



### **Important Update – Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> May.**

Dear parent/carer

I am writing to you to provide further detail regarding some Year groups returning to school based learning after half term and the provision for other students, including those who are the children of Key Workers who require childcare provision.

On Thursday 21<sup>st</sup> May, we will be sending a survey to parents of Year 10 and Year 12 students. This will assist us in our planning, and your participation would be greatly appreciated.

This email contains a lot of important information. A summary of any actions you need to take or important updates are below.

At the Victory Academy, we are currently undergoing an upgrade of our IT provision. For this reason, discrete student timetables and details of the staffing and support arrangements will be sent in a follow up communication that you will receive after half term.

### **Summary for Year 10 and Year 12:**

- Maintain social distancing at home.
- Introduce your child to the concept of the Family Bubble and the need to stay in the Family Bubble when at school.
- To learn about our “family bubble” approach to Year 10 and Year 12 provision, please view this short video - <https://youtu.be/VG347gkQ5zM>
- Students in Year 10 should wear their usual school uniform; the blazer and tie is not required.
- Students in Year 12 should wear smart/casual business wear.
- All students will be required to bring their own equipment to write with (pen, pencil, rubber, ruler) and a set of wired headphones that can be plugged into computers to allow students to access learning.
- Refresh your child’s understanding of our key school rules and values – Respect, Pride and Belief.



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- If students are not able to engage appropriately at school, respecting social distancing and the need for Family Bubbles to remain apart from each other then we will have no choice but to ask that child to engage with distance learning at home.
- If your child shows symptoms or tests positive for Covid-19 do not send your child to school and inform our Attendance Improvement Manager, Wendy Reeve w.reeve@tsatrust.org.uk
- If a child feels unwell, they should alert one of their Family Bubble staff immediately.
- If a member of your child's bubble, student or staff, shows symptoms or tests positive for Covid-19 we will be asking everyone in that bubble to stay at home and self-isolate for 14 days.
- The latest **Government guidance is that wearing a face covering or face mask in schools or other education settings is not recommended**. Therefore, students and staff will not wear masks whilst in school.

Any work completed by pupils at home needs to be submitted digitally and not in hard copy at the school. This is due to the risk posed to staff from accepting hard-copy work from pupils.

**All other students must stay at home** and continue to engage with their distance learning in the way they have done up to now. For the children of Key Workers requiring childcare this will now be provided at their school from 1st June and parents should continue to provide **24 hours notice** of their intention to use this provision.

We will be opening as follows from 8th June:

Year group	First date students should attend school
10	8 <sup>th</sup> June for family bubbles 1 -5. These family bubbles will have in school provision at staggered start times on a Monday and Tuesday 11 <sup>th</sup> June for family bubbles 6-10 These family bubbles will have in school provision at staggered start times on a Thursday and Friday
12	8 <sup>th</sup> June for family bubbles 1 -3. These family bubbles will have in school provision at staggered start times on a Monday and Tuesday 11 <sup>th</sup> June for family bubbles 4 and 5 These family bubbles will have in school provision at staggered start times on a Thursday and Friday



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Our keyworker provision will be available from Monday 1<sup>st</sup> June.

I would like to reemphasise our belief that Child First = Child Safe = Adult Safe. This has been the key principle that has guided our planning since we began working on how to safely transition students back in to school based learning.

**Reminder of guidance published by the government:**

As you know, whilst there has been a partial relaxing of the lockdown there are still significant restrictions that we must all abide by. This is important for us as the “Bubble” approach we have taken is aimed at minimising the interaction of people when they are in school. To complement this approach it is important that we all minimise contact with other people when outside for school. I have summarised the key restrictions that are currently in place below:

- During the emergency period, no person may leave or be outside of the place where they are living without reasonable excuse.
- People are allowed to meet one member of another household in a public space.
- The law bans public gatherings of more than two people, except in specific circumstances.
- Exercise “with one member of another household” in outdoor public spaces, such as parks or the countryside.
- There is no limit on where the exercise can take place, and the government made clear in its new guidance that people can drive into the countryside for walks or recreation.

**Family Bubbles:**

To support social distancing and reduce the risk of unnecessary contact we are introducing Family Bubbles.

Each student will be part of a small, consistent Family Bubble with assigned staff who will only work with students in that Family Bubble. Students are, therefore, protected from contact with any other student outside their Family Bubble whilst at school.

How will the bubbles work?

- We have limited the Family Bubbles to a maximum of 15 students.  
Your child will be issued with a coloured wristband on their first day of arrival at the academy. When students are in school, this wristband will need to be kept on throughout the whole day.
- Bubbles will study together, take breaks / lunches together and they will only use facilities such as playgrounds and IT suites with this bubble.



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- If your child usually has additional learning support they can access support outside of their bubble by informing their family leaders who will safely facilitate this.

### **Opening Hours:**

In order to welcome students back to The Victory Academy safely and ensure social distancing we have introduced a staggered timetable for students returning to school based learning. Our overall school opening hours are 8.40am – 3.05pm. However, there will be flexible start times for each family bubble to allow for safe entry to the school. Students should only be in school during these times. In addition, we are changing how students and parents enter and leave the school and this will be indicated in the follow up communication.

The arrival and departure times for different bubbles will also be made clear during the follow up communication.

### **The school day:**

As explained in my previous letter, each Family Bubble will follow its own individual timetable to ensure it is always kept separated from any other Family Bubble. Students will be in school for four hour periods, on their allocated days, with breaks provided.

In the first week back, commencing 8<sup>th</sup> June, we will be working with students to help them re-socialise appropriately after an extended period of isolation. This will include “time to talk” sessions with family leaders and signposting to wellbeing resources as required.

### **School Lunches:**

We will be ensuring social distancing measures are upheld in dining rooms and are planning on staggered lunch breaks to ensure family groups are kept isolated. Robust controls are being implemented in kitchens to ensure catering staff are social distancing whilst preparing and serving food and extra checks will be made to ensure our supplier is delivering exceptionally high food safety standards.

We will be providing a “grab and go” lunch service that can be pre-ordered at the start of each day.

These meals will be charged in the normal way. Students in receipt of free school meals will have their meal provided free of charge in the way they always have.



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Until further notice all payments will be cashless. This can be topped up online and those students entitled to free school meals will be able to use their allowance as usual.

Families entitled to receive free school meals will continue to receive the voucher scheme until further notice. If your child does access in school offer we will provide them with a free school meal in addition to this voucher.

### **Uniforms:**

During this time, we are asking that students continue to wear their school uniforms, as outlined above, **but without blazers or ties**. Please help to keep their uniform clean and washed regularly to help maintain the highest standards of hygiene.

Students will not require PE kit.

### **Face masks:**

The latest **Government guidance is that wearing a face covering or face mask in schools or other education settings is not recommended**. Furthermore, the government states that schools and other education or childcare settings should not require staff, children and learners to wear face coverings. The majority of staff in education settings will not require PPE beyond what they would normally need for their work, even if they are not always able to maintain a distance of 2 metres from others.

Therefore, students and staff will not wear masks whilst in school.

### **School Rules:**

This has been an unusual time for us all and we have had to make many adjustments during lockdown. Children will have missed their friends and the structure their school environment brings through routine. As we move into the next stage and begin to reclaim some normality, we will be asking all our students to remember school rules and behave in a suitable manner within their bubbles.

We must make it clear that our first priority is to keep our community safe as we transition back to school-based learning. Therefore, **if a student is unable to engage appropriately at school, respecting social distancing and the need for Family Bubbles to remain apart from each other, then we will have no choice but to ask that child to engage with distance learning at home**. This is to ensure the safety of our whole school community. Please also note that students cannot “swap” into other family bubbles, and must stay within their allocated group.



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### **Keeping our community safe over time:**

Whilst we are studying within the Family Bubbles, we will be following the Government self-isolation strategy. If a member of your child's bubble, either student or staff, shows symptoms or tests positive for Covid-19 we will be asking everyone in that bubble to stay at home and self-isolate for 14 days.

**If your child shows symptoms or tests positive for Covid-19 do not send your child to school and inform Wendy Reeve: [w.reeve@tsatrust.org.uk](mailto:w.reeve@tsatrust.org.uk)**

**If your child is at school and begins to show symptoms then they must tell their Family leader immediately. We will contact parents and carers to alert you that your child is showing symptoms and ask you to collect your child immediately.**

These rules also apply if anyone in your household is affected. We are not medical professionals and we will be following the national advice. You can find information about symptoms at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance/stay-at-home-guidance-for-households-with-possible-coronavirus-covid-19-infection>

Please note that if someone displays potential Covid-19 symptoms but following a test is found not to have the virus, then the members of the Family Bubble will be able to return to school.

### **Where to look for further information**

The Thinking Schools Academy Trust is actively responding to ongoing developments with the Coronavirus outbreak so please use the links on this page for updated information on our response and what it will mean for you.

Today we have launched a dedicated website for information on our plans to return students safely to school.

**FAQs and information: [www.tsatrust.org.uk/coronavirus](http://www.tsatrust.org.uk/coronavirus)**

We look forward to safely welcoming some students back to school next term. We will keep under review our ability to safely accommodate students from other year groups going forward. However, this will only be done when we are confident that this can be done safely.

Yours sincerely,

Ms M Gage  
**Director of Education (Chatham)**



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