



The Blue Coat School

www.blue-coat.oldham.sch.uk

Proud to be part of the Cranmer Education Trust

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Dear Parents and Carers

I hope that you and your families are safe and well and that as restrictions start to ease, you are gradually starting to establish some more 'normality' in your lives. I know that many of our families have suffered bereavements or have had significant worries over the health of loved ones during this pandemic, so please be reassured that you have always been in our thoughts and prayers.

Thank You - Can I start by thanking you all for your help and support during the last 17 weeks. Without question this has been the strangest and most challenging school year for us all, but we have kept going. Despite the challenges from working from home, not only have our young people engaged with the work they have been set, they have also produced work that has been of high quality and which will leave them with strong foundations in their knowledge and understanding for when they return to school next year.

I don't underestimate the challenges of working from home as a family. The sacrifices everyone has to make, the change to routines, the stress and anxiety of running a family home, juggling work commitments whilst also making sure that your son/daughter is keeping up with their schoolwork is not only incredibly difficult, it's also exhausting! But you have done it. For some it may have been more difficult than others, but you have all done everything you can as a family, and what has been right for you as a family, to support our young people through this incredibly challenging period.

We will not be setting any work for over the summer holidays. Everyone needs a break – you do, and the children do, and I hope you all manage to spend some quality time together as a family during the break. Can I also thank you for the numerous messages of support that you have sent to the school and to staff – you will never know how much these have helped.

Finally, on your behalf can I thank the staff for their tireless efforts during this period of school closures. Whilst juggling the same challenges from working from home as us all and managing illness and personal bereavements; staff have continued to set high quality work, maintain contact and relationships with the pupils, provide pastoral care and support to those who need it and look after our vulnerable and key worker pupils. They have also managed to adapt curricula and schemes of work for next year, to consolidate the learning pupils have acquired during the last few months and to focus on the key knowledge they now need to make progress when they return.

It has been inspiring to see how pupils, parents and staff have all pulled together to support each other throughout this crisis and it reinforces what a special school community and family we have at Blue Coat. So, thank you to you all.



September – It has been an absolute delight to welcome back our Year 10 and 12 pupils to Blue Coat over the last five weeks. To see how happy the children have been to return to school and how much they have enjoyed being back in lessons is without question the highlight of the last 17 weeks. Schools are just empty buildings without the energy and enthusiasm of their young people, and I wish we could have welcomed more year groups back - the good news is that from September we can!

You will have all received the letter from Mrs Hollis, CEO of the Cranmer Education Trust which outlines arrangements for school across the Trust. This letter will provide further details on how we will do this at Blue Coat, and how we will do it by putting the health, safety and welfare of pupils, staff and our wider community at the heart of everything we do. School is going to look very different in September. This is not a return to a normal, but at least it is a return.

Opening to pupils – As you can imagine, there is a huge amount of work to do at Blue Coat to get the school ready for September. Due to guidance and restrictions about pupil movement and interactions, we will be keeping the pupils in Year group bubbles. This is the only occasion where the uniqueness of our school site actually helps us for once!

We have been able to divide our school buildings into 7 different 'schools'. Each year group will have its own building, their own classrooms, indoor and outdoor social spaces. The pupils will move around their own Year group 'school', but they will not mix with children from other Year groups. Staff will move from 'school to school' to deliver lessons. We will be able to deliver a full curriculum and the pupils will be taught by subject specialists and their own teachers for every lesson, just as if we were returning as 'normal' in September.

We are having to make adjustments to many of our teaching spaces to accommodate this and for teaching staff, this is going to be like working in a new school! It is going to take some getting used to so we will be staggering the return of pupils in September. We will now have two training days for staff (Tuesday, 1st September and Wednesday, 2nd September) so that they are familiar with the new arrangements and understand how the school will operate. We will also be holding transition and induction days for our pupils in Year 7 and 12 because they didn't get these this year and it is essential that we provide them with the opportunity to settle into Blue Coat before all 1750 pupils arrive.

Therefore, the start of term will look like this:

- Monday, 31st August – School closed (Bank Holiday).
- Tuesday, 1st September – Staff Training Day 1.
- Wednesday, 2nd September – Staff Training Day 2.
- Thursday, 3rd September – School opens to Year 7 and Year 12 only.
- Friday, 4th September – School is open for Year 7 and Year 12 only.
- Monday, 7th September – School reopens to all Year Groups (Years 7 – 13)

(We will be setting pupils in Year 8, 9, 10, 11 and 13 pre-learning tasks on Thursday 3rd September in preparation for their return on Monday, 7th September)

Please be aware that just as throughout this pandemic things may change. I will write to you during the week beginning 24th August, to confirm our final arrangements. I will also give you much more detail then about how the school will operate on a daily basis because by that point, we will know for certain. For now, I will you give you the generic principles we are working towards so that you can start to prepare as a family.



The School Day – Timings for the school day will stay just as they have this year.

	Normal School Day	School Day Q Wednesday
AM Registration	8:40am – 8:50am	8:40am – 8:50am
Period 1	8:50am – 9:50am	8:50am – 9:50am
Period 2	9:50am – 10:50am	9:50am – 10:50am
Break	10:50am – 11:10am	10:50am – 11:10am
Period 3	11:10am – 12:10pm	11:10am – 12:10pm
Period 4	12:10pm – 1:10pm	12:10pm – 1:10pm
Additional 6 th Form PM Registration		1:10pm – 1:15pm
Lunch	1:10pm – 2:00pm	1:10pm – 1:45pm
PM Registration	2:00pm – 2:20pm	1:45pm – 2:05pm
Period 5	2:20pm – 3:20pm	Supervised study available until 3:20pm

We will not be operating a staggered start for different year groups. So many pupils rely on school buses to get to school that to operate a staggered start is impossible. As soon as pupils arrive at Blue Coat, we will be directing them to their Year group 'school' and zone, so that they don't mix with other year groups. Pupils will be able to access the school site from 8:00am.

Break and lunchtime will also be at the same times. As each Year group is in their own 'school' with its own internal and external spaces, we can easily keep the children apart. Pupils will not be able to access the restaurant at break or lunch. If they want a mid-morning snack, they must bring their own. At lunchtime pupils will only be able to eat packed lunches. They can either bring their own or we will operate a grab bag delivery service to their form room. Details on how to order these will follow in the letter week beginning 24th August.

We will continue with the early finish on Q Wednesday that we introduced this year. The feedback from parents and pupils about this has been extremely positive. It will also allow staff the time to plan and adapt curricular as the year unfolds and we start to unpick the key knowledge we need to address with the pupils following the periods of school closures. Our curriculum model runs on 49/50 lessons a fortnight across all year groups, so we are not reducing the curriculum coverage or teaching time of any year group.

We are finalising the bus arrangements and at present and like last year, most have confirmed that they will be able to provide the school service for the early finish. Again, I will update you with the finalised bus arrangements in August. We will also provide supervised provision for any pupils who are unable to get home until 3:20pm and we will be writing to parents in September to ask if your son/daughter will require this.

We will however be asking Year 11 pupils to remain at Blue Coat on Q Wednesday period 5. This year we changed the order of our English curriculum to give the pupils more time in Year 10 than Year 11. This was so they could cover significant parts of the course content in Year 10 and spend Year 11 consolidating their knowledge. Obviously, they have lost out on this additional time this year, so we will be using this additional period to support their learning. We expect all Year 11 students to remain for this session, and will appreciate your support with this.

Travel – The majority of our pupils will travel to school using school buses or public transport. The current guidance is that they must wear face masks which they must remove when entering school. TFGM are looking to increase the number of bus services available and we will provide more information about this in August. As well as wearing face masks it is also important that the pupils follow all the rules outlined about social distancing whilst travelling. It is also vital that when children are moving between school and buses that they maintain social distance. We will enforce this as soon as they arrive at Blue Coat, but can I ask (insist) that as parents you all reinforce this with your children.



Many parents may choose to drop off and pick up their children. If you do this can I ask that you drop them off or pick them up at a safe place that is a distance away from Blue Coat, which enables them to walk the final part of their journey. Unless for significant health and wellbeing needs, we will not be allowing parents to drop off or pick up pupils from our school site. Our school drive has always been an extension of our corridors, and this is even more the case as we move to a 'school within a schools' model. We will also be restricting the vehicles we have on site during the school day to essential deliveries and medical emergencies only, so please bear this in mind if you need to visit the school for any reason.

Standards and Expectations – As a school we have the highest standards and expectations of all of our pupils in every area of school life. Our pupils are a credit to the school, and we cannot wait to welcome them back to Blue Coat in September. However, when they do return, school is going to be very different for them and they are going to have to ensure that they are **school ready** every day.

Before the pandemic we had the capacity to support and challenge any pupil who didn't arrive at school with the necessary equipment or appropriate uniform. With the restrictions on social distancing and sharing of equipment, we simply can't do this anymore, so we are going to need (rely on) your support with this as parents.

What does school ready mean:

- That they are in full uniform. What is acceptable and what is not is clearly outlined on the school website. Please do not send them in wearing trainers, inappropriate trousers, jewellery (other than a watch), inappropriate haircuts, false nails/eyebrows or excessive make up.
- That they are ready to learn. Check their bag with them the night before. They need their books, pens, a pencil, a ruler, a glue stick and any subject specific equipment ie. calculator. They will also need their PE kit on days when they have PE.
- Mobile phones are not to be used once the pupils enter the school site. If possible, please leave these at home. If it is essential that they have mobile phones as they travel to and from school, then they must be turned off and put in school bags as soon as they enter the school site. If pupils use their mobile phone during the school day, they will be confiscated for five days as per school policy – think of the unnecessary challenges this will present having to collect a mobile phone off a pupil. Please note that for similar reasons we will not be collecting valuable items in as pupils change for PE, so please only send your child to school with the essentials.
- That they are ready to learn. They've done their homework or pre reading tasks. Many of our young people will have developed strange sleeping habits over the last term. They need to get back into a normal and healthy sleeping pattern.
- That they follow the behaviour policy of the school. We have also created an addendum to our behaviour policy as a result of Covid-19 which is displayed on the school website. As well as our usual school rules, there will be some additional ones. The pupils must follow carefully designed one-way routes around the school. They must also follow the social distancing guidance they are given when moving between lessons and at break and lunch.
- That they follow our rules on hygiene. We have enough hand sanitizer to sink a battleship! We will have hand sanitizer stations set up all across the school. The pupils must clean their hands as they arrive on the school site, as they enter a building and as they leave and enter classrooms.



Life at Blue Coat is going to be very different for us all in September. It may be a while before we return to what we would class as 'normal' school, so we must all get used to working like this. Can I please ask that you work with us on this? Talk to your children and remind them that now more than ever it is essential that they do what they are told when they are told – not to do so potentially puts another pupil, member of staff, or family member at risk.

Examination Results

We will be issuing examination results to Year 11, 12 and 13 pupils electronically this year. A letter outlining this process has already been sent to parents with children in the relevant Year groups. On behalf of us all, I wish our Year 11, 12 and 13 pupils the best of luck with their examination results and in their future endeavours.

Finally – As I explained, I will write to you the week beginning 24th August to update you with our final plans for reopening and also share with you the operational details about how the school will function on a daily basis. The last 17 weeks have been incredibly challenging for us all and I thank you all for your support, patience and understanding.

We can't wait to welcome our young people back to Blue Coat – it has been awful without them. There is a lot of talk in the media about 'lost learning' and that the pupils are behind. This is not true, and it is actually unhelpful. Children of every age across the entire country are in exactly the same position. In fact, the work that the pupils at Blue Coat have been completing puts them in a very strong position for next year because we have been making them do the work and they have developed secure knowledge and understanding as a result. We will not be telling the children they are behind because they simply aren't. The most important thing is that we get all our young people back to school and show them that there is hope beyond this pandemic.

I hope that you all enjoy a peaceful and restful summer. I leave you with our school verse for the year.

"Give all your worries to Him, because He cares about you." 1 Peter 5:7

God Bless.

Yours sincerely,



Mr R. Higgins
Headteacher
The Blue Coat School

