

11th August 2020

Return of all students in the Autumn Term

Dear Parents and Carers,

I hope that you and your families are enjoying the summer break and have kept safe and well during this difficult time. On July 9th we wrote to you promising an update early this week with details on our plans for re-opening our school. We have created an information booklet based on the latest government guidance up to the 10th August 2020. I hope you find this helpful. We have been working extremely hard to make as safe as possible for staff and students.

We are really looking forward to welcoming students back to Corby Technical School on **18th August 2020** (the 17th August is a staff training day). The first two weeks back in August however, are technically part of our old (2019/2020) academic year and therefore subject to the DfE guidance for before the summer break. We have discussed this issue with the DfE, the County Council and our own Trust's risk committee, and we also realise that schools in neighbouring counties start returning for their new academic year from Monday 24th August 2020. We have therefore taken the decision to open Corby Technical School for these two weeks using the DfE's updated guidance for the new academic year. You will be able to see from the parent/student information booklet that our operational model has therefore been designed and risk assessed against this guidance which can be found [here](#).

There is one important caveat to our approach. Until September 1st student attendance will remain a matter of parental choice (except for those vulnerable students who were already expected to attend). Of course, we would very much like to see all students back next week and for school to begin to feel a little more normal, but the final decision is still yours for the initial two-week period. After this, and from the 1st September 2020, school attendance will become compulsory as per the DfE guidance.

The government guidance is continuing to develop, so it is inevitable that we will need to update our information for parents and students in the weeks to come, but I hope for now the booklet gives you a good understanding of how we intend to operate. As always, please do not hesitate to get in touch if you have any questions or concerns by emailing enquiries@corbytechnicalschool.org.

We have taken time to review all the government, DfE and Public Health England guidance and are confident that our procedures and operational structures will minimise risk and provide everyone in our school with as safe an environment as possible.

We are absolutely focused on ensuring all students return to continue with their learning and we have in place a clear strategy based on - Re-open, Return, Recover.

- We will re-open for all students
- We will expect all students to return
- We will implement a carefully planned curriculum to ensure students recover their lost learning

The booklet attached sets out specific guidance for the full reopening of our school. It explains the changes we have made to the way we would usually operate and aims to support you in preparing your child/ren for a successful return to school. The school day will look very different and it is important that everyone follows these new safety guidelines.

The DfE have advised schools that attendance will be mandatory again from 1st September. This is because it is vital for all students to return to school to minimise as far as possible the longer-term impact of the pandemic on students' education, wellbeing and wider development. It means from that point, the usual rules on school attendance will apply, including:

- parents' duty to secure that their child attends regularly at school where the child is a registered student at school and they are of compulsory school age
- schools' responsibilities to record attendance and follow up absence
- the availability to issue sanctions, including fixed penalty notices in line with local authorities' codes of conduct

We understand that some students and parents may be anxious about returning to school. Please do get in touch with us if this is the case via our enquiries e-mail address.

Key Changes and Requirements

- If any member of your household displays symptoms of COVID-19, your child must not come into school and we advise that your household follows NHS isolation, testing and track and trace guidelines.
- Schools must do everything possible to minimise contacts and social mixing while delivering a broad and balanced curriculum. All students will be placed in groups known as bubbles. The aim of these protective bubbles is to minimise contact with other students and reduce the risk of spreading the COVID-19.
- We will do all we can to keep students apart from other groups where possible and students will be encouraged to keep their distance within groups. We have taken steps to limit interaction, sharing of rooms and social spaces between groups as much as possible.
- All teachers and other staff may operate across different classes and year groups in order to facilitate the delivery of the school timetable. Where staff need to move between classes and year groups, they will aim to keep their distance from students and other staff as much as they can, ideally 2 metres from other adults.
- The scientific guidance is clear that the greatest risk to students returning to secondary school relates to their social interactions outside school. It is therefore important that students do not mix with peers outside of their bubble on their way to and from school. We ask parents to support us by restricting contact with others outside of school hours, in accordance with government guidance.
- We are advised that groups should be kept apart, meaning that we should avoid large gatherings such as assemblies with more than one group.
- When timetabling, we have tried to ensure groups are kept apart as much as possible and movement around the school site kept to a minimum. While passing briefly in the corridor or outside areas is low risk, we are advised to avoid creating busy corridors, entrances and exits. We will have staggered break times and lunch times (and time for cleaning surfaces in the dining hall between groups).

We have worked hard to ensure we are following the guidelines closely and providing as safe an environment as possible for our students. I really appreciate your patience and continued support. I am confident that together we will make this full return a success, as we did with our phased return in July, and I look forward to seeing our students in school again soon.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'A Reynolds', written in a cursive style.

Angela Reynolds
Principal