



A M E S B U R Y

CELEBRATING 150 YEARS OF EDUCATION

RETURNING TO SCHOOL SAFELY





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Dear Parents and Guardians,

As promised, I write to explain our preparations for the new academic year. The Senior Leadership Team has met on three occasions and continue to interpret the Government guidelines in order to ensure that our return to school is not only fulfilling academically and socially, but also as safe as possible.

This document deals with more than just our response to Covid guidelines. It is detailed and I do understand the challenge of finding those aspects of school arrangements, which are pertinent to individual families. Please bear with me on this as I seek to ensure that everything is covered.

Probably the greatest frustration for us all will concern how we welcome parents on to the site and whether fixtures can take place. Please be assured that we are as keen as you are to see all aspects of a prep school education return to normal. But, at present, even if Amesbury's stance may appear illogical, it is one adopted on account of Government guidelines, risk assessment and the demands of insurers. As I am in daily contact with my colleagues at our competitor schools, it will also be broadly in line with what is happening locally, and nationally, in the independent preparatory school sector.

Despite the specific challenges that we face, there is much to look forward to and I look forward to meeting you in person as soon as this is possible.

With all best wishes,

Jonathan Whybrow
27th August 2020

Back to school!

Firstly, let me repeat that:

- Term dates remain unchanged.
- The length of the school day will be as normal.
- All the necessary COVID-19 risk assessments for re-opening and operating under the current conditions will be undertaken.
- We have the necessary contingency plans for possible COVID-19 cases, self-isolation and for local lockdowns. We have registered for test and trace requirements.

Please note that pupils and staff who were on the shielding patient list, and those with family members shielding, are now advised also to return to school.

Possible quarantine issues caused by foreign travel

Please be aware that any child, who has travelled abroad to a country which requires a period of quarantine on return, will NOT be allowed to return to school if that period of quarantine has not expired.

The Safety of the Amesbury Community

In order to ensure the whole school site is minimising the risk of transmitting COVID 19 the guidelines below will be followed

- No one will be allowed on site if they have a positive diagnosis of COVID 19 or are displaying symptoms (high temperature, new continuous cough, loss or change to your sense of smell or taste)
- Anyone showing symptoms during the school day will be isolated by the school medical team until they can go home.
- Amesbury will be provided with a number of home testing kits. These can be given to parents of children displaying symptoms or staff with symptoms if they think it will be difficult to get the pupil/staff member to a testing site. Advice will be included on how to test.

Bubbles

Why is the government insisting on 'bubbles', despite the fact that these can be compromised as soon as the child leaves the school premises? The argument is that this will enable us to shut down only parts of the school affected should someone fall ill with Covid 19.

The bubbles at Amesbury are as follows:

Years 7 & 8
Year 6
Year 5
Year 4
Year 3
Years 1 & 2
Reception/Nursery and Pre-Nursery

Drop Off and Pick Up

Bubble	Timing Drop off	Timing Pick up	Venue
Year 7 & 8	8.00 to 8.15	16.40 to 17.00 Prep 17.40-18.00	High Pitfold
Year 6	8.00 to 8.15	16.40 to 17.00 Prep 17.40 to 18.00	Academic doors
Year 5	8.00 to 8.15	16.40 to 17.00 Prep 17.40 to 18.00	Keffolds gate
Year 4	8.15 to 8.30	16.00 to 16.15	Academic doors
Year 3	8.15 to 8.30	16.00 to 16.15	Keffolds gate
Years 2 & 1	Year 2 8.00 to 8.15 Year 1 8.15 to 8.30	15.30 to 15.45	Front door
Pre-Nursery Nursery Reception	8.15 to 8.30	15.30 to 15.45	High Pitfold

- Siblings can be dropped off simultaneously. Children should go to their classroom.
- Staff will be on duty in their classrooms from 8am.
- Members of the SLT will meet and greet.
- There will be no early pick ups so as not to compromise the academic or co-curricular timetable.
- Parents are not allowed on school grounds unless by prior appointment.
- Staff will use the High Pitfold and Secure car park.

Transport / Minibus Service

As already communicated to parents, the minibus service (for Years 3-8 only) will start from Monday 7th September 2020. All pupils will be required to wear masks on the minibus as year group bubbles will be mixing. There will be hand sanitisers to be used on boarding and leaving the bus and additional cleaning of the minibuses between journeys.

If you would like to book onto the minibus please contact the school office or refer to the email sent on Tuesday 25th August.

After School Care (ASC) and Breakfast Club

I also attach links for booking regular slots in Breakfast Club and After School Care. Adhoc sessions can be booked through the School Office as normal once School resumes from Tuesday September 1st.

<https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=9ZLsEgu4J0ypgkPEAHAXhe5lrBbvl0BAvqWmVe0IIPVUQUQUNBWINYTzNEMFNONEV05QOFJCTIE2Qi4u>

above is the form for After School Care Regular Booking Form Years 1 – 4

<https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=9ZLsEgu4J0ypgkPEAHAXhe5lrBbvl0BAvqWmVe0IIPVUOVoxVIFQS0FIWtk3T0I1QkhlOFhKWkhPNy4u>

above is the form for Twilight Early Years After School Care Regular Booking Form

<https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=9ZLsEgu4J0ypgkPEAHAXhe5lrBbvl0BAvqWmVe0IIPVUQjJKMEpRUkM5STE5RThWUkZHMEJYVVIEUS4u>

above is the form for Breakfast Club Regular Bookings

Classrooms and the Curriculum

A full curriculum will be offered and setting will take place. As per the Government guidance, all desks will face forward. Although this guidance discourages the wearing of face masks, pupils of an appropriate age, will be allowed to do so, except in a subject where this presents a risk in itself e.g. Science practical.

From Year 3, pupils should bring their own pencil case into school. This should contain a good supply of pencils (from Year 4 two pens are required), a couple of blue writing pens, a ruler (30cm transparent), rubber, pencil sharpener a protractor and a compass. Pupils in Years 7 and 8 should also have a scientific calculator (a Casio fx-83 is recommended). In the past this has been provided by the School but, in the present circumstances where the sharing of equipment is discouraged, we must ask that children have their own. Items should be named. Bags are allowed but pupils should limit the amount of equipment they bring into school. Pupils may take books home from school. Please also supply a water bottle as the water fountains will be out of use.

Special Educational Need provision will be offered as normal.

If they wish, staff will be allowed to wear a visor so that their pupils can see their full face. I will be encouraging staff to only have their visor down when coming into close proximity with a child. Having assessed the risk caused by the movement of Years 7 and 8 (those children subject to the government's most recent advice) inside our buildings, I have come to the conclusion that it is not necessary to wear masks. Of course, a child is welcome to use a mask if he/she wishes.

The biggest change to the normal routine will be that staff will move from class to class, whilst the children remain in one allocated classroom, except for when they move to a specialist teaching room.

Classroom allocation is as follows:

Pre- Nursery, Nursery, Reception	Early Years Building
Year 1	Rose/Shamrock
Year 2	Thistle/Dragon/Daffodil
Year 3	G1, G2 and L2
Year 4	G3, G4 and G5
Year 5	G6, G7 and G8
Year 6	U3, U5 and ICT Suite
Year 7	U6
Year 8	U4, U7, VAC

When children do move around the academic block, a one way system will be enforced to reduce contact wherever possible.

Headlines from the Remote Learning Survey

We cannot assume that school will continue normally and so we are working to respond to the survey which parents contributed to in August. Staff training which takes place prior to the beginning of term and also on every Monday will focus on Remote Learning.

Reception to Y2 (47 responses out of 83: 57%)

- **74% always or mostly found the flexible arrangement worked well for their home environment.**
- **74% always or mostly found the resources relevant and easily accessible**
- 57% always or mostly found the resources were suitable for different learning styles.
- 62% found the resources always or mostly engaging.
- 32% found the resources always or mostly allowed for independent work.
- 62% found that the balance between online and off line was just right.
- In terms of recorded video sessions: 87% (phonics), 89% (English), 70% (Maths), 68% (story time) of parents found them either useful or extremely useful.
- 64% of parents found the overall level of feedback from staff excellent or just right.
- 66% of pupils were engaged or very engaged in remote learning.
- **87% rated the remote learning overall fair, good or excellent.**

The vast majority of pupils used a laptop, tablet, ipad or desktop computer with over half (57%) working on a shared device.

The vast majority spent 1-3 hours daily on work. (Government guidance recommends no more than 3 hours a day)

The teaching method parents overall rated top, if we had to go into another lockdown, were videos recorded by the teacher explaining the work. (87% of parents put this as their 1st or 2nd choice).

Live lessons were rated 2nd overall (53% put this as their 1st or second choice)

Ways in which we will look to enhance provision for future remote learning.

- We will make clearer the daily schedule of work (alongside the weekly overview) with an expectation that pupils complete at least the English, Phonics and Maths daily
- There will be a topic focus spanning a half term which will be built up weekly.
- We will minimise the amount of printable worksheets and issue A4 exercise books (2 per pupil) to complete work in.
- We will use Forms to regularly assess pupil progress.
- 'How to' videos explaining English or Maths work will be provided using Flip grid or Power point.

Years 3 & 4 (45 out of 97 parents responded to the survey: 46%)

- **89% always or mostly found the flexible arrangement worked well for their home environment.**
- 58% always or mostly found that their children could access the videos and other online resources independently.
- 58% felt that the range of resources catered for different learning styles.
- **91% always or mostly felt that the way in which the work was organised, enabled children to complete English and Maths and to dip into other subjects that interested them.**
- **73% always or mostly felt the resources were relevant and engaging.**
- 47% always or mostly felt that work was pitched appropriately for independent work.
- 53% of pupils spent between 2-4 hours daily on work.
- 64% found that the balance between online and off line was just right.
- In terms of usefulness (always or mostly useful) of the face to face teacher sessions: tutor sessions (69%), English (56%) and Maths (49%).
- 67% of parents found the overall level of feedback from staff excellent or just right.
- 58% of pupils were engaged or very engaged in remote learning.
- **87% rated the remote learning overall fair, good or excellent.**

The vast majority of pupils used a laptop, tablet, ipad or desktop computer with over half (62%) working on a shared device.

The teaching method parents rated top overall, if we had to go into another lockdown, were videos recorded by the teacher explaining the work. (91% of parents put this as their 1st or 2nd choice).

Live lessons were rated 2nd overall (58% put this as their 1st or second choice)

Ways in which we will look to enhance provision for future remote learning.

- Within the Wakelet structure we will make clear the daily schedule of work with an expectation that pupils complete English, Maths reading and another subject daily (of a choice eg Geography or History).
- We will minimise the amount of printable worksheets and issue A4 exercise books (2 per pupil) to complete work in.
- We will use Forms, other small scale quizzes etc to regularly assess pupil progress. (Previously only the final piece of work ,or one piece of work, was submitted for marking and feedback).
- 'How to' teaching videos will be provided using Flip grid or Power point for each Maths and English lesson.

Years 5 to 8 (58 parents out of 161, responded to the survey: 36%)

- **83% of pupils were able to work independently whilst working at home.**
- **90% of parents felt their child was always or mostly supported to access the work.**
- **79% of parents felt their child was always or mostly supported to carry out the work.**
- 71% of parents felt their child was always or mostly supported to know how they were doing.
- 45% felt a condensed timetable worked best for their family set up. (29% preferred the full timetable and 26% expressed no preference).
- **86% felt that pupils had sufficient time with their tutor.**
- 74% felt the remote learning was either excellent or good.
- 62% felt the amount of work was just right.
- 48.3% felt there was the right balance between online and off line (though 48.3% felt there was too much work online).

Ways in which we will look to enhance provision for future remote learning.

- Aim to provide for more opportunity for off-line work (pupils video or photograph work).
- Lessons of 45 minutes to enable a 10 minute break between.
- Will continue to upload work at the start of the day to provide flexibility but advise pupils where possible to follow the school timetable to enable them to receive teacher support and feedback during the lesson.
- Weekly catch up with tutor.
- Provide pupils with clear expectations in terms of completing work.
- Ensure some video time in lessons.

Break arrangements

Break times will see the children restricted to their 'bubbles' and their morning snack will be delivered to them.

In order to ensure that staff are able to respect social distancing guidelines, a second staff room has been established.

Bubble	Area
Year 7 & 8	Far end of bottom area of playing fields (1 st team pitch)
Year 6	Near end of bottom area of playing fields (2 nd team pitch)
Year 5	Half of the top area (cricket square area)
Year 4	Half of the top area (cricket square area)
Year 3	Lizzie & tree stumps
Years 1 & 2	Grass tennis courts and sand playground
Pre-Nursery Nursery Reception	EYFS area

Assembly arrangements

Unfortunately, it will not be possible to join together for a whole school assembly under the present guidelines. Instead, bubbles will move to individual locations and the assembly will be live streamed.

Bubble	Year group assembly venue	Whole school assembly and Chapel venues
Year 7&8	VAC (4 th tutor room for SG)	Tutor rooms
Year 6	PAC	Tutor rooms
Year 5	Dance Studio	Tutor rooms
Year 4	Sports Hall	Tutor rooms
Year 3	Chapel	Tutor rooms
Year 1 & 2	Studio	Chapel

Dining arrangements

The dining room is not big enough to allow us to feed all children within a reasonable time scale whilst maintaining social distancing guidelines. Consequently, the School has purchased a marquee in order to achieve greater capacity. Family style dining, familiar to the younger children, will be used for all children; there will be no cafeteria service. There will be some restrictions to what can be offered but all specific dietary requirements will be achieved. To prepare for the advent of fixtures, Years 5-8 will have a packed lunch on Wednesdays, whilst Years 3 and 4 will have the same on Thursdays.

12.00 to 12.30 Yr 1 & 2 Dining Hall

12.45 to 1.15 - Year 3 Dining Hall

1.00- 1.30 - Year 5 Marquee

1.15- 1.45- Year 4 Dining Hall

1.30- 2.00- Year 6 Marquee

1.45- 2.15- Year 7 and 8 Dining Hall (Additional Snack to be given at 1.00pm)

Hygiene

We will continue to educate the children with regards to hygiene. "Catch it, Bin it, Kill it" will be our mantra. Hand sanitiser will be readily available. As staff leave a classroom at the end of a lesson, they will disinfect the surfaces and an enhanced cleaning regime will remain in place.

There will be frequent and thorough cleaning of all parts of the school, in particular any shared spaces such as dining room, sports hall and Science Labs and cleaning of any shared equipment prior to use.

Social distancing

As is common in all public spaces, we will continue to encourage and educate the children in maintaining social distance. We will also be very firm with those who do not embrace the sensitivity and seriousness of the situation. Invading someone's personal space takes on a whole new level of importance and I ask parents to support the school in explaining the critical nature of this new behaviour.

Visitors

There will be restrictions on visitors, but we do want to return, wherever possible, to actual meetings with parents as opposed to virtual ones. Please do not be offended should you find our receptionists behind a screen, possibly be asked to take a temperature check and are restricted as to where you are able to go. As stated, the more informal presence of parents on site at drop off, at fixtures and when waiting at pick up will not be allowed.

Boarding

There will be no boarding at Amesbury during this academic year.

Uniform

Pupils will be expected to wear school uniform. On the days that a child has PE and/or Games, he/she can arrive and leave in sports kit, which should include a full tracksuit. We are keen to play whatever the weather, so children should also bring their uniform and a towel so, should they get wet during games, they are able to change into dry clothing. We are grateful to parents for their full support in this matter.

The Co-Curriculum

Co-curricular activities (CCA) will take place wherever possible, and we are allowed some flexibility when it comes to mixing 'bubbles' as long as we have made a full risk assessment. As normal, the co-curricular programme will begin in week three (week beginning 14th September). More information on the CCA programme will be sent to you shortly.

Sport will be offered in year group 'bubbles'. Whether we play fixtures against other schools will be down to further Government guidelines and the attitudes of our fellow schools. Music, Dance and Drama will take place, observing Government guidelines and appropriate social distancing requirements. At present this means that there will be no brass or wind lessons. A small chapel choir restricted to the Year 7 and 8 bubble may be possible.

There will be no residential trips until further notice but we are hoping to conduct day trips.

Sport and Fixtures

Departmental Structure

Firstly, the Departmental structure has changed slightly for this upcoming Academic year, with Mr Rouse taking on the role of Head of Boys PE and Games, and Mrs Kemp continuing as Head of Girls PE and Games. They will be working in conjunction with each other to run the Sports Department, and any queries or concerns should be directed to them.

Michaelmas Sport

Regarding Sport for the upcoming Michaelmas term, we have been continuously reviewing the Government guidelines, as well as guidance provided by each individual National Governing Body (NGB). Although the NGBs have given the go ahead for certain sports, there is still a disparity between these and the DfE guidelines. With the uncertainty of what the new school year will look like as a whole, and with our competitor schools keen to consolidate their procedures in the first few

weeks, it is unlikely that we will be able to hold fixtures. This is very disappointing and is something which we will seek to address as soon as possible.

In order to still provide a level of competition and excitement around the return to sport, we will be hosting an internal competition that will cover a wide variety of sports and provide the pupils with some much needed competitive activity. This will allow pupils to still experience the benefits of 'Sport For All' and enjoy the camaraderie and teamwork associated with match days.

In order for this to work, and allow us to adhere to the guidelines, we will be asking pupils to come to school in PE/Games kit if they have a lesson on that day (whilst also bringing school uniform to change in to if it is wet weather). Pupils will also be required to bring their own water bottles, and we will be taking regular sanitisation breaks during lessons and fixtures.

We will continue to review the guidance, as well as our individual approach, and will keep you updated if there are any changes to procedures, and hopefully a return to fixtures after half term.

OPRO (mouthguards)

As we are hosting our own internal competition, the pupils will be covering sports that will require mouth guards in order to participate. In previous years, OPRO have attended the school in the first week of term to provide moulds in order to create custom-fitted mouthguards. Due to current restrictions all dental visits have been cancelled, but OPRO will still be providing home impression kits (please visit the website for details).

Parents will also have the option to purchase Power-Fit mouth guards that can be fitted like 'boil and bite mouthguards', but can be purchased in a unique Amesbury design. Alternately, simple and cheap mouthguards can be purchased from most sports shops.

SOCS

As soon as fixtures recommence, we will use SOCS Sport, for all teamsheets etc. And this can be accessed using this term's password.

If you look under the Resources – Downloads section, you can also find out how to 'Make the Most of the Mobile App'. This will allow you to have easy access to Amesbury fixtures at your fingertips.

We look forward to welcoming you all back to the touchline as soon as possible.

Parents as part of the Amesbury Community

As I have already stated, it is with regret that I have to state that informal visits by parents to the school site are not permitted. Social events such as coffee mornings and attendance at matches and match teas are also not permitted. Parents who have made a formal appointment can choose to either visit the school or meet via 'Teams' or 'Zoom'. I sincerely hope that I can lift these restrictions as soon as possible but everything must be done in line with Government guidelines.

Lines of communication

Mindful of the request for improved communication, in the first instance I offer these guidelines:

- Your child's class teacher/tutor should always be your first point of contact. Invariably, that teacher will be in possession of the detail and it is to him/her that the SLT will turn prior to any meeting.
- If the matter is not resolved at this stage, please address your concern to the subject teacher, if it is an academic matter, or to the Head of Year if it is a pastoral matter.
- The next stage is to deal with the Head of Department and/or Deputy Head (Curriculum) in the case of an academic matter or the Deputy Head (Pastoral) in the case of a pastoral issue.
- With regards to co-curricular issues, please address your concerns either to the class teacher/tutor or to the Head of Boys' Games (Mr Rouse), the Head of Girls' Games (Mrs Kemp) or to the Head of Performing Arts (Mr Reynolds).
- For advice about senior schools, you should contact the Head.
- For advice about the specific process for entry to senior schools, you should contact the Deputy Head (Curriculum).
- For advice about applying for scholarships and/or bursaries to senior schools you should contact the Head.

On the matter of communicating with parents, let us not forget one of the benefits of the lockdown – the use of video calls. In my opinion, this is an ideal half-way house between a meeting and an email and should be used when the latter becomes a matter of opinion and discussion, rather than the dissemination of information. It allows for all parties to find a mutually convenient time to 'meet' much more quickly.

Regular Communications from the School

As in previous terms, a weekly update to the calendar will be sent by email to all parents on Wednesdays. In a spirit of optimism, we have produced a 'normal' calendar and consequently this communication is likely to focus on changes imposed on us by Covid 19.

The weekly Friday newsletter will continue to be distributed.

On Tuesday 1st September I will hold a "Question and Answer" session by webinar.

On every Monday until half-term, I will hold similar webinars. At half-term I will appraise the effectiveness of these and decide whether to continue into the second half of term.

Updated Parent Calendar

Please find enclosed an updated calendar for the first two weeks of term. Subsequent weeks will be communicated within the Wednesday email.

Parents on site

Please allow me to reiterate the guidance concerning parents on site.

- Those parents with appointments will be allowed 'on site'. Informal visits are not permitted.
- Those parents dropping off our youngest children will be allowed 'on site'.
- Social events such as coffee mornings for year groups are cancelled.
- Information events will take place at the times advertised as a webinar.
- Parents will not be allowed to attend plays, concerts etc. Instead events such as Year 3's 'Play in a Week' will be available on line.
- Parents' Evenings will be possible using the existing appointments system (with some restrictions), and social distancing arrangements in the classroom block.

And finally..... a polite note as how parents can play their part (with reference to the ubiquitous government guidelines)

- If you lift share, please try to keep the car ventilated, bubbles distanced as much as possible, tissues used and sneezes and coughs contained.
- Wash school clothes, either sport or day to day wear, as often as is possible.
- If you intend to congregate socially, especially at drop off and pick up, please arrange to meet somewhere other than at the front of school.
- You can imagine how sensitive we will have to be when it comes to children arriving at school 'under the weather'. Please, please err on the side of caution as opposed to the 'see how you feel approach'. If we are at all concerned, we will ask parents to collect a child who is feeling unwell. The consequences of an error of judgement in this respect will impact on so many.

Thank you in advance for your co-operation and support.