

15 July 2020

Dear Families,

Welcome to my final letter of the year. It has been the most difficult and frustrating time of my career in terms of the challenges we have faced, both as a community and as a school. Being unable to deliver a 'normal' education to our young people, and the potential long term effects of this, is a source of anxiety for all of you as parents and all of us as educationalists. However, we have strived to provide some form of education to everyone throughout this time and our attention has now turned to the challenges of our September provision.

I would like to thank you all for your patience and support over the past four months and ask for this to continue in the times to come. I hope that our initial plans are clear; however, please do contact the academy if you would like any further information, advice or support.

Consultation on a change to the school day (Monday only)

The consultation process has now been completed. Thank you to those of you who responded for your support and queries. I can now outline the changes below.

There will now be an extra hour of curriculum time every Monday. The change is permanent.

All students finish school at 3.50pm on a Monday. School will start at 8am as normal. All other days will remain the same and all students will finish at 2.50pm on Tuesdays to Fridays. There will be no after school enrichment or Year 11 Intervention on a Monday under this model, and detentions will only run for up to an hour after school on Mondays.

RE lessons will be delivered to every year group. This is a government directive and all schools in England must deliver an RE curriculum to all students. Years 7-10 will have an RE lesson once a week. Year 11 will have their RE content delivered as part of their pastoral provision (Morning Meeting / Form time).

If you would like more information about the RE curriculum, we will be placing the Curriculum Principles (a guide to the teaching and content of the subject) on our website shortly.

Thank you again for your feedback and your support of the academy at this time.

Year 11 Results Day

We are all looking forward to seeing all Year 11s on results day. If you are yet to book an appointment for the day, please do so as soon as you can. Unfortunately, the restrictions we have to put in place mean that no one can collect their results without making an appointment. All Year 11 were sent a letter relating to results day; however, please contact the academy if you need any further information. If you do not make an appointment, your results will be posted to the primary address we have on our system.

Year 6 Transition

We have set up a Transition section on our website – please go to the *Admissions* section. Here you will find a welcome video and tour of the academy alongside information about our values, learning habits and how learning modes are used in the classroom. There is also information on uniform and a quiz with prizes available!

Mr Grayson and I have also been 'meeting' students virtually while they are in their Primary schools. It has been lovely to see some faces and give opportunities for our new students to ask questions – I hope that they all feel a little better following these virtual meetings.



For new Year 7 students, there are instructions below relating to our first days back in September. Please read these carefully and please do contact us if you would like more information. You can contact reception, using the number below, or you can email our Year 6 Transition Leader, Mr Grayson: pgrayson@dixonsua.com

Plans for September

I will now outline our plans for the safe return of all students in September. Unless the government releases any conflicting guidance, we will be expecting all students to attend the academy. For students who have serious medical conditions, or those that must continue to shield, we ask that you contact the academy to begin discussions about supporting your child's continued education.

Firstly, our school days and weeks will not change from our current plans. The academy day will start at 8.00am and finish at 3.50pm (Monday) or 2.50pm (Tuesday – Friday).

The academy will open to students from Tuesday 1 September. Year 7 and Year 11 will return on the Tuesday. All other year groups will return on Wednesday 2 September.

Year 7: Tuesday 1 September at 7.45am
Year 11: Tuesday 1 September at 7.45am
Year 8: Wednesday 2 September at 7.45am
Year 9: Wednesday 2 September at 7.45am
Year 10: Wednesday 2 September at 7.45am

New Year 7 Intake – September

Our new Year 7 will have a day of induction to ensure that they can be supported in getting to know some of the key routines and expectations. Much of this will be affected by our COVID plans and, as school will look very different to normal, we will focus on supporting them to understand the basics and how they can attend the site safely. They will receive their form group information and be placed in sets for their subjects.

Our focus is on providing a safe space where our young people can begin their secondary education. However, I will not ignore the fact that all our new Year 7 families have been unable to visit us or experience our usual induction process over the past couple of months. I will make a promise now. As soon as we are in a position of returning to normal operations, we will both re-induct the students in to our usual way of life and I will invite you all in to the academy to present to you and allow you to meet our staff.

I will also write another letter to all new families (as soon as we complete the planning for returning in September), detailing some of our key expectations and how we will aim to support your child's transition to *Dixons Unity* in September.

Information for all families

Arrival and dismissal

In order to manage the safe entry and dismissal of students on to our site, we are using different entrances for each year group, and each year group will have all of their lessons in separate zones in the academy:

- We will open the academy gates at 7.45am.
- Students will then be asked to enter the site, observing social distancing and following staff instructions carefully to ensure they go to the correct zone before being allocated to their classes.
- All year groups will remain in bubbles and will be restricted to their zones, unless they have to travel to use practical facilities, such as PE.
- When we dismiss students, they will go to the same entry/exit point as outlined below.

It is vital that all students follow the guidance around arriving and leaving the academy site safely. We would recommend that all students return home and do not meet up with friends from other year groups. Of course, travelling home with someone from your household is perfectly permissible. Face masks must be worn on public



transport; however, we are currently awaiting further guidance about the use of face masks in schools. Please help us to keep our community safe by encouraging students to travel safely to and from the academy.

Year Group	Entrance / Exit to be used
7	Pedestrian side gate from the Heights
8	Main entrance at the front of school
9	Side (MUGA) gate (Congress Mount)
10	Delivery drive from Congress Mount
11	Back gate leading to PE (Heights)

Lesson arrangements

The timetable will run as normal and the curriculum will be focused on recovering the lost time from the end of this academic year.

Break and Lunch

Break and lunch will be at the usual times. At all times, year groups will remain separated and students will not be able to mix across year groups. There will not be food available in the canteen at break time. We will provide water; however, students are allowed to bring a suitable snack from home to have at break. Each year group will have a dedicated outside space for break and lunch; there will be no mixing between year groups.

Lunch will be served as normal; however, strict guidelines will be in place for queuing and serving of food. Each year group will have a dedicated area to eat.

All canteen surfaces will be cleaned between sittings.

Uniform

Students must wear full academy uniform. On the day that they have PE, they must wear their academy PE Kit as we are not able to have the PE changing areas available to students. *Design School Uniform* is our uniform supplier – they are based on the Headrow in Leeds City Centre, or you can purchase uniform items from their website.

For any families who would like advice or support with buying our uniform, please contact the general enquiries email (Year 8-11), or email Mr Grayson (new Year 7s).

Equipment

Students must bring their pencil case, planner, reading book and Knowledge Organiser to school every day. Students will not have access to lockers so bags and coats will need to be taken to their zones / classrooms. Students must not share any equipment with each other. Students will be able to replace items in school – we will have items for sale in each zone.

Further communication

I feel that it is really important to let you know that this will not be our final communication to you regarding the September return. I will be working through the summer to ensure that we have plans and provision in place for a safe and successful return. I may also have to update you if anything changes around lockdown measures and government guidance; please keep a look out for text messages and for information on our website and Twitter feed throughout the summer holidays. I will also be writing another letter to all our new families who are starting Year 7 in September to offer further guidance and support.

Our full Risk Assessments and Recovery Planning will be live on our website from w/c 24 August. We will regularly monitor our email accounts should you wish to contact us. Please see below for details.



Safeguarding and Child Protection

We are still operating our safeguarding and child protection provision over the summer holidays. If you have a concern or issue, please contact the academy safeguarding team using safeguardingteam@dixonsua.com , or contact me directly. We will address serious issues immediately. You can also call Social Services if you have concerns about a child on 0113 2224403 (between 9-5pm).

If you need to report a crime, or have an emergency situation, please contact the Police on 101 (or dial 999 if there is a threat of immediate harm).

Contacting the Academy:

For general enquiries: info@dixonsua.com

Child Protection / Safeguarding / Wellbeing issues: safeguardingteam@dixonsua.com

Attendance or Curriculum: Ms Burmo-Rothenburg – KBurmo-Rothenburg@dixonsua.com

Serious concerns: Mr Carr – dcarr@dixonsua.com

I hope that the information in this letter is useful. I also realise that you may have many questions about the arrangements for September. I hope that further communications over the next few weeks will address these questions or concerns. My main focus is the safety of our whole community and, as such, I will continue to work with the Dixons Academies Trust and all of my wonderful colleagues at *Dixons Unity* to ensure that students can return to full time education in a safe and controlled manner.

Thank you for your support over the past two years – I certainly did not expect to be beginning our third year as *Dixons Unity Academy* under such challenging circumstances. However, I know that we will work together in partnership to secure the best progress possible for our young people, sending them out in to the world as happy and confident young people who can have a positive impact on our community.

Finally, I want to give a special thank you to our current Year 11 students, who have suffered the most as a result of the COVID crisis. They have not had most of the opportunities that a Year 11 cohort would have and I am so sorry for this. We are immensely proud of you all individually, and as a year group, and I hope that you all go on to the next stages of your lives with confidence and resilience. You will always be a very special year group to all of us here at *Dixons Unity*. You will always be a part of our family too; please do contact us in the future if you need anything; we are always here for you. Now go out there and leave your mark on the world!

To all our families, I wish you a lovely summer.

Yours sincerely



Danny Carr
Principal

