



COVID Recovery Plan September 2020 FAQs for Students and Parents / Carers

Broad principle

In line with Government guidance, the academy will be open from September 2020 for all students. The broad principle behind The Marsh Academy approach to COVID is to minimise COVID related risks to students, staff and the families of both while maintaining as much normality as possible; ensuring a good, full educational experience, a stable secure environment and supporting staff and students' mental health. Recognising that risks still exist and mitigating them where possible. DfE guidance recognises that social distancing in school is not compatible with opening to all students, so students distance where possible and restrict the number of people they are in close contact with.

Travelling to and from school

How do I get to school in September?

If at all possible you should walk or cycle. If that is not possible and you can be dropped off by car you should be. We realise many children need to use bus services to get to school, but if there is any way you can avoid this then you should.

How do I get to school if I normally go by bus? Will it be the same as normal?

With the exception of the Hamstreet/Aldington bus, the academy is not responsible for the buses, so queries should be directed to KCC. However, as we understand it:

- School buses (where no members of the public use the bus) should be running as normal. There will be no social distancing and we strongly recommend face coverings and some coach companies may insist on this. You should aim to sit next to someone in your year group if possible and should try to face forwards rather than face towards each other.
- Public buses. As we understand it, face coverings are compulsory and social distancing is in place. This reduces capacity of buses so Stagecoach have designated some buses as 'school only' and added more buses to busy routes (see separate correspondence). We hope this resolves any issues, but contact KCC/Stagecoach if you are concerned.
- Behaviour on buses must be immaculate. We will completely support the banning of any person not respecting the rules on the way to or from school.

Do I need to wear a face covering at school?

The current government view, which may change, is that face coverings are still not deemed necessary in schools, but now all Headteachers have discretion except in areas of local lockdown where they will be compulsory in some situations.

Our position is that **students are 'strongly encouraged' to have a face covering with them and to use it at times where social distancing from students in other year groups is more difficult, for example lessons changeovers or fire drills.** We are stopping short of making compulsory at this stage but will keep this under constant review. Face coverings are essential on public transport and increasingly in other places, so I expect you will already have your own supply and be comfortable using those. No restriction on colour/design as long as it is appropriate for school. Covered bins are available around the Academy to dispose of face coverings if you wish. If they are reusable and removed, you should have a plastic bag in order to place in to take home. Some children do not need to wear face coverings for example, if they have a hidden disability. We can provide Assistance Cards for any student in this position, so that they can easily demonstrate that they do not need to wear one.



How will I enter school in the mornings?

We will be really strict that there can be no congregating before or after school. Students should come straight into school and go straight home. In the mornings there will be different areas for you to go to before tutorial, but students will be able to get a take away breakfast from the canteen if they need it.

- Plaza A (roadside): 'Y7 bubble'
- Plaza B (school side): 'Y9 bubble'
- Back of Dining Hall: 'Y10 bubble'
- Hard Court: 'Y8 bubble'
- Business Area: 'Y11 bubble'

At the end of the day you will need to go straight home or straight onto your bus. **We will release Year 7 & 8 students at 2:50pm** initially in order to control the flow of students out of school. **Parents / carers should stay in their cars.**

School uniform

Do I have to wear school uniform?

We expect all students to wear full school uniform each day, including your blazer. We are told that no additional washing of clothes is required than normal, but appreciate you will probably want to be more vigilant than normal. On days that students have PE or Dance, they should come into school wearing their full PE kit for the day, to avoid the need to change. **If the weather requires it, a plain black jumper or sweatshirt can be worn over the top, or your blazer.** Of course in addition to a sensible coat. Those students who have bought the optional winter PE kit may wear this over their PE kit. Very few children choose to shower after PE, but this will be available on request. We will already review this policy in the first two weeks as we try to balance the risks of using a communal changing room with the risks of remaining in PE kit after exercise.

How do I buy uniform?

Uniform can be ordered via our website and paid for via ParentPay or card upon collection (no cash).

The Government guidance is very clear that students should, where possible, be considered in groups or 'bubbles' where mixing without social distancing is allowed within bubbles, but not between bubbles. In most cases in secondary schools, each bubble will be a year group. We gave a lot of thought to how to manage the balance between isolating each class or year group in the same room all day to keep the 'bubbles' watertight and allowing some movement around the school to allow students to access specialist rooms and resources and to maintain some sense of normality and a good education. We think we have struck a sensible balance, with some normality and movement around the site, but where this happens we have tried to carefully mitigate against any additional risks.

Do we have to social distance in school?

The Government guidance acknowledges that social distancing between students in school is not possible, so you will not need to socially distance from others in your year group in school. However, you should still maintain distance from students in other year groups and adults in school and even with students in your year group, you should not get unnecessarily close or touch. You should avoid face to face contact if possible. Passing briefly in the corridor or playground is considered low risk.

Will I be in the same room all day?

No. Where possible, we will restrict movement around the site, but we were concerned about how students would cope being in the same seat all day, being unable to stretch legs, get fresh air, access practical subjects and specialist equipment (even textbooks) and felt that students being unsupervised for 5 minutes between each lesson while the teacher moved across the school from different buildings carrying all the resources for the lesson would not make for good lessons or teaching and learning.

Will I be with the same students all day?

It depends.

Students in Year 10-13 have chosen options and study different subjects, so unless we narrowed their curriculum, these students will be with different students in different lessons, but these will still be within their 'bubble'. Post 16 will be considered one 'bubble'.

Year 7-9 students follow a common curriculum so each student will be taught in their tutor group for every lesson. Teachers will also have seating plans in place so that you will normally be sat with the same other person in each lesson. We realise this is not ideal and will review this as the year progresses. This causes a few issues, but we feel it is worth it in the short term to reduce the number of people you mix with:

- You would normally be in a different set in Maths and English, depending on how well you have been doing in that subject, in the short term you will stay in your tutor group.
- You would normally be in a different, smaller group for some practical subjects (PE, Dance, Catering, Art/Tech). This is not possible to start with and may impact how much practical you can do, but we think practical may be hard in some subjects anyway. This is likely to be the first area to change once we are comfortable we can ease the restrictions.
- You would normally be in a mixed year tutor group, this will change and is discussed in more detail elsewhere in this document.

Will classrooms look different to normal?

Broadly no. But you might find that more rooms are arranged in rows so you can all face the front and you might find some of the excess furniture in classrooms has been moved out into central areas. This may look a bit odd, but is to help spread out the classrooms more and give you a bit more space. Your teachers will not normally be able to come over to you and will spend most of their time at the front of the class. There will be markings on the floor in yellow and black tape indicating an area for the teacher where students must not enter, it is vital that you follow this and any other instructions, including following the seating plan in each lesson.

Can we share resources?

Where possible, no. You should bring in your own equipment, including stationery. If a teacher were to lend you a pen for example, they would not be able to collect it back, without sanitising it first. We strongly recommend that every student brings in the following equipment each day:

- Pencil case that is clearly labelled with their name and group
- 2 black / blue pens, 2 pencils, a red pen and highlighter(s)
- Ruler, rubber, sharpener
- Glue stick and scissors (ideally safety ones)
- Protractor, pair of compasses and a scientific calculator (preferably a Casio fx-83GTx)
- Water bottle and small hand sanitiser.

Other school resources can be shared within bubbles, or with sanitising in between or leaving them untouched for a period of time. This will vary between departments but might include textbooks, sports equipment or science safety specs. With exercise books, your teacher is allowed to mark them or hand them out, provided they wash their hands before and after handling them.

Will school rules be the same?

We will still expect you to follow our normal school rules and expectations all of the time. If anything our expectations will be higher, because we will have to take a very strict line with any student who does not follow COVID specific rules, for example not respecting social distancing. We can only have students on site who comply with these restrictions or it would put everyone at risk. There will be some changes to how sanctions will work as we are reviewing these in light of COVID restrictions, but this should not apply to many of you. We are also aware that many of you have worked above and beyond what we could expect during lockdown, so we are keen to spend more time rewarding those who deserve it than we do on challenging negative behaviour.

Will we still be supported by Curriculum Support Assistants?

We know that the adults in school who are not teachers can be vital to ensuring you succeed, so will continue to support you, but in order to protect them, you may find CSAs in fewer lessons or supporting you from further away. Where students rely on staff to support them with more complex needs or with personal care, this will still be provided as normal, but with staff taking greater precautions, such as using Personal Protective Equipment. The SEND department will be liaising with families who might be concerned about this.

Are parents/carers allowed to come into school?

Where possible, no. We have to restrict the number of visitors on site during the school day. This means that **parents/carers will not be allowed on site without a pre-arranged appointment** and in most cases we will try to communicate by telephone, email or in some cases video conference calls. We think this will help keep everyone safer. We are looking into how we might organise parents' evenings as we balance the need to keep everyone safe with the importance of good communication to support your learning.

Curriculum & Catch up

I have read that schools will be given a lot of money to pay for students to have a tutor to catch up on what they have missed, how will this work?

Unfortunately, the money quoted in the media, does not provide one to one tuition in the way you might expect and some catch up funding we receive from Government has actually been reduced. However, we will look at every possible way to ensure all students are supported to catch up.

How will we catch up with the work that we have missed this year?

Your teachers are spending a lot of time to make sure you are not disadvantaged and have been looking at your curriculum to make sure you will be focusing on the right material when you get back. We are also looking to make sure that we can run revision and intervention sessions for you, using online technology where appropriate, but we strongly feel that the best way to catch up is through good quality learning in your lessons with your teachers. While you have clearly missed a lot of time in school, if you consider it in the context of your 13 years of schooling and given that even during lockdown, most of you have been working and engaging with your learning, we are confident that if you work hard when you return, you will be fine.

Will we still do the same subjects?

Yes. It was really important to us that we do not narrow your curriculum and we have always felt that practical and 'creative' subjects are as important as 'academic' subjects so these will continue. Of course in some subjects in the short term, some practical activities may not be possible, so we will adapt your curriculum to take account of that and in most cases ensure you can still do these things when restrictions are eased. For example, we still expect PE to run but we know that some sports are not possible at the moment so we will adapt. We also do not yet know what will be allowed in terms of sports teams, but we recognise how important these are if we can compete safely.

Pastoral care, attendance, engagement

Do I have to come back to school in September? What if I feel anxious or worry that it is not safe? Will I get fined?

The government have made it very clear that attendance to school is mandatory in September and all student must return. There have been some very direct messages from the Government about fining parents / carers for non-attenders. We have to enforce this and if it is safe to be in school, it is of course so important that you attend, given you have already missed so much. We may have to look at Fixed Penalty Notices for non-attendance, but we would much rather meet with families who are concerned and try to support you to feel comfortable coming back to school if at all possible. You will not be penalised if your absence is due to following clinical or public health advice. This document, regular communication and even online lessons with your teachers are all part of our procedures to try to make you comfortable returning to school.

What if I have symptoms?

While the guidance is subject to change, at the moment, if you exhibit any of the COVID symptoms or someone in your household does, you must stay at home and must let us know.

What happens if I am self-isolating and unable to attend school but I am well enough to be continuing with my studies?

Your teachers will upload your work, lesson material and resources on Satchel One (previously SMHW) and you will be expected to submit evidence of this being completed either daily through uploading to Satchel One or when you return to the Academy.

How will Mini-Schools work if we have to stay in year groups?

We know that tutors, SDLs and MSLs are a vital part of the way we are able to look after you in school and this is going to be even more important than normal for many of you over the coming months. Unfortunately, this structure will need to be adapted in the short term so that we can support you without mixing different year groups:

- Tutor groups will become single year groups based in an area of the school with the rest of their year group. KS3 tutor groups will be the same as your teaching group so you can be safely with the same group of students all day. Tutor groups will therefore have a mixture of Mini-Schools in them.
- Each year group will have an SDL and MSL looking after them on a day to day basis, who may not be their normal Mini-School team, but we will be flexible where students have established support from their current SDL.

Can we still have assemblies / Big Debate?

We can still have larger group gatherings such as assemblies in the Theatre if it is one year group at a time. We can use technology to broadcast to larger groups, even whole school assemblies, with students remaining in their tutor rooms, if we feel it would be beneficial.

Exams

I am taking my exams next year, what does this mean for me?

At this point you should still expect a normal exam period and should be reassured that although you have missed a lot of school, the same is true for everyone and so the exam board will lower grade boundaries to ensure your year group are not disadvantaged. It is possible that some subjects will give you a choice of questions to make it easier to ensure you are examined in the topics you have covered, the exam boards are considering other ways to ease pressure on you, for example removing the need to complete Geography fieldwork or do all of the Science practicals yourselves. It is also possible that the exam period next year will be a little later to give you some more learning time.

I have missed so much school, I am worried about my progress. How will I, or my parents/carers know how I am doing or what I need to do to catch up?

We know this is hard and we want to reassure you as much as possible. Your teachers have been monitoring your learning, engagement with online lessons, and the work you have submitted and your teachers have given an indication of how well it seems you have engaged with remote learning, so we are in a better position to support you. We also plan to spend time in September assessing where you all are and giving you more support and intervention where we think it would help. Although we are hopeful that we can discuss your progress with you parents/carers at parents' evenings in the Autumn, we are making plans to hold these remotely if face to face meetings are not possible.

Trips/visits & extra-curricular activities

Will we still be able to go on school trips?

At the moment, the guidance states that schools can only resume day trip educational visits that don't go abroad. We don't plan to run school trips for now, but will review this termly, as we know that when it is safe to do so, trips and visits are a hugely beneficial part of your school experience.

Will Extended Day and clubs still run?

We know how important these activities are in broadening your educational experience and how much fun they can be, but we have taken the decision that they will not run during Term 1.

TAC3, TAC4 & SRP

I am usually taught in the Turnaround Centre or The Dommatt Centre, what happens to me?

The staff in the Turnaround Centres and The Dommatt Centre will stay in touch, if they have not already been. We have plans to have you in school as much as possible as soon as possible, but understand you might be anxious about this, so we will talk you through what September will look like for you. We hope to get you back to normal as soon as possible but acknowledge you may be in fewer mainstream lessons to start with.

How will lunch work?

We will continue to have a split lunch with at most 2 year groups on lunch at the same time. Students can only stay in the canteen if they are eating hot food and the seating is organised so that you will only be able to sit with other people in your year group. Other food will be packaged to be 'grab and go' so that everyone else must be outside: one year group at the back of the canteen and the other year group in the Hard Court. Both areas have been refurbished and now have marquees to allow this to continue when the weather turns wet.



What about break?

We will operate a similar system at break time, with at most two groups on break at the same time and kept separate where possible.

Is it safe to eat food from the canteen?

Our canteen staff have become accustomed to social distancing and wearing appropriate Personal Protective Equipment. Our kitchen will comply with the 'Guidance for food businesses on coronavirus'. Fortunately, the canteen already operates a cashless and contactless payment system and staff serving will be wearing appropriate Personal Protective Equipment. 'Grab and Go' food will be packaged and handed directly to students and we will make clear to students that they must only touch food or packaging that they intend to purchase and cannot put things back.

Can we still get breakfast in the canteen?

We will offer a take away breakfast before school in the canteen for those who need it. While this has to be carefully managed, we understand how important this is for some of our families.

How will the academy make sure that the school is clean and safe?

We will be increasing cleaning capacity, with a full daily cleaning rota for all areas with cleaners during the school day focusing on frequently touched areas, such as handles, toilets, etc. When students change rooms, surfaces such as desks will be wiped down with standard products, such as detergents. We will also ensure wipes are available so that students can clean keyboards before and after use. Many of the doors in the academy that had push buttons to leave have now been replaced with touch free sensors. Wherever possible, we will maintain good ventilation with doors and windows open by default and where appropriate learning will take place outdoors. If you are allergic to any general cleaning products then you must ensure you tell us.

How will you ensure good hygiene in school?

There will be an expectation that everyone abides by 'Catch it, bin it, kill it', with signage, bins and tissues aplenty. Hand sanitising stations have been set up throughout the school and there will be an expectation that everyone washes their hands or uses hand sanitiser, throughout the day, in particular before and after eating, lesson changeovers, when using the toilet or after a cough or sneeze. **We recommend that students add a small hand sanitiser to their daily equipment they bring in.** If you are allergic to hand sanitiser then you must ensure you tell us.

COVID outbreaks / cases in school

Have the school thought about what happens if there is another lockdown or a local lockdown?

Of course we will follow whatever Government guidance is issued at the time, so we are planning for it, but hoping it will not be necessary.

What happens during another lockdown?

We expect to be able to swiftly move to a full timetable of online lessons. We have spent a lot of time piloting lessons with success, so are confident this could be rolled out more extensively. There would be an expectation that all students join lessons and complete work and we would be following up any students not meeting these expectations. Year 11 will already have a full range of revision resources to ensure they would still be able to prepare for their exams. If appropriate we would be able to continue providing for 'vulnerable' children and children of 'critical workers'. It would of course be challenging and imperfect, but we are confident we can make it work.

What happens if there are cases in school?

This response applies now, but will of course be updated as Government advice changes.

- Any person with symptoms or with someone in their household with symptoms must stay at home.
- Any person with symptoms at school will be isolated and sent home.
- People who have been in contact with someone with symptoms do not need to self-isolate unless they develop symptoms.
- If someone tests negative, they feel well and no longer have symptoms, their household can stop self-isolating and return to school.
- If someone tests positive they must let us know and should self-isolate for 10 days and until symptom free. Other members of the household self-isolate for 14 days.
- School will send home anyone who has had close contact with someone who has tested positive (face to face contact less than 1m, touching, travelling in same car or within 2m for 15 minutes or longer).

The school will contact the local Public Health protection team and work with them to deal with any positive case. It is likely that two cases in 14 days will be considered an outbreak and groups of students or a year group may be sent home to self-isolate. It is unlikely that the whole school will close or large groups will be sent home to self-isolate, but these decisions will be taken on PHP team advice.

Risk Assessment

How do I know that the school has assessed the risks properly?

Schools routinely risk assess many aspects of school life and we have published our full COVID19 risk assessment on our website, which we hope will reassure you that we have taken a lot of care and given a lot of thought to how we can give you a full educational experience, while keeping you safe. We also hope that the communication with you through this crisis will reassure you, but we are of course happy to talk through any concerns you might have.