

16 July 2020

Dear parents and carers

Over the past 17 weeks we have been working hard at Ridgeway Academy to meet all of the expectations of the extensive Government guidance during the school closure. We have remained open for vulnerable and key worker children providing a safe and supportive environment for them to attend throughout the Spring and Summer term, including the Easter holidays.

We have held Academic Review meetings for Year 10 and 12 which were highly successful allowing us to see many of our students, before they returned to school on 15 June. We have welcomed our new students and their families through a series of Year 7 transition events and further activities are planned for students and their new tutors to continue forging positive relationships ahead of September. This week you will receive a report for your child detailing their effort and quality of work over the course of the academic year and a comment from their Form Tutor. Reports for the next academic year will detail progress and predicted grades for students.

Teachers have set up Google Classrooms; explored new learning platforms; recorded voice over lessons; delivered onsite lessons to Year 12 and daily live and recorded lessons for Year 10 for the past month and supervised 75% of our Year 10 cohort each week as they return onsite as part of our phased reopening. More recently, this provision has been extended to Key Stage 3 students. Over one hundred young people are now equipped with a Chromebook for home learning provided on a loan scheme by the school.

The Sixth Form team has continued to support students with their UCAS applications and personal statement writing, as well as welcoming our next cohort. All of our Directors of Learning have kept in regular communication with their year group and our pastoral team have made frequent phone calls to nearly 200 identified students.

We have tried to communicate as swiftly and as openly as possible and thank each and every one of you who has taken the time to contact us with messages of support during this unprecedented time. All of this has taken place whilst working to submit centre assessed grades for our Year 10, 11, 12 and 13 students.

This week we are holding Prize Giving ceremonies for each year group by form. Congratulations to all award winners, it has been wonderful to see the students.

In September, Ridgeway Academy will open for all year groups. The school will have to run very differently to pre-lockdown and this guide will outline those changes. For questions specific to your child only, please email your child's Director of Learning. As always, we are responding to the most up to date Government guidance and if we need to adapt and change our plans over the summer we will communicate this via email and our website. Please continue to follow us on Twitter as updates will be published there too. We are very much looking forward to seeing all of our students back at Ridgeway Academy in September, as well as welcoming our new students to start their journey with us.

## Plans for returning to school in September

### Thursday 3 September - Year 7 and Year 12 only (first day on school site)

- Year 7 students should arrive on site at the normal time of 8.25am and enter via the gate nearest Reception on Hems Lane. Members of staff will be on duty outside school at 8.25am
- Year 12 students should arrive on site at 9.30am

### Friday 4 September - all year groups return for induction

- Year 7 students should arrive on site at the normal time of 8.25am
- Year 8 students should arrive on site at 9.45am
- Year 9 students should arrive on site at 11.10am
- Year 10 and Year 11 students should arrive on site at 12.15pm
- Year 12 students should arrive on site 11.30am
- Year 13 students should arrive on site at 9.00am

### The school has allocated 4 entry points for students:

- Year 7 will enter via the gate nearest Reception on Hems Lane
- Year 8 via the gate near H block/Student Services on Hems Lane
- Year 9 via the Sports Centre gates
- Year 10 and 11 via the gate at the rear of the playing fields. Year 10 and 11 will assemble on Attimore playground using the markers to line up in tutor groups
- Year 12 and 13 students may enter the school via any of the entry points

### Site Security

To further protect students on site and control unplanned visitors to the school site, automated security gates will be installed at the two entrances on Hems Lane during the summer. From September, parents/other visitors will not be given access to the school site without a pre-booked appointment. Students arriving by car should be dropped safely outside school. There will be no vehicle access for parents. We would ask that you do not attend school to bring lunches or equipment that students have forgotten. These items will not be accepted to minimise the possibility of infection.

### Equipment needed in September

Students **MUST** bring in their essential daily items including:

- A waterproof bag with the capacity to hold A4 sized exercise books
- Their own pencil case with black pens, a green pen, pencils, ruler, eraser and sharpener **along with colouring pencils, scissors and glue stick**
- Their own scientific calculator
- Their own water bottle
- Their own hand sanitiser
- PE Kit: PE lessons will be running from September and students must wear their PE kit to school on the days which they have PE lessons.
- Padlock: If your child wishes to have a locker, they will need to provide a padlock for their locker. These are available on a first come, first served basis.

**Due to restrictions on cash handling, students will no longer be able to purchase stationery items in school**

Every child will be following a full timetable and learning a full curriculum. Your child will receive specialist teaching in every subject.

### **Lunch and cashless catering**

The lunch break from September will be 50 minutes; with two staggered lunchtimes. Each year group bubble will have access to a catering area serving hot and/or cold food. We will be using the cashless catering system and students will be asked to sanitise their hands after they have made payment and before eating to ensure healthy and safe hand hygiene. Due to government guidelines, our catering provider is not able to accept cash payment, so it is essential that all parents/carers set up a Wisepay account. All payment for food should be completed via topping up the students account on Wisepay. Please do not give your child cash which they will be unable to use in school. If you have any difficulties setting up your Wisepay account, please contact the Finance team: [Finance@ridgeway.herts.sch.uk](mailto:Finance@ridgeway.herts.sch.uk)

### **Toilet breaks and refilling water bottles**

All toilet facilities will be cleaned regularly throughout the day. Toilet breaks will be limited to break and lunch times unless for medical reasons. Staff will be monitoring the movement of students around the school during lesson time and change overs and ask that toilet breaks are not taken during this time so we can maximise time in the classroom. Water fountains are to be used during break times to refill bottles. Where possible, water bottles should be large enough to last all day.

### **Other changes**

Teachers will continue to comply with 2m social distancing and will therefore remain as much as possible at the front of the classroom. Students in each year group will be able to socialise with their peers during break and lunch time as each year group will be in dedicated social areas. Students will be regularly asked to sanitise their hands, including when they arrive onsite. A one-way system has been introduced and will be used where appropriate to ensure students and staff can move around the school site safely. Posters are present in all areas of the school to remind students to apply the 2m social distancing rules. Posters and sanitising stations are present in all blocks continually promoting positive hygiene. Lunch and break times will be supervised and staff will be requesting that large groups do not gather. This is intended to keep students safe. They may find it frustrating at first, but please help them realise we have their best interests at heart. Students must attend school with all their own equipment. Details are provided in this letter. Students will be responsible for looking after and carrying their own exercise books. Classrooms will be rearranged in accordance with Government guidance and desks, where possible, will be in rows and facing forwards.

### **Symptoms and self-isolation**

The Government's advice regarding symptoms remains unchanged. If your child displays any of the following symptoms they should isolate for 7 days and the household should isolate for 14 days. Please follow the school's absence reporting procedures.

- A high temperature – this means you feel hot to touch on your chest or back
- A new and continuous cough – this means coughing a lot for more than an hour, or 3 or more coughing episodes in 24 hours

Students and their families are eligible for Covid-19 testing. This can be accessed via the NHS website.

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/testing-and-tracing/>

Please contact the school immediately if a member of your household tests positive. To support the Government's track and trace system you should contact the Public Health England Health Protection Team on 0300 303 8537. In all suspected cases onsite, we will follow the guidance set out by Public Health England which includes the isolation of the student or staff member and a thorough cleaning regime. Should your child need to isolate we will contact you directly.

## **Behaviour and Expectations**

Getting back into a good school routine is of paramount importance. We will continue to have extremely high expectations of all students on their return to school. As always, we will provide high academic challenge and will meet this with high levels of support to enable students to flourish. The school's Behaviour for Learning policy will be updated over the summer break and will be available for parents when school recommences at the beginning of September. The changes made will be Covid-19 related, to ensure that our policy meets the government guidelines for remote and on site learning as well as ensuring students understand the importance of following the school's expectations.

## **Attendance**

Clear guidance has been given to schools regarding student attendance from September onwards. Students are expected to attend school each day. Normal school policies will be followed if attendance drops below 95%. The measures put in place by the school will ensure that the whole school community can attend school each day in a safe manner.

We expect all students to abide by our Behaviour for Learning policy, including the new Covid-19 agreement below, and we will not accept any behaviour that threatens the safety of our students or staff. We will be contacting home if a breach occurs and agreeing the consequences and sanctions for the student's poor behaviour choice.

## **Returning from travel abroad**

Families travelling overseas this Summer will need to consult the government guidance regarding rules around quarantine. Year 7 and 12 students are expected in school on Thursday 3 September and with the rest of the school community returning on Friday 4 September 2020. Families travelling to any country that is not exempt from the two-week quarantine measures will need to arrive back in the UK by 20 August 2020 to enable them to attend school on their first day back.

## **COVID-19 SCHOOL AGREEMENT**

### **Staff will...**

- Provide an environment which has been risk assessed in response to the Covid-19 infection;
- Adhere to the social distancing rules as set out by the government as much as we reasonably can;
- Provide a curriculum that meets the needs of your child's well-being, mental health and academic needs;
- Contact parents/carers if your child displays symptoms of Covid-19;
- Inform you if staff or children in your child's 'bubble' show symptoms of Covid-19 as this will mean you will all need to self-isolate for at least 14 days or until the test comes back negative;
- Continue our clear and consistent approach to rewards and sanctions for children as set out in the Behaviour for Learning Policy as well the expectations outlined in this agreement;
- Communicate between home and school through notices, newsletters, text, email and the school website.

### **HOME As a Parent/Carer, I understand that ...**

- If my child, or anyone in my household, shows symptoms of Covid-19, I will not send them to school, we will self-isolate for 14 days as a family, I will get them tested and I will let the school know as soon as possible via telephone;
- If requested by the school, I will collect my child from school immediately if they display symptoms of Covid-19;
- When dropping off and picking up, I will adhere to the school timings for my child and where driving will park responsibly outside the school site;
- My child will not bring any items into school with them that are not listed in the equipment section listed above;
- I will respect the need for the school to control visitors and will only attend the school site for pre-arranged appointments;
- I need to support all staff in their efforts to create an 'as safe as possible' environment during this crisis;
- Read all letters/messages/emails that are sent home;
- I need to inform the school immediately of any changes to parents/carers and emergency contacts details;
- The Headteacher can exclude my child for repeated breaches of safety, following the Behaviour for Learning policy guidelines.

### **STUDENT I will do my best to...**

- Adhere to the social distancing rules in class and in social time;
- Tell an adult if I feel unwell;
- Only use my own equipment and no other;
- Only enter and exit the school building from the designated gate;
- Follow good respiratory hygiene: coughing and sneezing into elbow or tissue (catch it-bin it-kill it);
- Follow good hand hygiene – use soap and water for 20 seconds/hand sanitiser;
- Behave well at all times to maintain the safety of myself and others;
- Follow instructions of staff to ensure the safety of all;
- Follow the expectations as outlined in the Behaviour for Learning policy and know that if I don't, the consequences will be very serious.

### **Country wide or localised lockdown**

If as a nation or more locally we are required to close the school, our distance learning strategy will come into operation once more. From September every child will be part of a Google Classroom for each of their timetabled subjects. Our staff will set all work on Google Classroom, where resources are stored, tasks are submitted and conversations with teachers and peers take place. We will also operate a timetable of live lessons and online tutor support via Google Meet, should the school close. Information will be provided to students and parents through the school newsletter, and through the Google Classroom platform which all students currently have access to. Students and parents will still have access to any work set on Show My Homework, although our default platform will be Google Classroom.

### **Preparing for school**

Returning onsite after several months away may be daunting for your child and you may be feeling concerned about their return to school, especially if they find change difficult. If your child has been disengaged with their studies you may be anxious about their attitude to learning and worried about their education. To support their return, please aim to complete the following over the summer break to help prepare your child and gain a sense of control over the uncertainties. Think about your child's individual needs. Take some time to talk through their return with them and read this guide together. Pre-empt any worries your child may have by contacting their Director of Learning or Form Tutor prior to the end of the term.

If you feel the school needs to know any details about your lockdown experience that will support your child's return, or changes to your personal circumstances, please contact their Director of Learning. Our pastoral teams will be focusing on your child's social, emotional and mental well-being reintegration into the school environment. Talk regularly about returning over the summer break and go through some of the school preparation together: gather their equipment; try on their uniform; purchase a new school bag for example.

Alongside a wealth of useful information on the school website, please take a look at this short video about supporting your child's return to school in September.

Please click on the following link:

<https://youtu.be/H96X6zw7rgE>

### **Google Classroom feedback**

In our continued effort to improve our online learning systems, we would appreciate your feedback around the use of Google Classroom as a home learning tool. We ask you complete the following questionnaires by 1 August to enable us to set our next set of objectives in our Blended Learning offer for students.

If you are a **student** at Ridgeway Academy please complete this form:

[https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSd3m7PwM1mNX92I-kBS2HyZ25IF-T-lp0rsVTo6S0Bf8luw2A/viewform?usp=sf\\_link](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSd3m7PwM1mNX92I-kBS2HyZ25IF-T-lp0rsVTo6S0Bf8luw2A/viewform?usp=sf_link)

If you are a **parent/carer** of a student at Ridgeway Academy please complete this form:

[https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSc4RnWOxL191\\_s3YmmqknmazziPjeArvckim70PFQ6az62Jfg/viewform?usp=sf\\_link](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSc4RnWOxL191_s3YmmqknmazziPjeArvckim70PFQ6az62Jfg/viewform?usp=sf_link)

### **Directors of Learning / Year Group Contact**

Listed below are the contact details for the Director of Learning responsible for each year group:

Year 7 - Merideth Tinker ([merideth.tinker@ridgeway.herts.sch.uk](mailto:merideth.tinker@ridgeway.herts.sch.uk))

Year 8 - Kostas Koupis ([kostas.koupis@ridgeway.herts.sch.uk](mailto:kostas.koupis@ridgeway.herts.sch.uk))

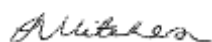
Year 9 - Will Sarjeant ([william.sarjeant@ridgeway.herts.sch.uk](mailto:william.sarjeant@ridgeway.herts.sch.uk))

Year 10 / 11 - Glenn Merrigan ([glenn.merrigan@ridgeway.herts.sch.uk](mailto:glenn.merrigan@ridgeway.herts.sch.uk))

Year 12 / 13 - Sarah Merrigan ([sarah.merrigan@ridgeway.herts.sch.uk](mailto:sarah.merrigan@ridgeway.herts.sch.uk))

As we move towards the end of an academic year like no other, we want to thank you for your unwavering encouragement, support and kind words throughout the Covid-19 pandemic: you have been magnificent! We wish you a restful and enjoyable summer break.

Yours sincerely



Sarah Mitcherson  
Headteacher