



27 August 2020

Dear parent/carer

The new school year is almost upon us all, and we are looking forward to welcoming our students back to Monmouth Comprehensive School. I am absolutely delighted to have been appointed as the new Headteacher, and cannot wait for all of our students to be back with us. Your child’s time at secondary school is transformational – they join us as 11 year olds and leave as adults, and we are acutely aware of the privilege and responsibility that we have in enabling this development. We are also hugely ambitious for all of our students – they all should have freedom to make their choices in life from the very best range of options available, and that freedom requires an excellent education as its foundation. The relationship between school and home is a vital one in order to support your child to be happy and successful at school and beyond, and I am looking forward to meeting you in person as soon as circumstances allow it.

We are all starting the new academic year in genuinely unique times. Never before have we been faced with a global pandemic to take into account as part of our school planning. A huge amount of thought and effort has gone into ensuring that our school is a safe space for us all, and we have worked closely with Welsh Government and the Local Authority in order to be able to open fully for all students. A range of measures have been put in place to ensure the safety of everyone at school. We have a comprehensive risk assessment that has been quality assured by the Local Authority, and which is available for you to peruse – please click the following link to access this, or visit our website - [MCS Risk Assessment September 2020](#). Additionally, we have a Student Protocol and an Unwell Protocol that set out all of the measures that we have put in place at school to keep everyone safe. These can be found at the following link, or on our website: [Student Protocol September 2020 – Unwell Protocol September 2020](#).

The start of the school year

In order to fully induct students into the new measures, we are bringing students back to school in a phased way.

The plan allows for the staged re-introduction to school for staff and students in line with the Government guidance on the return to school for the Autumn Term.

- **Tuesday 1st September to Thursday 3rd September** will be school *planning and preparation* days as well as a school INSET Day, in readiness to welcome students back to school. These are days designated by the Government to allow us to make sure all Health and Safety requirements are in place and tested, as well as training for staff. We will then start with the successive re-introduction of more and more year groups into school. By the 10th September all students will be back at school.
- On **Friday 4th September** Year **7** and Year **12** will start at school as part of their transition work. This will allow our new Year 7s to familiarise themselves with our buildings, make new friends and understand our routines. Year 12 will continue with



their transition into the Sixth Form on this day.

- On **Monday 7th September**, Year **11** and **13** will start back at school.
- On **Tuesday 8th September** Year **9** will start back at school.
- On **Wednesday 9th September** Year **10** will start back at school.
- On **Thursday September 10th** Year **8** will start back at school.

Each year group will start with a wellbeing focus on their first day, as well as learning about the new measures in place. We will also take time to focus on year-specific priorities during this week.

The School Day

Plans were already in place pre-Covid to adjust the school day to 50 minute lessons, instead of 1 hour. 50 minute lessons allow for greater breadth in learning, as students are able to enjoy a wider variety of subjects. 50 minute lessons have also been shown through a multitude of research studies to be more effective in ensuring that students learn and make excellent progress. We have also made adjustments to the timings of these lessons in order to ensure we can meet government guidelines. The timings are as follows:

MCS Daily Routine		Trefn
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TIME	Years 7, 10 & 11	Years 8, 9, 12 & 13
8:45 AM	Registration	Registration
9:00 AM	Lesson 1	Lesson 1
9:50 AM	Lesson 2	Lesson 2
10:40 AM	<i>Break 1</i>	Lesson 3
11:10 AM	Lesson 3	
11:30 AM		<i>Break 2</i>
12:00 PM	Lesson 4	Lesson 4
12:50 PM	<i>Break 3</i>	Lesson 5
1:20 PM	Lesson 5	
1:40 PM		<i>Break 4</i>
2:10 PM	Lesson 6	Lesson 6
3:00 PM	<i>End of School Day</i>	<i>End of School Day</i>
3:10 PM		Lesson 7 - Y12 & 13

We will run a staggered dismissal at the end of each day in order to comply with regulations.

- Students that walk home will be dismissed at 2.50pm.
- Students who use the school-based bus service will be dismissed at 3.00pm.
- Parental collection in Bus Bay is from 3.20pm onwards, and the car park will not be available before that time. Parents must remain in vehicles in order to comply with Covid regulations.

Other information

Uniform: students will attend school wearing their usual school uniform. On days that they have PE, they will wear their PE kit all day. If you have any questions about the uniform please check our website for the details of our uniform policy. Please get in touch with the school if you still have questions after that.

Transport: we are awaiting final details and protocols from the Local Authority, but understand that the usual transport routes will run as normal.

Catering: we will have a full catering service available to students as usual. Students are of course welcome to bring in their own packed lunch if they prefer, as long as it is suitable and healthy.

Meetings with school: current Covid guidance requires us to conduct meetings with parents by telephone, email or via virtual meeting whenever possible. This also means that parents need to avoid entering the school building without a pre-arranged appointment. Thank you for your support with this.

Communication

Our school website provides up-to-date information about what is happening at our school (www.monmouthcomprehensive.org.uk). We also send home lots of information via 'SIMS INTOUCH.' It is essential that we have accurate email addresses for all parents so that information is sent home. If you have changed your email address and/or will change your email address, could you please notify the school straight away.

We tweet regularly – follow us @LearnWithMCS.

We have an active Friends Association. The committee and other volunteers organise events throughout the year and are ambitious to provide support for parents. Details of the Friends can be found on the school website.

I am so excited to be starting this new school year and this new adventure at MCS with all of our students. Secondary school is a vital time in every person's life. It is a time of opportunity, of development and of change. We are determined as a school that every MCS student is known, is stimulated and challenged, and is supported and cared for. It is such an exciting time in their lives, and by working together we can ensure that they are both happy and successful.

Yours sincerely

Hugo Hutchison
Headteacher