



High Tunstall College of Science

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Headteacher: Mark R Tilling

Deputy Headteachers: Peter W Hayward and Laura Ovens

July 2020

Dear Parent/Carer

Following the government's announcement that schools will reopen fully in the Autumn Term 2020, I am writing to share with you the arrangements we have implemented to ensure the safety of all staff, students and visitors to the College. These arrangements have been put into place following a robust risk assessment process.

We are looking forward to seeing all our students once again, however, I would like to reassure you that the safety of our college community is our priority. We will continue to review the arrangements we have implemented at this stage and update you with any changes as and when we make them.

I can confirm that college will reopen to staff on Tuesday 1st September. This means that Year 7 students will return to college at 8.35am on **Wednesday 2nd September 2020 with Year 11 returning later in the day at 11.00am. We will see the rest of the college, Years 8, 9 and 10, return on Thursday 3rd September 2020 at 8.35am for a prompt 8.40am start.**

Before reopening, we have updated our risk assessments that identify the risks associated with coronavirus specific to our college and additional measures have been put in place to minimise those risks as far as we are able to. Our risk assessment for the full reopening of the College will be published on our college website after 26th August 2020 and we welcome any feedback on the measures we have put in place.

All staff and students will continue to have access to testing if they develop symptoms of coronavirus, and rapid action will be taken should any test come back positive to ensure that the college continues to be a safe environment. The affected student or member of staff will be required to self-isolate at home for 14 days, as will any students and members of staff they have been in close contact with (e.g. the rest of the student's bubble).

We recognise that some of you may have some concerns about your son/daughter returning to college and that this is an unsettling time for some son/daughter. We also understand that the past weeks will have been challenging for many families. If you would like to talk to us about your son/daughter and any concerns you have about their return to college, please, in the first instance, contact your son/daughters tutor by email. If your son/daughter has an EHC plan please contact the college SENDCO, Mrs Stobbs, who will support you and your son/daughter with their return to college.

Allocating Students to a 'Bubble'

In line with the Department for Education (DfE) guidance, the college has made arrangements for all son/daughter to attend college as part of a smaller consistent group, often referred to as a 'bubble'. These groups of students will remain together throughout the college day and will not interact with other bubbles in college. This is an important measure to limit the spread of any infection and will limit the number of interactions between students in college. Your son/daughter will remain with their Year Group bubble and will only mix with that year group. Please note, siblings may be allocated different groups and this is supported by the DfE in their guidance.

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Attendance

From September 2020, the normal rules around college attendance apply. Therefore, we must remind you of your duty to secure that your son/daughter attends college regularly. The college have a responsibility to record attendance for all son/daughter and follow up absence. Please see our college attendance policy which is published on our website.

College staff

All college staff have been fully briefed on the arrangements in place for a full reopening in September 2020. Some college staff may have been shielding during the lockdown and as such we will be supporting them fully as they return to work. I would ask all parents/carers to bear in mind that some staff may have spent a considerable amount of time away from college and that this is also an unsettling period for those members of staff. We ask that our entire college community are patient with each other as we adjust to this new way of life.

Maintaining a safe college environment

I would like to take this opportunity to remind you of the preventative measures the college has put in place in order to minimise the spread of infection.

As per the advice from the government, the following actions for infection control remain in place:

- Displaying coronavirus infection control measures information posters around the college
- Encouraging good hygiene by promoting the importance of handwashing for at least 20 seconds with warm water and soap in the following circumstances:
 - Before leaving home
 - On arrival at college
 - After using the toilet
 - After breaks and sporting activities
 - Before food preparation
 - Before eating any food, including snacks
 - Before leaving college
- Installing alcohol-based hand sanitiser dispensers that contain at least 60 percent alcohol throughout the College
- Ensuring students and staff understand that they must cover their mouth and nose with a tissue before they cough or sneeze, then throw the tissue away into the bins provided.
- Ensuring frequently touched objects and surfaces are cleaned and disinfected more regularly than usual
- Calling NHS 111 if someone becomes unwell, isolating any unwell people in a separate room, and providing a separate bathroom, where possible
- Telling staff to stay at home for 14 days if they develop symptoms of coronavirus
- Arranging classrooms so that son/daughter are seated side by side facing forwards and removing unnecessary furniture and equipment.

As an important part of our college community, I would ask that you continue to encourage good infection control practices, such as thorough handwashing at home and keep your son/daughter informed about the things they can do to discourage the spread of infection.

Behaviour management and our policy of ensuring teachers have attention to best conduct at all times will remain. Mrs Wood has outlined in the attached letter the way we will continue to maintain the expectations on behaviour, attendance and uniform if students choose not to comply. We ask you to support us in this.

Symptoms of Coronavirus

As per the current NHS and government advice, you should keep your son/daughter at home for a period of 14 days if they develop coronavirus symptoms. Symptoms include a high temperature, a new continuous cough, and a loss of taste/smell. Where symptoms continue after 7 days, or begin to worsen, you should call 111. If someone in your son/daughter's household has symptoms, your son/daughter must self-isolate for 14 days from the day the other person's symptoms started. This is because it can take 14 days for symptoms to appear. More information regarding symptoms and actions can be found on the NHS website (<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/>).

The College will insist that any student or member(s) of staff who show any symptoms that may be compatible with Coronavirus, book a test immediately. Information on booking a test will be provided by the College and the student/member of staff will not be permitted to return until the test result is confirmed and the period of isolation is complete. In addition, guidance from the DfE states that a small number of home testing kits may be able to be distributed by the College in exceptional circumstances. We have not yet received the details of this and will advise parents/carers as soon as more information is available.

If someone you or your son/daughter has been in close proximity to has tested positive for Coronavirus, you may be contacted by the NHS Test and Trace service. Information on the NHS Test and Trace service is available here: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/testing-and-tracing/nhs-test-and-trace-if-youre-contacted-after-testing-positive-for-coronavirus/>

If you think your son/daughter may have been exposed to or has coronavirus, please contact the college on **01429 261446** at the earliest opportunity.

College Uniform

From September 2020, all students will be expected to return to college in their full college uniform. In accordance with DfE guidance, uniforms do not need to be cleaned any more often than usual, nor do they need to be cleaned using methods which are different from normal.

Our college uniform is vital in contributing to the ethos of the college and sets an appropriate tone for students to return to learning. Details of our college uniform policy, which will be applied in full from 2nd September 2020, is available on our website.

College Bags

It is still recommended that we limit the amount of equipment students bring to college each day. Therefore, only essentials can be brought to college by students such as: lunchboxes, hats, and coats. Lockers will not be allowed to be used in Year 8-11 as this would mean mixing bubbles. If students bring their bags they will be expected to be by their chair in their classroom.

Arrangements for the start and end of the College day

The beginning and end of the College day are the busiest times for son/daughter and adults congregating together in one place, so maintaining safe distances within normal arrangements can be a challenge. We have implemented the following measures for when students return to college:

- Year 7 should meet in the old car park area outside the front of the North Building where they will be met by staff
- Year 8 should use the west staircase and make their way to the Mathematics corridor where they will be met and directed to their classroom
- Year 9 should use the East staircase and make their way to the Discovery corridor where they will be met and directed to their classroom

- Year 10 should use the main student entrance and will be directed to the Communications classrooms via the Heart staircase
- Year 11 should use the North staircase and go to level 2 where they will be directed to their classroom by a teacher
- Students who attend the Shine Centre or the ARC should go straight to the external doors for those areas.

We encourage students to walk or cycle to college if possible and avoid public transport where possible and at peak times. College start time has not changed and hopefully the new car park will be complete and parents should not drive up to the main building but use the red car park zone indicated on the attached site map.

- A marked system has been set up in the college corridors to minimise face-to-face contact between students and make it easier to follow social distancing guidance.

What if we arrive late to college?

It is important that students are in College by 8.35am so learning can start promptly at 8.40 am. If for any reason your son/daughter is late they will have to come to the main reception and ring the door bell and wait until someone comes out to take them to their designated area. Students will not be allowed just to wander in the College buildings late. Please do not come into the college building unless invited to do so.

Transport

If you and your son/daughter travel to college using public transport, we must remind you that it is a mandatory requirement to wear a face covering unless you are exempt for reasons of health, age or equality. Full guidance is available here: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-safer-travel-guidance-for-passengers#face-coverings>

Arrangements for breaktimes and lunchtimes

We recognise the importance for all students to have a break from learning and to enjoy time outside during the college day. Reconnecting with friends will be an important aspect of students settling back into college life, so we have made some adjustments to break and lunch times to ensure they can do so safely.

Break times

- Year 8 & 10 will have a break at 9.40 – 10.00 am
- Year 9 will have a break at 10.10 – 10.30 am
- Year 7 and 11 will have a break from 10.40 – 11.00 am

Students will not be able to purchase food in the first few weeks whilst we get used to the new arrangements so we encourage you to send them into college with a healthy snack.

Lunch times

- Year 8 & 10 will have lunch at 12.00 – 12.30 (Year 8 first, followed by Year 10)
- Year 9 will have Lunch at 12.30 – 1.00
- Year 7 and 11 will have Lunch from 1.00 – 1.30 (Year 7 first, followed by Year 11)

Students will be expected to go outside for their 15 minute “outdoor” time unless we are having inclement weather.

The College Day

The College day in essence will be the same as we would normally run with the changes indicated to make break and lunchtimes easier to maintain social distancing. Assemblies will be carried out by Zoom/Microsoft Teams and will be beamed straight into classrooms. For most lessons students will stay in the same room, except where specialist subjects like Design and Food Technology need to use a specialist rooms. We are endeavouring to maintain a broad and balanced curriculum for all and will utilise staff to support student catch up missed work around the building.

Though we are zoning learners around the College and ensuring that they do not break their "bubbles" we do want to return the College to as near normal as possible and can only do that with the support of the whole College community.

Visiting College

If you need to speak to the college at any time, please contact the college by phone on 01429 261446 or by email to the following contacts for each year group:

Year 7	Mrs A Dunlop	adunlop@hightunstall.hartlepool.sch.uk
	Mrs M Wake	mwake@hightunstall.hartlepool.sch.uk
Year 8	Mr D Cook	dcook@hightunstall.hartlepool.sch.uk
	Mrs L Dixon	ldixon@hightunstall.hartlepool.sch.uk
Year 9	Mrs R Harbron	rjefferson@hightunstall.hartlepool.sch.uk
	Mrs S Lester	slester@hightunstall.hartlepool.sch.uk
Year 10	Mr L Blythe	lblythe@hightunstall.hartlepool.sch.uk
	Mr D Halliday	dhalliday@hightunstall.hartlepool.sch.uk
Year 11	Mr J Turner	jturner@hightunstall.hartlepool.sch.uk
	Mrs L Harrison	lharrison@hightunstall.hartlepool.sch.uk

All email contacts are on our website and will be included in the parent handbook you will receive in September.

We would like to politely request that parents do not come on to college site unless it is absolutely necessary as you will not be able to speak to a member of staff face to face without making an appointment in advance. Appointments will only be made in exceptional circumstances so we can ensure that you and our staff are kept safe.

Support for students and families

We do not underestimate how difficult the recent weeks have been for us all and we all will have been touched in some way by the coronavirus pandemic. We recognise the need to focus on students' emotional wellbeing as well as their return to learning. The following support is in place for students once they return to college:

- A. Tutor to be first point of contact for any issues
- B. Student Support Officer and Head of Year to support if cannot be resolved
- C. Emotional Health and Well Being Officer available for students who are struggling
- D. Special Educational Needs and Disability Coordinator to support those who need additional support.

The College does have access to staff who are trained bereavement counsellors and if you would like support please contact the Head of Year as indicated above.

Parents may wish to seek support for themselves from the following support agencies:

- Samaritans – call free 24 hours a day on 116 123
- National Domestic Abuse Helpline – call for free and confidential advice, 24 hours a day on 0808 2000 247
- Shelter provide free confidential information, support and legal advice on all housing and homelessness issues if you call 0330 0536 083 (please note, this is not a free phone number and your call will be charged), or their free webchat is available at https://england.shelter.org.uk/get_help/webchat

I hope that these arrangements provide you with the information you need to support your son/daughter's return to college. Students of a compulsory age must be in college unless a statutory reason applies therefore, if you do have any concerns about the return to college that you would like to discuss with us, please contact us by emailing the College at admin@hightunstall.hartlepool.sch.uk as soon as possible.

I would like to take the opportunity to thank you for supporting the college over recent months and supporting your son/daughter with their home learning.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'M.R. Tilling', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Mr Mark R Tilling
Headteacher