

26<sup>th</sup> August 2020

Dear Parents,

As the start of term approaches I am writing to provide another update on our preparations. I know that parents in various sections of the school are receiving information such as Mr Marshall's letter about pastoral support (Senior School) and Mrs Knott's letter about her back to school assembly on Friday (Juniors); however I wanted to write to provide an overview.

We are very much looking forward to welcoming all of our pupils back; it will be a great relief to return to school. I know that parents will have concerns and may feel anxious about this, but please be assured that the safety of pupils and staff remains our top priority. Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any questions or concerns. As regards Health & Safety it would be helpful in the first instance if these questions could be directed to our Business and Operations Director, Miss Carrie Williams [c.williams@ohgs.co.uk](mailto:c.williams@ohgs.co.uk) who leads in this area.

Our Senior Leadership Team has been working on our plans throughout the summer, and we have now had approval from the Governors' Health & Safety and Finance & General Purposes Committees for our reopening. We have also held a meeting with our staff consultative committee and the draft risk assessment was shared with teaching unions. Our risk assessment can be accessed via the link below and I would ask parents to read this. There may well be a need to amend this to reflect a changing situation or government guidance and we will do so.

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1BtOnJxEWQf-TDsxFUPFW6ly5OCeJLLxnXqnhvCBNvBg/edit?usp=sharing>

I would ask parents to sign the form below in order to confirm that they accept the school's procedures and will follow government guidance on test and trace.

[Procedure acceptance](#)

## **Face Coverings**

Many parents will have seen that yesterday evening the government announced that it was changing its guidance on face coverings in schools in England for secondary school aged children. For areas that face tighter local restrictions (such as Oldham) they are now to be worn in communal areas (but not in classrooms) and so pupils will need to come to school with a face covering. We will have a supply in school for those who forget to do so. This new information is very recent and we will of course be seeking some clarity on exactly where this applies to in school, and will make this clear to the pupils. We had already gone beyond the government guidance by stipulating that staff and pupils can wear masks throughout the school day should they choose to do so, and this remains the case.

## Senior School Day

In preparing for the start of term we are conscious that it will be a significant change for senior school pupils to remain in the same room and / or zone of the school for the majority of their lessons. We are keen to do all we can to ensure that school feels as normal as possible, whilst focussing primarily on health & safety. We are also conscious of the impact of recent months on their mental health.

To that end we have reviewed the school day in senior school, and have been able to create an afternoon break during periods 4 and 5 when pupils will be able to go outside. This has been achieved by removing the existing movement breaks between periods 2&3 and 4&5 and taking five minutes off morning assembly / form time, rather than reducing teaching time. This new timetable will be temporary whilst we face the movement restrictions that are in place. This change has the support of the staff and we think will be appreciated by the pupils. The new timings are below:

<b>Lesson Timings</b>			
<b>Senior School</b>		<b>Junior School</b>	
8.45-9.05	Registration/Assembly	8.45-9.05	Registration/Assembly
9.05-10.05	Period 1	9.05-10.05	Period 1
10.05-10.25	Break	10.05-10.25	Break
10.25-11.25	Period 2	10.25-11.25	Period 2
11.25-12.25	Period 3	11.25-11.55	Period 3a
12.25-1.25	Lunchtime	11.55-1.00	Lunchtime
1.25-1.30	Registration	1.00-1.30	Period 3b
1.30-2.30	Period 4	1.30-2.30	Period 4
2.30-2.45	Break	2.30-2.45	Break
2.45-3.45	Period 5	2.45-3.45	Period 5

## Entrances and Exits

Miss Barnett and Mrs Knott have communicated details about this to parents in their sections of the school. In senior school we have now designated specific entry and exit points for different year groups in order to do our best to preserve the integrity of year group bubbles. They are as follows:

**Year 7:**

School entrance onto the bottom drive near the tennis courts and the emergency entrance under the extension stairs near the food rooms. On their first day (2nd September) they should use reception.

**Year 8 :**

The old Girls' School main entrance next to the School Nurse's office facing the central stairs.

**Year 9:**

The entrance on the top drive nearest the school library. They should use the central stairs to access upstairs.

**Year 10:**

The entrance by the pavilion and sports notice board.

**Year 11:**

The entrance next to Mr Marshall's office that opens onto the top drive. They should access upstairs using the stairs at that entrance.

**Year 12:**

The entrance by the pavilion and sports notice board. They should use the stairs at that entrance to access upstairs.

**Year 13:**

Various depending on where they are based - Hulme or Tullie House, Art Block, Library

## **Expectations of pupils**

Our response to this crisis has necessitated a huge 'team effort' from staff, parents and pupils. Our pupils were fantastic during lockdown and I am very proud of the way they engaged with their studies. We will need them to approach the return to school with the same level of commitment and responsibility. I am sure they will rise to this latest challenge. There will obviously be new expectations of them in terms of their behaviour as relates to health & safety, and we will be reinforcing this in all sections of the school. In senior school Mr. Marshall has prepared the following information for students on this.

[https://docs.google.com/document/d/1fZbTyEnBnIYbCZ9mohUxAHanf\\_tlt2\\_bxej0PHrB3E4/edit?usp=sharing](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1fZbTyEnBnIYbCZ9mohUxAHanf_tlt2_bxej0PHrB3E4/edit?usp=sharing)

## **Examination results**

This year's A Level results day was like no other. Set against the backdrop of continuing concerns about public health, this year's grades were initially awarded by a combination of school centre assessed grades and statistical modelling devised by Ofqual. Following a significant public outcry about the methodology used, and the individual unfairness that this produced, the controversial algorithm used to create these results was scrapped, and the examination boards were instructed to issue grades based on the original centre assessed grades. The press reporting that the initial results did not affect independent schools was inaccurate. A significant number of our students had grades which were unfair and we shared their anger and frustration. As a school we had been in favour of some sort of moderation, but following the initial issuing of results, it was clear that the only possible approach was to revert to the centre assessed grades.

The final picture for our year group is of a superb set of grades with 23% of grades at A\*, 86% at A\*-B level and 100% at A\*-D. However, at Oldham Hulme Grammar School we teach individual students, not an overall set of statistics and we care deeply about their well-being and success. The A Level class of 2020 at Hulme were a very strong cohort, and we are very pleased for our students across the ability range who have now been awarded results that reflect their efforts and ability.

There are many outstanding individual sets of results with our top performer, Sagarika Koppera, being awarded 5x A\* grades and two other students, Nathan Green and George Spencer, being awarded 4x A\* grades.

We are pleased that students are now able to proceed to the next stage of their education. In terms of university admissions, we are delighted that 3 students have gained places at Cambridge and 7 are progressing to degrees reading: medicine, dentistry or veterinary science. This represents 19% of this year's cohort.

Our Year 11 students had already worked extremely hard before lockdown, and they did not stop working on the 20<sup>th</sup> March. Instead they engaged fully with their online lessons and undertook A Level bridging courses when GCSE study ended in May. They are therefore very well placed to embark upon the next stage of their education, and we are very proud of them.

Their results are excellent and there are many impressive individual performances. Our top performing girl (Rachel Green) and boy (Mohammad Uneeb) have achieved 10x Grade 9s and 9x Grade 9s respectively. However, there are many success stories across our ability range and we share our students' joy and relief. Overall Hulme students achieved a pass rate of 100% with 62% of these grades being at Grades 9-7.

No-one would pretend that grades are not important, but I believe that in years to come it is the personal qualities that they have demonstrated in this crisis of: determination, resilience and initiative that will set these young people apart. I am also very proud of our dedicated staff team who worked tirelessly to continue to teach and support our students through this time.

### **And Finally**

As we begin a new term with fresh challenges I will seek to keep parents as informed as possible through regular communications. I would again urge parents to follow @OhgsPrincipal on Twitter where I will continue to tweet news about the school; although I cannot promise that my sense of humour will improve!

Yours sincerely,

CJD Mairs

Principal