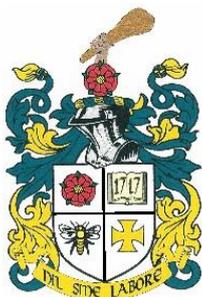


Headteacher:
Mrs A. Chapman, MA, SFHEA, NPQH



Founded in 1717

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Ref:Ach/lvu

July 2020

Dear Parents and Carers of our new Year 7 students (Class of 2025),

Thank you so much for your patience and understanding in what has been the most unusual period of my whole teaching career. I know you will have been disappointed that the lockdown has affected the usual end of term arrangements for transition and I cannot believe I have not yet met our new students.

I hope you have found the online videos, parent/carer presentation and transition work useful. Please find enclosed the correct information about the use of mobile phones, unfortunately in error we printed and posted an old copy to you in the presentation pack.

I know you will have many questions and I do not have all the answers at this moment, we will be working hard over the summer to put everything in place and a full guidance document will be emailed to you towards the end of August. In the meantime, please be reassured that we know that the Year 7 students need a special start to the year and we will guide them through this and I have no doubt that they will settle into Baines School very well and be happy students.

Plans to Fully Re-Open Baines School in September 2020

With the staged relaxation of a number of the 'lockdown measures' one of those is the full return to school of all students from September. The Department for Education published guidance for the full reopening of schools on 2 July and we have been busy exploring the practicalities of doing this whilst still having to adhere to the health and safety measures within the guidance. For those of you interested in reading the guidance it can be found here: www.gov.uk/government/publications/actions-for-schools-during-the-coronavirus-outbreak/guidance-for-fulloping-schools. There are many additional linked documents to provide more detail on specific aspects.

We will open to all students in September, but we will have to operate in a very different way to meet the requirements within the updated guidance and we are unsure about how long these measures will need to be in place. While I do not have the full detailed guidance pack ready for you now, this will be developed over the summer holidays, there are some basic pieces of information that you will need prior to the summer break.

There are lots of reports in the press about how schools will operate and a number of parents/carers have shared concerns with me regarding the potential for a reduced number of subjects in order to concentrate mainly on mathematics and English. The guidance has been published by the government and every school has an individual context regarding the layout of their school and how they can best meet the needs of their children and follow the government guidance.

In re-opening our school, there are some fundamental principles that have guided the decisions we have made:

1. Keep the curriculum as close to normal as possible – children need a broad curriculum of all subjects as they are all different. To reduce to core subjects would not produce balanced well-rounded students. The subjects like art, PE, music etc enhance and support positive mental health as well as being career choices for many students. It is appreciated that learning in subjects will be different in order to follow the government guidance about resources, equipment and staff distance guidelines
2. Keep everyone safe and reduce the movement of large numbers of students as much as possible. To do this will mean that staff will have to be the ones that move around more than students. It is better for forty-five staff to move more frequently than eight-hundred children
3. To allocate base rooms, social space and travel routes around the school to reduce the number of interactions between students and to try to maintain 'bubbles' as much as possible.

In essence, the fundamental change is that teachers will move around the school to students and students will largely (but not exclusively) remain in a named area of the school. In order to maintain a full curriculum, some subjects need to be taught in specialist rooms and this will require student movement.

You may be familiar with the term 'bubble' that is now used to refer to a distinct group of students within a school that do not mix with other distinct groups of students. The purpose of using 'bubbles' that do not mix is an attempt to reduce the chance of transmission and to make it quicker and easier in the event of a positive case of COVID-19 to identify those individuals that need to self-isolate without the need to close the whole school. Employing the concept of 'bubbles' in our secondary school setting conflicts entirely with our normal day to day running of our school.

Whilst we can do this to enable all students to return safely to school in September, we have made sure that when the time comes we can switch back to our normal operation overnight. As things stand, we have arranged to open in the following way with the caveat that everything is subject to change, dependent upon any further updates and/or further relaxation of lock down from central government.

Teaching within the 'bubbles'

All students will follow their normal timetabled lessons, but will remain within the same cluster of classrooms (year bases) for the lessons that do not require specialist equipment (English, Mathematics, history, geography, REP, languages, life skills) and their subject teachers will come to them. The students will move for the practical lessons, but this may not be every practical lesson as a rota may be needed to avoid year bubbles from mixing.

Year Bubble Base Areas

Year 7 – Top floor of N Block

Year 8 – N Block

Year 9 – Some rooms in L & T Blocks

Year 10 – N Block and some science rooms in B Block



Year 11 – B Block

Toilets

Each year group will have an identified block of toilets.

PE and sports lessons

These lessons will be taught as normal, with the early focus being on personal fitness but students will be expected to wear their Baines PE kit to school on the days they have PE to restrict the use of the changing rooms. We will adapt the PE kit slightly to allow students to wear plain black leggings or plain black tracksuit bottoms instead of the shorts/skort.

School uniform and equipment

This is to be worn, as normal, on the days when students do not have PE. Please ensure students have their equipment including a calculator and reading book with them as our ability to loan equipment will be more limited than usual.

Timings of the school day

The timings of the school day will remain as normal starting with the warning bell at 8.35am and finishing at 2.50pm. We will be allocating social areas for each year group and it will be expected that students will meet in those areas before school. At the end of the day, those students who catch school buses will be released slightly earlier and then class teachers will dismiss students in an orderly manner following a rota that will reduce the opportunity of students passing each other in the corridor.

Breaks and Lunchtimes

In order to ensure no mixing of the bubbles at break and lunchtimes, we will operate an early break/lunch for allocated year groups. We will split the refectory in half so that two-year groups can use it at their allocated time and then vacate into their social area, prior to the next two-year groups entering the refectory. We are exploring a different venue in school for Year 11 to have their food and breaks in. For now, we will be serving a reduced food menu, and we will ask students to pre-order their food for the whole of the following week. Food will be prepared and packaged specifically for each child, labelled with their name to ensure they have the food they ordered and to reduce the proximity for queuing and serving. Please do not worry about this, it will all be explained to the students on their first day in school. You can really help by ensuring there is credit uploaded onto ParentPay in readiness for the return to school. Healthy packed lunches will still be permitted in the hall, again during the allocated times for the year groups. We ask that students take all their rubbish home with them.

Start of the new term

There is an amendment to the start of the school year to induct the students back into our school. For the majority of our children, we have not seen them since March and we will need to welcome them back and go through the health and safety procedures, explain how our school will run during this re-opening phase and give them the opportunity to settle back into school. For our new Year 7, they have never met each other before and do not know what form group they are in, they need a special induction day to welcome them and get to know Baines School.



Tuesday 1st & Wednesday 2nd September – Staff INSET Day (School is closed for students)

Thursday 3rd September – Induction Day for Years 8, 9 & 10 (School is closed for years 7 & 11)

Friday 4th September – Induction Day for Years 7 & 11 (School is closed for years 8, 9 & 10)

Monday 7th September – School is open for all students to follow their timetable

We are very much aware that these new arrangements for the start of the new academic year are far from ideal. At the risk of stating the obvious, none of us would plan to organise our school in this way and, like you, I am hopeful that we will not need to implement them for long. However, I am really pleased to be able to welcome all of our students back to school and to support them in getting back to some 'normal' routines as well as continuing their face to face education. I will write to you about this again towards the end of August with a fully detailed plan.

Please also reassure your child/children that when they start, we will not expect them to remember or know everything about our school, how it works and where everything is. Moving to a new school is a large change for anyone and with the new routines being put in place due to Covid-19, this makes it a little more challenging. However, please be positive, it is an exciting time and we are looking forward to the new academic year.

Hopefully, the information I have shared with you will have answered some of your questions and given you the information you need for now.

On the first morning when your child arrives, we would like them to make their way to the sportshall, between 8.15 and 8.30am this is situated at the side of the astro-turf. Unfortunately, in order to protect the bubbles, we will not be able to permit parents and carers to join the students in the sportshall so we ask that you say your goodbyes and good lucks outside the school entrance gates. There will be staff to show them where to go so please do not worry if they are not sure where this is.

During the summer holidays, more information will be made available and this will be posted on our Facebook and emailed out. Please keep checking the Baines School Facebook page for updates.

Please take care this summer and I look forward to welcoming you and your family to Baines in September.

With kind regards,



Mrs A Chapman
Headteacher

