



Rob Pavey – Headteacher (September 2020)

14 July 2020

Dear Students, Parents and Carers,

September re-opening

I hope this letter finds you and your family well. Many of you will be wondering what will happen in September, and many of you will have questions or worries about how school will run, and whether it will be safe. I hope this letter will help respond to some of those questions, although I must be honest that we cannot give definitive answers yet, and that the situation may well change significantly over the summer.

For those that want to read the full document, here is the link to the government guidance, which was released on July 2nd:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/actions-for-schools-during-the-coronavirus-outbreak/guidance-for-full-opening-schools>

Here is the full text of the Secretary of State's statement of July 2nd:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/education-secretarys-statement-on-coronavirus-covid-19-02july-2020>

The critical issue for Cheney, and for all schools, is to balance the need to get our young people back into school, with the need to keep everyone safe, and to prevent a second wave of infections. Although we cannot guarantee absolute safety, the evidence now suggests very low risk for those of school age, and no heightened risk for adults working in schools. We fully acknowledge that there will be a small number of students, staff or families where the risks are much higher, and we will do everything we can to ensure that our students in that category get a full education.

Below is an outline of the measures we will be taking in Cheney. I have followed the same order as the government's system of controls, although you will quickly see that many of them are already well embedded both in school and in wider society.

1. Students or staff displaying symptoms: no-one who is ill should come to school, and anyone who becomes ill when in school will be moved immediately to an area where the infection cannot spread and the appropriate care can be given.
2. Increased hand washing and sanitising: we are increasing the number of areas where students and staff can wash, and hand sanitiser will be provided in all classrooms and at other key points. Staff will reinforce this constantly.
3. Respiratory hygiene: tissues will be provided in all classrooms, and 'catch it, bin it, kill it' will be strictly enforced by all staff.
4. Enhanced cleaning: the facilities staff will be carrying out additional cleaning and disinfection of common areas, and items like door handles which are likely transmission hot spots. In addition, all classrooms will have disinfectant wipes and sprays for students and staff to use at the start of lessons.
5. Minimise contact between groups and maximise social distancing where possible: this is the main area where there will be major changes. The following plans are being worked on now, and the final details will be communicated at the end of August:

- a. Year groups will have their own designated area of the school, effectively creating 6 mini schools on the same site (with the Sixth Form being treated as one bubble). This includes designated classrooms and recreation areas. This will allow the full curriculum to be taught, although there will be some reduction of our ability to do practical subjects. Demonstrations may replace experiments in science for example, and practical subjects will concentrate on the theory side of the course until October.
- b. Separate entrances and exits will be used as far as possible.
- c. PE will continue (I view it as essential, especially after months in lockdown) but with reasonable adjustments to activities (no contact sports for example) and to uniform requirements so changing rooms are not needed. Full details are being worked out by the PE department, but I expect students will come into school in PE kit rather than uniform on days when they have PE.
- d. Break and lunch times will be staggered to minimise crowding, to allow cleaning between services and to allow students to eat an early lunch if they want.
- e. The catering system will move from a biometric fingerprint system to a touch card system. We encourage all parents to top up accounts online, but the cash-loaders in school will also be adjusted to take touch cards. We hope this will be a short-term solution, as it is possible to lose a card in a way that is much harder to do with your finger.
- f. In Years 7 and 8, lessons will be taught in form groups as far as possible to minimise mixing between groups. This will mean approximately 18 out of 25 lessons per week will be taught in the same room, with teachers coming to students, thus drastically reducing the number of different people students come into close contact with during the day.
- g. A clear 2 metre teaching space will be created at the front of every classroom, wherever possible. As it is teachers that are moving between groups and across years, teachers represent the biggest risk of spreading the virus throughout the whole school.
- h. Classrooms are being rearranged wherever possible so that students all face the front, rather than each other, which may help minimise transmission.
- i. Students will sit in the same seat wherever possible.
- j. The new start of lesson routine will involve cleaning desks and chairs with disinfectant wipes, whenever students have moved between rooms.
- k. Teachers will also disinfect shared surfaces like keyboards at the start of every lesson.
- l. A 'no physical contact' rule will be introduced. It is not possible to enforce social distancing, but it is possible to enforce a rule which requires students to keep their hands to themselves. This will need to be reinforced through the behaviour system, and we hope that both students and parents will understand the reason for any detentions arising because of this, and will support the school in keeping all members of our community safe.
- m. There can be no sharing of equipment; pens and pencils cannot be lent or borrowed in class. Again, this will require reinforcing through the detention system. All students will be required to have a working pen (this is in any event a normal, basic expectation).
- n. Marking and homework will be done electronically where appropriate. This is both to minimise contact with shared surfaces, and also to prevent staff having to carry large stacks of books around all day. We will aim to use Google Classroom as our main approach to sharing resources and accepting

completed work. Students will be supported to learn how to use this method. **Families who have no suitable internet access or electronic devices at home should let their child's pastoral team know as all students will be expected to complete homework and to hand in work for assessment.**

- o. The number of points food is served from will be increased.
 - p. Students are encouraged to come to school on foot or by bike wherever possible to minimise crowding on public transport. We acknowledge that this is not possible for all students.
 - q. Individual faculties are also looking at sensible adjustments to the way they teach and to their curriculum in order to support these measures.
6. Use of PPE. Although wearing masks is not currently recommended for use in schools, we will have a supply available. This will primarily be for staff to help limit spread between classes and between year groups, but we acknowledge that some students may feel more comfortable if they use it. We will keep this under review as the situation develops.
7. Response to any infection. Registers for every lesson and class seating plans will help the Public Health England teams identify students or staff who need to self-isolate in the event of a confirmed case in school. As soon as a case is identified, we will follow the instructions and guidance given by our local health protection team and we will inform any students and parents who need to self-isolate. We do not anticipate needing to close the whole school, or even sending a whole year group home if a single case is identified, but we will follow the advice at the time. By September, we should also have a number of home testing kits in school, which we can give to students who have been in close contact with a confirmed case.

We understand that people will have further questions and concerns, so we will send out a further letter with final details in August. We will also run some Q&A sessions in the evening of the two staff INSET days in September (Tuesday 1st and Wednesday 2nd) in Cheney, and we are hoping to be able to hold an additional session in Bayards Hill Primary School as well. We will need to limit numbers coming to these events, so there will be a sign-up form on the school website shortly, together with precise details.

I would just like to close by wishing all families a restful break over the summer and by wishing Rupert Moreton all the best for his move to Malmesbury.

Best wishes,

Rob Pavey

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