



August 2020

Dear Parents and Pupils,

I hope you have had a fabulous summer and have been able to enjoy the hot weather. I would like to take this opportunity to welcome you to the coming year in the Upper Prep section at Ballard. After such a strange summer term, we are looking forward to a more normal and exciting year ahead, and I would like to inform you of some useful points for the new term (but please bear in mind that some of these things may change as we finalise details for this term). We have been working hard to develop the plans and to ensure School is safe for everyone, and details will be sent out by Mr McCleave in due course. We understand it has been a very different and difficult time for many over the last six months and returning to School will have its own issues. Children are very adaptable, but we are aware that suitable pastoral support will be vital in the coming weeks and months and we will support all in the Ballard family through these times.

There are three Tutor Groups in each of Year 7 and Year 8, with Tutor Rooms in the Main House (or Art room), and we welcome many new pupils this term as well as a number who started at Easter so have not yet physically been in School. I know those of you who are buddies to new pupils will do a great job looking after them in the first few weeks, but I also urge you all to look after each other as we get used to the new routines. This would be a good time to remind you that registration period starts at **8.30am each morning**, and although the Form Tutor should be your first port of call (and we really want to hear from you), this is not the best time of the day to see a Form Tutor; it would be much better to leave a message or email in the first instance. With the new arrangements for this term, this will be particularly important and I urge you to note the drop off arrangements that will be sent out including the fact that we will not be able to run the normal Early Club. We have Form Tutor times on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Fridays after lunch as normal and these provide an important time for pastoral support. There are also many activities planned for these times such as quizzes, current affairs, etc., and they provide a time for quiet reading (Tuesday, specifically, is set aside for everyone in the School). It is important that children have a **reading book with them in School at all times**.

Teaching groups will vary, with Humanities and the Arts continuing to be taught in their Tutor Groups, however English, Maths, Science, DT and MFL are streamed or set into groups. PSHE is an important session and is taught with the whole year group together, but of course maintaining social distancing as much as possible. Details of the modified activities programme will also be made available in due course.

In order to ensure the term starts as we mean to go on, I urge you to check uniform guidelines and the equipment list (it will be particularly important this term that pupils have their own equipment). The full equipment list can be found under School Information on MSP. Please note that although we are likely to be using computer devices for an increasing amount of work, handwriting is still an important skill and pupils should all use proper handwriting pens as listed. A reminder that mobile phones should not be brought in to School – if it is felt that one is needed (for example, travelling

to/from School by train), please let me know. It will not be practical this term to hand phones in at Main Reception as we have done in the past, so we will make other Tutor-based arrangements to collect them in.

We will continue to have our formal Parent/Teacher evening, as well as a Parent/Tutor evening during the year. The first parent event of the term is the Informal Evening on Monday, 14<sup>th</sup> September for new parents and pupils (tbc). Our Parent/Tutor meeting is on Tuesday, 20<sup>th</sup> October, giving you a chance to talk with the Tutor and review the start to the year.

If you have any questions or concerns please do not hesitate to email me and I will do my best to answer as promptly as I can.

Yours sincerely

James Blake  
Head of Upper Prep

## **ADDENDUM – Return to School (September 2020) update for Upper Prep**

We have been working hard to take the necessary steps to prepare the School for the children to make a happy and successful transition back to School. We understand that every child returning to School will have had a different experience of learning at home and our priority will be supporting them to readjust to School routines and social interactions with their peers and teachers, whilst taking every precaution we can to support everyone's wellbeing and safety.

We aim to make School welcoming to help the children settle back securely but whilst following Government guidelines, there will inevitably be some changes to our normal routines, which are detailed below. These arrangements may be subject to change based on changing guidelines from health and Government officials.

### **How it will look**

We will be operating in Year Group bubbles, with pupils based in classrooms used only by their Year Group:

Year 6 will be based in MH16 (6DG) and MH17 (6DMC) (first floor)

Year 7 will be in Chapel (7PJ), Heritage Room (7AB) and Junior Library (7NHe/ANM)

Year 8 will be on the top floor – MH29 (8CRG), MH32 (8MC), MH38 (8JW).

Lessons taught as Tutor Groups will all be in their Tutor Room, but for other subjects they will move around within their Year Group classrooms, and will not at the start of term have access to specialist rooms.

Pupils will be kept independent from other year groups in School at all times. They will have exclusive use of separate assigned areas of the School, both inside and outside, making use of our beautiful school grounds, and toilets designated for their year group use only.

Normal school rules will apply (other than uniform).

### **Drop off Arrangements**

Please arrive promptly between 8.20am and 8.40am to drop off your child.

Drop off will be in the main car park. We recommend you stay in your car and please maintain the 2 metre social distancing rules at all times and please refrain from gathering in the car park after dropping off your child. Details of exact car park arrangements will be sent next week.

Parents must not enter school buildings at any time unless a prior appointment has been made.

Pupils should report directly to their Tutor Room where their temperature will be taken and recorded on arrival at School using a remote infra-red thermometer. If your child's temperature is 37.8C or greater, their temperature will be checked again after a few minutes and if it is still high you will be asked to collect them immediately.

### **Pick up Arrangements**

The children will come out at 4.00pm or 5.00pm to the designated area where they are dropped off in the morning. We recommend you stay in your car and please maintain the 2 metre social distancing rules at all times.

## **What to Wear**

School uniform is to be worn every day, except on a Wednesday (and Monday for Year 6) when pupils should come wearing full PE kit (i.e. including full tracksuit). N.B. there will be no changing facilities available.

## **What to bring to School**

Please bring all your own equipment which will be kept in your bag or designated work area. Please also bring a reading book.

You may bring, for example, a ball to use at break time.

Water bottle, clearly named – additional water points have been provided so bottles can be refilled.

Trainers for days when they are not in their PE kit but might be doing PE lesson or activity.

No other items should be brought into School.

## **Classroom Environment**

A one-way system is in place around the School, and this will be explained with other guidelines on the first day in School.

The desks in the classrooms have been arranged as far from each other as possible and the teachers will remain 2 metres from the children.

Where possible, windows and doors will be opened to ensure good ventilation.

## **Break times**

Year 6 will be allowed to use the side of the upper playing field near the driveway, Year 7 will have the Terrace, and Year 8 the Canopy area near the dining room. Pupils should continue to adhere to social distancing guidelines where possible, whilst still having fun playing together. Break time snacks will be delivered in their designated areas and handed out using tongs.

## **Lunch**

Pupils will eat lunch in the dining room supervised by a member of staff. They will be reminded of the importance of not sharing food and drinks with their friends. Lunch will be on a rota, with cleaning between each session. Year 6 will have lunch at 12.30pm, Year 7 at 12.45pm and Year 8 at 12.50pm, using the designated tables and maintaining as much social distancing as possible.

## **Hygiene**

Hand sanitisers have been placed at the arrival point and at all the entrances and exits. Pupils should use these when they arrive at School, before and after eating and playtimes and at regular intervals throughout the day. Hand driers are disconnected in the toilets so pupils must wash their hands for the recommended time of 20 seconds and dry them well with paper towels provided.

Good respiratory hygiene will be encouraged and children will be reminded to cough or sneeze into a tissue or their elbow with tissues disposed of in the allocated tissue bins.

Classrooms will be thoroughly and professionally cleaned every evening, with particular attention to frequently touched surfaces.

## **PPE**

Government guidance is changing regularly, but we have decided pupils from Year 7 and above must wear face coverings when inside but not in classrooms. Staff will also be wearing face coverings (masks and/or face shields) when travelling around school.

## **Responding to someone becoming unwell at School**

If a child shows symptoms of COVID-19 whilst at School, the School Nurse will be contacted. They will be cared for in the isolation room, either with the School Nurse or other member of staff. Parents will be contacted to come and collect them immediately. The Government advice below should then be followed <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance>.

## **Finally**

It is vitally important that all pupils adhere to these guidelines. Any behaviour that might increase the risk of spreading the virus, will result in that pupil being asked to be collected – please refer to the Behaviour Policy addendum produced by Mr Marshall.