



ST/KJP

12th October 2020

Dear Parents/Carers,

I hope you are well. The first few weeks of term have certainly passed by quickly and students continue to adapt well to our new routines. It is great to have them back in their classrooms and there have been some fabulous examples of student achievement in lessons.

The current situation does not allow for us all to come together in the hall in the traditional way to deliver assemblies to year groups, but I did manage to embrace technology and pre-record an assembly which was shown to students in their tutor groups. The key message of the assembly was the importance of team and community. There have been many challenges over the past 6 months but the community spirit we have seen really has been incredible. We have looked out for our neighbours, arranged shopping for shielding friends/relatives and taken time to ask after each other. As we return to work and school, I asked students to reflect upon the community and team spirit they have seen and to think about how we could continue to show some of these positives in our own Sheffield community.

Remote learning

Whilst we are very much enjoying being back at school, we know how important it is that we have effective contingency plans for what will happen if students have to learn from home. We want to reassure you that we are working hard across departments to prepare for remote teaching and learning, should it be needed. The academy is currently contacting all parents/carers to ascertain access to ICT and to identify those that will require paper packs of work. Our communication with parents/carers and setting of any remote learning will also be shared with you through email and access to Sims Parent App, therefore, can you please ensure that you have given us your email contact and have downloaded the Sims App.

Form Tutors have been delivering a series of presentations with students to ensure that they understand how to access online resources through Teacher Dashboard, an online platform that integrates fully with Microsoft 365. These presentations are available on our website (www.scacademy.co.uk) in the student section. In this section, you will also find a walkthrough video which shows students how to access the service, as well as how to complete and submit work. You will also find a direct link to Teacher Dashboard itself.

If your child has symptoms and is awaiting the results of a COVID-19 test, they should visit the Remote Learning Resources page within the student section of our website. This page will contain a number of learning resources that they can access from home, as well as homework tasks that have been set via Teacher Dashboard. If the test results are positive, teachers will then set all work via Teacher Dashboard for the self-isolation period, which will match the work being undertaken in lessons.

SIMS Parent/ Student App

We would like to thank all those parents who have registered and already downloaded the SIMS Parent App. Moving forward this will be our main method of communication between school and home, therefore if you have not already registered please check for an email from no-reply@sims.co.uk then please follow the simple steps to register and download the app. If you have not received the email, or need to update your email address, then please contact the school reception or email parentapp@scacademy.co.uk

Broad Way, High Heath, Pelsall, Walsall. WS4 1BW | **Principal:** Stuart Turnbull

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The features of the SIMS Parent App are:

- Easy access to morning and afternoon attendance
- What homework tasks your child has been set and when the homework is due in
- Access to school reports
- The ability to update contact details
- The chance to view achievement and behaviour data
- See your child's daily timetable
- View the whole school calendar to see key dates throughout the academic year and school contact details.

We have also launched the SIMS Student App which students can access via a mobile phone or any internet enabled device. The Student App has similar features to the Parent App, but most importantly it will enable students to easily manage their homework deadlines. They can see what homework tasks have been set, what has been completed and what is still due. We are supporting students in school with registering and downloading the App and would also appreciate your support with this at home. User guides on how to access information on both Apps are available on the school website and have been sent via the Parent and the Student Apps.

Routines and keeping safe

We would like to congratulate our students on their mature response to the measures that have been put in place and appreciate the conversations that are happening at home reinforcing the message of hand hygiene, respectful distancing and use of face coverings where appropriate. We advise that students do carry a face mask for use when needed. Students have also been reminded of the need to wear masks on public transport and if they are visiting shops on the way to or from school.

Students have been brilliant at following the new systems and structures, timings of the school day and at break and lunch time. In our messages given to students on their return to school we reminded them of our Ready, Respect, Responsible behaviour policy. Every measure taken by our students can make a difference and we continue to urge them to be mindful of this when with their friends during social time at break and lunch. As we are all aware, the rate of COVID transmission continues to rise and there is inevitable uncertainty around how this situation will develop in the future. This, alongside the impact of the renewed restrictions we are under as a society, may cause some anxiety for some of our students and we would urge them to speak to their Form Tutor or our Children Service's team if this is the case.

At this time of year many students (and adults) will develop colds. If your child is unwell with a cold, sore throat or other minor illness that you would normally have sent them into school with, they can still come into school as long as they do not have:

- a temperature
- continuous cough
- loss or change in taste or smell

If you are unsure whether your child should be in school, you can seek further support or advice from the NHS website - <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/symptoms> or by calling 111.

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New Routines

We are constantly reviewing and reflecting on the organisation of our academy and we believe that due to how well the students have adapted to the new ways of working we can now make some slight changes to the start and end of the academy day. This will also mean that students are potentially waiting for less time outside the academy gates in the morning and dismissal of all students will be quicker at the end of the day. This will be a timely change for us as the mornings and evenings will become darker and the weather may well become colder and wetter. The new amended staggered arrival and dismissal times will start from Monday 2nd November (the week after half term). Two Year groups will arrive and be dismissed at one time but they will be socially separated on entry (via main or student reception) and on exit (via small staff car park gate or pedestrian gate).

The table below provides the details for each year group and clearly explains the new start and finish times after half-term.

| Year | Arrival | Gate | Entrance | Departure |
|-------|---------|----------------|----------|-----------|
| 7 | 08:40 | Small car park | Main | 15:00 |
| 8 | 08:40 | Pedestrian | Student | 15:00 |
| 9 | 08:50 | Pedestrian | Student | 15:10 |
| 10 | 08:50 | Small car park | Main | 15:10 |
| 11 | 09:00 | Pedestrian | Student | 16:10* |
| 12/13 | 09:00 | Small car park | Main | 15:20 |

* Year 11 will still be dismissed at 14:40 on Fridays.

Food Arrangements

We will be adding to the food service offer at lunch times after half term. Each lunch time there will also be a choice of two hot 'grab bags' that students can choose from in addition to the cold service already available. I have attached the four week rolling menu with this letter. Where possible we would still encourage parents to send students to school with a packed lunch. Unfortunately, there will be no opportunity to purchase food at break time so if your child is likely to want to eat/drink at this time they will need to bring something from home.

PE Kit and Extra-curricular

As you know students have been arriving at school in their PE kit on their designated PE days, this has proved very successful and will therefore continue for the foreseeable future. Please can I ask for your support in ensuring students come to school in the correct PE kit - Sheffield PE tracksuit top, Sheffield PE polo shirt, plain black shorts/tracksuit bottoms or leggings, plain black PE socks and trainers. If students do not have a Sheffield PE tracksuit top they can wear a tracksuit top which must be either **blue** or **black**. As of week beginning 5th October Extra-curricular PE will start for Years 7/8/9, this will take place after school on their designated PE days. After half-term these will develop into inter-form competitions so please encourage your child to attend.

Visits to School

In order to keep our staff and students safe at this challenging time, parents and carers are reminded that they are not allowed into the school building without a pre-arranged 'essential' appointment. Students should ensure that they have all their necessary equipment for the school day.

School Calendar

Form Tutors will also be contacting parents/carers to discuss how the term has gone so far, how well your child has settled back into school and to discuss with you what will be happening over the remainder of the term. Please look at the website or on your Sims parent app to view a copy of our school calendar. This shows key dates for this academic year. Our Open Evenings for prospective Year 7 and Year 12 students will be held virtually this year and will be accessible via our website.

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We will continue to provide you with updates and key information. We have been overwhelmed by the support we have received so far from our parents and carers and would like to thank you for this and for re-enforcing our key messages with students.

Yours sincerely

Mr Stuart Turnbull
Principal

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