



# Sir Graham Balfour School

Member of Sir Graham Balfour Multi-Academy Trust

Dear Parents and Carers

So here we are – the final lockdown update! I want to start by thanking you for the flood of lovely emails and messages you have sent in this week. Exhausted as we all are, they have been very welcome. We are continuing to run around like headless chickens trying to get everything ready for September, and this work will continue throughout most of the holiday.

We cannot wait to see all our kids in the autumn – this has been the most bizarre time and I know our staff are really looking forward to working with children again, together in the same building. I know that many of you are really looking forward to re-establishing some form of normality too by having your children come back to school.

As I have pointed out to you and our students already, school will look and feel very different to what we are all used to. There will be very little free movement inside the building at any time; outside, students must stay in their Year Group bubbles at break and lunchtimes (these are marked on the enclosed map and will be clearly signposted as students arrive back in September). Students will carry particular responsibility for abiding by the rules we will have in place at all time; they really must comply with those rules in order to keep everyone safe. Please, work with us in order to help prepare your child for coming back and making sure they can re-commence their schooling in a safe and calm manner.

You may be pleased to know that I am not going to repeat everything I have pointed out in recent weeks; all my updates are available on the school website if you wish to go back to them. Here are a few additional key points for your attention this week:

## 1. Uniform

A few of you have written in, asking if your children can wear their running trousers instead of buying additional jogging bottoms. The answer is yes, where they are clearly designed for that purpose. However, anything that looks like ‘fashion’ skin-tight leggings will still not be allowed, so please do not waste your money on these. Instead, please buy appropriate jogging bottoms to be worn on the day students have PE.

## 2. Face Coverings

As we know, students on school or public buses must wear face coverings, and now anyone over 11 must wear one when going into shops from the 24<sup>th</sup> August. We wait to hear whether the Government will introduce a law to make face coverings compulsory in offices, and perhaps, therefore, in school. To this end, please do arrange for your child to make/buy a face covering, ideally one that is washable and therefore re-usable, for the start of term. Some children and some staff will definitely be wearing one anyway, and I will be very supportive of them.

## 3. School buses – please read if you child catches a school bus

Please see the enclosed letter for your attention. I have asked the Local Authority for information about how they are going to run the school buses, but as you can see, this is still being worked out. They will be contacting you directly with information about how school transport will operate, alongside your child’s travel pass.

## 4. First Day – where to gather

I wrote to your children last week, outlining where they will be taught in their bubbles from September. For your reassurance, all their House Tutors will meet them outside at the beginning of the first day and will escort them all into

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the correct room. Please therefore do pass this reassurance on – they must not worry about where they are supposed to go.

#### **5. Required kit**

Teachers have sent me reminders this week of things they would like students to have with them for the new term. As you know, we will be very restricted as to the amount of kit we can share, so please could you help by making sure they have the following, most of which is general for all lessons, and then a few specific things for individual subjects:

**General:** blue/black pen, a coloured pen, scientific calculator, highlighter, protractor, pencils, pencil crayons, pencil sharpener, rubber, ruler, highlighter, glue stick, compass

**Specific:** appropriate MLF dictionary, acrylic paints for Year 10 art students, headphones or earphones for GCSE/Scholars Music (these must have a mini (3.5mm) jack).

We will provide kit for our Pupil Premium students, and this will be distributed in the first week.

#### **6. Buying food from the school dining room**

We are working closely with Aspens, our suppliers, to address some of the issues relating to having students in year bubbles. We are looking at having separate till points for different years, looking at the possibility of having 'grab bags' which include a full meal but won't require too much queuing, we are also seeing whether we can introduce a pre-ordering facility so that students can pick up their food from different areas of the school at break and lunch. There is still much to do on this over summer, and we will be in touch with you very close to the start of term to let you know more. Our new Year 7's will have their fingerprints scanned on the first day back so that they may start to use the dining room straight after.

#### **7. If you or anyone else in the home is shielding..**

Please do speak to your doctors about this and what school re-opening might mean. As you know we have followed all the guidance from the DfE regarding school re-opening. Their documentation suggests that as of 1<sup>st</sup> August the shielding rule will be lifted, and people of all ages should be able to return to their settings as normal. I have written at length recently over how we are constructing bubbles according to advice, but this means that any social distancing within each year group will be minimal. Please do mention this to your doctor if you fall into this category.

#### **8. Do you have any spare/unwanted gardening equipment?**

If so, we would be happy to take off your hands any border forks, spades, rakes, hoes, wellington boots, gloves etc. Groups of our students will be working with Mrs Mayer on transforming an area of land at the back of the school and we would really appreciate your help with getting it up and running.

I will leave it there for now. Unless there is something extremely urgent, I will not be writing to you again before early September, which for some of you, will be a relief! These past few months have thrown challenges at us all that few of us were equipped to deal with. I am so proud, and so deeply humbled at the way our entire school community has pulled together and done its best to navigate through these uncharted waters. I am especially grateful to you, our amazing co-teachers, who have helped your children carry on learning throughout this time. I warmly salute you all.

I wish you a happy, relaxing and restorative summer and look forward to being in touch in the autumn.

Yours sincerely



**Lesley Beck**  
**Extremely Proud Headteacher of Sir Graham Balfour School**