



BEECHWOOD

Sacred Heart School

An Independent School for Boys and Girls (3-18)

Pembury Road
Tunbridge Wells
Kent
TN2 3QD
United Kingdom

T +44 (0)1892 532747
F +44 (0)1892 536164
E bsh@beechwood.org.uk
W www.beechwood.org.uk

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Dear Parents

I hope you are enjoying the final few days of the summer holidays. My family and I moved into Stuart House in mid-August and have quickly settled in, feeling very fortunate to be living in such attractive surroundings. We have been exploring the spacious grounds and can tell the school is a wonderful environment in which to live and learn. It is clearly also a very welcoming and friendly place, and I hope that this is your experience too, especially those families who are new to the school this term.

At the induction morning for the Year 7 pupils on Friday, my advice to them preparing for their move into senior school was to take one day at a time: know when you need to arrive, where you have to go, what to bring with you and how to get home at the end of the day. With these fundamentals covered, everything else will flow naturally and you can give your best to the events of the day.

As simple as it sounds, I suggest all of us will need to adopt the same practical approach for the first few days back to school as we adjust to the changes in our daily routines due to Covid-19.

The Government issued further guidance on Friday evening for the reopening of secondary schools and I am pleased our plans are in keeping with the principles included in this new announcement. We will be looking closely at the guidelines over the coming days, but I am relieved to inform you that we don't anticipate significant changes to the instructions you received in the parent handbook last week.

Public Exam Results

It was a difficult experience this summer for thousands of A level students across the UK who initially received downgraded results before the government's decision to award grades predicted by their teachers. Throughout this fast-changing situation and period of confusion, the staff at Beechwood worked exceptionally hard to support our pupils and assist them with their plans for the next stage in their lives. I am pleased to report the final results in both A level and GCSE were an excellent outcome and testimony to the pupils' and their teachers' hard work and dedication.

Staff News

We welcome the following new members of staff this year:

Patricia Carey as our Computer Science teacher

David Gould and Nicole Enebi who join the English department

Deborah Buchner as our Psychology teacher

Maria Campos who joins the Spanish department as maternity cover
Victor Magar who joins the Maths department
Katie Byrom and Danni Saffer join the Prep as Year 2 and Year 5 teachers respectively
Sarah Madams joins as the School Nurse
Michael Scragg joined at the beginning of August as the Consultant Bursar
Gabrielle Broad, an old girl, joins the school's Accounts department

We wish them every happiness and success as they take up their new posts at the school.

Arriving at School

Prep school parents received a letter explaining the logistics for the school day from Mr. Coakley.

For Senior Students, the school day begins at 8.30 am and pupils should enter the school using the following entrances, where they will be met by staff who will direct them to their Form rooms:

- Years 7 and 8 will enter through the door to the bag room (to the East of the building, closest to the Prep)
- Years 9, 10 and 11 will use the Mater Square doors to the South of the building
- Sixth Form will enter via The Garth

Pupils should exit the building by these same routes at the end of the day. Any pupils late to school should use the front entrance where they will be registered at reception.

Parents are asked to remain in their cars when dropping off or when collecting at the end of the day.

During the Day

The school will be cleaned more frequently, and students may be asked to wipe their desks and other spaces as they leave classrooms. There will signs around the school reminding pupils of social distancing, keeping to their 'bubbles' and cleaning their hands regularly.

The Form tutor will explain the routines on the first day and pupils will be reminded to follow seating plans in each of their lessons, keep to their 'bubbles', and respect social distancing as much as possible.

Pupils will not be able to use the lockers because the bag room is a potential area for congestion. Pupils should bring a bag to school with the items they will need each day. We will explain the arrangements for PE when the pupils receive their timetables.

Regular hand washing will be the order of the day.

End of the Day

On Thursday and Friday, the school day will end at 4 pm, with the school transport leaving at this earlier time.

From the second week, the school transport will leave at 5 pm, and supervised study will be available in the auditorium from 4 pm to 5 pm for those pupils using the school buses who aren't attending clubs.

Clubs

The focus at the beginning of the term will be to establish our new routines in the timetable and while I am aware that clubs and activities would normally begin in the second week of term, our priority will be to start with the catch-up classes for Year 11 and Upper Sixth pupils, with other clubs beginning from the following week. We are keen for the full range of opportunities to commence as soon as possible, and while the programme will look different because of needing to maintain our 'bubbles', we will be thinking creatively to provide as rich and as varied a programme as possible.

Face Masks in the Senior School

Pupils are NOT expected to wear masks at the Senior School. Those pupils bringing a mask to school, for example, those using public transport or a school minibus, must bring a resealable bag in which to store it during the day.

We are blessed with plenty of space at the school for the staggered breaks and lunchtimes, so we have assessed the risk of transmission as low. We will monitor the situation closely and may alter our advice depending on the rates of transmission in the local area and will, of course, follow any changes to government guidance.

We feel it would be sensible for pupils to carry a small hand sanitiser and a packet of tissues, but we will have stations around the school where pupils can access these if they don't have their own.

Appointments at School

If you need to contact anyone at the school, please telephone or email us. Please do not go to reception in person without having made a prior appointment as we seek to minimise the number of visitors to the school for everyone's safety.

And Finally

My apologies for the length of this letter but I hope it provides a useful summary in preparation for the first day of term.

I will be spending a large proportion of my time over the coming weeks visiting lessons and getting to know the school. I look forward to meeting you all in due course and wish you and the pupils all the best for a successful and rewarding year ahead.

Yours sincerely,

Nick Waite