

September 2020

Dear Parents and Carers

### Forest High School

I hope you had a good summer, despite disruptions caused by the pandemic. I am writing to you today to provide you with an update of the significant improvements we have undertaken at Forest High School and how we have prepared the site for when teaching commences.

The most important duty in any school is to ensure children are supported back into safe, formal education and that we work with them to bridge any gaps in their knowledge - which is inevitable when blended on-line learning has been the only contact between the school and student for such a long period.

Attached to this letter is a message from John Whitehead, the Head Teacher, which sets out specific details about the measures we have put in place for the start of the new year. Please make sure you are aware of the approach and support us by making sure your child is prepared for what is expected. John also outlines details of the investment we have made in the school and the measures introduced to improve whole school performance.

We are fortunate that Forest High School is a small local school. Because of this, we are able to cluster (or bubble) children into key-stage groups, and those groups will spend the vast majority of their time in colour-coded zones in designated areas of the school. We will be applying the latest Government guidance and asking children to wear face coverings in common spaces for their own protection and that of others, so please make sure your child has a face covering when they arrive at school.

Being a small school with year-group 'bubbles' allows us to deliver our full curriculum. Many large schools will find this approach to be difficult because many of their children will be using buses to get into school, causing logistical issues, and the large cohort means their 'bubbles' are sub-sets of their year group which, in some cases, will limit curriculum delivery. Our ability to deliver a full curriculum should provide considerable benefits to all our students.

On the subject of the curriculum delivery: last year's results at GCSE are difficult to compare with previous years because of the difficulties in assessing a child without a formal examination. That said, we are pleased that in all cases students achieved at or above their predicted grades, which in a 'normal' year would have shown further improvements in performance at Forest High School. This is a testament to the hard work of the students, staff, senior leadership team and Head Teacher, John Whitehead.

The period of lockdown has allowed us to put significant investment into the school. Some of this investment was in new roofs, external renovations and improvements which will ensure the school is warmer, dryer and safer. Other investments have been in new IT facilities and putting interactive teaching technology into classrooms. This investment will secure Forest High School as an education institution for years to come, and was very much overdue.

With the combination of good leadership, a strong teaching team and the investment in the fabric of the building and classrooms, I am very confident in the future of the Forest High School. Covid19 has meant that many parents are reconsidering the importance of a good local school and the advantages of a smaller, cohort at the school and, as a result, we believe Forest High School can rightly put itself at the heart of the Cinderford community.

Thank you for trusting us to educate your child. I know Forest High School will continue to be a safe, welcoming and supportive environment. Please read and digest the attached message from the Headteacher and if you have any concerns, please speak to the school so we can provide the reassurance you need.

Best wishes



**Kevin Hamblin**

CEO, SGS Academy Trust



John Whitehead | Headteacher

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## Message from the Head Teacher:

### Health and safety measures at Forest High School

Dear Parents and Carers,

I hope you are all well and that you and your families are feeling safe and secure. I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for the support you all gave the school during the lockdown period and the very kind messages of support that many of you sent you the staff at Forest High School (FHS). Those messages meant a great deal to all of us. As mentioned by our Trust CEO, the school's absolute priority now is to ensure that all of our students can return to full time education while feeling safe. It is essential that the generation of young people in school should not have their life chances damaged by what has happened over the last six months. Returning young people to school and offering them high quality learning has been the priority of everyone at FHS since the lockdown began. For this to happen with minimal risk, all members of the school and local community must understand their responsibilities to themselves and other people and conduct themselves in a responsible way. We are all dependent on each other to stay safe and well.

- The first change we have made is that until further notice, students will not be expected to wear blazers and ties as long as the guidance requires them to change clothing every day.
- Students should also come to school in their PE kit on days when they have a PE lesson.
- We will be putting all students into “bubbles” that will occupy specific parts of the site.
- Arrival and departure from school will be staggered (please check the times below).
- Period One teachers will provide their groups with essential updates on a daily basis.
- Students will be directed to follow social distancing guidelines and wear face coverings as they move around school.
- Students will not be required to wear face coverings in lessons.
- Students should bring their own re-usable masks /face coverings to school. The school will provide face masks if students forget to bring them in.
- It is essential that all students who travel on the school minibuses are wearing a face covering when they board. **It is imperative that students follow the safety instructions given them by the drivers.**
- Students will be asked to sanitise on entry to the minibuses and to classrooms; they are welcome to bring their own sanitiser to school. Sanitiser will be available in classrooms.
- Any resources issued to students will remain with the student from that point onwards.
- Teachers will share resources on Microsoft Teams where appropriate.
- Break and lunchtimes will be staggered so that students stay within their “bubble”. (see below for times)
- Students can use contactless payments or use cash using the safe protocols put in place by the canteen staff.
- Students will be required to bring a bag to school, preferably one that can be wiped down. It is essential that they have a bag big enough to carry all of their books and equipment as these things cannot be left anywhere in school. Lunchboxes and pencil cases should be personalised and no items should be shared or borrowed.
- If students choose to bring their own lunch and snacks, they must be kept safe in their bag until break and lunchtimes and all litter and packaging should be taken home and not left in school. A water bottle is essential to keep hydrated; we **do not** provide disposable cups, nor can we provide cups or glasses. Everyone using the water cooler will need to sanitize his or her hands before and after its use.

The school has established clear protocols for supporting members of the school community who appear to be symptomatic. Please be assured that the school will make contact with you if your child is affected and that we will follow the guidance published by the Local Authority and Public Health England. We will be following guidelines around testing and tracing and will require your support in providing quick updates regarding any positive Covid19 tests. The school also has a contingency plan in the unlikely event that there is a local lockdown.

Finally, the NHS Young Minds Matter Team will be on site from Tuesday 1<sup>st</sup> September and will be advising and supporting the school in terms of supporting student mental health. FHS puts the health and wellbeing of all members of the community ahead of all other considerations and I would like to reassure you that we will be reflecting on what is working and updating our strategy as required.

### **Staggered Arrival at FHS**

8.15am – Year 8  
8.30am – Year 7  
8.45am – Year 11  
9.00am – Year 10  
9.15am – Year 9

### **Student “Bubbles”**

Year 7 – Science Block  
Year 8/9 – B Block  
Year 10/11 – T Block

### **Bubbled Morning Break Times**

Year 7 10.15-10.30am  
Year 8/9 10.30-10.45am  
Year 10/11 10.45-11.00am

### **Bubbled Lunchtime**

Year 7 **11.50-12.20pm** in dining room (ROUND TABLE). Then in Science or yr7 play area  
Year 8/9 **12.20-12.50pm** in dining room (Conservatory). Before in Creative Arts or tennis courts.  
Year 10 and 11 **12.50-1.30pm** Social area is in front of spotlight. Table tennis only with own bat and balls/ in correct social bubble.

### **School Improvement**

FHS has been following a renewed school improvement strategy since September 2019. I would like to take this opportunity to give you an update on our progress and future plans. The school has an ambitious vision, which is at the root of all we do. Our vision is to inspire all students to become confident, ethical and compelling individuals with the aspiration and qualities to shape a better future for all. The school has four core values (Respect, Responsibility, Curiosity and Resilience) that outline the qualities we want everyone in our community to show. We are very proud to inform you that our Year 11 students for 2020 achieved results that showed a significant improvement on the previous two years. The grades they achieved were evidenced by the work they produced in lessons. These students achieved grades that were very close to their targets across the curriculum.

At the start of the lockdown period we determined to use the time to transform the school and its culture so that the students and staff would notice a real difference on their return. As mentioned in a previous letter, the scaffolding has been removed. In addition to this the front of the building and reception have been remodelled, £260,000 worth of fire doors will be fitted and £240,000 has been spent on replacing much of the roofing. We have also over £200,000 to spend on improving the fabric of the building and purchasing resources that will allow us to offer a curriculum that is broad and unique in the Forest of Dean. In addition to the Trust investment we received £13,200 from The Growing Our Community fund to improve the appearance of reception and the front of the school. All of the above are visible signs that the school is undergoing a transformation.

From September 2020 FHS will have a new school day (please see below). This school day will allow us to deliver a more creative curriculum, including an enrichment programme. It will also provide us with greater flexibility to deal with the current challenges around Covid19. FHS has appointed a learning manager (David Fisher) who has written a Relationships Policy with the purpose of providing students with the support they need to make the most of every learning opportunity. Students will have more dedicated time with their tutors this year, improving and deepening those key relationships. As part of our desire to give students greater responsibility, we will allow Year 10 and 11 students to use a teacher's first name from September as a pilot scheme. If Year 10 and 11 show that they can use this privilege as responsible young adults, we will include other year groups later in the academic year. Students will continue to have their say on the future development of the school through the Student Council and the STRIDE programme. The Student Council have already provided valuable ideas for the FHS reception mural and proposed the pilot scheme for using staff first names. In September 2019, FHS committed to the Teacher Effective Enhancement Programme (TEEP) and there is significant evidence that the quality of teaching is much improved. From September 2020, we will be launching a new rapid improvement curriculum for Year 7 students who join us needing additional support (The Malala Programme). The Futures Careers Programme for all year groups will offer a much-improved pathway for our students to mapped out and plan their futures.

The community at FHS feel very optimistic that the school is on a path for sustained improvement. We have made some outstanding appointments to key positions for September and we have received consistently high quality support from SGSAT. The academic year 2020-21 will be the year when the FHS becomes outstanding in every sense of the word.

Your support for the school is essential. Please let me know if you have any questions about the development of the school or suggestions for ways in which the school can work more effectively with parents and our local community.

The new school day will be as follows:

|       | Period 1<br>8.30-<br>9.30am | Period 2<br>9.30-<br>10.30am | Break<br>10.30-<br>10.50am | Period 3<br>10.50-<br>11.50am | Period 4<br>11.50-<br>12.50pm | Lunch<br>12.50-<br>1.30pm | Period 5<br>1.30-<br>2.30pm | Personal Development 2.30-3.15pm  | Heroes Hour 3.15-4.15pm  |
|-------|-----------------------------|------------------------------|----------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------|---|--|
| Mon   |                             |                              |                            |                               |                               |                           |                             | <b>Tutor Time</b><br><br><b>Week One 2.30pm:</b> Attenborough Assembly<br><br><b>Week One 2.50pm:</b> Farah Assembly<br><br><b>Week Two: 2.30pm:</b> Parks Assembly | Homework Club  |
| Tues  |                             |                              |                            |                               |                               |                           |                             | <b>Year 7/8 Enrichment</b><br><br>Year 11 Short Term Target Interventions<br><br><b>Week One 2.30pm:</b> Year 9/10 Leadership Assembly                              | Extra tuition time for students who would like to complete a GCSE course in Music and Drama <b>OR</b> Year 11 students who want extra intervention |
| Wed   |                             |                              |                            |                               |                               |                           |                             | <b>PSHE with Tutor</b><br><br><b>Week Two: 2.30pm:</b> Year 11 Leadership Assembly  | Homework Club  |
| Thurs |                             |                              |                            |                               |                               |                           |                             | <b>Year 9/10 Enrichment</b><br><br>Year 11 Short Term Target Interventions<br><br><b>Week One 2.30pm:</b> Year 7/8 Leadership Assembly                              | Extra tuition time for students who would like to complete a GCSE course in Music and Drama <b>OR</b> Year 11 students who want extra intervention |
| Fri   |                             |                              |                            |                               |                               |                           |                             |   |  |

Yours faithfully,



**John Whitehead**  
Headteacher  
The Forest High School