

26 August 2021

Dear Parents and Carers

I hope that you and your families are well and have had some opportunity to rest over the summer. I wanted to write to you with a few updates before term starts again next week.

During the holidays, I have continued to review the government guidance and thought it might be helpful to update you regarding the most current guidelines and start of term arrangements.

I am pleased to tell you that a number of the protocols in place last term are no longer necessary and most aspects of school life will begin to feel like "normal." Year groups will continue to enter and leave school at their designated gates (details below), once in school the one-way system around the school is no longer necessary and students do not need to remain in year group bubbles during break and lunch time. Split lunches will continue with Year 7, 9 and 11 taking first lunch (12:15 - 12:50pm) and Year 8, 10 and 6<sup>th</sup> form taking second lunch (1:15 – 1:50pm). Students are very welcome to continue to wear masks around school and in lessons but there is no longer the expectation that all students must do so.

### **Plans for returning to school in September**

#### **Wednesday 1 September (Inset day and Lateral Flow Testing for Year 8 - 11)**

The two tests will take place in the Sports Hall on Wednesday 1 September and Monday 6 September 2021. The schedule for the first test is outlined below while the second test will take place during the school day. Please note Wednesday 1 September is an INSET day but we request the students attend school during the times allocated below to enable us to complete the first test before they return to school. As soon as they have tested they must return home straight away, they cannot stay on site.

<b><u>Wednesday 1 September</u></b>	
Year group from September 2021	Testing time
8C/8D/8E	09:00-09:30
8K/8O/8W	09:30-10:00
9C/9D/9E	10:00-10:30
9K/9O/9W	10:30-11:00
10C/10D/10E	11:00-11:30
10K/10O	11:30-12:00
11C/11D/11E	12:00-12:30
11K/11O	12:30:13:00

### **Thursday 2 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. Students will be dismissed at the usual time of 2.55pm
- Students will complete LFT testing in the morning and then complete their induction programme throughout the day
- Year 12 students should arrive on site at 9.30am and will finish at 12.30pm.

### **Friday 3 September - all year groups return for induction**

- Year 7 students should arrive on site at the normal time of 8.25am and will finish at 2.55pm
- Year 8 - 11 should arrive at 1:30pm via their allocated gate entrances and attend tutor time where they will receive planners and timetables, ready for lessons to begin on Monday 6 September.

### **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**

Parents/carers and 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 to the school site for parents. We would ask that you do not attend school to bring lunches or equipment that students have forgotten.

### **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; Year 7 - 9 must wear PE kit (Ridgeway kit only) on the days they have PE lessons. Year 10, 11 and 6<sup>th</sup> form will use changing rooms and must attend school in full uniform every day. Hoodies cannot be worn as part of PE kit.
- 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 serve basis

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 upon entering the canteen to ensure healthy and safe hand hygiene. Parents/carers must

set up a Wisepay account. Payment for food must be made via Wisepay, therefore it is important that parents/carers check the balance regularly. 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 are cleaned regularly throughout the day. Toilet breaks are 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.

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

If your child develops symptoms listed below they should not attend school and should be booked to complete a PCR test, if the test is negative your child can return to school. There is no longer a need to isolate bubbles or close contacts if a test confirms a positive result.

Please inform the school immediately if your child tests positive.

Symptoms:

- 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
- Loss of taste and/or smell

Families must continue to lateral flow test twice weekly following the initial two tests being completed in school.

### **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.

### **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.

### **School uniform**

Uniform is a key component of our drive towards the highest standards here at Ridgeway Academy and we will continue to be rigorous in our application of the uniform policy. All students are absolutely clear about our expectations and so we expect there to be little difficulty for them. A reminder that students who are not in correct uniform will be sent home

to change and return to school or kept out of timetabled lessons and I ask all families to reiterate this to their children. The uniform code is in all student planners with a copy on our website.

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

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

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

Year 8 - Mr C Daly ([carl.daly@ridgeway.herts.sch.uk](mailto:carl.daly@ridgeway.herts.sch.uk) )

Year 9 - Mr M Pring ([matthew.pring@ridgeway.herts.sch.uk](mailto:matthew.pring@ridgeway.herts.sch.uk) )

Year 10 - Mr W Sarjeant ([william.sarjeant@ridgeway.herts.sch.uk](mailto:william.sarjeant@ridgeway.herts.sch.uk) )

Year 11 – Miss H Jenner ([helen.jenner@ridgeway.herts.sch.uk](mailto:helen.jenner@ridgeway.herts.sch.uk) )

Year 12 / 13 – Mrs S Merrigan ([sarah.merrigan@ridgeway.herts.sch.uk](mailto:sarah.merrigan@ridgeway.herts.sch.uk))

If you have any queries about any of the content in this letter, in the first instance please do contact your child's Director of Learning.

I would like to thank all parents and carers for the ongoing support that we receive from you and we look forward to partnering with you in supporting your child's education from September.

Yours sincerely



Jackie Smith  
Deputy Headteacher