



22 July 2021

Dear Parents and Carers

I am confident that we all appreciate how challenging this year has been. The disruption your child/ren has/have endured this year, has often been simply unbelievable. Every time, I have had to send students home, due to Covid and isolation, it has been a painful experience. Despite this, we have kept the school going to the best of our abilities, given all the restrictions in place, our students have engaged well with school life as best they can and overwhelmingly you, as parents, have stood by us. I am, as always, extremely grateful for your support and patience.

Having said all that, it is time to now look ahead, with optimism and with a clear sight of what will come next. Below, I will outline a number of key changes and adaptations that we have made to better cope with the continuing impact of Covid. This will include information about reopening in September and a reminder regarding results days during the summer.

**Start of term information, Tuesday, 7 September:**

You will be aware that we will be conducting asymptomatic Covid testing, as we have done at the start of term previously. These tests are not compulsory and will only be administered to those students who have consent from parents. To facilitate the smooth running of the testing, we will have a staggered start to the academic year 2021-22:

Year	Test 1	Return to school date	Test 2 During school time
7 (New)	Tues 7 Sept (AM)	Weds 8 Sept	Fri 10 Sept
12	Tues 7 Sept (PM)	Weds 8 Sept	Fri 10 Sept
13	Tues 7 Sept (PM)	Weds 8 Sept	Fri 10 Sept
11	Weds 8 Sept (AM)	Thurs 9 Sept	Mon 13 Sept
10	Weds 8 Sept (PM)	Thurs 9 Sept	Mon 13 Sept
8	Thurs 9 Sept (AM)	Fri 10 Sept	Tues 14 Sept
9	Thurs 9 Sept (PM)	Fri 10 Sept	Tues 14 Sept



If your child is not participating in the testing, please take note of their first day in school – it will be the day after a testing day for their year group. It should go without saying that if your child does show symptoms of coronavirus they should not attend school, including not attending for an asymptomatic test during this first week back. Instead you should book a PCR test, in the usual way at an NHS testing centre.

For your knowledge, DfE guidance for parents and carers of children attending out-of-school settings during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak be accessed here: <https://bit.ly/3rcfzXz>

## **Communications**

In the new academic year we will be changing our parent app from MyEd to Arbor. Many parents may already be familiar with Arbor as this is the system in place in our Trust primary schools. A welcome message will be sent to you in the first few weeks of the new term on how to download and use the new app. We will cease using MyEd on 22 October 2021 so it is imperative that you download and use the new parent app as soon as possible as this will be our main method of communication with parent(s)/carer(s)

## **Catering costs change**

Due to the increasing market price of food and catering supplies, and as a result of issues around Brexit and Covid, the price of a meal deal will increase in September to £2.40. This is in line with many schools in the area. Our 'in-house' catering team continue to source, prepare and cook quality local produce in line with Government guidelines and nutritional standards, and still offers good value for money.

## **Cashless school**

A gentle reminder that school is cashless and the only way to pay for school meals, trips, planners, revision guides is via [scopay.com](https://www.scopay.com). No money or cheques will be accepted. Please remember to keep your accounts topped up.

## **Laptops**

Any student who had permission to continue using a school laptop is politely reminded that this device should be returned to school prior to the Summer break. Students should return these to Mrs Pickering in Student Services.

## **Safeguarding**

As we approach the Summer holidays, a number of families may be feeling some unease at not having the pastoral support available over the next six weeks. Pastoral Officers and other colleagues will not be working throughout the Summer, and as such, parents are politely reminded to refrain from contact.

All students will receive a video briefing prior to the Summer to outline specific issues and signpost to support services. Additionally, families are reminded that emergency key contacts, help lines and more general advice can be found on our website [here](#).

## **Holidays in term time**

Whilst it may seem a strange request to make at the end of one academic year, we are mindful that some families may be looking ahead to much needed family time and booking a holiday. We must be clear that holidays in term time will not be authorised unless there are exceptional circumstances. We would ask for families to continue to support the school, maximise learning time and use school holidays instead.



## Catch up funding and curriculum regeneration

Over the last year, the school has worked extensively to support students in reducing the effect of lost learning due to the pandemic in the following ways:

- Remote learning provision, including live lessons, during lockdowns or periods of self-isolation.
- Curriculum redevelopment to prioritise essential knowledge, secure key concepts and address gaps in learning.
- Redevelopment of the Y7 Key Stage 3 Communications curriculum, splitting it into Literacy and Communication and Numeracy through STEM, so that students have additional time to work on the key concepts relating to reading, oracy, writing and numeracy.
- The appointment of a primary specialist teacher to work with Key Stage 3 students requiring literacy and numeracy support, or who missed essential learning when in Year 6 during the first COVID lockdown.
- Smaller class sizes in Literacy and Communications and Numeracy through STEM.
- Employment of academic tutors and interventionists in English, Maths, Science and Humanities, to work with cohorts of students at Key Stage 3 and 4 to support them. This has included in-class support, withdrawal work, and out of school support.
- Investment in two Mental Health support workers.
- Appointment of a new Phase Leader to support students with the transition between Y6 and Y7.
- An extensive intervention programme of after school and during Easter holidays to support examination classes.
- Provision of EdTech to enable remote learning and independent study e.g. Tassomai; TT rockstars; Hegarty Maths.

## Reading

As a core element of our curriculum regeneration, we have been working with Huntington Research School to plan for the implementation of a reading and vocabulary strategy next academic year. Reading is regarded as the master skill, necessary for students to fully access all subjects and examinations, whilst also promoting life-long learning, vocabulary development, cultural capital, social mobility, enhanced earning potential and mental well-being. The research is also clear that even confident readers benefit from further reading provision within school.

In June, we consulted with Year 7 parents about a 30-minute extended school day for Year 7 and Year 8 twice a week, to allow for additional reading provision. 42 parents responded to this, with 77% of parents in favour of the proposal, and 83% in favour of supplementing this with reading at home five times per week. However, we have also listened to the comments from parents who were not in favour of this. In response to these comments, we have therefore decided to proceed with an extended school day on a Monday and Wednesday.

This will be compulsory for the new Year 7 intake, but we will provide parents of Year 8 students (current Year 7) with the opportunity to disapply their son/daughter from this provision if they notify us in writing that they wish to opt out. For students who do not opt out, our expectation will be that they stay for 30 minutes on those days. If you wish for your son/daughter to opt-out, please e-mail [pickeringn@tmhs.rklt.co.uk](mailto:pickeringn@tmhs.rklt.co.uk) with the subject "Opt-out" by 3 September, with the name and form of your son/daughter, to allow us to adapt timetables for the new term. However, we would actively encourage all parents to support us in getting their son/daughter to participate in this reading programme, given the well documented benefits.



We have also noted parental concerns about the volume of daily reading alongside homework and other social activities. As such, we will be reviewing our Homework Policy for Y7 and Y8 next academic year with a view to refocussing this more on reading whilst reducing other forms of homework, so that students still have time to do other valuable things in the social time. Finally, I would also emphasise that the reading approach is only part of our curriculum regeneration. Plans to support students after the pandemic will also include a wide range of other academic and pastoral support measures, as outlined previously.

### **Extracurricular provision**

With the current planned easing of restrictions, we are planning on the reintroduction of extracurricular clubs from the second week in September. These clubs will take place on a Tuesday and Thursday from 14:50. Whilst they will not be compulsory for students in Year 8-11, we would strongly advise students to participate and experience all that we have to offer beyond the taught curriculum. We have a wide range of clubs and activities to suit different learners.

### **Examinations and results days**

Results days will be on Tuesday, 10 August for A-level results, and Thursday, 12 August for GCSE results. A letter was recently sent out to parents of Y11 and Y13, providing details of the procedures for those days and also details of the appeals process which the examination boards have put in place.

The Government has confirmed that resit examinations will be available in all subjects in November. No details of what will happen to examinations next summer have yet been finalised, but we will notify parents of any announcements as they are made.

### **School Closed for staff development during the Academic Year 2021-22:**

- Monday, 6 September 2021
- Tuesday, 4 January 2022
- Friday, 1 July 2022
- Monday, 25 July 2022
- Tuesday, 26 July 2022

### **The last day of the academic year 2021-22 will be Friday, 22 July 2022.**

On behalf of all the staff and the Governors at the School and the Trustees from Red Kite Learning Trust, I thank you for your continuing support of what we are trying to achieve here. I hope you are able to enjoy the Summer break with family and loved ones and I look forward to the new academic year where once again we can support your child/ren in reaching their full potential.

Yours faithfully



Matthew West  
Principal

