



# DARRICK WOOD SCHOOL

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RESPECT | RESPONSIBILITY | HONESTY

Dear Parent/Carer

With the start of the new academic year a week away and much discussion in the media about this I am writing to remind you of arrangements being made at Darrick Wood.

Firstly, however, I want to share a few words about our Year 11 and Year 13 students. The last few months will have been incredibly difficult for them and this will not have been helped by the uncertainty leading up to the A level, GCSE and vocational qualification results. Despite these issues I know that most students are in a position to move on to the next stage of their lives. For those whose results have not quite worked out the way they would have wished, we will do all we can to support and reassure them as they make decisions about their futures. We wish Years 11 and 13 all the very best with their next steps and look forward to seeing many of Year 11 enrolling in the Sixth Form on Friday, 4<sup>th</sup> September.

At the end of the summer term we learnt that we were successful in securing funding from the government for two vital projects to improve the fabric of the School. The first project began over the summer break. This provides much needed repairs to many of our flat roofs (e.g. Sports Hall and Gymnasium) as well as replacing guttering around the Barker and Rhymaun Buildings. The work will continue through to the end of October. The second funded project is to replace the lift in the Turner Building. This is not now likely to start until next summer, but I am pleased that after many attempts to secure the funding we have succeeded, and this work can now be planned.

### **The return of students in September**

I wrote to parents/carers on 13<sup>th</sup> July to share our plans for the return of all students in September. You can access a copy of this on our website [here](#). It includes details about when each year group is expected to return. Parents of new Year 7 students are encouraged also to view the email sent specifically to them in relation to the start of term which is in the transition area of the website.

### **How are we preparing?**

We have been busy over the summer preparing the School. At the end of the summer term we removed all but the essentials from classrooms allowing thorough cleaning to be undertaken. Hand sanitiser dispensers are being placed in each classroom, in addition to those installed around the site. We have also arranged for substantial enhancement to the cleaning of the School during term time.

In order to implement the government guidance classrooms will look and feel different. Students must remain 2 metres away from teachers in the classroom and staff around the site. Students should also face the front. Some specialist rooms, where students sit facing each other (e.g. IT suites) have had Perspex screens installed and other rooms have had furniture rearranged or removed.

Our Sixth Form Centre has also had to be adapted. The email in July notified parents that all students in the Sixth Form needed to prepare to bring their own devices into school for use in the study areas. The Resource Centre on the top floor is now a study area only for students in Year 12. The Common Room on the ground floor is now a study area for students in Year 13. Like the rest of the School, each year group is in their own year group bubble and should not mix outside of their bubble. We have had some requests from parents about what constitutes a 'device'. By this we mean anything that is not a mobile phone but can connect to the internet via the School's wifi system and allows students to complete their school work. Typical examples are laptops, iPads and other tablets (perhaps with keyboards if this helps), Chromebooks etc. There will not be computers for Sixth Form students to use in their study areas. We have a limited supply of laptops available for those facing particular hardship and students should contact the Sixth Form team in confidence if they feel they may qualify for one of these.

Our one-way systems have been enhanced and additional signage provided. The one-way systems must be followed by all students and staff during lesson changeovers. Further reductions in congestion and mixing in the corridors are planned by not having a lesson changeover bell. Where possible, students will access classrooms from external doors. Students will start and end their days at different times and we are planning staggered break and lunch times. Staggered break and lunch means there will only ever be three or four year groups at break or lunch at a time. Each year group will access one specific servery via their own queue, ensuring the year group bubbles do not mix. Food, including packed lunches, will be consumed outside. Break and lunch will be 30 minutes each.

### **Catering**

I have met with our caterers, Independent Catering, who have confirmed they will provide both hot and cold food at each servery. Students will collect their food at their servery and take it to their playground. We are planning to enhance the availability of shelter during inclement weather, but in the meantime, we urge students to ensure they have a coat to wear. Parents will recall we now allow plain black coats as well as those that are plain dark brown.

Independent Catering are not able to take cash payments under any circumstances at any of the serveries so parents/carers must make sure their children's accounts are topped-up and that the children have their ID cards with them. These cards will be used for cashless catering instead of the 'fobs' used in previous years. The cards will be distributed on their first day in school and must be worn in and around school at all times.

## Lockers

Another change we have found necessary is that, for the foreseeable future, students will not use lockers. Many lockers have had to be removed to allow classrooms to have sufficient space and guidance suggests students should take personal belongings, books, PE kit etc home daily. The staggered break and lunch also mean that access to some lockers would be difficult as lessons continue whilst some year groups are at break and lunch. In the event of sudden school closure, there will also not be time to clear lockers, so it is best the students have everything they need at home. If your child thinks they still have belongings in a locker they should inform us on their return and we will make arrangements for them to collect these items.

## School will be different for now

The changes asked of us by the government mean that certain aspects of school life will be very different for now. The library will not be accessible at all. With regret, we currently are also unable to offer any extra-curricular provision. PE and practical subjects such as Music and DT will continue but will be adapted by staff to minimise risk of COVID-19 transmission. Assemblies will be held virtually whilst in Form Time as we are unable to gather in large numbers inside.

At this stage our focus will be on settling the children back into school as safely as possible and delivering the best learning opportunities we can in the circumstances. We will write to you next week with more details on other aspects such as changes to how we set homework/remote learning and enhancements to our behaviour expectations and procedures.

## Face coverings

You will probably be aware that the government last night announced a change to its guidance regarding the wearing of face coverings in secondary schools. We are reviewing the details and will write to you about this in due course. In the meantime, please find attached an information booklet from the LBB/NHS regarding the return of students to school.

## How can you help us?

As ever, your support makes a big difference to ensuring our endeavours are successful. Please ensure your child is in the correct uniform and has all the equipment expected for school each day. Students should not rely on their peers or teachers to lend them equipment. Please also ensure your child adheres to the new timings of the School day for their year group. Please talk to them about how seriously we will take any breach of our rules that could impact the learning or welfare of others.

Please note that all students must attend school from the date set out for their year group in previous correspondence. For year groups starting later than Monday, 7<sup>th</sup> September remote learning will be provided by teachers. **If your child, or a member of your household, has any of the COVID-19 symptoms you must not send your child to school. Please inform the School of the situation and arrange for testing immediately.**

I am very grateful to parents who helped with the PSFA uniform sale on Monday. This raised hundreds of pounds for the School but also hopefully helped at a time when, as parents, we are all tasked with getting our children ready for the new academic year.

In accordance with government guidance, **parents and visitors will not be allowed on site without a prior appointment and most meetings will be held virtually for now.** This includes, in most instances, not dropping off at school forgotten items such as PE kit and packed lunches. If your child does forget their packed lunch, you will need to ensure their ParentPay account has sufficient funds for them to purchase lunch at school instead. We would be grateful if parents also avoided meeting their children outside the School gates. In normal times we discourage this because of safety and congestion issues. Currently, we also discourage this because of COVID-19 restrictions.

## Travel to school

Students are encouraged wherever possible to travel to school by walking or cycling. The London Borough of Bromley's School Travel Team have been in touch recently and encourage the use of the following site to plan journeys:

<https://stars.tfl.gov.uk/saferjourneyplanner>

Please see the attached information they have asked that we provide to you. They also advise that from 1<sup>st</sup> September, Transport for London have plans to introduce buses dedicated for school travel. These plans include dedicating up to every other bus for school travel on what they anticipate will be the busiest high-frequency routes (those with six or more buses per hour). These services would be clearly signed, and information would be posted at bus stops and online. They are also planning to add over 200 extra buses onto some of the busiest low-frequency bus routes (those with less than six buses per hour) and onto some of the existing school services. For further information on all changes to bus operations, please visit

[tfl.gov.uk/reopeningeducation](https://tfl.gov.uk/reopeningeducation). We have also been asked to distribute the attached information from South-eastern trains.

The last few months have been very difficult to say the least. Schools opening again for all students is a step towards normality for us all and I am looking forward to seeing all our students and staff back at Darrick Wood in September.

Yours sincerely

Dr M J Airey  
Head Teacher