



SIR THOMAS RICH'S SCHOOL

Oakleaze, Gloucester

From the Headmaster - August 2021

I do hope that this email finds you well and you have enjoyed the summer break despite the rather mixed weather we have had. We are very much looking forward to welcoming students back to school for the start of the new term, and we have now formally reviewed our approach for September, following the latest guidance issued by the Department for Education. Please be assured that the health, safety and wellbeing of all our students and staff remains at the forefront of our planning.

I would be most grateful if you could read through this email with your son or daughter before term starts, as it contains key information regarding start dates, routines and plans for September.

Timetables

Students' timetables should be available on Parent Gateway by 3 September.

Mixing and 'Bubbles'

From September, we will no longer keep students in year-group 'bubbles'. All students will have access to specialist classrooms such as the DT workshops and science laboratories. Teaching staff will be based in their curriculum departments and students will move around the school between lessons.

Staggered Start Dates

We are required to test all students for Covid-19 twice at the start of term, which will be staggered over the first week to achieve this:

Monday 6 September - INSET, staff only

Tuesday 7 September - Years 7 and 12 only

Wednesday 8 September - Years 7, 12, 11, and 13 only

Thursday 9 September - All students in

The School Day

We will not be operating a staggered day and all students will be required to be in school for 8.30 am. The school day will finish at 3.20 pm, unless students are staying for clubs, catch-up sessions – or detention!

Entrance Gates

In order to ensure a smooth arrival at school, from September we are asking Key Stage 3 (Years 7, 8 and 9) students to arrive and depart using Gate 3, and Key Stage 4 and 5 to use Gates 1, 2 and 4.

One-Way System

Most areas of the School will revert to a two-way pedestrian system. We will though be operating a one-way system on the stairs to the F corridor. In addition, both the external Sports Centre door and the external Music Department door will be exit only.

Testing for COVID-19

After an initial two tests in school at the start of term, students will continue to test twice weekly at home until the end of September. Home test kits will be issued to all students, and we are also retaining a small asymptomatic testing site in school so we can offer testing to students who are unable to test themselves at home.

Attendance and Isolation

Students must not come into school if they have Covid-19 symptoms, have had a positive test result, or if there are other reasons requiring them to stay at home due to the risk of passing on Covid-19 (for example, if they are required to quarantine by NHS Test and Trace). Anyone in school who develops Covid-19 symptoms, however mild, will be sent home and they should follow public health advice. Close contacts of a confirmed case will no longer have to self-isolate, instead they will be advised to arrange a PCR test.

Close Contacts of a Positive Case

From Monday 16 August unvaccinated young people up to the age of 18 years and six months and fully vaccinated adults are no longer required to self-isolate if they live in the same household as someone with Covid-19, or are a close contact of someone with Covid-19. Those identified as a close contact will be informed by NHS Test and Trace that they have been in close contact with a positive case and will be advised to take a PCR test. Individuals are being strongly encouraged by the Government to take a PCR test if advised to do so. There is no requirement to self-isolate while awaiting PCR test results, so individuals can attend their setting as usual.

Pupils who have been identified as a close contact should continue to attend school as normal. Students who are 18 will be treated in the same way as children and young people until six months after their 18th birthday, to allow them the opportunity to get fully vaccinated. At which point, they will be subject to the same rules as adults and so if they choose not to get vaccinated, they will need to self-isolate if identified as a close contact.

The school will assist NHS Test and Trace and inform pupils and their parents if a pupil has been in close contact with a positive case.

Face Coverings

The Government has indicated that face coverings are no longer advised for pupils, staff and visitors either in classrooms or in communal areas. Pupils, staff and visitors may choose to wear face coverings should they wish. Face coverings are also no longer recommended to be worn on dedicated transport to school and are no longer legally required on public transport.

Hand and Respiratory Hygiene

We will be encouraging students to wash their hands with soap and water often for at least 20 seconds, use hand sanitiser gel if soap and water are not available, wash their hands as soon as they get home, after using the lavatory and at break times. We will also be reminding students to cover their mouths and noses with a tissue (not their hands) when they cough or sneeze and put used tissues in the bin immediately and wash their hands afterwards.

Cleaning Regimes

We continue to do our very best to maintain an appropriate, enhanced cleaning schedule. This will include deep cleaning at the end of the day and a further cleaning of classrooms and corridors at least once during the school day as well as regular cleaning of touch points throughout the day, following the guidance for the cleaning of non-health care settings.

Ventilation

We will endeavour to ensure the School remains well ventilated and that a comfortable learning environment is maintained. We will open external windows and doors to improve natural ventilation, as well as open internal doors to create a throughflow of fresh air.

Uniform

The full rules on uniform will apply. We will no doubt revisit the requirements when the weather becomes cooler, as I am sure that keeping occupied spaces well ventilated will be an important part of the system of controls for the year.

Extracurricular Provision

We hope to have a full programme of extracurricular activities from the start of the Autumn Term. If you would like further details, please contact Mr Carter cdac@strs.org.uk.

Educational Visits

We will begin to reinstate educational visits with curriculum trips being prioritised. Detailed risk assessments and Covid-19 protocols will be examined carefully.

Mobile Phones

Mobiles are no longer permitted for use during the school day, before school on the school site and immediately after school whilst waiting for school transport. Mobiles are only permitted to be used under the direct supervision of a member of staff for an educational purpose, or to contact home for a valid reason. This is a return to our usual rules.

Eating in Classrooms

Eating in carpeted areas will no longer be permitted. Students may eat in the canteen, school hall, outside and other areas with a hard floor surface. This is a return to our usual rules.

Catch-up

In September, teachers will plan lessons to revisit key ideas, concepts and skills where necessary. At the start of term, low-stakes assessment will be used in each subject to help gauge the progress of students; in other words, students will be given a short assessment in class, the outcomes of which will be used to inform teachers' lesson and curriculum planning as well as any intervention work that might be needed for an individual or groups of students. Year 7 and Year 12 students will be asked to complete 'baseline assessments' in one of their first few lessons so that teachers can establish students' starting points to inform long-term lesson and curriculum plans. Students do not need to prepare for baseline assessments.

Remote Education

We have a duty to continue with our remote learning offer for those students who are self-isolating because they have Covid-19 symptoms and are waiting for a PCR test result or are self-isolating because they have had a positive test result. In this case, Satchel One will be used to set work. In addition, teachers may use Microsoft Teams to livestream lessons.

PE and Games

On days students have either PE or Games, they should wear their PE or Games kit to school. On days where students have an after-school practice, they should wear normal school uniform during the day and change for after-school practices. Students will not have Games on their first day back in September.

Risk Assessments and Outbreak Management Plans

We continue to review and update our risk assessments regularly, treating them as 'living documents', as the circumstances in the School and the public health advice changes. We continue to monitor whether the controls we have in place are working as planned. We aim to publish our updated risk assessments and risk assessment action planning on our website by Friday 3 September.

It may become necessary to reintroduce 'bubbles', for a temporary period, to reduce mixing between groups and other measures such as face-coverings and a staggered school day as part of our outbreak management plans. Any decision to reintroduce 'bubbles' would not be taken lightly and would need to take account of the detrimental impact they can have on the delivery of education.

Results

We would like to congratulate our Year 11 and Year 13 students for their hard work and achievements over the last two years, culminating in the grades they were awarded over the last couple of weeks. We cannot underestimate the effort and application of both our staff and students in achieving these results. Whether students are staying in our Sixth Form, moving on to other schools, universities, taking a gap year or commencing employment, we wish them all well. I would particularly like to thank the team of staff who have been in school over the holiday to support our students and deal with enquiries.

Communication

Communication with parents and carers remains a priority for us, so please do email us on info@strs.org.uk or call us on 01452 338400 if you would like to get in touch with a member of staff. Contact details for Heads of Year and Key Stage are:

Contact details for Heads of Year

Assistant Head of Year 7	Jamie Payne	jnp@strs.org.uk
Year 7 and 8	Zak Hinds	zfh@strs.org.uk
Year 9	Nick O'Neil	no@strs.org.uk
Year 10	David Tilley	dpt@strs.org.uk
Year 11	Neil Stewart	njs@strs.org.uk
Year 12	Barry O'Neill	bjo@strs.org.uk
Year 13	Ellen Jauncey	elj@strs.org.uk

Contact details for Heads of Key Stage

Head of Key Stage 3	Rhys Davies	rmd@strs.org.uk
Head of Upper School	Peter Daniell	pmd@strs.org.uk
Head of Sixth Form	Alun Williams	aiw@strs.org.uk

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