

14 May 2021

Dear Parents/Carers

RE: DPA 'Roadmap' updated – May 2021

Following a very successful return to face-to-face learning in March and the Prime Ministers announcement this week that various restrictions are being slowly lifted in their planned roadmap we are writing to inform you about how we are responding to these changes at DPA. This is being done in conjunction with the guidance from the Department for Education and Public Health England in our local context. We discussed with governors on Tuesday night the intention to move DPA to our Phase 6 plan after half-term. This will mean that we can broaden the curriculum experience for students with staff returning to their classrooms, with students receiving learning in specialist spaces/rooms, zoned year group bubbles at break, reduced staggered start/finish times whilst still limiting close contact and movement around the building.

Full details of these changes will be sent out in the next couple of weeks after doing our risk assessments in preparation for Monday 7th June and with an eye on any further updates or changes from the government.

Face coverings

The government has advised based on the current state of the pandemic and the positive progress being made, the following recommendation for the additional precautionary face covering measures put in place from the 8 March. Therefore, from 17 May, in line with Step 3 of the roadmap, face coverings are no longer recommended for pupils in classrooms or communal areas in all schools. Also, they state that face coverings will also no longer be recommended for staff in classrooms. The DfE also recommends that in all schools we continue to recommend that face coverings should be worn by staff and visitors in situations outside of classrooms where social distancing is not possible (for example, when moving around in corridors and communal areas).

However, the guidance goes on to say that face coverings for pupils, students or staff may be advised for a temporary period in response to localised outbreaks, including variants of concern. In all cases, any educational drawbacks should be balanced with the benefits of managing transmission. As Slough remains a local authority with a higher transmission rate and localised outbreaks continue to be highlighted, we feel to continue to prevent further transmission and support us moving towards Phase 6 after half-term and specialist teaching in specialist rooms **we will continue to support this preventative measure remaining in place until half-term**. It will be kept under review and safety of all stakeholders remains our priority.



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Nick Caulfield – Principal



SELF-WORTH ASPIRE SUCCESS HONESTY

Our commitment to returning students to specialist teaching spaces, a more comprehensive extra-curricular programme that all lead to a more normal experience in school requires us to be vigilant and remain cautious in assessing what is best for our community in our context.

Timetable

As per the recent DfE guidance this can be achieved through keeping groups separate and through maintaining distance between individuals. These are not alternative options and both measures will help, but the balance between them will change depending on the: pupil's ability to distance, layout of the building, feasibility of keeping distinct groups separate while offering a broad curriculum after half-term eg separate year group designated spaces at break, no virtual academic mentoring, entrance/exit points to the building through designated doors.

Both the approaches of separating groups and maintaining distance are not 'all or nothing' options and will still bring benefits, even if partially implemented. We may keep pupils in their class groups for most of the classroom time, but also know this is not always possible and allow mixing in wider groups for: specialist teaching, transport to school as a family, breaks & toilets, corridor movement etc.

School attendance

As a reminder, pupils should self-isolate and not come to school if they:

- Have coronavirus symptoms or have tested positive

For pupils who are self-isolating or shielding, they will be able to access live lessons or recorded lessons via Teams and our blended learning provision. This was very successful before the Christmas break when we had students in school and at home.

Rapid Testing

We are aware its voluntary for students and those adults who live with them but please encourage everyone to take part in the testing scheme and record the results on both the school and NHS website.

This is just one of many preventable measures that will support our move away from lockdown restrictions which we have all experienced and do not to go through again. If you recall it was introduced to support the identification of those who have covid but do not know they have it and can then avoid spreading the virus.

Our safety measures

Rest assured that we're doing everything we can to make sure our pupils and staff can operate in school safely. We'll continue by taking the following protective measures:



- We'll ask that **all staff and students continue to wear a face covering in classrooms, communal areas, and corridors until half-term**. This is in line with the latest government guidance for schools when applying it to your local context. Although Slough has dropped in confirmed cases it remains higher compared to some other local authorities. We are also aware that there are several confirmed outbreaks locally and the government are keeping a close eye on the different variants of the virus. The Prime Minister recently announced that the virus remains a threat and the variants of the virus are being tracked very closely.
- Procedures for going to and from school, such as:
 - A reminder that gathering at the school gate, community play area and otherwise coming onto the site without an appointment is not allowed
- Equipment that pupils can take to and from school, e.g.:
 - Limit the amount of equipment, they bring to school to essentials like lunch boxes, bags, books and stationery
 - Avoiding unnecessary sharing of items
- How we'll keep pupils safe in school, such as:
 - A reminder of hygiene measures such as regular handwashing and using the vast amount of hand sanitizer stations.
- Uniform
 - Wear it correctly, in full and with pride.
 - Remember to change out of it when they get home.
 - Contact your child's AM and raise any issues that exist due to financial pressures.
 - Piercings – nose studs and rings are not permitted and will be confiscated. We have provided students with verbal and now parents written notification that this will be taking place. This is in line with our published Home School Agreement and Uniform policy.

EID

We hope that our students and their families have enjoyed celebrating Eid during the later stages of this week. We are delighted to be able to support and celebrate such an important event and hope that everyone has been able to enjoy themselves given the covid restrictions that still exist.

We'll continue to keep in touch when we update our plans or if we need to make changes due to new government guidance.

Yours sincerely

Nick Caulfield
Principal

Chris McNab

Associate Principal