

4th June 2020

Dear Year 10 Parents,

I am writing in response to the announcement by the Government that schools should be opening their doors to Year 10 pupils (a maximum of a quarter of the pupils per day) from 15th June. Of course, this clearly has involved a huge amount of planning and preparation already, and requires the School to gain the views and opinions of all stakeholders, which includes all staff and parents of children in Year 10. The Government has issued guidance for schools, which we will follow in order to provide the safest possible environment for all our pupils and staff on their return to Ballard when it comes.

Children and young people (0 to 18 years of age) who have been classed as clinically extremely vulnerable due to pre-existing medical conditions have been advised to shield. We do not expect these children to be attending School, and they should continue to be supported at home as much as possible.

Clinically vulnerable children are those considered at a higher risk of severe illness from Coronavirus. If your child falls into this category, please follow medical advice.

If a child lives in a household with someone who is clinically extremely vulnerable, as set out in the ["Guidance-on-shielding-and-protecting-extremely-vulnerable-persons-from-covid-19"](#), it is advised they only attend an education or childcare setting if stringent social distancing can be adhered to. We would expect and insist that all Year 10 pupils to engage fully and sensibly in social distancing from each other and staff. There will be strict arrival, hygiene, hand-washing, movement, contact and communication rules and any pupil not adhering to these may be asked to leave School. All staff and pupils would have their temperature taken upon arrival, and those with a temperature above 37.7 degrees would be asked to return home.

The aim of the reopening for Year 10 pupils is for them to have some face-to-face contact with staff, to give the pupils some peer social contact and potentially some pastoral and academic support. The last parental survey reflected a great deal of satisfaction with the current remote teaching and learning activities provided. Whilst it is not perfect and there is no substitute for face-to-face lessons in the classroom, we are confident in our provision and believe our fee structure reflects this fairly. I do not believe that trying to deliver any socially distanced in-school lessons to a small number of pupils whilst streaming the lessons to the majority of pupils who are not in School would be beneficial in any way to the education we are providing.

Essentially, pupils will be given a day of the week, or potentially two, on which they may attend Ballard. Days will run from 8.30am until 4.00pm. Staff will be in School to supervise the pupils in the PAC whilst they continue their online lessons on their own devices - pupils will not be given direct, subject specific lessons by staff in School. They will be supervised whilst accessing their remote education. Furthermore, whilst in School they may wish to talk to members of the Academic Team or the Pastoral Team, which we will facilitate. Pupils will be able chat to each other during break times (at a safe distance). We will be offering a half-day option if pupils wish to come in for a morning only, which will run from 8.30am until 1.00pm. We will aim to give you as much information regarding staff availability as possible before your child is due in.

The plan is to leave Thursday free (so no Year 10 pupils in during the morning, allowing us to deep clean the PAC), and offer a socially distanced PE session in the afternoon which will be delivered to pupils in rotation, depending on numbers. The PE Department are confident they can offer this and will be contacting pupils separately.

There have been discussions regarding the use of some of the penultimate week of term, which is usually Trips Week, and the Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday of the last week of term for practical subjects (such as Art, Music, DT, Food Tech and PE) to use to catch up on work that cannot be undertaken remotely. This would, of course, still be delivered safely and involve only a quarter of the year group on any given day – more details to follow.

Parents would have to accept that their children will face a greater level of social interaction than they are currently experiencing, and therefore a greater risk. The School will do its utmost to put in measures to protect staff and children and adhere to COVID-19 Secure Guidelines. However, it would be impossible for us to guarantee the complete safety of your children. Whatever decision is made, returning to School will invite a level of risk for staff and children.

Of course, Ballard is not a “neighbourhood” school in the same way many maintained schools are. Any pupils arriving at Ballard would have to walk, take public transport or be driven to Ballard by a parent. We would not expect children to lift share owing to the lack of social distancing possible in these circumstances. Any pupils arriving would also have to provide their own packed lunches as we are unable to prepare food for such a small number of children.

As I said in a previous email to you all, “we all want to get more pupils back into School as soon as it is safe to do so. Ballard staff have devoted their lives and careers to the care and education of young people – they do not want to see classrooms empty for a day longer than they need to be. However, the priority at Ballard is the safety of everyone in the school community.” It would be fantastic to get Ballard children back in and for us to be back to normal, and I am really looking forward to the day when we can all be in School together again.

As part of our due diligence regarding the decision if, when and how we reopen for Year 10 pupils, we are gauging the views of all our stakeholders. Following this, the Leadership Team will again meet with the Governing Body to discuss and analyse the data and survey results. The Governing Body will make the final decision before the weekend as to how we reopen Ballard, and when this is a safe, feasible and practicable option. Please follow the link below and complete this survey. If this survey could be completed by lunchtime on Friday this week that would be much appreciated.

https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=yqbBWbHUcEuLUCcwnoKIDU8Z-7B1xF1KmAvNka_VD89UNERITzJZVk5aNkpCQ08xNVIZNIBZWVVZNi4u

Mrs Guillen will be writing to you nearer the time with more details once the parental survey and further planning has been completed.

Please rest assured that every decision we make at Ballard is in the best interests of the children who attend, and the community as a whole.

With best wishes and stay safe,

Andrew McCleave
Headmaster