



HIGHWORTH WARNEFORD SCHOOL

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September Return – Important Information

Dear Parents/Carers

As promised, I am writing to give you more details about the re-opening of the school at the start of the new academic year. In common with society more generally, many of the COVID measures that were in place at the end of the summer term no longer apply in school. However, some aspects still remain and, although students will be given a full briefing, I would appreciate it if you could spend some time talking to your child(ren) about the content of this letter.

Return to School – including COVID testing

You are probably already aware that we have been asked by the government to reopen our NHS Asymptomatic Test Centre at the start of term to administer two lateral flow tests before reverting to home testing. This is very similar to what we had to do last year but we believe we can do this without a staggered start, as we no longer have to impose year group bubbles. However, we do feel that many parents will be reassured if at least one of these tests is completed *before* students return to the classroom. Therefore, we are going to use the following schedule, which does mean those in Years 8 to 11 briefly coming into school prior to their start back. I understand this is not going to be convenient for all, and I apologise for the limited notice, but other options would have been more disruptive.

Wed 1st September Staff Training Day 1

No students in school today.

Thu 2nd September Year 7 Transition Day 1 and Year 7/8/10 Testing

Year 7 will take their first test at the very start of the day before moving on to team-building activities. As they arrive in school (from 8.30am onwards) they should make their way to the Sports Hall where they will be processed. Any students without consent should gather in the Lower School Cage.

Year 7 do not need to wear school uniform but they should dress appropriately for the weather (most sessions will be outside) and wear trainers. They also need to bring water and a packed lunch. They will be given their House ties at the end of the day.

Year 8 will be offered their first test between 10.15am and 12pm. Report to the Sports Hall.

Year 10 will have their first test between 1.20pm and 3pm. Report to the Sports Hall.

Fri 3rd September Year 7 Transition Day 2 and Year 9/11 Testing

Year 7 will be spending time with their tutors, Head of House and then starting their first lessons. They need to be in full school uniform. If you have managed to charge their payment cards online, they can use the Canteen. Alternatively, they can continue to bring a packed lunch.

Year 9 will be offered their first test between 10.15am and 12pm. Report to the Sports Hall.

Year 11 will have their first test between 1.20pm and 3pm. Report to the Sports Hall.

Continued...

Mon 6th September All students return (Week A on timetables)

Second tests will be taken during lesson time this week.

Some additional notes for parents of Year 8-10 students with regards to the first test:

- We have been advised that consent forms completed last year are still valid, so you don't need to do anything extra. If you have since decided to withdraw consent, you don't need to specifically tell us – they just won't take a test.
- If you would like to now give consent having previously withheld it (or are new to the school), please use this online form: <https://bit.ly/3zA0xhb>
- Please try to *stagger* arrivals between the times given, as this will reduce the chances your child(ren) will need to queue. As a rough guide, it would be helpful if those with surnames towards the start of the alphabet arrived towards the beginning of a session and those later in the alphabet closer to the end.
- If your child genuinely can't make the allocated slot, but can make another session, that's fine. If you have children in different year groups, they can attend one session together.
- If they can't make any session (on holiday etc.) then your child will still be able to have one supervised test the following week.
- Once they have tested, they don't need to wait for the result and can leave immediately.
- There will be parking available in our tennis courts.

Some additional notes for all parents:

- All testing is completely voluntary and your child can choose to not take part at any stage. However, over 95% of students did so last year, with most continuing to also test at home.
- Following a test, you will receive a result text from NHS Test and Trace at some stage, but please assume the result is negative unless we contact you to say otherwise on the same day.
- If a result is positive, we will ask you to book a confirmatory PCR test for your child and insist that they do not attend school for 10 days if this also comes back positive.
- There will no longer be any requirement for students (or double-vaccinated staff) to automatically self-isolate if they are a contact with a confirmed case. However, the strong advice is for close contacts to take a PCR test.

At any stage, if your child has COVID symptoms, they should not attend school – please book a PCR test. Even if this comes back negative, it is sensible to keep them at home until they are better.

Changes to COVID Measures

For full details, please see the latest risk assessment on our website. In summary:

- Masks are no longer compulsory, apart from on school transport, where they are still required in line with expectations on public transport. However, masks can still be worn as a matter of personal preference at any time, including in the classroom.
- Year groups are no longer seen as “bubbles” which allows us to:
 - Reopen changing rooms for PE so that students do not need to wear PE kit on the days they do PE
 - Relax rules relating to the use of equipment and toilets
 - Restart many lunchtime and after-school clubs and activities
 - Reallocate social areas to allow some mixing of year groups
 - Make use of lockers
 - Open the Canteen normally – with snacks at break and meals at lunchtime for all year groups

However, the following will remain in place:

- Expectations about good hygiene and sensible behaviour – hands/face/space
- Enhanced cleaning during the school day
- Use of one-way systems and external classroom exits
- Keeping doors and windows open where possible for good ventilation

Timings of the Day

These will now change to something similar to pre-COVID times but we are going to still allow movement time between some lessons:

| | |
|---------|---|
| 8.50am | Registration (students expected to be in school <i>at least</i> 10 minutes before this) |
| 9.10am | Lesson 1 <i>5-minute change-over @ 10.10am</i> |
| 10.15am | Lesson 2 |
| 11.15am | Break |
| 11.35am | Lesson 3 |
| 12.35pm | Lunch <i>Y10/11 can use the Canteen at 12.35pm; Y7/8/9 from 12.45pm</i> |
| 1.20pm | Lesson 4 <i>5-minute change-over @2.20pm</i> |
| 2.25pm | Lesson 5 |
| 3.25pm | End of school <i>Students on buses go to Lower School Cage</i> |

Equipment

Here is one more reminder about what is needed at the start of term:

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|-------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| • Pens – black/blue and green | • Casio scientific calculator |
| • Pencil | • Coloured pencils (not felt tips) |
| • Eraser | • Whiteboard pen |
| • Ruler | • Glue stick |
| • Protractor | • A reading book |
| • Pair of compasses | • A pair of paper scissors |

We would also request that students bring in a set of wired (not wireless) headphones that are needed for lessons like Music and Computing. They will need to have a standard mini-jack or ¼ inch jack – we don’t have adaptors for lightning-style headphones. Although this was originally a request due to COVID, students far prefer to use their own headphones and find it more hygienic.

Traffic Congestion

As schools reopen, traffic inevitably becomes worse during rush hours. We encourage all students to walk or cycle if feasible or use school/public transport if not.

If you do have to bring your child in by car, please try to avoid coming on to the main school site – congestion on Shrivensham Road is definitely getting worse, rather than better. There are large car parks close to the rear entrance of the school that are better drop-off and pick-up points and will save your sanity!

I would also note that, as well as continuing roadworks within Highworth itself, the extended closure of the White Hart roundabout is going to have a significant impact on the whole local traffic network. While we understand this might cause unavoidable disruption, please do build this into travel plans if you know it will impact your journey. Thank you for your support and also to the parents who have kept me informed about the roadworks situation.

Calendar

Here are details of some events during the first half-term back:

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|-------------|---|
| 16/9 | Year 7 photographs |
| 17/9 | Non-Uniform Day (for Buscot House charities); Jeans for Genes Day |
| 20/9 | Year 8 Residential Trip to 24/9 |
| 21/9 | Year 10 photographs |
| 23/9 | Year 7 Parents' Evening with tutors (in school – appointments from 4pm) |
| 27/9 | Year 11 Careers Guidance sessions this week |
| 28/9 & 29/9 | "Unacceptable" Sexual Harassment theatre sessions |
| 2/10 | D of E Training weekend |
| 4/10 | Dyslexia Awareness Week |
| 7/10 | Early finish (12.45pm) for Open Evening |
| 8/10 | Staff Training Day 2 |
| 15/10 | Year 7 Aerospace Trip to Bristol |
| 22/10 | Year 11 Progress reports issued; Last day of half-term |

I really hope you have enjoyed the summer. My colleagues and I are really looking forward to seeing the children again and particularly keen to give them more of the well-rounded experiences that make Warneford such a great school.

Yours faithfully



Andy Steele
Headteacher