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ROYAL ALEXANDRA & ALBERT SCHOOL



July 2020

Dear Parent,

Letter to Parents of Flexi-Boarders regarding September Re-Opening

We have been discussing plans for the September re-opening of School over the past few weeks, trying to think about how we can best apply the Government guidance to our unique situation, to allow both boarders and flexi-boarders get the best out of school. We are mindful of the need to try to maximise the educational experience whilst ensuring we reduce the risk to our pupils and community as much as we can.

We have reached a stage in our planning where I feel I am able to give you some definitive statements about how school will run, including for the extended day.

Firstly, below is a link to the government guidelines for schools should you wish to look at the detail. I am pleased that they have recognised the fact that each school will have its own context and a need to consider arrangements for that context. For us having boarders and also flexi-boarders and a desire for us to run an extended day for all, is certainly a different context to a standard 8 – 4 school. As you know we try to be much more than that, and I recognise that this is the reason why you have chosen RAAS, and we feel it is important that we offer the extended day and a safe co-curriculum offering.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/actions-for-schools-during-the-coronavirus-outbreak/guidance-for-full-opening-schools>

During the school day, we are planning a return to their standard school teaching timetable. We will be facilitating the pupils being taught by their specialist teachers and in specialist rooms where they need to be. We will be operating systems for moving around School which look to minimise interactions and in particular we will be expecting pupils to stay in their year-group, and only their year-group, which we are treating as a distinct “bubble”. Two exceptions to this are the Sixth Form and the Junior School, which we have decided to treat as whole bubbles for the school and extended day, this allowing the use of the Sunley Centre for study periods, and the use of the Junior Playground respectively.

We will not be having year-group assemblies or other mass gatherings in School. Of course, communications with the year-group or school as a whole are important, but we will be delivering these via technology with form-groups staying in their form rooms for these occasions, as led by the form tutor.

The Extended Day

All flexi-boarders will be able to stay for the extended day from 07.30 – 19.00 Monday to Fridays, including breakfast and tea and 07.30 – 12.00 on Saturday, including breakfast. However with the need to keep the campus as safe as possible and to be able to follow track and trace programmes if needs be, this can only be by advance arrangement.

We will be sending you more details on how the extended day can be booked, but the slots will essentially be as follows:

Pre-School Slot 1	07.30 – 08.00	With breakfast available for Junior School and year 10 and 11 flexi-boarders from 07.45, with staggered timings and separated seating areas by year-group
Pre-School Slot 2	08.00 – 08.30	With breakfast available for Sixth Form and year 7,8 and 9 flexi-boarders from 08.00, with staggered timings and separated seating areas by year-group
After School Slot 1	16.00 – 17.30	<p>This will have within it a range of co-curriculum choices, done by year-group bubble, and will include an option for “Year Group Hub” with computer access, if not doing a co-curriculum activity but wishing to stay</p> <p>This will include a trip to the Dining Hall included, for junior school flexi-boarders at some point between 17.00 and 17.25.</p>
After School Slot 2	17.30 – 19.00	<p>With a trip to the Dining Hall for Tea included, for senior school flexi-boarders at some point between 17.30 and 17.55 depending on year-group.</p> <p>The expectation for this slot after Tea is for prep to be done in the Year Group Hub</p>

During the school day the School is going to be arranged in horizontal bubbles, by year-group as already explained. We will then be transitioning after school for the boarders to be looked after in vertical bubbles, keeping to their own houses. Having a transition between horizontal and vertical systems in the school does present some risk, but we are confident that we can minimise this with a number of methods which we will be implementing. However, we have decided that the boarding houses should only be accessible outside of the school day, and only for boarders at that time. Flexi-boarders will not be able to access their boarding house.

Instead, flexi-boarders will be provided with a **Year Group Hub** on site for break-times, lunch-times and for after school and the extended day, including a defined area of outside space on campus for that bubble, The Year Group Hubs will be set up with computers for this use for flexi-boarders to use for the extended day, and we are purchasing a large number of laptops to facilitate that. This will also support any pupils who wish to use the extended day slots to do some academic catch-up, to work

through material from last term or just to support their academic progress given the context of any perceived missed schooling.

One reason why we need booking in advance for the extended day slots is to make sure that we have prepared the facilities for the numbers requiring them. If we need to increase the facilities we will – we are clear that we want to meet what demand there might be for flexi-boarders for the extended day. We will be asking parents to make what bookings they know they will need for the term in advance, including co-curriculum activity choice, done in the normal way. The expectation of co-curriculum involvement for flexi-boarders will still be there, and we will be offering a large choice, albeit within year-groups.

We will be in touch before September with the details of the booking system for the extended day and for the co-curriculum activities and also with more details about how the pupils and parents can keep themselves and the community as safe as possible.

We are happy to be sent any questions that you may have on the above, and in fact welcome them as they will help us during this planning phase. Please could questions be sent to the Concerns email as below:

concerns@gatton-park.org.uk

I hope that so far you have been able to enjoy the sunshine, and my best wishes for the rest of the summer holidays.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Mark Dixon', written in a cursive style.

Mark Dixon
Headmaster