



28th August 2020

Dear Parents and Carers

Firstly, I hope that you and your families have had a restful summer break and that your child is looking forward to returning to school. I know that the staff at Axe Valley Academy have missed their students and are incredibly excited to return to see them all in September and to meet our new Year 7s.

The purpose of this letter is to confirm the changes in arrangements, which I outlined to parents in July, ready for return in September. This letter contains a large amount of information regarding the measures we are putting into place alongside the systems of control designed to minimise the risk of transmission of COVID-19.

Please read this letter carefully and go through this with your child to ensure that they are familiar with all the measures in place to keep them as safe as possible. We will be regularly sharing this information with all students upon their return.

We also have updated guidance for visitors which I have included in the 'Frequently Asked Questions' section and it would be helpful if you could familiarise yourself with this in the event of needing to visit the school site.

There have not been many changes to the information I published to parents in July, however over recent days we have seen much speculation about the Government's position on the wearing of face coverings in schools. We welcome the guidance on face coverings in education which was published on the 26th August. You can read this guidance at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/face-coverings-in-education/face-coverings-in-education>

"Nationwide, the Government is not recommending face coverings are necessary in education settings generally because a system of control, applicable to all education environments, provides additional mitigating measures. Schools and colleges will have the discretion to require face coverings in communal areas where social distancing cannot be safely managed, if they believe that it is right in their particular circumstances."

Axe Valley Academy has a wide range of hygiene measures and systems of control in place but recognise that face coverings may provide additional confidence to students, parents and staff. Therefore, it is permitted for students and staff to wear face coverings whilst moving around the school site. Government guidance states that *"Face coverings can have a negative impact on learning and teaching and so their use in the classroom should be avoided"* and as such students will be asked to remove face coverings before entry to a classroom and they must sanitise their hands immediately after placing the face covering in a re-sealable bag in line with current guidance. Students must provide their own face

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covering and plastic bags. Students will not be permitted to wear a face covering during a lesson unless there is an underlying medical condition and their Healthcare Plan determines there is a need for this. If you feel that there is a medical need for your child to wear a face covering in a lesson, please contact the school. Further guidance on face coverings is found below.

Beginning the New Term

- Axe Valley Academy will remain closed to pupils on Thursday 3rd September 2020 and Friday 4th September 2020 for staff training
- Monday 7th September will be a Year 7 only day
- Tuesday 8th September Axe Valley Academy will be open to all students across all year groups 7-11

The First Day

In September it is essential that students only access school via the rear gates by the bus park. Further details are below. There will be no entry for any students via the front of school as we need to keep the students bubbles separate. Please do plan students routes with them so that they only access the site through the rear entrance points from September. New year 7 will be greeted by a team of staff to help them arrive at the right places and to offer support and reassurance. If new Year 7 parents are dropping their children off at the rear of school, we respectfully ask that they remain in their vehicles.

Travelling to School

We would like to encourage as many students as possible to walk or cycle to school. If parents are dropping their students at the rear of the school, it is essential that parents do not leave their vehicles. Devon County Council has confirmed that normal school transport will be running, and we have circulated their guidance to parents which can be found at the link below. Devon County Council have confirmed that anyone travelling to school by bus should do so wearing a face covering. This face covering should be removed on entry to school and placed in a sealed plastic bag. Students should also sit in year groups wherever possible on their bus.

<https://www.devon.gov.uk/educationandfamilies/school-information/school-and-college-transport>

Uniform

Students will be expected to wear full school uniform and bring their own equipment with them in September. The Uniform Policy was sent to you in July and is available on the website.

We are asking that if students have PE on their timetable that they arrive in Axe Valley Academy PE uniform on those days and remain in that kit throughout the day. This will be their uniform on days where they have PE. They should have their normal full school uniform in their bags in case they need it on these days. Students will be allowed to wear their Axe Valley Academy PE hoodies, blazers or plain dark coats over their PE kits if they wish. It is essential that they wear Axe Valley Academy PE kit and not any other gym wear. **They will not need to come in or bring PE kit on Tuesday 8th September.**

If Your Child is Unwell

It is essential that for anyone displaying symptoms of coronavirus that they do not attend school and that you inform school immediately by telephone and seek a test as soon as possible. The main symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19) are:

- a high temperature
- a new, continuous cough
- a loss or change to your sense of smell or taste

If your child takes a test please inform Axe Valley Academy of the result as soon as possible by sending their name and a copy of their test result to admin@axevalley.devon.sch.uk

You can find further information on symptoms and testing below:

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/symptoms/>

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/testing-and-tracing//>

If your child comes into contact with a confirmed case of COVID-19 they should self-isolate for 14 days. If a confirmed case is found at Axe Valley Academy, we will immediately liaise with Public Health England and NHS Test and Trace before communicating with parents of affected students to advise of next steps.

It is essential that any student who has visited a country which requires them to quarantine upon their return that they do so for the recommended time. More information can be found below: -

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/coronavirus-covid-19-transport-and-travel-guidance>

'Bubbles'

- **Years 7 & 8**

These year groups will form one bubble. They will enter and exit through the bus park gates. They will use the quad toilets only. Their canteen will be located in the entrance to the art block. Year 7 will have social time in the Year 7 area. Year 8 will have social time in the space down outside Ready to Learn.

- **Years 9 & 10**

These year groups will form one bubble. They will enter and exit through the canteen gates only. They will use the C block toilets only. Their canteen will be located in the hall. Year 9 will have social time in the music quad area. Year 10 will have social time in the Year 10 area.

- **Year 11**

This year group will form one bubble. They will enter and exit through the C Block gates only. They will use the L block toilets only. Their canteen will be located in the canteen. Year 11 will have social time in the canteen and the space outside of the canteen.

Students will be expected to move around the site, to follow their timetable, maintaining awareness of the social distancing expectations. We will ask students to move around the site in single file and ask them to adhere to the one-way systems in place. There will be markings on the floors, both outdoor and inside, to help students to remember the expectations and stay safe. Changeover times and an adjusted structure to the school day will be introduced to prevent congestion in corridors.

For hand and respiratory hygiene, we will continue to provide hand sanitiser for use on entry and exit to all teaching rooms. We will continue to insist on good hand washing routines to include washing vigorously for 20 seconds with soap and water, and more often than usual. We will also continue to reinforce good respiratory hygiene using the '*catch it, bin it, kill it*' approach where lidded bins are available in all classrooms.

Face Coverings

As stated above, the Government guidance on face coverings in education was updated on 26th August. We have a wide range of hygiene measures and systems of control in place but recognise that face coverings may provide additional confidence to students, parents and staff. Therefore, it is permitted for students and staff to wear face coverings whilst moving around the school site. Government guidance states that '*Face coverings can have a negative impact on learning and teaching and so their use in the classroom should be avoided*'. Students will be asked to remove face coverings before entry to a classroom and must sanitise their hands immediately after placing the covering in a re-sealable bag. Students must provide their own face covering and plastic bags.

Timings of the School Day

Students are to arrive for 8.45am at the rear of school. On arrival to school on the first day students will be asked to move directly to their tutor bases. On a normal teaching day students will be asked to move directly to their first timetabled lesson.

The start and finish times of the school day will remain the same as last academic year, however the structure of the school day has been adjusted slightly and these timings are shown below.

Arrival	08:45
Lesson 1	08:50-09:50
Lesson Changeover	09:50
Lesson 2	09:55-10:55
Morning Break	10:55-11:15
Lesson 3	11:15-12:15
Lunchtime	12:15-12:40
Registration	12:40-13:05
Lesson Changeover	13:05
Lesson 4	13:10-14:10
Afternoon Break	14:10-14:25
Lesson 5	14:25-15:25

Canteen

The canteen will be split into 3 separate areas for our different bubbles. Wrapped snacks and drinks will be served at breaks and a grab and go lunch option will be available only. The grab and go option will be a meal deal to the value of £2.20 and students who are entitled to Free School Meals will be able to collect an option. There will always be a hot or cold meal choice with cake or fruit. Drinks and individually wrapped snacks will be available to buy separately in the separate canteen bubbles. A sample week's menu is below.

Monday

Southern coated chicken wrap
Pasta and sauce (v)
Choice of sandwich

Tuesday

Panko coated chicken burger
Jacket potato beans and cheese (v)
Choice of sandwich

Wednesday

Chicken skewers
Steak or vegetarian pasty (v)
Choice of baguette

Thursday

Choice of panini
Sausage roll
Choice of salad pot (v)

Friday

Cheeseburger or chicken nuggets and chips
Veggie sausage and chips (v)
Choice of salad pot

FAQs

Most of the questions that I have been asked have been outlined in the sections above however some more general questions have been raised the answers to which I have summarised below. I hope you find these helpful.

Does my child have to attend school?

Yes. The Government advice is very clear on this and everyone needs to attend school every day and on time. The only exceptions are where specific medical advice has been given to a student. The family of any student in this category must contact the school in advance of the start of term to discuss arrangements for their child's education.

What are the main ways in which Axe Valley Academy will try and ensure safety for students?

- A full risk assessment has been carried out and verified by an external provider, Local Governing Committee and Directors of Uffculme Academy Trust. An additional UAT quick reference guide has been published and is available on our website.
- Your child will spend most of their time at school in a 'bubble' e.g. lesson time, break and lunchtimes. When moving from lesson to lesson, students may pass others around the school site. On the few occasions where it is difficult to maintain a year group bubble, students will be expected to stay socially distanced from others.
- Hand sanitation stations will be available outside all classrooms and buildings and students will be required to use these prior to entry.
- Toilet blocks are allocated to separate bubbles and there will be increased cleaning of toilet facilities and other key areas around the school during the day.
- When students leave a classroom, the classroom will be cleaned by the teacher prior to next group of students arriving, assuming they are from a different year group bubble. There have been lesson changeover and break times added to allow for this to happen.
- The Canteen is being split into three venues for the separate bubbles. There will be a restricted 'grab and go' menu choice.
- Year groups will have their own designated playground area.

Should my child wear a face covering or face mask on the school bus?

It is now a requirement to wear a face covering on the school bus and if you travel on public transport. Any face masks must be removed before you come on to the school site. If it is of the disposable type, it should be placed in a bin near the entrance; if it is re-usable it must be placed in a plastic bag which you need to provide.

What are the rules on handwashing and hygiene?

Regular handwashing and/or sanitising is vital. When students arrive and leave school, they will be expected to sanitise their hands at the stations at the entrances. In addition, there will be hand sanitiser available outside every classroom. Students are expected to sanitise on arrival at lessons and when they are going to break or lunch. Tissues will be available in each classroom. If students sneeze/cough they are expected to use a tissue or to cover their mouth/nose with the crook of their arm. A used tissue must be placed in the specialist lidded bins immediately. Any subsequent sneezing should use fresh tissues. At all times, students are expected to avoid touching their face.

Will staff work in the same way?

The Government have advised that staff should stay at the front of the class wherever possible and keep a two-metre distance where they can so students may notice some minor changes. Students that require additional support will continue to receive this support. Additionally, the Government has advised that desks should face the front wherever possible.

What other equipment does my child need to bring in?

All students will need to bring in pens, pencils, a ruler, calculator, protractor, pair of compasses, highlighters etc as normal. We will be unable to share equipment with students,

other than a small supply of emergency equipment which will be sanitised after use, due to the risk of infection and they will not be allowed to share equipment with other people in their class. Please help your son or daughter to ensure they have everything they need by checking with them the night before.

Does the normal school behaviour policy apply?

Students are expected to follow the normal rules that we have in school and we will maintain our highest expectations of behaviour. They should be respectful of all other students and staff. If students don't behave appropriately, we follow our usual behaviour policy of a warning before using the Ready to Learn system. There will be severe sanctions for students who refuse to follow the social distancing and hygiene measures due to the risk they pose to others. **Any intentional attempt to infect others, including coughing or spitting at others or on their equipment, will be treated as a serious breach of the behaviour policy and serious sanctions will be applied. We reserve the right to refer these incidents to the police.**

Are there changes for me if I need to visit school site as a parent?

Yes. For safety we are implementing the following regulations to help ensure that we maintain a COVID-secure environment for all:

1. If you or anyone in your household is displaying symptoms of COVID-19 or is currently residing in a locally 'locked down' area, then you must not visit the school.
2. Tours will only take place when students are in lessons and only in circumstances where they are absolutely essential, in order to manage the risk of transmission and minimise cross-contamination.
3. All visitors must sign in on arrival and give their email address and phone number to enable visitors to be tracked and traced should the need arise.
4. All visitors must also sign a disclaimer stating that they have not visited any countries not included on the travel corridor list within the last 14 days and that they are not displaying symptoms of COVID-19.
5. All visitors must follow current guidance relating to social distancing.
6. Visitors must wear a face covering whilst on site and sanitise their hands on arrival.

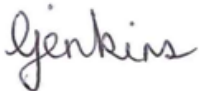
In Summary

- Students, staff and visitors will be expected to adhere to social distancing, hand and respiratory hygiene guidance and one-way systems
- Additionally, visitors should wear a face covering when arriving in Reception
- Year 7 return to Axe Valley Academy on Monday 7th September 2020
- Years 8-11 return to Axe Valley Academy on Tuesday 8th September 2020
- You must not attend Axe Valley Academy if you have any symptoms of coronavirus
- You must not attend Axe Valley Academy if you are in quarantine following a visit to a country which requires you to do so upon your return
- Full school uniform will be expected (see Uniform Policy which is available on the school website www.axevalley.devon.sch.uk). Students will wear Axe Valley Academy PE uniform on a day where they have timetabled PE lessons

- School transport will be running and face coverings should be worn
- Face coverings can be worn when moving around site but are not mandatory and should not be worn in the classroom
- The canteen will offer a grab and go meal deal option only

We are delighted that all students are returning to school in September and look forward to welcoming them back. The guidance outlined in this letter will be reviewed regularly in line with Government guidance and our local situation.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jenkins". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned to the left of a vertical line.

Laura Jenkins
Headteacher