11th June 2020

**Re: Y10 Cautious Re-Opening**

Dear Parents and Carers,

Thank you for all the support you have offered over the past few months.  Thanks especially to those parents/carers who forwarded a question or suggestion about our cautious re-opening for Y10.  Your suggestions and questions have challenged our thinking and in what has been a very demanding time of creating risk assessments and preparing our building, if feels like we have done this together with the support of the whole community.  It is still a decision for each family to make on whether to send their child back at this time but we respect the decisions of all families whatever they decide.  We understand that some may be especially vulnerable in terms of their own health or live with those who are. We feel humbled that such a large majority feel comfortable entrusting their children into our care at this time but we do recognise and feel our enormous responsibility to look after everyone and keep everyone safe.

Once again thank you for your continued to support and remember that we are here for you if you need us.  #togetherapart [togetherapart@st-josephs.bolton.sch.uk](mailto:togetherapart@st-josephs.bolton.sch.uk)

This letter is for Parents and Carers of Year 10 and intended as information for parents and carers of different year groups to keep you updated on our plans. As we plan to cautiously open school on Monday 15th June to Year 10 students we have listened to the concerns of the community and answered a series of questions that you posed. We have also produced a safety video to explain to students how to keep everyone safe in school: <https://youtu.be/JEitQRbThdY>. **It is essential that all students returning to school watch this video and agree to follow our safety rules.**

The following questions came from members of our community. We have provided answers so that all the community feel informed. This document should be read in conjunction with [our opening risk assessment](https://stjosephsbolton.org.uk/letters-home/) and our [opening instructions](https://stjosephsbolton.org.uk/letters-home/).

**Q. Will we still be returning if the regional R rate fluctuates?**

Whilst the regional R value has been the focus of much attention, the decision about opening school needs to take account of a range of data as well as practical considerations.  These include an understanding of the local picture of COVID-19, which currently shows a downward trend in the numbers of confirmed cases, and the numbers of deaths in the local hospital. We believe that following our risk assessment, with good hygiene and sanitisation and an insistence of social distancing at all times, school opening poses minimal risk to this situation.   Existing arrangements for control of infectious disease remain in place and the new NHS Test and Trace service will help ensure that should a confirmed case be found with a connection to school, a local team will investigate and support with appropriate action to prevent spread.

**Q. Will my child be in a group with their friends?**

Student groupings have been carefully designed to support the option choices of your child and their ability banding to ensure maximum impact of the face-to-face sessions. Although we understand how difficult it has been for all students during this time, we cannot accommodate friendship groups during a child’s allocated day in school.

**Q. Will my child be taught by their usual class teacher?**

The face-to-face sessions in school are to supplement the online learning and not replace it. Due to the restrictions of students in school, following government advice, your child may not be taught by their class teacher. They will be taught by a subject specialist.

**Q. How do you ensure the appropriate level of work will be provide to each child if the safety cocoons are mixed ability?**

Face-to-face learning is to supplement the online learning and not replace it. Bearing this in mind, the student groups have been devised to support ability as much as possible. The face-to-face learning will focus on the process of learning and developing skills for learning and each subject rather than the teaching of new content, therefore these are skills that are required regardless of the ability of each student.

**Q. How long is each lesson?**

Each lesson will last for one hour.

**Q. What are the arrangements for students to use the toilet and maintain safe distance please?**

Each student bubble will be allocated a toilet block for their use, either the main corridor toilets, the English block toilets or the toilets in the school’s new build. Therefore a maximum of 14 students (Approximately 7 for boys and 7 for girls) will be using a set of toilets each day and these are the students in the same teaching bubble so there is no crossover of student bubbles. A teaching assistant will supervise each toilet block to ensure that there are no more than two students in the toilets at a time and that the students waiting are appropriately socially distancing. If the toilets are required during class time, a student will use the same toilet block and be supervised by a member of staff.

Toilets will be cleaned regularly and cleaners will ensure that there are sufficient handwashing facilities in the toilets for each time that they are used

**Q. Will there be a system of feedback for students?**

Yes, student voice is very important to us. Following the first week back in school, Y10 students will be surveyed to provide their feedback to us.

**Q. What support will be provided for those students unable to return due to clinical vulnerability?**

The face-to-face teaching is to supplement the online learning and not replace it. Teachers will still be setting work to complete on epraise, reviewing the submitted work and providing feedback to all students completing work at home. We are developing our use of technology to support students at home through narrated lessons and other methods. Longer term, as would normally happen, assessments will be made with all students to identify their gaps in knowledge and understanding and appropriate interventions and support will offered to the students that require it. We are currently awaiting guidance from the DfE about what the exam system will look like for GCSE students next year. Clearly a lot of classroom teaching will have been missed for students at all schools. Our ‘catch up curriculum’ will be developed when we have more certainty about what the future looks like. In the meantime we have to use every virtual learning session to further learning as much as possible. If you have concerns about your child’s progress in a particular subject please message their teacher via epriase.

**Q. What social distancing arrangements will be in place within school?**

The school site has been adapted and 2m markers have been put in place at the front of school, in classrooms, on corridors and on the yard. On arrival to school, each child will line up on 2m markers until they are directed to enter the school site. They will be directed to use an allocated toilet block supervised by a teaching assistant to ensure social distancing while queuing. At break times, students will have 2m markers on the school benches and the yard to ensure social distancing at all times. We need your support in explaining to your child why this is important to follow.

**Q. Can my child bring a school bag and do they need to bring their school books in?**

Your child is not required to bring any of their school books that they might have at home. They will be allocated a desk with all the resources that they need. We are just asking that they bring a calculator for their work. We advise that a plastic bag is used as school bags cannot be easily washed on returning home from school.

**Q. Can students wear school trousers and a PE top?**

Yes, we are asking students to wear clothes that can be easily washed on returning home from school. The main thing is that your child is comfortable and their clothes are washable and appropriate for learning. We don’t want it to be a fashion show but we have relaxed the usual uniform to ease the laundry situation!

**Q. How many break times are there and how long are they?**

Break times are staggered for students and will be 10minutes long. Each student bubble has an allocated toilet block and outside location for their break time. Students will be able to use the toilets during their break. Toilets and break times will be supervised by staff at all times.

**Q. What are the bus arrangements? Are all the routes the same?**

All of the school buses will be available but there are some modifications. All students are asked to fill up the bus from the back, they should leave a row of seats and should wear a face covering at all times.

All buses will run as normal but the Wigan buses will be combined. There will be one bus following this route:

* Ince bar (KFC) - 07.35
* Scholes, Opp Windsor shoes - 07.40
* Whelley/ Bradshaw St - 07.42
* Ashbourne Ave - 07.45
* Wigan Rd / Crown hotel - 07.47
* St. David’s crescent - 07.50
* Haigh Rd / Holly Rd - 07.52
* Aspull Fingerpost - 07.55
* Bolton Rd / Gerrard arms - 08.00
* Arrive school - 08.15

Here is the link to the school website for the letter for the info from TfGM for parents;

<https://stjosephsbolton.org.uk/parent-zone/school-buses/>

Thank you for your ongoing support at this time,

Yours sincerely,

Mrs H Horridge

Assistant Headteacher