

NR/CH

17 July 2020

Dear Parents and Carers

Here we are again - another school year over and it has been the most unusual one I can remember in 26 years of teaching. With most of our students having accessed their learning at home since mid-March, it seems a little surreal that we have reached the end of the summer term.

Can I start by thanking parents and carers for their patience, hard work and perseverance in helping us to ensure your children have received the best possible education under these most taxing of circumstances. Being a teacher isn't always easy but I hope many of you have found out how rewarding it can be when something 'clicks' and learning takes place.

We are absolutely looking forward to enjoying our summer break but, at the same time, already eagerly anticipating the start of next academic year. Unfortunately, due to the ongoing coronavirus pandemic, September won't be a return to 'normal' in the sense that there are lots of changes we've had to make to the site and organisation of the day in order to ensure we continue to be as safe as possible.

I have lots of information to share with you – I'll try and make it as concise as possible!

Term Dates

The first thing to note is that we are going to have a staggered start to the 2020/21 academic year in September, to allow our students plenty of time to become accustomed to the changes and the new layout.

Monday 31st August is a bank holiday

Tuesday 1st September is a teacher training day – **no students should attend**

Wednesday 2nd September is for students in **years 5, 8, 11 and 13 only**.

Thursday 3rd September is for **all students**

School will close for half term at the end of the school day on Friday 23rd October and reopen on Monday 2nd November. The Christmas holidays start at the end of the school day on Friday 18th December.

School Day

The timings of the school day remain the same from September, with lessons starting at 8.50am and the end of the formal day at 3.10pm every day.

Uniform

Due to the advice around clothing being washed more often, we are modifying our uniform expectations for the autumn term, so a blazer and tie should not be worn. You should already have received a letter from Mr McCudden outlining the uniform, but a summary is:

- Grey v-neck sweater with the school logo embroidered
- White shirt or polo shirt
- Black school shorts, knee length skirt or standard fit school trousers [not fashion items, jeans or leggings; no logos or embellishments]
- Shoes should be plain black throughout, without visible logo and be polishable

If you would like further clarification on the above, or would like to know where the uniform can be purchased, please visit our website or contact us directly.

Site organisation

Year 7 will revert back to being taught on the South Avenue site for 2020/21 and will be based in the mobile classrooms.

[As I mentioned earlier, the DfE have given all schools quite specific guidance on how they expect us to function in September and, should you wish to do so, you can find the original document by following the link.](#)

We have planned that:

- All year groups will be allocated an area or 'zone' of the school building and grounds where they will have the majority of their lessons
- At South Avenue, years 5 and 6 will use the main entrance from South Avenue and head directly into the rear yard, whilst year 7 will enter the school using the gate from the welfare, near the mobile classrooms, and use the front yard.
- At Acklington Road, years 8 and 9 will use the main student entrance, with years 10 and 11 using an entrance at the opposite side of the building, gaining access to the site using the gate between the science and English rooms.
- Breakfast Club will take place as usual from 8.00am on both sites.
- Year groups will stay in their zones, preferably in the same classroom as much as possible, and the teachers will move to the students
- Breaks and lunches will be taken in the zones with a restricted menu on offer from our canteen. Lunch will be delivered to the year group zones and eaten in classrooms and/or social areas, rather than the dinner hall.
- Packed lunches may be brought to school, but the contents should not be shared with others.

- Practical lessons will still take place, although they might be less frequent as these areas will be shared and will need cleaning between lessons when used by different groups of students.
- We are unable to have assemblies or other large gatherings. Should this level of social distancing continue later in the term, we will also have to change the format of parents' evenings and open evenings.
- Masks should not be worn in school, as the current advice suggests they are not effective in our environment. Government guidance at this time suggests that, unlike public transport, masks are not mandatory on the school buses. Should students choose to wear a mask when travelling to and from school, they need to bring a bag so they are able to store them as hygienically as possible during the school day. This is guidance which may well change significantly between now and September and I will update parents on this, and any other updates, towards the end of the summer break.

Staffing

Inevitably, at this time of year, we have some changes in our staffing for a variety of reasons.

Mrs Crosby began her maternity leave earlier this term and, as we eagerly await news of her baby, we wish her and her family all the very best.

You will remember that this time last year Mrs Brown took a year-long sabbatical and was due to return this September. I'm sure you'll be as perplexed as me when I tell you that the sunny climate and golden beaches of Portugal appear to be a bigger attraction than Amble [crazy, I know] and she has decided to move there permanently and pursue other adventures. She will be a huge miss to our school and our community, but we wish her all the very best for the future.

Miss Douglas has been with us for a year as our PE apprentice, working with our younger students during their PE lessons at South Avenue and, more recently, helping with Mrs McNaughton's group every Friday. She leaves us to take up her place on a degree course which I sincerely hope will lead to her returning in the near future as one of our PE staff.

Mrs Nicholson has been our Primary Improvement Lead at South Avenue since last March, when she stepped in to work with the year 5 and 6 teams to help us make some significant improvements in the quality of provision at South Avenue. She promised us that she would stay for one year to work alongside our dedicated and talented teachers to ensure our outcomes at key stage 2 improved. In all honesty, we must have had at least three years' worth of time, effort and dedication from Mrs Nicholson over the past 12 months as she has been absolutely integral to some key developments which sees our lower school site in a hugely better position for Mr Nisbet to lead from September.

Mrs Parks has been a cornerstone of James Calvert Spence College since its inception and of Coquet High School for many years before that. She is a highly valued, well respected and

dearly loved colleague and an influential and active member of the community. She represents what JCSC is all about – kindness, tolerance and understanding with a genuine drive and desire to ensure our young people are properly educated and prepared for the future. Having worked with our staff team, teaching our community's children over the past 27 years, Mrs Parks has decided that the time is right for her to take a very early retirement. This news comes with mixed emotions for all of us at JCSC as we understand that this is absolutely the right thing for her to do and the right time, but we know we will miss her. Fortunately, she has promised to continue visiting with her homemade cakes!

In September we have two new members of the maths team joining us in the form of Mr Robson and Mrs Davitt. I am sure they will be a huge success, contributing to the accelerated progress of our students in this key subject.

We also welcome back Miss Kane to the English department following her maternity leave, and she returns with the sole purpose of delivering high quality additional English teaching to small groups of students, assisting them in catching up and maximising progress.

In other staffing news, Mrs Yuill has been appointed as the permanent Director of Art & Design, and will be ably assisted by Miss Scrimgeour as second in Art & Design for the duration of Mrs Crosby's maternity leave.

At key stage 2, Mrs Allman, Miss Middleton and Mr Heeney take up new roles leading on reading, writing and maths respectively.

Mrs Davison was appointed as second in Maths earlier this term and joins our other leaders in ensuring we offer the very best education to our students.

I am sure you will join us in congratulating our existing colleagues who are taking on a new challenge and warmly welcoming our new staff.

I know that there has been a huge amount of information in this letter, if you would like any further clarification, or wish to speak to someone about any aspect of school life, please don't hesitate to get in touch – including during the summer break.

One group of people who work incredibly hard, and whose gargantuan efforts often go unnoticed is our governing body. They are a team of dedicated volunteers who give up hours of their time, totally unpaid, to ensure our community has a school that is continually improving, self-reflective and determined to give our young people the very best life chances. They are a highly professional, well-organised and effective team who have provided me personally, and the staff body as a whole, with unconditional support throughout this crisis. They are a fundamental part of the JCSC team and I am sure you will join me in thanking them for their time, dedication and unwavering commitment.

[The governors' annual report can be viewed on our website](#) and gives a glimpse into the work they do on behalf of us all.

Thank you for your continued support. It's been a hugely challenging and stressful time for us all, and I have been humbled by the wonderful, thoughtful comments that many parents have directed at Team JCSC. Our kitchen staff, our facilities staff, our cleaners, our LSPs, our office admin staff, our teachers and our community have all come together in the most fabulous way.... When times are challenging, good people show themselves to be great and, at JCSC, I'm proud to say I work with a great team. Thank you to you all!

We do hope that you have a safe, relaxing and enjoyable summer break and we look forward to having a full school again in September, when we will continue to strive for excellence for all of our students.

Best wishes



NEIL RODGERS
Executive Headteacher

Some key dates for the summer and the start of the 2010/21 academic year:

Thursday August 13th - A-Level results day

Thursday August 20th - GCSE results day

[Please see letter from Mr Nisbet regarding the protocol around results days]

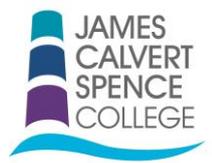
***Tuesday September 1st - Staff Training Day/
6th Form Enrolment Day***

***Wednesday September 2nd - Years 5, 8, 11 and 13 return/
6th Form Enrolment Day***

Thursday September 3rd - All students back to school

Friday October 23rd - End of first half term

NAVIGATE ILLUMINATE SHELTER



Monday November 2nd

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Students return to school

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