this, when pupils return to the academy they will be provided with a new basic stationery set that they must bring to school each day.

Behaviour policy update – In the current situation, some behaviours that were previously socially acceptable are no longer. An addendum to the behaviour policy will be written which reflects this. The aim of this addendum will be to promote the behaviours that are acceptable and make clear those which the academy views as unacceptable on the grounds of public health and safety. Many of these will relate to the principles of personal hygiene and adherence to social distancing rules. The addendum will also clearly state the consequences for pupils who do not follow the new rules. This is important so that all staff and pupils feel safe within the academy.

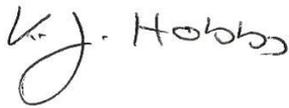
As pupils return to the academy, these new expectations will be clearly explained and consistently reinforced until they become cultural expectations.

Routines and procedures - Lining up in the corridor will no longer be appropriate behaviour and a new protocol will be introduced to manage the start of lessons in a safe way. Similarly, when pupils enter the room, small group sizes will mean that furniture will be laid out in a manner much more conducive to social distancing. Staff will produce seating plans to ensure that students always sit in the same seat, therefore reducing the number of other pupils in their vicinity. Floor tape will also be used in classrooms to mark out the 'teacher area' at the front of the classroom and any other areas that staff feel require this demarcation.

This letter begins our parental consultation process and having read this, we would like you to email any questions that you may have to info@davidnieper.academy In addition, we will be conducting an online virtual parents' forum to discuss this at 5.30pm on Thursday 21st May. If you would like to attend this, please email info@davidnieper.academy and an invite will be sent to you.

I will look forward to responding to your questions and speaking with many of you on Thursday.

Yours faithfully



Dr Kathryn Hobbs
Headteacher