

SJO/AT

16th July 2020

Dear parents and carers,

On 2nd July the government made an announcement that schools would be able to open to all students at the start of the autumn term. We were delighted with the decision and we are looking to welcoming all students back to full time education after the summer holiday. As part of their opening plans, schools are instructed that they must all follow guidance to minimise the risks of coronavirus (COVID-19) transmission. A copy of our risk assessment is on our website for your reference.

When students come back to school in September, they will return to their normal classes, and they will be taught by specialist teachers. We have made a commitment to ensure that all subjects and timetabling will continue as normal. There will be no narrowing of the curriculum. This means there will be no need to reduce the offer for GCSE, A level, and other L3 courses. We will be able to organise extra-curricular activities and details of these will follow in September.

However, in order to meet the health and safety guidance, there will be some changes to how the school operates. Whilst class sizes will return to normal, all students will be expected to sit in rows facing the front of the class at all times. In addition, some social distancing is still required. To enable us to respond to the guidance, year groups will be kept apart during the day with no mixing at social times. Year group 'communities' will be based in designated areas of the school where they will be able to move freely between classes. Teachers will be expected to move to these communities to teach their subject. Students will move out of their communities to specialist areas for science, technology, PE and creative subjects. These areas have separate risk assessments and a strict hygiene routine will be implemented. To prevent interaction at social times, breaks will be staggered during the day and time will be given for both play and exercise as well as eating. This will mean some lessons will inevitably be a few minutes longer than others.

I know that you will have many questions about the full opening plan. To help, some further guidance is given below:

1. **Transport to and from school:** All buses will return to normal. Devon County Council is responsible for transporting students to and from school if they qualify for a bus pass. Students should follow good hand hygiene when they travel on a bus by using hand sanitiser and good respiratory hygiene by wearing a face covering. This applies to school buses as well as public buses. Bus drivers may refuse to carry students who do not comply with these rules. Where possible, students should cycle or walk to school if they live close enough. Cars must not park on the school site unless by prior arrangement, for example for students with disabilities.
2. **Attendance:** This is compulsory from the start of the autumn term and first day calling will resume. Please contact your child's Head of Year if issues arise with attendance, as we may be able to resolve them working with you. Students **MUST NOT** attend school if they have symptoms of coronavirus. If anyone in your household is instructed to self-isolate, or if anyone tests positive for coronavirus you **MUST** inform us as soon as possible.
3. **Uniform:** Students are expected to attend in full uniform from September. There is no longer any need to clean clothes more regularly than normal. To reduce time spent in the changing rooms, students may attend school or leave school in their PE or Dance kit if they have these subjects

Together; we care, we challenge, we excel

during the day. If it is raining, however, uniform should be brought to school to change into under controlled conditions.

4. Food: Hot food will be available for students to purchase at recess times. The range will be limited as we can only supply covered food. However, if possible, students should, bring packed lunch instead. Students must bring their own water bottle which can be filled during the day. We will not be supplying cups.
5. Personal equipment: Students will be expected to provide their own basic equipment (pen, pencil, ruler and eraser) as normal. However, as we will not be able to lend equipment, students should also bring their own safety scissors, glue sticks (if required), and colouring pencils for subjects such as Art. Students should bring their own calculator for Science and Mathematics. If parents are in receipt of free school meals, we will be able to assist with these items. Please send a message to office@tavistockcollege.org if you need help.
6. Gatherings and meetings: No visitors will be permitted on site and there will be no meetings. We will not be able to offer activities that involve large numbers gathering in one place. So, sadly there will be no Open Evening in September, no school production, and no parents' evenings. We cannot safely organise assemblies or church services for remembrance or Christmas. Virtual meetings will replace face to face meetings.
7. Hygiene: hand washing is thought to be the greatest protective measure. Students will be encouraged to wash their hands on entry to school, before leaving, before and after eating and every time they visit the toilets. Hand sanitiser will be used on entry and exit of every classroom. It would be very helpful if parents could continue to reinforce this with their children. Face coverings are not expected in school, but they will be permitted.
8. Behaviour expectations: Our behaviour policy has been updated during this period. Anyone who compromises the health and safety of others will be subject to the strict application of additional sanctions.

We know that some students will feel they have fallen behind, and we also know some have made greater progress than anticipated as a result of one to one tuition at home. Some students have engaged in alternative learning and this has done them no harm at all. Many students have worked extremely hard and we have been very proud of their efforts. Please try not to worry about where your children 'should be' with their learning. We have systems in place to help diagnose gaps and we know how to accelerate learning. In addition, we understand there will be additional funding for tutoring from the government and we will let you know when this is available.

We do not yet know what will happen to external exams next summer, but we know whatever decision is made by the government, there will be some adjustments made for students in Y11 and Y13.

My staff have continued to work hard throughout this crisis, including through their holidays. We may not have got everything right all of the time, but the circumstances have been quite unique. Thank you also for the kind emails and letters of support we have received over the last few weeks.

You may have additional questions. Please send any queries to office@tavistockcollege.org . This email address is checked regularly throughout the holiday periods.

We all now need a break, students included. We look forward to returning to what we do best when we open again in September, and I hope to see many of you on results days in August. The school will open to Y7 and Y12 students on 8th September, and to everyone on 9th September.

I wish you all a very happy and healthy summer.

Yours sincerely



Sarah Jones
Principal