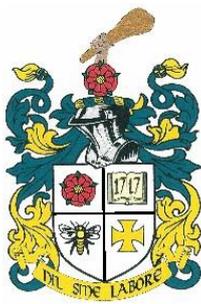


Headteacher:
Mrs A. Chapman, MA, SFHEA, NPQH, FCCT



Founded in 1717

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24th August 2021

Dear Parents and Carers,

Update regarding Baines School start to term September 2021

I hope you and your families are all enjoying the summer break. It was wonderful to welcome so many students to our summer school, and I especially enjoyed meeting many of our new year 7 group.

I am writing with an update with regards to the start of term in September, following the guidance that the government have issued from 16th August 2021 onwards. Please note, at the time of issue, this letter complies with the most recent government update, but as we all know, change can happen quickly and at the last minute. We have not yet received any further updates from Lancashire Local Authority, so please be understanding if there are any unforeseen last-minute changes (I hope there won't be).

This document covers the detail for all of the year groups, so please do ensure you read the relevant information for your children, especially with regards to Covid testing and the staggered start to the new school year.

In addition to the Covid information, there are some key reminders which will contribute to a smooth and positive start to the year helping us to quickly focus on learning without being distracted with the basic expectations and standards.

Start of Term for students and Covid Testing

As you are aware, there is a requirement to carry out two Covid tests for all students for whom we have received consent for at the start of term. For those students who gave consent in the last in-school mass testing process, we can use the same consent. If you no longer wish your child to be tested, then please email the Covid inbox to communicate this.

For the new year 7 students, we have already received consent for over half of the year group using our online form. The government has said that once the in-school tests have finished, students and staff should continue the twice-weekly home-testing until the end of September (when it will be reviewed).

The tests are new and do not involve swabbing the back of the throat, just the nostrils, they also take less time to process than the previous tests. For parents and carers of year 7 students, we understand that this is new to the students and please be reassured that we will explain the



process to them and will support them as this is likely to be the first time that many will have taken a Covid test.

Information about the time slot for the tests will be posted on Class Charts in a similar way as last time. We will also post the general times on our school website and Facebook.

For those students in the new year 7, if we have received consent, the students will be tested during their first day on Monday 6th September so you will not receive an appointment time, we will manage that internally during the school day.

As you are aware, because of the testing, we have had to adapt the start to term again this year. We are ambitious in the plan so that there is as little delay to the start of term as possible. We are able to achieve this because we have a fantastic team of staff and parent/carer volunteers who are giving up their time to support all of our children. On behalf of all of our Baines community, I would like to thank the Covid Testing Team.

The start to term is as previously published in my July update letter, there have not been any further changes to the timing of plan since then.

Start of Autumn Term – September 2021

The table below shows the plan for the start of term 2021/22:

| Date | Activity | Normal School Day | Testing Appointments | Remote Home Learning |
|------------------------------------|--|--|---|---|
| Thursday 2 nd September | INSET DAY Staff training & setting up Mass Testing Centre | No year group INSET Day | No year group | No year group |
| Friday 3 rd September | INSET DAY Staff training | No year group INSET Day | Years 10 & 11 come to school for their Covid test appointment then return home | No year group |
| Monday 6 th September | Induction & testing for year 7 Years 10 & 11 start at break time. | Year 7 arrive at 8.30am in sports hall. Years 10 & 11 to arrive at break time 10.50 ready to go to form | Year 7 will be tested during the day in school | Years 8 & 9 at home – work will be set on Class Charts to complete at home |



| | | | | |
|---|--|--|---|--|
| | | group at 11.10. | | |
| Tuesday 7th September | | Years 7, 10 & 11 normal school day and lessons | Years 8 & 9 come in for their Covid test appointment and then return home | Work will be set on Class Charts for years 8 & 9 to complete at home. |
| Wednesday 8th September | | All year groups back in school. 7, 8, 9, 10 & 11. | Any mop up tests and the start of 2 nd tests | None |
| Thursday 9th September | | All year groups back in school. 7, 8, 9, 10 & 11. | Working through a timetable of 2 nd tests for all year groups. These will continue until completed over the next few days. | None |

Please note the start time on Monday 6th September for years 10 & 11. They are required to arrive at school at 10.50am for break time (years 7, 10 & 11 will receive free toast at break on this day) and then move to their form group to start at 11.10am. This later start for the older students allows the new year 7 students to be welcomed in to school and forms part of their induction process that they missed in July.

All of the information that students will require with regards to their Covid Testing time slot and the remote learning work for years 8 and 9 will be communicated via Class Charts.

Masks & Covid routines

The government has communicated that we are no longer required to maintain the strict year group bubbles and there is no longer a requirement to wear face masks in school. At Baines, we want everyone to feel comfortable so as always, we will continue to allow anyone to wear a mask who wishes to (The wearing of masks is still a requirement on public transport, including to and from school).

There are four main strands to the government guidance for Covid procedures in school (these are called Control Measures):

- 1. Ensure good hygiene for everyone**
- 2. Maintain appropriate cleaning regimes**
- 3. Keep occupied spaces well ventilated**



4. Follow public health advice on testing, self-isolation and managing confirmed cases of Covid-19

1. Ensure good hygiene for everyone

Hand hygiene – we will continue to ask students to carry their own hand sanitiser as part of their basic equipment and to encourage students to regularly wash their hands at breaks and lunchtimes, as well as sanitise as they enter and exit classrooms.

Respiratory hygiene – we will continue to encourage the ‘catch it, bin it, kill it’ approach to reduce the potential spread of germs.

2. Maintain appropriate cleaning regimes

We have an excellent cleaning team who work predominantly before and after school to keep our school clean and ensure there is a deep clean of desks and frequently used areas on a daily basis. Although sanitising desks and chairs after every single lesson is no longer a requirement, we will continue to ensure that rooms have a supply of antibacterial wipes to be used as required. We also think it is good practice for students to wipe down the computer and music keyboards after every use, so we will continue the routines that the students have become accustomed to.

3. Keep occupied spaces well ventilated

When school is in operation, it is important to ensure it is well ventilated and that a comfortable teaching and learning environment is maintained. As part of our risk assessment, we had already identified any areas of the school where ventilation required some improvement so we have already turned off air conditioning and put measures in place, for example: opening windows (especially where large numbers of people gather such as the school hall), limit the size of a group timetabled in any rooms with lower levels of ventilation. The government guidance is that, “Opening external windows can improve natural ventilation, and in addition, opening internal doors can also assist with creating a throughput of air. If necessary, external opening doors may also be used (if they are not fire doors and it is safe to do so)”. This has to be balanced during the colder weather where there is the need for ventilation while maintaining a comfortable temperature for staff and students to work in.

You may have read in the news over the last week, that the government is carrying out research linked to providing schools with CO2 room gauges. As always, we will adopt whatever system we are required to by the government. I will inform you if we are to receive such devices and how they work etc.

4. Follow public health advice on testing, self-isolation and managing confirmed cases of Covid-19

As always, we will follow the PHE advice concerning the management of any health aspect linked to Covid. Here is a summary of the latest guidance:

a. If a person develops Covid-19 symptoms or has a positive test – they should not come into school. If anyone at school develops symptoms, they should be sent home (avoiding



using public transport, ideally be collected by a family member). Siblings who are either under 18 or have been double vaccinated, no longer are required to self-isolate but it is recommended that they attain a PCR test.

Close Contacts, Isolation and Confirmatory PCR Tests

As a school, we are no longer required to carry out the close contact tracing for a student who tests positive, this will be done by the NHS who will liaise directly with the parent/carer. The guidance says that contacts from a school setting will only be traced by the NHS where an individual has been specifically identified as being a close contact.

To be honest, I cannot see how the NHS can carry this process out as accurately as we can as a school, so I will not be surprised if this system changes once term starts again. This is the excerpt from the government guidance:

“Individuals are not required to self-isolate if they live in the same household as someone with COVID-19, or are a close contact of someone with COVID-19, and any of the following apply:

- they are fully vaccinated
- they are below the age of 18 years and 6 months
- they have taken part in or are currently part of an approved COVID-19 vaccine trial
- they are not able to get vaccinated for medical reasons

Instead, they will be contacted by NHS Test and Trace, informed they have been in close contact with a positive case and advised to take a [PCR test](#). We would encourage all individuals to take a PCR test if advised to do so.

Staff who do not need to isolate, and children and young people aged under 18 years 6 months who usually attend school, and have been identified as a close contact, should continue to attend school as normal. They do not need to wear a face covering within the school, but it is expected and recommended that these are worn when travelling on public or dedicated transport.

Confirmatory PCR tests

Staff and pupils with a positive Lateral Flow Device test result should self-isolate in line with the [stay at home guidance for households with possible or confirmed coronavirus \(COVID-19\) infection](#). They will also need to [get a free PCR test to check if they have COVID-19](#).

Whilst awaiting the PCR result, the individual should continue to self-isolate.

If the PCR test is taken within 2 days of the positive lateral flow test, and is negative, it overrides the self-test LFD test and the pupil can return to school, as long as the individual doesn't have COVID-19 symptoms.

Attendance

School attendance is mandatory for all pupils of compulsory school age and it is a priority to ensure that as many children as possible regularly attend school.”



In my last letter to you in July, I explained that some of the procedures we have put in place due to Covid, have worked really well and we have reflected that some of the small but simple changes have led to a smoother running school. Some of the examples of these are: movement routes through the different buildings as this reduces the bottle necks that can happen at lesson changeovers, year 11 social space, online ILC, form rooms for years to be grouped in close proximity to each other so that a 'belonging' and 'year identity' can be developed, including the celebration of high-quality student work in the PROUD display boards. We will have some face to face assemblies but will retain some sessions online, including online guest speakers as this allows us to access a much wider range of speakers.

In September, we will consult with parents and carers about their experience of online consultation evenings, to see whether parents/carers wish for these to remain online or move back to the face to face sessions in school.

School Buses

There are some changes to the school bus service. The X12 and X2 will no longer run as these were additional services provided by the Department of Education just for students when social distancing requirements were in place to reduce numbers on buses. The number 2 will increase in frequency to every 30 minutes to support transporting school children. The number 12 will run as normal.

Food

While we will retain some elements of year groups for eating arrangements and a staggered lunch sitting, we will be further developing and broadening our food selection to be more in line with the menus prior to Covid. We will also serve breakfast again from 8.00 to 8.30am in the refectory from Wednesday 7th September 2021.

We will re-introduce the facility to sit and eat, but I ask that parents/carers talk to students about ensuring that any waste is disposed of and not left for the refectory staff to clear away. The litter situation has been much better since students have not been sitting to eat.

We will monitor the continuation of students being able to eat outside as I believe this is a nice change for the students to be able to sit outside on the benches, but should litter or seagulls become a problem, we may need to review this. This includes bottles, which is the main issue regarding litter.

Please ensure that there is credit on your ParentPay account as we cannot give credit. After things have settled following the first week of term, any student who does not have credit to pay for their food will be allowed a sandwich at lunchtime until their account is back in credit. I am sorry that I have had to take this decision but last year there were too many accounts in debt and we are now having to engage with a debt recovery company. I never want students to go hungry but cannot allow the use of educational funding to subsidise parental debts. I appreciate your support and understanding in this.



Tracksuits

A reminder that students are encouraged to wear the new Baines School tracksuit to school on the days they have PE lessons and PE clubs. This will be monitored by Progress Tutors to ensure that no one is wearing the tracksuit on days when they should be in full uniform. The Baines School tracksuit is compulsory for the new year 7 students, but will be phased in for the other year groups. From September, on PE days students should come to school in one of the following options:

- New Baines Tracksuit – with PE kit (PE top, shorts or skort underneath for lesson and tracksuit to put back on top to keep them warm and dry)
- Baines PE Rugby Shirt and Baines School PE shorts
- Baines PE Hoody and plain black long leggings

Please note, no other hoodies, tops or tracksuits will be permitted, only Baines PE branded items as this helps with ensuring the students look smart and can be identified (no stranger danger onsite). The benefit of the tracksuit is that it can keep them warm and dry, especially in winter.

You may order the Baines tracksuit online <https://baines.lancs.sch.uk/uniform-shop/>, please be understanding with any orders that have been recently placed, we have had to order more stock because of the popularity of certain sizes and this may result in a short delay.

Standards of Appearance

I am sure that there will be many students who have enjoyed changing their appearance over the summer holidays. Please ensure that anything that does not meet our uniform expectations is rectified **before** returning to school in September. In particular, false nails, hair colour, false eyelashes, jewellery and piercings and trainers will need checking. Please ensure that they are all resolved prior to the first day back. We do not want to start the year with any negatives because of students not meeting the uniform and appearance expectations. Thank you, I appreciate your support with this.

Equipment

Please ensure that your child has the correct equipment at the start of term to help maximise their learning. Having a well-stocked pencil case, calculator and reading book is essential for the start of term. Please also ensure they continue to bring their mini-whiteboard, pen and folder with them for use in lessons, we spent a lot of money supplying these to every student last year and they really support ongoing feedback in lessons. Anyone who has lost theirs will be expected to purchase a replacement from school. The new Year 7 will be provided with one when they start in September.



Footwear

Black polishable shoes should be worn on days when students do not have PE. Some students try to wear black trainers; however, I would very much appreciate you ensuring your child has the correct footwear. School shoes do not have logos on, such as the Nike Tick.

Wellbeing

The students' wellbeing continues to be extremely important to us, and therefore over the first two weeks, all students will be asked to complete a wellbeing survey to ensure that if anyone needs support returning to or starting at Baines School, they can be identified and supported quickly.

I am really looking forward to welcoming all of our students to Baines in September, although we tried to maintain as close as possible to normal as we could last year, there has been disruption. I am so proud of the way that everyone in our community supported the school and the children through the pandemic. The government guidance is that there may be situations that require schools to 'step up and step-down measures' in response to changing circumstances. We will follow guidance and keep you informed of any changes required. It isn't over yet and there are bound to be challenges and further change, but in working together, I truly believe we are developing highly successful, well-rounded children who are flexible to adapt to whatever life throws at them but most importantly, young people who know how to keep themselves safe, healthy and are happy!

I am sure we are all looking forward to getting back some of the things we have missed, for example: school trips, breakfast and increased variety of food, more enrichment clubs, use of the ILC every night and the ability to work across year groups.

There have been some improvements in the school buildings during the holidays (and hopefully some more developments to come during the year) and I am sure the students will notice a positive difference. I don't want to spoil the surprise now, but look forward to sharing them with you in my first Headteacher Update of the year. In the meantime, enjoy the last few days of the holiday and support your children in getting back into the correct sleeping and waking patterns for school, ensure your ParentPay account is in credit and help them to pack their bag before the first day of school.

Welcome to 2021/22 – let us make it an amazing year!

Yours faithfully,



Mrs A Chapman
Headteacher



