



Covid-19 Updates 2020/21 - Letter 1

18th September 2020

Dear Parents/Carers,

We are very pleased with the way in which the school year has started. Attendance has been very strong and the standards of uniform, equipment and preparedness for lessons have continued to be excellent. Our students have adapted to the changed school environment, settled in well, and have been working hard in lessons. Since the start of term, we have been evolving our internal school procedures in response to further changes in government guidance, and our experience of managing the return of students to school.

We very much appreciate the numerous messages of support we have had since starting back at the beginning of the month. I appreciate there is still some anxiety among some parents/carers about the return to school, but I can assure you that the school is operating within guidance set by the government. Whilst the school is certainly not running as it would normally do, having introduced different access and exit points for each year group, separate year group bubbles and split break and lunch times, we have been very impressed with the way in which the students have adapted to the challenges. The vast majority of them seem very happy in school.

The pastoral teams have received some queries regarding face coverings; year bubbles, provision for assemblies, PE lessons and social distancing, including outside school. I fully understand that there are so many opinions regarding what to do and not do in our new Covid world, but for clarification, the government guidance states the following, which the school has always and will always adhere to.

- **Face coverings:** The school has allowed discretion in relation to face coverings outside of the classroom, because this is also provided under the guidance. *'The government is not recommending universal use of face coverings in all schools. Schools that teach children in years 7 and above and which are not under specific local restriction measures will have the discretion to require face coverings for pupils, staff and visitors in areas outside the classroom where social distancing cannot easily be maintained, such as corridors and communal areas and it has been deemed appropriate in those circumstances. Primary school children will not need to wear a face covering.'*
- **Bubbles:** The guidance states *'In secondary schools, particularly in the older age groups at key stage 4 and key stage 5, the groups are likely to need to be the size of a year group to enable schools to deliver the full range of curriculum subjects and students to receive specialist teaching... Whatever the size of the group, they should be kept apart from other groups where possible.'* The school has encouraged all students to stay apart and keep their distance, avoiding all physical contact wherever possible. However, it is impossible to provide social distancing of up to 2m in classrooms, corridors and dining rooms at all times. The students are kept within discrete bubbles so that, should there be an outbreak, one year group bubble does not impact on another. Whilst we appreciate that many students have siblings in other year groups, the government guidance recognises that *'Endeavouring to keep these groups at least partially separate and minimising contacts between children will still offer public health benefits as it reduces the network of possible direct transmission.'*
- **Assemblies:** The government guidance says that assemblies are acceptable, but they should not take place with more than one year group bubble. This is the reason why we have separated Year 12 and 13, and given the recent rise in cases nationally since the return to school, we have now divided all year groups in half, so that they are physically distanced during an assembly. The assemblies are an intrinsic part of school life and enable a community to celebrate, reflect and take on board important messages from the Head of Year and Senior Leadership Team.

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Working in collaboration with Bredon Hill and St Egwin's Middle Schools

- **PE Lessons:** Currently, students have the option to wear their PE kit to school on days when they have PE, and to remain in their PE kit for the whole day. With the recent good weather, this has not posed a problem. However, I would highlight that as more inclement weather returns during the autumn and winter, students will have the choice of changing into their full school uniform or fresh PHHS uniformed PE kit at the end of their PE lesson.
- **Transport and Departing School:** County Transport has been massively improved since the start of term, with all buses now having cleared the school site by 3.45pm on the vast majority of days. We would appreciate your support in reinforcing the importance of high standards of behaviour, bubble distancing, and Covid etiquette, as once students board their bus, they are no longer under the direct supervision of school staff. We are continually reminding students that, in line with the guidance from County Transport, we strongly recommend the wearing of face coverings on dedicated school buses, and that the wearing of face coverings on public transport is compulsory.

At the end of the school day, students leave our site through a number of different exits, which staggers their departure times. For students who walk home, Year 9 students are filtered via Cambria Road; Year 10 via Inches Lane; and Year 11 via Victoria Avenue. We advise them to stay within their bubbles as they walk home and be particularly mindful of social distancing in relation to other pedestrians from the local community.

You will be aware that since the start of term, there has been a steady increase in the number of Covid-19 cases nationally. There are also significant problems with testing and I appreciate that as a parent, you may feel confused in terms of what to do, should your child or a member of your household develop symptoms. I am therefore providing you with a set of notes summarising the latest government guidance in relation to your child attending school. [Please see the attached appendix.](#)

Self-Isolation

When students are absent for up to five days, they should log into PHHS Live in order to access subject information and learning platforms such as MyMaths and Doodle. They should also continue to log into Show My Homework for homework. We would also encourage them to ask their friends to share work that was done in lessons, so that they don't fall behind. If self-isolation is longer, the school will provide access to further work and learning material.

Bubble Restrictions/Lockdown

In the event of a confirmed case within the school community, the school will be guided by Public Health England. This may result in a class or year group (bubble) lockdown and in this event, Prince Henry's will provide our students with online learning, as we did between March - July. Each lesson will be provided through Show My Homework (SMH) and the school will aim to provide approximately 50% of lessons as live lessons via Teams, so that students have continuity of their education.

Year 9 students are currently receiving training on how to access and use these virtual platforms.

Local Restrictions/Lockdowns

Separate guidance will be provided in relation to this, should this arise.

In the event of a local lockdown, Prince Henry's is looking to provide our students with online learning, as we did between March - July. We will aim to provide approximately 50% of our lessons as live Teams lessons, so that students have continuity of their education.

Parents' Evenings Online

Until further notice, and starting with the Year 13 event on 24th September, we will run future Parents' Evenings using an online platform that works in a similar way to FaceTime and Zoom. Each year group will receive a letter detailing the arrangements and providing guidance on how to book and 'attend' appointments with your child's subject teachers. One important point to highlight is that the length of the appointment

will be fixed by the software, and staff cannot override this. There will be a countdown clock for each session, and the system ends the appointment - not the member of staff. If school should be closed due to a local lockdown, we will continue to run the Parents' Evenings on the dates scheduled.

Open Evening

Open Evening is a highlight of the school year, and something that our whole school community always looks forward to. Historically, it is a very busy event, with hundreds of people attending. With the continuing restrictions due to the Covid-19 pandemic, a very large public gathering of this nature is not practical. Therefore, as we did earlier in the summer with our Induction Evening and Speech Day, this year's Open Evening will be an online event.

You are warmly invited visit the Open Evening area of our website <https://princehenrys.worcs.sch.uk/openevening2020>, between Monday 19th - Friday 30th October 2020. As I hope you will understand, in the current climate and in the interest of being fair to everyone who will be applying for a place at Prince Henry's and protecting the health of our staff, students and visitors, we cannot accommodate individual appointments to visit the school.

This means that on Thursday 22nd October, we will be operating a full and normal school day, finishing at 3.30pm.

I appreciate that there is a lot of information contained within this letter and I would like to thank you for your continued support during these very challenging times.

Best wishes,

Yours sincerely



Dr A Evans
Headteacher