



# St Albans Girls' School

Learning for Life in a Community where All can Excel

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25 August 2020

Dear Parents/Carers,

Thank you for your encouragement and comments from the letter sent to you all last week. It was really encouraging to see the great endorsement to the re-opening of schools at the weekend led by Professor Chris Whitty, England's Chief Medical Officer who said that "many more [children] were likely to be harmed by not going than harmed by going" to school. He added "there's also very clear evidence from the UK and around the world that children much less commonly get a severe illness and end up having to be hospitalised if they get symptomatic Covid,".

It is essential to understand however, that there are no risk free options and so our focus on *safety first for all*, through risk management planning and openness to adapt to changing situations as they arise are essential to us all to feel confident – protective measures like distancing, hand washing and cleaning can and do reduce the risks.

As I am sure that you would expect, we have a plan to manage all eventualities. From the day to day running of the school, classroom movement and general circulation, to the more extreme events which could arise due to a confirmed outbreak of Covid-19. No stone has been left unturned. On our school website from Thursday 27 August 2020, you will be able to access our working documents related to all aspects of Covid-19 related Health and Safety. This includes:

1. Full risk assessments
2. Recovery plans
3. Cleaning risk assessments and action plans
4. Catering risk assessments and action plans
5. Infectious diseases procedures
6. Hertfordshire County Council checklist for schools – RAG rated for STAGS specifically
7. Transport risk assessment
8. Activity and Controls measures of movement around the school
9. Activity and Controls measure for teaching and the curriculum

All guidance will be reviewed on a weekly basis, given that the information from Public Health England and the Department for Education is updated so regularly. I will follow this with a Loom on Thursday which goes into detail about the organisation of activities across the school site, as referenced in points 8 & 9 above.

## Use of masks in school

The use of masks has again been reiterated by the Chief Medical Officer and indeed has been the subject of much discussion in the news for children in Scottish schools. Students travelling on public transport will need to wear masks and having read so much guidance, it seems sensible now to move to a situation where the use of masks is required at STAGS at all times of movement around the school for both staff and students.

Head Teacher: Mrs M Chapman  
Sandridgebury Lane, St Albans, Herts, AL3 6DB  
Tel: 01727 853134 Fax: 01727 831157 e-mail: [admin@stags.herts.sch.uk](mailto:admin@stags.herts.sch.uk)



## **End of the day organisation**

Staff will park in the overflow car park next to the Technology block which will free up more spaces in the overflow car park for parents. However, please remember that even with additional capacity, we have limited spaces and when this is full, the site team will have to close the school gates. I strongly encourage you to park further away from the school and your daughter meets you at a pre- agreed location or that you wait until after 15.45, when the public buses and school buses have left and the site is much more accessible. Cycling or walking is definitely the preferred option and your daughter can utilise the bicycle sheds for security if she cycles to school. Both the front and back entrances of the school will be open as usual for ease of on-site access.

There will be the facility for students to remain on site after school ends, as has been usual in the past. Students can remain in the restaurant or canopies in designated areas, with the latest 'pick up' time of 17.00.

## **Mobile phones**

With the absence of access to lockers, students will be able to retain their mobile phone in their bags. The phone must be switched off at all times and the usual sanctions will apply should the phone be accessed inappropriately during the school day.

## **Resources and equipment**

As students will be located in subject specialist areas in the main, textbooks and resources are available and will be sanitised following any usage. However, many parents have contacted me regarding students bringing their own devices to school. This is completely acceptable and there will be a follow up letter from Mr Kershaw with more details.

Additionally, we are asking that students in Years 7, 8 & 9 bring an apron to school with them for their Resistant Materials lessons. More detail will follow from the department via parent comms.

## **Wellbeing**

Additionally, we recognise that this is a stressful time in so many ways as we move into the new phase of returning to school. We expect there to be varying levels of anxiety, which we will support in our usual way, but if you feel that your daughter will be struggling above and beyond what you feel to be manageable, please do contact Ms Thomas, Deputy Head at [kts@stags.herts.sch.uk](mailto:kts@stags.herts.sch.uk), so that we can more effectively support on an individual basis.

I will come back to you again this week with more specific detail about in-school organisation, but in the meantime, if you have any queries, please do not hesitate to contact me at [head@stags.herts.sch.uk](mailto:head@stags.herts.sch.uk).

Thank you for your continued support.

With all good wishes



Margaret Chapman  
Head Teacher