

3 September 2020

Dear Parents/Carers,

I hope you are enjoying a restful summer break and share our excitement about welcoming pupils back to school. The first thing to say is that it will not be business as usual, but we have done our utmost to ensure that our pupils have access to a full, broad and balanced curriculum, and that the appropriate support is available to ensure that our pupils continue to progress and flourish.

Prior to the summer holiday, we sent you some information regarding the full opening of schools. Over the summer, there have been a number of updates to the guidance by the government. As an academy, we have responded to this guidance and updated our risk assessments and procedures. If you have any further questions after reading this letter, please contact admin@croftonacademy.org.uk.

So how will September be different to previous years?

In welcoming all children back this autumn, schools have been asked to minimise the number of contacts that a pupil has during the school day as part of implementing the system of controls to reduce the risk of transmission of Covid-19 and manage risk effectively.

The guidance also goes on to say:

Schools must comply with health and safety law, which requires them to assess risks and put in place proportionate control measures. Essential measures include:

- a requirement that people who are ill stay at home
- robust hand and respiratory hygiene
- enhanced cleaning arrangements
- active engagement with NHS Test and Trace
- formal consideration of how to reduce contacts and maximise distancing between those in school wherever possible and minimise potential for contamination so far as is reasonably practicable

How contacts are reduced will depend on the school's circumstances and will (as much as possible) include:

- grouping children together
- avoiding contact between groups
- arranging classrooms with forward facing desks
- staff maintaining distance from pupils and other staff as much as possible

Start Dates:

- Monday 7 September – INSET day (school closed to pupils)
- Tuesday 8 September – Year 7 only (8.45am directed to registration)
- Wednesday 9 September – Year 7 only (8.45am directed to registration)
- Thursday 10 September – All year groups (8.45am directed to registration)
- Friday 11 September – All year groups (8.45am directed to registration)

Arriving at school:

Your child should endeavour to walk to school wherever possible and arrive for entry into school at 8.45am. Pupils will now access the school site via the pupil entrance adjacent to the main hall. If your child is arriving by public transport, they should conform to the government guidelines of wearing face protection in the form of a mask or face covering. If bus timetables mean that children must arrive before the school start time of 8.45am, they will be directed to their designated outside zone where they will wait. Breakfast can be purchased from the Pod adjacent to the pupil entrance. Children arriving by local authority taxi will continue to enter via the front of school – we ask that parents/carers liaise with local authority transport service to ensure their child arrives as near to 8.45am as possible and waits in the taxi until their keyworker arrives to escort them to their bubble. In times of wet weather, we will provide alternative designated zones for each year group and pupils will be notified of this on arrival at school.

All staff and pupils will be expected to sanitise their hands on the way into school, before a lesson, at the end of a lesson and before and after breaks and lunches. Additional hand sanitising stations will be installed across the academy to ensure this takes place.

Face coverings/masks:

The government is not recommending universal use of face coverings in all schools but have said that each school has the discretion to require face coverings where social distancing cannot be easily maintained i.e. on corridors and in social areas.

As an academy we are implementing a one way system and staggered breaks/lunches to minimise contact between pupils from different year groups. However, we recognise that for some parents/pupils the wearing of face coverings is an important part of feeling safe. As a result, the wearing of face coverings on corridors and in social areas (break and lunch) will be optional for staff and pupils. The face coverings must be plain black, white or blue. They must not be patterned or have any logos or embellishments (please see attachment for pictures of acceptable face coverings). Face coverings will not be permitted in lessons.

If you would prefer your child to wear a face covering on corridors and in social spaces, please make sure that they are aware of your wishes. As the wearing of face coverings is optional, the academy will not provide face coverings and will not be responsible for ensuring that pupils adhere to parental wishes. All pupils who wear a face covering must bring an individual sealed plastic bag to store the face covering when it is not in use. Pupils will not be permitted to wear face coverings below their chin or around their neck. Pupils will be asked to remove face coverings that are not in line with academy expectations.

In the event of any future local lockdown, further guidance will be issued on the wearing of face coverings.

Buses:

We have been informed that bus services for schools will be operating as normal, however, where buses are open to the public there will be a limit on the number of passengers allowed to board the bus. Full details about buses can be obtained from West Yorkshire Metro website.

End of the school day:

At the end of the school day (3.05pm), pupils will need to go straight home or to their arranged mode of transport. Pupils must avoid waiting for children in other year groups unless they are meeting a sibling to go home together.

Attendance:

All children are expected to be regularly attending school from September. Children who are ill should, as usual, be kept at home and families should notify school in the usual way as to the absence. The school will be adhering to its attendance policy.

The only change to previous practice is that families should advise school immediately whether or not the absence is due to suspected/positive covid illness or symptoms, or if any member of the family has covid symptoms. Please state clearly in the notification of absence either 'my child and family have no COVID 19 symptoms' or 'my child or family has COVID 19 symptoms' as appropriate.

Families should keep school informed as to the test status of any family member – not just the children registered at school. This is to enable the school to actively engage with monitoring and to communicate and collaborate with the local health protection team including the NHS Track and Trace. It will be on their advice whether there is a need for self-isolation and who needs to isolate, children, staff and/or year group bubbles. This will enable us to help protect the school community and reduce the possibility of spreading the virus.

When advised to do so by NHS Track and Trace, we will notify families if there has been the potential of contact with others who have tested positive.

Holidays in term time:

Not surprisingly, with the amount of time missed from school and our need to 'catch up', no term-time holidays – for whatever reason and of whatever length - will be authorised in the academic year 2020/2021.

Organisation of classes:

All year groups will study the full curriculum as normal, taught by subject specialist teachers. Pupils will follow their normal timetable, moving around school following a one way system. Lessons will have staggered end times to ensure contact on corridors is minimised (although brief transitory contact is considered low risk).

Posters will be displayed around the academy to remind pupils that they should not touch other pupils and that they should report to a member of staff if they develop symptoms of coronavirus. Any deliberate breach of hygiene guidelines by pupils will be taken very seriously.

In Years 7 and 8, the class groups have been reorganised to reduce the movement of pupils between groups. In Years 9, 10 and 11, pupils will access all of their core and option subjects, but will spend a large proportion of their time in half year groups (A and B).

The use of shared water fountains is a public health concern. As a result, pupils will not be able to fill up water bottles in school. Beakers of water will be available for free at break and lunch. We strongly recommend that pupils bring a pre-filled water bottle to school each day.

Lessons held in specialist spaces (e.g. Technology, Music, Science, PE) will have very clear guidance about the use of the space and equipment. This will be shared with pupils prior to the start of the lesson. The use of shared equipment is restricted. Pupils should bring an apron (or old shirt/t-shirt) to Technology and Art lessons to protect their clothes.

In the classroom:

There will continue to be robust hand and respiratory hygiene alongside enhanced cleaning arrangements during the school day.

In addition, Government guidance states that:

- Pupils should sit side by side, not face to face in classrooms where social distancing cannot be maintained. Pupils will be allocated a seat and this will be recorded by the teacher on a seating plan. This will help to identify pupils in the event of another pupil receiving a positive coronavirus test.

- Teachers must teach from the front of the room and remain 2 metres away from their pupils.
- Pupils with an Education Health Care Plan will continue to receive LSA support in the classroom in line with social distancing guidance.
- Where social distancing is possible (1 metre+), this will be enforced.
- Pupils should not share equipment and are expected to arrive equipped with their own equipment: pen, pencil, ruler, planner (issued to them in the first week), calculator, rubber – additional equipment, to avoid sharing, would include: protractor and glue stick. A suitable pencil case and bag to carry equipment is required. We would encourage pupils to carry their own hand sanitiser, wipes and tissues each day in school. An individual sealed bag is required for storing face masks if pupils choose to wear a covering on corridors and in social areas.
- Hand sanitiser and tissues will be available across school and in every classroom – pupils will be reminded to use sanitiser on entering and leaving classrooms and before and after break/lunchtime. Posters are displayed around school and in the main toilet area reminding pupils about hand washing procedures. Lidded bins are provided to ensure 'catch it, kill it, bin it' is stringently adhered to by all staff and pupils. We will also be introducing enhanced cleaning, including cleaning frequently touched surfaces often using standard products such as detergents and bleach.

As in previous years, the school recommends the following calculator that can be used from Year 7 through to GCSE studies: Casio fx-83GTX. This particular calculator can be purchased from all good retail outlets and online stores.

Year 7 pupils are not required to bring their PE kit on Tuesday 8 September.

Break and lunch provision:

Breaks and lunchtimes will be staggered through the day. This is to limit groups coming into contact with each other. During break and lunch times pupils will have access to the canteen and also to an identified zone outside for fresh air. Many pupils will choose to bring a packed lunch, however, the canteen will be open and serving a reduced menu.

As always, Year 7 will be provided with a free meal on their first day (Tuesday 8 September). Parents/carers should ensure there are adequate funds on their child's account via Parentmail only as we limit the use of money in school. We will be issuing Year 7 parents/carers with login instructions for Parentmail – please look out for the email link. We encourage parents/carers to remind their child that sharing food and drink increases risk and therefore should be avoided.

Breakfast and break service will commence from Thursday 10 September. Parents/carers of Year 7 pupils should ensure their child has breakfast before school and brings a snack with them on Tuesday and Wednesday of the first week.

Assemblies:

Assemblies will involve only one year group per day. Pupils will be allocated a seat and this will be recorded on a seating plan. This will help to identify pupils in the event of another pupil receiving a positive coronavirus test.

First Aid room:

The first aid room will be for emergency only. Access for pupils will be at break or lunchtime and in the current climate we will not be providing paracetamol to pupils. Prescribed medicine can be stored in the first aid room, but must be in its original container/box with the label from the pharmacy attached.

Code of Conduct:

An updated code of conduct will be shared with pupils on their first day. However, very simply we ask that pupils follow staff instructions the first time of asking, in order to protect the health and wellbeing of all members of our school community.

We will be implementing a one way system around school where this is possible to do so and ask parents/carers to remind their child about adhering to social distancing when moving between areas of the school.

Uniform:

Our uniform guide is available on the school website www.croftonacademy.org.uk. A summary is provided below:

- Plain white school shirt with pointed collars, top button fastened and long enough to be tucked in
- Crofton Academy clip on tie - provided free to every pupil at the start of the new term in September 2020 — replacements for lost/damaged ties are £5.50
- Plain black tailored trousers or plain black tailored knee length skirt (the skirt does not carry the Crofton Academy logo and therefore can be purchased from supermarket school shops)
- Plain black sensible school shoes - logos, Kickers tags/labels, embellishments, metallic buckles and bows and coloured soles etc. are not acceptable — neither are canvas trainers that are sold as shoes
- Optional plain black V neck long sleeved jumper (Crofton Academy logo and purchased from our uniform stockist)
- Visible socks should be black or white
- Tights should be plain black opaque

New Y7 PE Kit (Y8-Y10 optional for this year — must be worn from September 2021)

- Modern, reversible long sleeve sport shirt
- Short sleeve indoor PE shirt
- PE (matching) shorts
- Black sports socks

Year 8 — 11 pupils can continue to wear the current PE kit until the end of the 20/21 academic year or choose to purchase the new kit. Only the new style kit will be sold from now on and all/ new pupils joining the academy will be expected to purchase this new style kit.

Please be aware that clothing labelled as school uniform in shops and supermarkets does not always comply with Academy Policy, particularly trousers that are skinny fit, skirts made from stretchy material and shoes that are canvas style pumps or shoes with embellishments, colour or brown/wooden soles and heels and coloured stitching.

Online uniform orders can be placed through our preferred schoolwear provider Better & Bright at <https://www.betterandbrightschoolwear.co.uk/> or via their outlets in Castleford and Pontefract.

Visitors to the school site:

We will be limiting visitors to the school site, and parents/carers will only be invited on to site for meetings where a suitable alternative is impossible. Anyone arriving without an appointment will not be allowed entry to the site – please telephone or email admin@croftonacademy.org.uk if you wish to speak to a member of staff.

Potential future lockdown:

While we hope that this does not happen, we are preparing ourselves for this possibility. Pupils will be prepared by enrolling onto Google Classrooms. Years 8 – 11 have already used Google Classrooms during the national lockdown so this will not be new to them. We will give guidance to Year 7 at the beginning of the school term. Google Classrooms will also be used for homework tasks during the academic year.

In the event of a local lockdown, the academy will follow the relevant local health protection team guidance. This will be issued to parents in a timely manner

What do parents/carers need to do next to support the safe return of pupils?

- Read this guidance carefully.
- Ensure that pupils who travel to school on public transport wear a face covering.
- Avoid pupils sharing a car with other pupils from different households.
- Encourage your child to walk or cycle to school.
- Remind your son/daughter about social distancing guidance on the way to and from school.
- Make sure that pupils have their own equipment and only bring to school what they need each day.
- Ensure that pupils have the correct uniform that complies with the academy uniform policy.
- Avoid pupils arriving at school too early, as they will be asked to wait outside of the academy building.
- If arriving by car, to avoid overcrowding at the academy gates, drop off and pick up pupils away from High Street.
- Use the Parentmail system for lunch money – instructions for Year 7 parents/carers will be emailed out once children are on roll.
- Provide your son/daughter with a filled water bottle, as shared water fountains will not be available for use.
- Provide your son/daughter with an apron or old shirt for Technology and art lessons.
- Provide you son/daughter with a suitable face mask and individual sealed plastic bag (if you choose to do so).

What if my child is shielding or self-isolating?

The government guidance is clear that the majority of pupils should be safe to return to school in September. As of 1st August, shielding advice for adults and children was paused. This means that even the small number of pupils who remain on the shielded patients list can return to school, as can those who have a family member who are shielding. If your child has been given clinical advice to continue to shield or self-isolate, please contact the academy and speak to their Year Leader.

How will my child catch up on any lost learning?

The teachers and support staff at the academy are very skilled at assessing what pupils know and can do. As part of your son/daughter's return to school, teachers will take time to assess any gaps in knowledge and make sure that these gaps are filled so that no child is disadvantaged by the recent school closures.

What about my child's mental well-being?

We recognise that this has been a difficult and upsetting time for some pupils. The large majority of pupils will be supported by the structure and routine of attending school, but there are some who will need further support. Upon their return, we will take time to talk to pupils about their experience and make sure that those who need it, have access to additional support.

We recognise that for some families, your child returning to school in September is a daunting prospect. Please be assured that we have followed the government guidance to ensure the health, safety and well-being of all pupils and staff. A full, updated risk assessment will be published on our website on Monday 7th September.

We are very much looking forward to welcoming back all pupils for the new academic year.

Yours sincerely



Lee Hardcastle
Deputy Headteacher