



*'We value the power of education to change lives.'*

17<sup>th</sup> July 2020

## **Dear Parents/Carers, Students and Staff**

I am writing to share with you information about the end of what has been an unprecedented term, and to share with you the first set of information about the start of next term when we re-open fully to all students.

We are sad to say goodbye to 4 members of staff and express our gratitude to Mr Yapp and Mr O'Connor, our Assistant and Deputy Headteacher respectively, who will be retiring at the end of this term; and to Miss Whiteside and Mrs Currie who are heading off for new opportunities. We send them all our best wishes. Mr Yapp will be returning to teach RE and EPD on a part-time basis.

Despite the closure of the school to most students and staff, we successfully completed several recruitment processes online. We are very pleased that yet again our reputation for academic excellence and our special ethos continue to attract excellent teachers, despite the national shortage of teachers, and indeed excellent support staff too. We are welcoming new staff of the highest calibre to Highcliffe School in September, in both teaching and support roles, and teaching staff are listed on the enclosed New Staff list.

We are also delighted to announce the arrival of three new Highcliffe babies, during the lockdown period. Mrs Gunner gave birth to a bouncing baby boy and Miss Dobson a delightful baby girl whilst Mr Houghton is now the proud father of a baby girl. All mothers, fathers and babies are doing well.

## **The School Closure Period**

As already written in my previous letters throughout this extraordinary period of school closure, my colleagues and I have relied heavily on both parents' practical support in helping your son or daughter learn at home and on your feedback and encouragement to help get the right approach. *Parents – thank you so much.*

I know from your feedback and encouragement, and from my conversations with other Headteachers locally and nationally, that whilst distance learning and remote marking and feedback on work have not been a perfect substitute for face-to-face learning in classrooms in school, Highcliffe has maintained a high-standard of education, pastoral care and school life (e.g. assemblies, careers appointments, quizzes, competitions, the Transition Portal etc). Nonetheless, I have great sympathy for all our students; forced into learning at home, on their own, isolated from friends for long periods of time, without easy access to a teacher for help. Or alternatively, waiting for GCSE and A Level Results Days having had examinations cancelled. I also feel a huge amount of respect for students because the vast majority have coped incredibly well with the psychological, practical and educational impact of lockdown and school closure, and those who have struggled more than others have been open to receiving help and support.

Our decision to bring all of Year 10 and Year 12 in over June and July for as much face-to-face specialist teaching as possible, rather than just run the academic reviews or focus on only the most vulnerable as suggested by the government, was vindicated by the response of those students. Every single Year 12 and 10 student who attended lessons at school in June and July was *exemplary* in their attitude to learning, their general conduct, their respecting of social distancing and other Covid 19 routines. Students, teachers spoke with genuine pride at how impressive you were and with heartfelt pleasure at seeing you soak up the learning opportunity given to you. *All Students – congratulations and thank you for your efforts at home and in school over the last four months.*

Then there are the Highcliffe staff themselves. Everything the school has achieved since 23<sup>rd</sup> March has been achieved by people themselves coping with all the psychological and practical consequences of lockdown, including looking after their own families and educating their own children at home. I have worked in education as a teacher and school leader continuously since 1994. *I cannot think of another body of colleagues I have been more impressed by, grateful for or proud to associate myself with than my staff here at Highcliffe School, every single one of you in every different role you do.* This includes our contract cleaning team who have been on site all the time keeping the school hygienic and safe for students and staff. *My wonderful Highcliffe colleagues – thank you so much.*

### **September Re-Opening**

Unless the government guidance or the local or national Covid situation changes over the next 6 weeks, the school will re-open for education to all students at the start of next term. We already had a staggered start to the term planned, with Year 7 and 12 in on Friday 4<sup>th</sup> September, Years 8 to 11 joining them on Monday 7<sup>th</sup> and Year 13 on Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup>. This will take place as intended. Students will be thoroughly briefed on all alterations, adaptations and expectations and the reasons for them, on their first day back at school; with as much as possible provided to them online in advance of their first day.

In essence, reflecting changes in other walks of life, the guidance for schools has shifted the focus from strict 2m social distancing and small ‘bubbles’ of people, onto rigorous routines for cleaning, compulsory regular hand hygiene, ‘catch it bin it kill it’ and robust measures to isolate any individual suspected of Covid-19 and trace their contacts. ‘Bubble’ groups are now year-group sized with no maximum or minimum limit, and normal class sizes are permitted. Where practicable, schools are asked to take steps to limit the interactions between different year group ‘bubbles’ and apply ‘zoning’ to the school, however not at the expense of undermining the delivery of a “broad and ambitious curriculum” to all students (which includes access for all students to specialist facilities for Science, Music, PE, Computing, Art, and Design & Technology subjects).

We will operate zoned entrances to the school from Parkside with hand hygiene routines in place; zoned seating on school transport with hand hygiene rules in place; different breaks and lunchtimes for different year groups; zoned-by-year group social areas around the site, apart from each other; and a one-way system for movement around site which will limit physical proximity and face-to-face social interaction. Year 7 to 9 are already organised into sub-groups, in the form of half or third year-group timetable blocks. Year 10 and 11 are grouped into half-year groups for two-thirds of their timetable, which do not re-mix for lessons; and the DfE guidance is that Year 10, 11, 12 and 13 students can change from one class group to another in order to make their Options subjects possible.

There will be a relentless focus on hygiene especially hands, safe behaviours such as “catch it bin it kill it”, plus specific routines and adaptations for specialist subject rooms e.g. Science, for toilets, the Medical Room, changing rooms, and catering outlets. Seating plans will be used in all classes to support ‘track and trace’ if needed, rooms will be re-organised for side-by-side seating only, windows and doors opened for ventilation, and all but essential furniture removed to maximize the space available. Enhanced and rigorous cleaning routines for shared rooms, equipment, handles, surfaces, toilets, changing rooms etc will be in place.

Clubs, activities and programmes which usually mix students from different year groups together will be temporarily suspended or re-organised into year-group only events. Specific adaptations for Music, PE and other specialist areas will be applied and may lead to significant changes to ‘normal’ routines and arrangements.

Uniform and Dress Code apply in full to all students again, without exception. Please note that the Main School catering outlets will not be operating at breaktimes to support year group zoning, and students will need to bring drinks and snacks for break time. The Sixth Form will be restricted to their zone and their café at break and lunchtime.

Specific adaptations to the Behaviour Policy applying Covid guidelines to detentions and internal isolation, and the consequences any students who defy the health and safety routines they *must* follow at all times, will be published and briefed to students. This will include the sanctions for deliberately coughing or sneezing in someone's face, or otherwise deliberately engaging in any behaviour which is perceived as putting another at risk of possible infection. It will also include a specific focus on the dropping of chewing gum/sticking it under tables and the dropping of food remains or litter in social areas, as these behaviours bring with them risks about infection from items which have been in or near a person's mouth.

There is much more to our plans and the adaptations being put in place than described above, but I hope the summary gives you a clear indication of the main points and re-assurance at this stage.

Parents and students will receive from school more detailed information and briefings **from Tuesday 1<sup>st</sup> September onwards**. Our planning is well-advanced and already very detailed. However, as we have seen in the last four months, a lot can change in 6 weeks with the national or local Covid-19 situation and in the government guidance – therefore we will share the final details with you closer to the start of term.

I have been asked to remind parents who are buying second-hand uniform from other parents to double-check the item purchased is *current* school uniform (the current Dress Code was recently re-sent to families). In particular, parents should take care not to purchase the old PE skort which was discontinued owing to its unacceptably short length and tightness, and only buy the current, longer skort with longer shorts sewn in.

We currently intend running A Level and GCSE Results Day on site at school with social distancing and hygiene guidelines applied but should circumstances dictate we have planned an alternative online version instead.

Finally, I would like to direct your attention to a number of things online. I encourage everyone to look at the new Year 7 Transition Portal which has helped us run the entire Year 6 into 7 process this summer virtually instead of face-to-face. There is a wonderful Go-Pro tour of the school in it, of far greater interest than the briefing from a very-nervous-and-trying-to-hide-it Headteacher which pops up when you open the page! [highcliffe.school/transition](http://highcliffe.school/transition)

There is also the online Year 13 and 11 Art Exhibition at [www.adt.highcliffe.school](http://www.adt.highcliffe.school).

The Virtual Summer Concert will be broadcast at 7:30pm on Friday 17<sup>th</sup> July. [highcliffe.school/l/SummerConcert20](http://highcliffe.school/l/SummerConcert20)

Finally, there is a video overview of our distance learning programme at [highcliffe.school/l/LockdownOV20](http://highcliffe.school/l/LockdownOV20).

Best wishes to all staff, students, and parents for the summer holiday!

Yours sincerely  
**Patrick Earnshaw**



**Headteacher**

## Teaching Staff Joining Highcliffe School in September 2020

Staff Name	Post/Subject	Overview
Mr S Addyman	Assistant Subject Leader PE	PE Teacher, BSc Hons (2:1) Sports & Exercise Science, University of Cardiff. PGCE – Plymouth University of St Mark and St John. Currently teaching at a school in Bath.
Miss J Bascombe	Head of Psychology	Psychology Teacher. BA Hons (2:1) Psychology, University of Winchester. Advanced Educational Studies, University of Winchester. Currently teaching at a college in Southampton.
Mr E Davies	Assistant Headteacher (Attitudes, Behaviour, Community)	Geography teacher. BSc Hons (2:2) Geography. Bath Spa University. PGCE, Manchester Metropolitan University. Currently teaching at a school in Bournemouth
Miss R Dunford	PE Teacher	PE teacher. BA Hons English (First) Physical Education, University of East Anglia. Currently teaching at a school in Leicester.
Mrs S Giller	Assistant Headteacher (SENDCO) (Inclusion, Safeguarding, Transition)	French teacher. BA Languages for Business (French) Oxford Brookes University. PGCE Southampton University. Currently teaching and SENDCO at a school in Southampton. Wealth of experience as a SENDCO.
Miss A Mann	Maths Teacher (Maternity Cover)	Maths teacher. BEng Hons (First) Product Design Engineering, Sheffield Hallam University. PGCE Southampton. Currently teaching at a school in Bournemouth
Mrs N O'Connor-White	Drama Teacher (Maternity Cover)	Drama Teacher. BA Hons (2:1) Drama Studies with English Literature, Kings Alfred's College. PGCE, Reading University. Currently teaching at a school in Winchester.
Mr T Whiter	History Teacher	History teacher. BA Hons (First) History & International Relations, University of Exeter. Master of Science by Research in History, Distinction, University of Edinburgh. PGCE, University of Exeter
Miss M Whitney	ADT Teacher	ADT Teacher, BA Hons (First) Fine Art, Arts University, Bournemouth. Obtained her teaching qualification through the Bournemouth SCITT programme.