

Dear Parent/Carer

We hope that your family remains safe and well. As promised, I am writing to update you on the latest Government guidance and our plans to reopen Edwinstree to all students in September. Year 5 to attend on Thursday 3rd and Friday 4th September from 8:45am – 2:15pm, please read the important information relating to New Year 5 students on the second page. Year 6, Year 7 and Year 8 to return on Monday 7th September.

I am relieved to inform you that as of the 24th August, there are limited changes to the Government guidance and we plan to open the school as outlined at the end of term. However, as of the 26/8/20 Government have advised that Year 7 and 8 students should wear masks in “Communal Areas” if they are in a **lockdown area** of the country. We are **not one of these areas**. Today, the Government announced that this decision would be left to Headteachers. As this guidance seems to be changing daily, I think at this stage, it is pragmatic for me to ask you to **prepare, by ensuring that Year 7 and Year 8 have masks to use** (just like when they go to the shops). I will publish a Parent Newsletter on Friday 5th September and update you of any changes.

With this letter we have reissued the timetables and once again updated all the information on the website including the uniform list. We attach the Government latest guidance on preparing for a return to school and ask that you now prepare for your child to return to school. If you **misplaced any of our communication over the summer or before the end of term, please refer to our website** where you can find all the information you need www.edwinstree.herts.sch.uk.

However, I am aware that as a parent, you have had an overload of communication, so I have created a summary of the key things you need to know in order to get your child ready for their first day back at school.

- Uniform – first day of term arrive in COVID-19 uniform ie no tie. If they have PE that day don't panic we will remind them what they need to bring. Currently students are not required to wear a mask, but if they wish to they can.
- Equipment – We will provide all their equipment which will stay in school, they only need a water bottle and a mobile phone if you wish them to have one in school.
- Raincoat – Rain or shine, we will take every opportunity to be outside, as this is one of the safest spaces for your child, PE lessons will also take place outside.
- Lunch and break times – will be in class designated areas on the field and supervised by the teacher.
- School meals – Your child will require a home prepared packed lunch for the first half term unless your child is entitled to free school meals. This will be reviewed at half term
- Entrance time and where to go – please make sure your child arrives ON TIME, not before or after – a key to keeping your child safe and reducing the risk of whole school closure is to limit mixing with students in other year groups, please follow the allocated timetable start and finish times
- End of the day – please have your plan of action in place, child care arrangements etc. for the staggered end of day finish times.
- Students travelling by bus are most likely to be required to wear a mask and potentially have an allocated seat, please make sure you know what is expected by the Bus Company and reinforce this message with your child. Your family's social bubble and friendship group – do talk to your child about which friends in their class and year group they will be socialising with and why staying in the agreed social bubble is important.
- To reduce travel disruption and congestion around schools we would be grateful if you could use the official guidance at www.intalink.org.uk/safeschooltransport
- **What if my child is ill?** Please email in to alert us admin@edwinstree.herts.sch.uk
- **Will my child have all the changes explained to them?** Yes a significant part of the day will support your child to understand how the school will operate as a full school managing COVID-19.
- **What if my child is anxious or concerned?** The school has been working hard to review all the advice and guidance as to how we support students to return and ensure that they are able to re-engage with learning. However, if you have a particular concern, please do not hesitate to alert us to this asap via admin, the sooner we know, the sooner we can begin to prepare.
- **Can they bring their own hand sanitiser?** All rooms have hand sanitiser stations and additional outside wash basins have been installed, students do not need to bring their own sanitiser, but if they would like to this is fine. Teachers will allocate time for hand washing (See Risk Assessment and summary table from last communication).

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As a parent, how can you help in September?

The biggest risk to Edwinstree remaining open, **is the ability we have to lockdown and isolate any cases of Coronavirus that may occur.** In order to do this, the school is operating almost as four separate schools, with students isolated in their year groups with their own separate environment and team of teachers. However, we really need your help and support, we can work really hard in school to limit the interaction between students in different year groups and bubbles, but if they leave school and then ignore the social distancing rules and mix with lots of different students, the risk of an outbreak and potential school closure increases significantly. **The more you can support us by helping your child to identify their social bubbles and the friends they will associate with the better.**

Can my child arrive early, or leave late? What about after school clubs will they operate?

We have had enquiries from Parents and Carers looking to get the schools help in juggling childcare arrangements that the school would normally accommodate, and there are a number of you requesting an earlier start or later finish time. I am sorry but we are unable to support these requests and manage student social distancing, which is key to maintaining the classes and year groups separate. I understand and empathise with the difficulties that this creates for you, but being open for the whole of last term we have a significant evidence base that our students, just by the nature of being children, are unable to social distance without a member of staff being available to supervise. We do not have the staffing to provide the wrap around care before and after school and no after school clubs will run until further notice. Please be aware that to manage breaks and lunch, staff will be teaching above their normal allocation. We will continue to review our timetables and if we can do anything more to support you we will. For now, please help us to keep students in their class and year group bubbles, adhere to our timings and keep them safe and socially distanced.

Where do I bring my child to if they are Year 5 on Thursday 3rd September?

Please bring your child to the bottom gate, which is the furthest gate from the park, and where your child should enter and exit the school each day. Senior staff and the Year 5 Teaching Team will be waiting to welcome them and direct them to their class playground area. On Thursday 3rd September they will have an opportunity to explore:

- Which class they are in and how they are feeling about the start of school.
- Their Year Team teachers and what they teach.
- How Edwinstree will operate under COVID-19.
- How we support each other and what it means to be at a Church of England school.
- What it is like to begin to learn at Edwinstree.

On Friday 4th September they will follow the lessons on their timetable and if they have PE, they will need to attend school in their PE kit. We are really looking forward to seeing them and can't wait to welcome them into Edwinstree.

What are the timings of the day for Year 5 students on the 3rd and 4th of September.

The timings of the days are from 8:45am - 2.15pm, all students should arrive and leave via the bottom gate. Please can we ask that you agree to meet your child a little way from school, in order to comply with social distancing guidelines and keep everyone as safe as possible?

As from Monday 7th September their start time will be 9am – 2:30pm

What about learning, catch-up, homework etc.?

At the start of term we will publish our "catch up plan" and outline our expectations for homework etc. For now, we advise that you support your child by getting them ready to return to school and managing any anxiety. Please remind them that we are really looking forward to seeing them at our warm and caring school. I have included an introduction letter for your child with this information and I would appreciate you sharing the letter with them. All letters can be found on our website.

Thanking you in advance and assuring you of our best intentions.

Yours sincerely

Jo Gant
Headteacher