



The Blue Coat School

www.blue-coat.oldham.sch.uk

Proud to be part of the Cranmer Education Trust

Egerton Street, Oldham OL1 3SQ

Tel: (0161) 624 1484

Email: secretary@blue-coat.org

Headteacher: Mr R Higgins, M.A.

Our Reference: RHIGG/CLA/542

Date: 18<sup>th</sup> September, 2020

Dear Parent/Carer,

Thank you for all your help and support over the first two weeks of the academic year. I think we all knew that this would not be a return to school as normal, and that some significant challenges lay ahead, and in fact still lie ahead of us all.

But, hopefully the last two weeks reassure you that as a school, we are prepared. The pupils are already making fantastic progress in their studies and we are ready to deal with whatever the pandemic present us with. The next few months are clearly not going to be without disruption for us and for all schools across the country. So far, we have had 3 pupils test positive for COVID-19. In each case we have worked with Public Health, identified close 'contacts' and communicated with you quickly, transparently and clearly the steps we are taking to keep everyone safe.

This year we will all be constantly learning and adapting to the current climate; which, as we know, changes frequently and often without much notice. From **Monday, 28<sup>th</sup> September** we will be making changes to the timings of the school day. We will start at the same time but will finish 15 minutes earlier. These 15 minutes will be taken off the pupils' lunchtime, and the school day will now look like this.

	<b>Normal School Day</b>	<b>School Day Q Wednesday</b>
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 <sup>th</sup> Form PM Registration		1:10pm – 1:15pm
Lunch	1:10pm – 1.45pm	1:10pm – 1:45pm
PM Registration	1.45pm - 2:05pm	1:45pm – 2:05pm
Period 5	2:05pm – 3:05pm	Supervised study available until 3:20pm

Please note, that the arrangements for "Q" Wednesdays will remain the same.

### Why are we doing this?

As we operate a school-within-a-school model, we have no restaurant, and cannot offer hot food. As pupils are eating packed lunches, they are finishing their meals much quicker than usual – especially without the restaurant queuing time, which some have even acknowledged they miss!



With the school-within-a-school model we have also lost all our social spaces and the ability to offer our usual wide range of extra-curricular activities. As a result, pupils are eating in classrooms and then being sent outside so we can clean them for Period 5. This has been manageable so far because the weather has been kind, and unseasonably warm, but we all know this is unlikely to last. Reducing lunchtime by 15 minutes will still allow the pupils adequate time to eat their lunch but will not require them to spend sustained periods outside with little to do, in whatever weather Oldham Edge throws at them.

We have contacted the bus companies and all services except the 893 and 823 will arrive at 3.00pm to accommodate the earlier finish time. Pupils on the 893 and 823 will remain in their school bubble until 3.20pm, where they will be supervised by members of staff and will have the opportunity to make a start with homework. They must not leave at 3.05pm and walk into Oldham. I appreciate that other pupils may also need to stay in school until 3.20pm due to the timings of service buses or what time they can be picked up by parents. The same supervised study will be available for these pupils.

If your son/daughter needs to use the 823 or 893 to get home, or you require them to stay in school for other reasons, **please follow the link at the bottom of the letter**. You will have until Wednesday, 23<sup>rd</sup> September to do this.

This is a temporary arrangement. When we can offer increased dining facilities and social spaces to our young people, we will return to the normal timings of the school day. I hope you understand and will support these necessary changes.

Finally, we have had a really positive start to the school year. It's wonderful to have the pupils back in school and to see them engaging with their learning. From the way they've started, it's clear they've missed school and interacting with their peers and their teachers. Unfortunately, we have had to send home a number of pupils in Year 10, but that is as a precaution and for everyone's safety – regrettably, it's something we are probably all going to have to get accustomed to as the year progresses.

For pupils who are now isolating at home, we are using BLOODLE to ensure they can access the same curriculum and resources as pupils in school. Public Health have praised us for our school-within-a-school arrangements, and the systems we have in place to identify who pupils have been in contact with during lessons, at social time and on the way to and from school. We are doing everything we possibly can to keep our young people, their families, our staff and school community as safe as we can.

We have done huge amounts of work to the school site to allow us to welcome back the pupils and keep them in school safely. Our systems and processes are working, but we need your help and support to keep going. We all need to work together, and everyone needs to take responsibility

**Please** do not send your child to school if they are displaying COVID-19 symptoms:

- a high temperature – this means you feel hot to touch on your chest or back (you do not need to measure your temperature),
- a new, continuous cough – this means coughing a lot for more than an hour, or 3 or more coughing episodes in 24 hours (if you usually have a cough, it may be worse than usual),
- a loss or change to your sense of smell or taste – this means you've noticed you cannot smell or taste anything, or things smell or taste different to normal.

**Please** do not send your child to school if anyone in your household has tested positive for COVID-19. If this is the case, your entire household should be isolating.



**Please** do not send your child to school if anyone in your household is displaying COVID-19 symptoms. If this is the case, the family member should go for a test immediately and the rest of the household should isolate until a negative result is returned.

**Please** do not send your child to school if they have been identified as a close 'contact' of a COVID-19 case by Public Health England. If this is the case, they need to self-isolate for 14 days.

**Please** keep us updated - if a pupil is unwell or having a test or even if a family member is. The more we know, the more we can prepare.

**Please** make sure that your son/daughter arrives at school with a cotton face mask, and not a disposable one. We are still having to issue cotton masks to some pupils on a daily basis, which we don't have the resource to sustain.

I know you are all aware of these rules and restrictions, but it is important that as a school community we **all** follow them. We are doing everything we can to make the school safe, and keep it open to all pupils, but it requires us all to adhere to the guidance.

If your son or daughter tests positive for COVID-19 and you receive notice of this, please contact school using this link:

[https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=v4fq2raVOE668tA9PQrgMz15OxD9h\\_IPpLEICbNA579UQ1Q2S05XWUs2SFFOQ1pQWUFWRTNQMUY4UiQIQCN0PWcu](https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=v4fq2raVOE668tA9PQrgMz15OxD9h_IPpLEICbNA579UQ1Q2S05XWUs2SFFOQ1pQWUFWRTNQMUY4UiQIQCN0PWcu)

This link will also be on our school website. Senior staff will monitor this periodically over the course of the weekend. You will be asked for key information and an emergency telephone number in case we need to speak to you urgently.

Positive Covid-19 test results received during the school week, please contact [studentservices@blue-coat.org](mailto:studentservices@blue-coat.org) in the usual way.

Thank you for your support so far, and for all the sacrifices that families across our school community are having to make (especially those in Year 10 at the moment) to keep our school as safe and as accessible to all as possible.

Yours sincerely,



Mr R. Higgins (MA)  
Headteacher  
The Blue Coat School

