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# ROYAL ALEXANDRA & ALBERT SCHOOL



4<sup>th</sup> June 2020

Dear Parent,

It has been 10 weeks since Covid-19 caused the UK to enter 'lockdown' and since then we have all had to adjust to the 'new normal'. As a school we have responded to the evolving situation firstly when the Government put in place measures to contain the spread of the virus, and then to gradually reopen once the threat was reduced.

Working within Government safety guidelines we have remained open to as many pupils as possible. To support the national effort to combat the Coronavirus we have been open to vulnerable children and the children of key workers since 23<sup>rd</sup> March, including through the Easter holiday and May half term. Year 6 children came back to school on 1<sup>st</sup> June. We now have around 30 Boarders and 70 Flexi Boarders attending school. Other pupils have been accessing the curriculum via teacher-supported online learning. I have been impressed at how well all pupils have progressed during this time in lockdown.

Whilst the numbers attending have been relatively low, the logistics of running a boarding school with class sizes of less than 15 and trying to ensure social distancing, have been complex. Nevertheless, we have put in place many measures to keep children and staff safe. These include:

- Putting children into classes of less than 15 so they can space out within the classroom
- A team of staff is allocated to each class and they do not work with any other classes
- Flexi Boarding and Boarding pupils are in separate classes
- Each class has its own main classroom, toilet facilities and break areas
- Pupils are encouraged to practice regular and thorough hand washing
- Where a different classroom is used, there is thorough cleaning before another class uses it
- Lunch times are staggered with social distancing in place for queuing and seating. Each class has its own seating area which is cleaned before another class use it
- Separate drop-off and collection points for each class
- Pupils are not wearing blazers, so it is easier to follow the advice from Public Health England to wash clothes each day when the child returns from school

Keeping the separation between classes is essential because, if a child does become unwell with the Covid-19 virus, we need to limit the potential for it spreading.

I think we all share a common goal of wanting to have pupils back in school as soon as possible. Only then will they be able to enjoy the experience of learning alongside their peers and to benefit from the many other opportunities on offer such as co-curricular activities, sport and music.

We are working towards the full reopening of the School in September, however, I have to accept there might still be some restrictions in place. One of the main concerns for boarder parents is the potential need for overseas pupils to spend 2 weeks in quarantine when they come to the UK. I am

currently working with senior staff to find a way of overcoming this issue and one of the options we are considering is reopening one of our boarding houses two weeks before the start of term for overseas pupils.

I have been advised that each boarding house can be considered a household, so we won't need to restrict the number of boarders. There might, however, be a requirement to continue to have smaller class sizes. If this is the case we might need to consider teaching a limited number of pupils at a time, in a staggered timetable, and make alternative provision for boarders when they are not in lessons. This might change but whatever we offer will, of course, comply with relevant Government guidance.

The start of the Autumn Term is still three months away, and I sincerely hope that the School can open as usual but we do need to prepare for every eventuality. I will write again when I have more details about reopening in September. In the meantime, please be reassured that whatever happens, we will do whatever we can to ensure the safety and wellbeing of the children attending this School.

Yours sincerely,

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

Mark Dixon  
Headmaster