

15th July 2020

Autumn 2020 Full Academy Opening Letter

Dear Parent/Carers and Students

Further to the summary in the most recent edition of the Ax@home Newsletter, below is some additional information on the plans we will have in place to open fully for all students and staff in the Autumn term. If you have read the parental guidance from the Government you will understand that to ensure the Academy opens safely we will have to make a range of modifications to our 'normal' methods of educating and supporting our students. I am sure that even after reading this information you will have further questions and we will provide further detailed updates prior to the start of the Autumn term once the site has been fully prepared. This will also enable the Academy to respond to any further changes that may happen over the Summer holidays if the Government Guidance changes once again. We will be providing you with a visual overview of the arrangements and the site.

Student Groupings - 'Bubbles'

As mentioned last week, in line with the Government guidance, we will be creating teaching group 'bubbles' in Years 7,8 and 9 and in Years 10 and 11 will be putting in place year group 'bubbles'. This is because, as the Government guidance states, *"Consistent groups reduce the risk of transmission by limiting the number of pupils and staff in contact with each other to only those within the group. Maintaining distinct groups or 'bubbles' that do not mix makes it quicker and easier in the event of a positive case to identify those who may need to self-isolate, and keep that number as small as possible."*

Each year group will be allocated a Zone of the Academy site as their base to reduce the opportunity for different groups mixing and reduce the movement needed across the Academy site. During the Academy day teaching groups will be taught in the same classroom wherever possible for all of their timetabled lessons to reduce the amount of movement around the site and also minimise the number of students who use a teaching space each day. Staff will move around the site to teach students in their 'base' rather than the normal arrangement whereby students move to subject staff in their classroom. We will provide a map of the site to students and parents in advance of the Autumn term commencing so that students will know where their 'Zone' will be.

Student Arrival and Departure

We will be operating a clear 'arrival at the start of the day and end of day exit plan' using different areas of the site and access points for each year group to avoid year groups mixing. The Academy day will operate under normal start and end times but we will be staggering the entrance and exit to the building to ensure the 'bubbles' do not mix on site. Also, we will be adopting a staggered break and lunchtime, again, to avoid 'bubbles' mixing.

Catering

The Academy will be providing food at lunch-time. We are currently devising a method whereby students (and parents) can pre order lunch food for the week via a Google form. Food will then be available to collect from the diner or hall. This will avoid lengthy queuing and gathering of large groups of students. Hot and cold options will be available but the range of food will be a limited range in comparison to our normal variety. We will be circulating further information on this in the second half of the Summer holidays. Students can bring a packed lunch if that is the preferred choice. Food will not be available at break-time so we encourage students to bring a snack to have at this time. Also, we have had to decommission the water coolers around the site as the shared use of water coolers is not permitted under the Guidelines. If students normally fill up a water bottle at school they will have to bring their own fluid refreshments. We encourage students to bring water or juice drinks and not fizzy drinks.

Practical Subjects

We are endeavouring to deliver a broad and balanced curriculum covering the normal wide range of subjects to all students in the Autumn Term. There will be some adaptations to enable this to happen in subjects such as Physical Education and Technology and we will provide more specific detail on this.

Uniform

In line with the Guidance, normal uniform expectations will apply to all students in the Autumn term. We appreciate that it may be challenging to order correct sizes online with Uniform Direct and they will be operating a free returns policy to support you if you order the wrong size of uniform. More detailed uniform information will be in the Thursday 16th July edition of Ax@home Newsletter.

Transport

The Academy will be running the bus service following the normal schedule. We will be communicating with parents and students who utilise the bus provision next week with more details as we still have some aspects to clarify with the bus companies.

Hygiene and Prevention of the spread of Coronavirus

It will be important that all students maintain positive hygiene in line with the guidance. There will be hand sanitiser available across the Academy site and enhanced cleaning in place but we also encourage students to have their own hand sanitiser as well, particularly if they are using transport to travel to/from the Academy. In summary, the hygiene and prevention measures focus on:

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 school
2. Clean hands thoroughly more often than usual
3. Ensure good respiratory hygiene by promoting the 'catch it, bin it, kill it' approach

We will be providing more detail to students at the start of term to ensure everyone is fully clear how our hygiene and prevention measures and also behaviour expectations will operate on a day to day basis. I am sure students will respond positively.

In recent days the question about face coverings and whether they should be worn in schools has understandably become prevalent. We are waiting for an update and clarity from the Department of Education on this matter and will include this update in our planning and communication over the holiday period. We are all looking forward to having all students and staff back on the Academy site but we also realise that the move back to school will be an anxious time. We will be doing everything possible to ensure we support the emotional well-being of all students alongside focusing on academic progress. To help support the transition back into school we will be phasing the start to the Autumn Term for different year groups. This will enable all of our students to be supported fully to what is going to be a very different structure to their Academy day. New Year 7 students have missed out on all of the transition experience of visiting the Academy and meeting staff and it is vitally important to help our newest students settle into their 'new' life at Axholme Academy. So, Year 7 will be on site fully from Thursday 3rd September and other years will have a phased return.

The arrangements for the start of Autumn Term are:

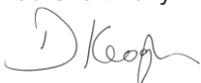
Thursday 3rd September - Years 7, 10 and 11 on site

Friday 4th September - Years 7, 8, 9 on site

Monday 7th September - All year groups back on site

On behalf of all of the staff and Governors I would like to say a heartfelt thank you to all students and parents who have really worked so positively whilst we have responded to what has been such a challenging situation for all concerned. It has been a real community effort at all stages since March 20th. This will need to continue as we prepare for and enter the Autumn Term.

Yours faithfully



Mr D Keogh
Principal