

Timetable Options – September 2020

If you had chosen option 1 or 2: Would this have stopped an early closure? Why is the school closing early?

No - choosing Option 1 or 2 would not have made a difference. The reason the school is closing early, is based on our observations of students' ability to socially distance over the Summer Term. As a school that remained open throughout lockdown and returned around 50% of our population before the end of term, we have a "good" bank of evidence of how students would operate under a Covid school. It was clear, that even with their best intentions, our age group found it impossible to remain socially distanced from each other at break and lunchtime. The only time this occurred was when a teacher was out with the students and they were supervised with care. This is not because students behaved badly, it was their natural behaviours and play that they were continually fighting against.

Therefore, we made the decision to begin September with all teaching staff managing students during all breaks and lunchtimes. This meant a teacher's workload increased significantly, and we were asking staff to move away from their contractual hours. The reason for the temporary reduction in hours is because staff are out on duty during all break and lunchtimes with the students that they are teaching, as students are retained in their class bubble. We believe this to be the safest option for our school at the beginning of the year, but once our systems are in place, we should be able to reduce the number of staff needed outside. Our lunch and break time hours have reduced significantly to just 35 minutes, to decrease the risk at unstructured times.

The table below is specific to the Risk at Edwinstree School, it does not and will not uncorrelate to other schools and their situations

	Advantages	Disadvantages
<p>Option 1 Continue with our normal timetable which involves all students moving classes for 5 different sessions of learning, two tutorial periods and to Collective Worship.[COWO]</p>	<p>Students are able to experience the full curriculum which is a huge advantage of a middle school in comparison to primary schools.</p> <p>All specialist subject teachers are able to teach their subject well to students.</p> <p>Summary Curriculum strong and capitalises on the Middle School advantage of Specialist rooms and Specialist teachers.</p>	<p>The site is not big enough to avoid students meeting in corridors. We do not have any extra indoor space to accommodate this and subject to students taking extensive walks around the field which would reduce their teaching time significantly we can't solve this problem, even with a potential one way system.</p> <p>Students would not be isolated into bubbles and would cross year group bubbles in small corridors that are unable to contain two year groups without very close contact.</p> <p>Staff would come into contact with a significant number of students, in some cases the whole school in a week.</p> <p>Spread of COVID significant, if an outbreak occurs, potential to lock down all year groups.</p>
<p>Option 2 Classes stay in one room and teachers move to the classes.</p>	<p>Maintains the specialist subjects and a full curriculum, but students would not be taught in specialist rooms.</p> <p>Although students lose the option of being in a specialist subject room, they do access their full curriculum weekly.</p>	<p>Students at significantly less risk of meeting in corridors risk reduced further through staggered starts and ends.</p> <p>Students lose out on specialist rooms.</p> <p>Staff and students risk increases but particularly staff, as they teach between many bubbles and year groups.</p> <p>Staff wellbeing – combined with break and lunch time with a class they are being asked in this room to move rooms repeatedly. 15 times for some in a week.</p> <p>Students at the start of term, when we have not seen them for 6 months are left in classrooms by themselves as the travel takes place for 20 minutes plus in 5 minute blocks.</p>

<p>Option 3 Current option staff divided into teams for teaching and these teams deliver a reduced curriculum. At each half term the foundation subject team moves on to pick up the curriculum.</p>	<p>Gaps in the curriculum in subjects students really enjoy ie music, food technology etc., thus reducing what makes a middle school great.</p> <p>Students only access a part of their curriculum each half term. Core is protected and there but not taught daily.</p>	<p>Staff and students safest as the students are locked into a class bubble and the staff into a year group. Very little opportunity to mix.</p> <p>Staff and students can be isolated into year group and class bubbles, therefore, if and when an outbreak occurs, only part of the school should be locked down not the whole.</p>
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Is there a school that have got this decision right that we can learn from?

There is no decision that is right, just a decision that manages to meet the needs of the individual school at the time. As Headteacher, my decision supported by the Governing Body, was premised on the following:

- Keeping staff and students safe through ‘class bubbles’ and ‘year group bubbles’.
- The Wellbeing of the whole school community
- Minimising the risk of a whole school lockdown.
- Minimising curriculum damage to maximise safety.
- Ensuring wherever possible, that specialist teachers continued to teach in their specialisms – this is what we are best at.
- Accepting there is no right answer, but we made our decisions based on the evidence and experience we had collected from being open from the outset of COVID with a significant number of students in school.
- Remaining resolute that I could not make the decision based on what would be the most popular, it had to be what the school could evidence was the right decision for COVID at this moment in time.