

17 July 2020



— THE —
ELMGREEN

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Headteacher

Dear Families

Here we are the end of undoubtedly the strangest school year in recent memory. I would just like to thank all families for your support over the last year and of course particularly over the last four months. I said at the start of lockdown that a school is more than the bricks and mortar of the building and we have felt 'The Elmgreen Way' in a myriad of ways in this time.

I would also like to thank the Parent Promoters Foundation who have been a constant support over the last few months particularly in their campaigning to end digital poverty. We are grateful to everybody who has contributed to the campaign so far - parents and carers, students, staff, and community. The campaign closes in two weeks' time. Please help us raise a little more money <https://donatemyschool.com/parentpromotersfoundation2209>.

Most of all though, I would like to thank the staff who have given so much of themselves in the last few months. Everybody has been fantastic in adapting to the 'new normal' but I would like to particularly single out the office and premises staff who have been so unremittingly positive since March. Also, I'd like to thank the staff who have worked tirelessly with our on-site students and also my Senior Team who have been unbelievable in their ability to come up with solutions to problems in the tightest time frames possible.

I also wanted to take the opportunity at the start of this very long letter (just in case you don't make it to the end) to say thank you to three really key members of staff who are leaving us. Ms Foster, Head of Drama, Mr More, Assistant Headteacher and Mrs O'Hana-James, Deputy Headteacher. They have all given extraordinary service to The Elmgreen School over a great many years. Mr More and I were talking this morning about how organisations move on and that people will come and go in the life of any school over a number of years. However, I know that you would all agree that these three colleagues have epitomised the best of The Elmgreen Way and would join me in wishing them the very best in the years to come.

The most recent thing that my Senior Team have had to grapple with of course is the full opening of school and this letter is largely about how that will happen in September. I had a really useful Families Forum on Tuesday and this letter includes many of the things that I spoke about in that meeting. The full government guidance can be found here-

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/actions-for-schools-during-the-coronavirus-outbreak/guidance-for-full-opening-schools>

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In September the Government has asked that all students should return to school but that they should distance as much as possible and be kept in 'bubbles' of year groups. Our plans are based on their System of Controls:

1. *Minimise contact with individuals who are unwell by ensuring that those who have coronavirus (COVID-19) symptoms, or who have someone in their household who does, do not attend the setting*
2. *Clean hands thoroughly more often than usual*
3. *Ensure good respiratory hygiene by promoting the 'catch it, bin it, kill it' approach*
4. *Introduce enhanced cleaning, including cleaning frequently touched surfaces often, using standard products such as detergents and bleach*
5. *Minimise contact between individuals and maintain social distancing wherever possible*
6. *Where necessary, wear appropriate PPE*

Like most schools we have decided that this will mean that each year group will stay in a particular bubble within the school each day and the students will have their classes in one small area. Students will need to come to school just prior to the start of the school day and they will be asked to disperse quickly at the end of the day. This is not absolute but we envisage the school bubbles looking like the chart below. As you can see there are specific areas for each student to go from the moment they walk in until the moment they leave. This is to ensure that the students mix as little as possible between their bubbles. What I will try to do in this letter is attempt to answer the questions that have arisen from families and staff so far about what this will look like.

Year	Entry/Exit	Line up	Teaching zone	Toilets	Break zone
7	Front	Pitch	MFL and REV and Eng rooms (113-123)	Drama	Garden
8	Side gate lane 1	MUGA	Hums and 2 DT rooms (003-008, DT breakout and 040)	PE	MUGA
9	Side gate lane 2	MUGA	Maths rooms (125-137)	Maths	Pitch and terrace
10	Side gate lane 1	Pitch	English rooms (101-112)	English	MUGA and garden
11	Side gate lane 2	Pitch	Science rooms and 1 Art room (221-209)	Art	Pitch and terrace
12 & 13	Front	Pitch (fire drill only)	Music, Psych, sixth form study area, library and Art	Music	Common room and off site

How long will this last?

The Government has asked us to plan for the Autumn Term. Obviously, we don't know what the situation will be in January but hope that we can go back to a 'normal' classroom from the start of the Spring Term.

Will students stay in one place all of the time?

Students will stay in their bubble. We have kept some of the specialist classrooms free so that they can be booked for the necessary classes. This would include Science Labs, Design and Technology rooms, Dance Studio etc... It will be the case that in the first instance these will primarily be for Key Stage 4 and 5 but we will review this as the term goes on.

What will these bubbles and classrooms look like?

The classrooms will be very traditional in set up with desks in rows facing the front to minimise the face to face contact that students have. The teacher will move from bubble to bubble so there won't be a maths classroom and a history classroom in the traditional sense. Between each bubble there will be sanitising units so that staff and students can clean their hands as they move in and out of their designated area. There are toilets within each bubble so students will not have to mix with other year groups there.

Classrooms will also be sanitised throughout the day and cleaned each evening. Students using computers will be expected to use a sterile wipe to clean the screen, mouse and keyboard after using it.

Students will not be expected to keep to a specific distance away from each other because theoretically they are in the bubble but they would be expected to not have any physical contact.

What will homework look like and how will it be marked?

Students will largely be doing homework on Google Classroom. The reason for this is that we do not want the books to come home the first term as we need to minimise the amount of people touching them. Identified pieces of work (in line with our marking policy) should be marked on Google Classroom and you need to contact the school if it is not.

As a parent I would be anxious about not seeing my child's work. I have asked Mr Arnett, the Assistant Headteacher who oversees Parents Evenings to look at how we factor that interaction about your child's progress into the autumn term. There are a number of virtual forums out there that we are looking at.

What does break and lunch look like?

Each bubble will have a zoned area that they have to stay in and they will have a lunch service to themselves. Unfortunately because of the logistics we will be unable to offer a break snack service and because of the need to get quite specific groups through in such a

short period of time our lunch service may be slightly more limited. We will still offer a vegan, vegetarian and meat option though. Children will still be able to play but should not be in contact with each other.

Are you still offering the same curriculum and how will students be catching up?

Yes. There have been lots of reports about schools narrowing their curriculum just for this year but we believe that this is counter to the ethos of The Elmgreen School and also works under the presumption that one subject is necessarily more important than the other. Departments will be doing some baseline testing in September to see what specific intervention is needed for each child.

For Year 11 we have made the decision that they will need some more structured catch up support this year and so will be introducing a Lesson 7 for them on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday. This will be a mixture of core and option subjects over our two week timetable. A copy of the school day is shown below so that you can see how that will look over the course of a week.

Time	KS3 and 5	Time	KS4
8.30-8.55	Lineup and Tutor time week A	8.45-8.55	Lineup only week A
8.45-8.55	Lineup only week B	8.30-8.55	Lineup and Tutor time week B
8.55-9.45	Lesson 1	8.55-9.45	Lesson 1
9.45-10.35	Lesson 2	9.45-10.35	Lesson 2
10.35-10.55	Break	10.35-11.25	Lesson 3
10.55-11.45	Lesson 3	11.25-11.45	Break
11.45-12.35	Lesson 4	11.45-12.35	Lesson 4
12.35-1.25	Lunch	12.35-1.25	Lesson 5
1.25-2.15	Lesson 5	1.25-2.15	Lunch
2.15-3.05	Lesson 6	2.15-3.05	Lesson 6
3.05-3.15	Lineup and dismissal	3.05-3.15	Lineup and dismissal Year 10
		3.05-3.15	Movement break Year 11
		3.15-4.30	Lesson 7 (Y11 Mon to Wed)

There has been a significant change in Government thinking about summer interventions and I think that we are largely in agreement about that. There is no point in throwing resources at something when you do not know where students are with their learning. In September we will have more of a sense of where our young people are when we meet them face to face. In the meantime students should engage with as much reading as possible. The links below should be a starting point. As I said in my last assembly there is no better way of improving vocabulary and knowledge and that being a great reader is life changing. Please use the following-

Reading list for students over the summer: <https://www.the-elmgreen-school.org.uk/curriculum/student-support/library/>

A video reading list for KS3: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WOTaS-BjzII>

Will students still be handing their phones in?

Yes. We think we have come up with a system with bags and PPE where this is possible. With the best will in the world if students have phones on them then the temptation to get them out is too great. We have also introduced an afternoon line up as well as the morning line up so that phones can be handed out and so that students can leave the site in an orderly manner.

Are students allowed to wear PPE?

The DFE guidance is clear that students should not be able to wear masks and PPE in school. I am aware that this is an area that many people still feel anxious about and although at this point we are keeping to that guidance I will keep an eye on this over the summer. We have a draft risk assessment that we are constantly updating which you can access [here](#) and we will let you know if there are any significant changes to it. It is not complete around some areas like music for instance but if you continue to use this link then you will be able to see it as we amend it.

It is of course the case that students should be wearing face masks on public transport if that is how they get to school. I would suggest having a small bag within their main bag to store this in would be a good idea. We would of course encourage students to not use public transport as much as possible. The amount of times I cycle past students waiting at the bus stop at West Norwood Station and think it must take more time to get on the bus, wait in a traffic jam and then get off the bus than it would to just walk the 400 metres to school is more than I can count. Hopefully the lockdown has meant that we all have learned some positive new habits.

Does my child have to attend?

Yes. The government is very clear that we will revert back to normal attendance in September. You will have no doubt seen in the press that this includes the possibility of fining families. I feel that this is an unhelpful narrative in the first instance. Mr Grant and the Attendance and Inclusion Team have a pretty good idea of who is vulnerable or particularly

anxious about returning to school. If you feel that applies to you and you haven't been contacted yet please contact the attendance team so that we are aware of your concerns. The address is attendance@the-elmgreen-school-org.uk.

What happens if someone has COVID-19 symptoms?

At school we have space set aside for any student who has symptoms that is a separate space from other medical issues. Staff will of course wear PPE when they attend to such cases. If a student has Covid-19 symptoms then they would have to be tested before they are allowed to return to school. The bubble of students would remain in school whilst waiting for the result but the bubble (a year group) may then be isolated if the student's test was positive. I copy the specific guidance below:

'Schools must take swift action when they become aware that someone who has attended has tested positive for coronavirus (COVID-19). Schools should contact the local health protection team. This team will also contact schools directly if they become aware that someone who has tested positive for coronavirus (COVID-19) attended the school – as identified by NHS Test and Trace.

The health protection team will carry out a rapid risk assessment to confirm who has been in close contact with the person during the period that they were infectious, and ensure they are asked to self-isolate.

The health protection team will work with schools in this situation to guide them through the actions they need to take. Based on the advice from the health protection team, schools must send home those people who have been in close contact with the person who has tested positive, advising them to self-isolate for 14 days since they were last in close contact with that person when they were infectious.

Close contact means:

- *direct close contacts - face to face contact with an infected individual for any length of time, within 1 metre, including being coughed on, a face to face conversation, or unprotected physical contact (skin-to-skin)*
- *proximity contacts - extended close contact (within 1 to 2 metres for more than 15 minutes) with an infected individual*
- *travelling in a small vehicle, like a car, with an infected person*
- *The health protection team will provide definitive advice on who must be sent home. '*

You are of course free to read all of the guidance but it is worth pointing out that based on advice that we are given, we may have to close areas of the school reasonably rapidly and for working families that will be a challenge. In theory this would not be the case if a staff member developed symptoms as they should be distanced from students at all times.

How will the children get used to this?

This is a really important point. Clearly this is a very different experience that all students have previously had of The Elmgreen School. We are determined that everybody has the same positive experience of Elmgreen that they would have previously had but clearly there are more restrictions on movement and how students can interact. Assistant Headteachers Mr Arnett and Ms Garner and the Heads of Year will be leading on this area. Each bubble

will have their Head of Year located with them and a member of senior staff but there are lots of new routines and 'normals' to learn. We are therefore slightly staggering the start of term so that we can spend time teaching those routines to each bubble.

Date	Year groups in school
Friday 4 September	7 and 12
Monday 7 September	7, 8 and 9
Tuesday 8 September	7, 10, 11 and 13
Wednesday 9 September	All students

We have already made some changes to our behaviour policy for the June partial reopening about specific things around COVID-19 around spitting and coughing etc. Mr Arnett and Ms Garner will write to you at the start of term so that there is absolute clarity on what our expectations are.

What about the Library and Extra Curricular Provision?

Our fantastic Library staff have a click and collect system set up in September for the library. In terms of it as an extracurricular space then I'm afraid we will have to look at our risk assessment closer to September. At the moment lots of extracurricular activities will be difficult because this will mean a crossing of bubbles.

Mr Silly and PE are also looking at their provision for September and the autumn term and how we do physical activity and clubs. It is certainly the case that there will be no competitive fixtures in the Autumn Term but I am sure they will come up with some fantastically creative solutions as they have throughout the last four months.

There will certainly be no residential or overnight visits in the Autumn Term. I know how good we are at those and this is a real frustration but I promise we will make it up to you when we can!

Ms Moran and Mr Freeman will be in touch about what the physical and virtual club timetable looks like in September.

Do students have to wear uniform?

Yes. Please try and keep uniform and bags as clean and tidy as possible. As students are in bubbles the wearing of uniform should be absolutely fine.

Do you have a Plan B?

As we have seen in Leicester recently things can change very rapidly and this could be the case for a year group or the whole school. The school and particularly Mr Ryan and Mr Sullivan have done significant work on Google Classrooms in the last four months and although we still have work to do we feel that we would be able to launch Google Classrooms as a provision at very short notice. If we do have to close then live lessons would commence almost immediately.

Year 11 and 13

Mr Arnett and Ms West have already written to students about the arrangements for our Results Days in August. I would just like to thank all of those students again and we will do something to celebrate and mark their achievements as soon as we are able to.

Finally I would like to say that although this all sounds very authoritarian and restrictive and frankly not that much fun we will endeavour to make every students' educational experience as positive and enjoyable as possible.

One thing that we have learned in the last four months is that people are infinitely adaptable and that there is always a way of making things work. We will go into this term with the philosophy of The Elmgreen School as our guide. 'We look after ourselves, We look after each other. We look after our school, We look after our community.' Have a lovely summer and I am so looking forward to seeing our students back together in September.

Yours faithfully



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