



The de Ferrers Trust

☎ 01283 372600

✉ MAToffice@deferrerstrust.com

🌐 www.deferrerstrust.com

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Dear Parents and Carers

You will have heard the government announcement that schools will be open for all pupils from September 2020. Our schools have been looking after children of key workers and those classed by the government as vulnerable since 23 March. Last month, our schools welcomed back pupils in different year groups.

We approached this with caution and detailed planning. This has gone extremely well as our safety measures and risk assessments were excellent. Thank you to all those parents who sent your children back into school as requested – it has been lovely to see them.

We are delighted that we can now look forward to seeing all our wonderful pupils back in school next term! We will be very busy in the next couple of weeks planning, completing new and detailed risk assessments, and working out exactly what school will look like and feel like when your child returns.

The Government has stated: *'Given the improved position, the balance of risk is now overwhelmingly in favour of children returning to school. For the vast majority of children, the benefits of being back in school far outweigh the very low risk from coronavirus (COVID-19).'*

We're working hard to consider how we group pupils together, ensure that we reduce contact between different groups of pupils, and keep the stringent cleaning and disinfecting processes we already have in place to ensure that our academies are as safe as can be for your child.



Your child's school will send out further detail before the end of term, but in the meantime there are some key points that you need to be aware of.

1. You must ensure that if anyone in your household has COVID-19 symptoms, your child does NOT attend school. Any child or staff member who develops symptoms in the school day will be sent home immediately. You must follow the government guidance 'Stay at home: guidance for households with possible or confirmed coronavirus (COVID-19) infection'.
If anyone in your household, or your child, tests positive for COVID-19 you MUST inform your school.
2. Your child will be expected to follow strict behaviour rules relating to physical contact with other pupils, and keeping their hands clean. Pupils will be expected to/taken to wash their hands regularly, and use hand sanitiser.
3. Pupils and staff will not be wearing face coverings in school. The government advice is quite clear that this is not necessary. If face coverings are used on public transport to get to school, it should be removed on arrival.
4. If your child has Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities (SEND) your child's school will have been in touch with you regularly over the last few months, and will contact you to explain what provision will look like from September.
5. Secondary: It will be more important than ever that your child has their own equipment in school to ensure that this does not need to be shared.
6. The government has advised walking or cycling to school wherever possible to reduce the use of public transport.
7. Attendance at school. The government has relaxed the rules on attendance during lockdown. However, this will change in September. The government guidance says:

'Missing out on more time in the classroom risks pupils falling further behind. Those with higher overall absence tend to achieve less well in both primary and secondary school. School attendance will therefore be mandatory again from the beginning of the autumn term. This 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 pupil at school and they are of compulsory school age;*
- *schools' responsibilities to record attendance and follow up absence*



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- *the availability to issue sanctions, including fixed penalty notices in line with local authorities' codes of conduct.'*

If your child remains under the care of a specialist health care professional you should discuss their care before returning to school in September, and talk to your school about the situation. Where children are not able to attend school as parents are following clinical and/or public health advice, they will not be penalised.

8. School kitchens will re-open in September, and lunches will be available again. Pupils eligible for free school meals will return to having their lunch at school, and will no longer receive lunch vouchers.
9. Pupils will be expected to wear school uniform again from September.

We intend to keep changes to the curriculum to an absolute minimum. We intend to provide as full a range of subjects and activities as possible.

We understand that some of you and your children will be anxious about returning in September, after some months out of school. Please be reassured that we are taking exceptional measures to make our schools as safe as can be. We will be providing additional emotional and wellbeing support for any pupils that need it, and will also be providing additional opportunities to support learning where this is required.

Although it feels like this situation has lasted forever, in fact pupils will have lost by the end of term, at worst, only 70 school days of learning. And very many of them have worked hard using online resources or work books provided by our hardworking and dedicated teachers. We are all determined that they will absolutely not be '*a lost generation*' and we're adapting our curriculum to make sure that they get the learning and knowledge that they need to achieve success in the future.

Your children deserve a great, and safe education – we will not let them down.

See you in September!

Yours sincerely

Ian McNeilly
Chief Executive

