

## Truro School Covid Steering Group Bulletin No.1 (11 Sept 2020)

This committee meets weekly and is made up of school leaders, medical, academic, pastoral, boarding, business, technological, and facilities experts. Its role is to review and make ongoing recommendations to optimise the School's approach to living and learning within the pandemic. The committee recognises that the elimination of all risk is not possible, but strives to minimise it in all ways we can. Our weekly bulletins will follow the format outlined below.

### Updates from Weeks 1-2 (Fri 4 – Fri 11 Sept)

We are delighted that the school is up and running once again, with a very healthy school roll of over 1000 once again across the Prep and Senior Schools. All pupils and staff that we were expecting to be here attended as anticipated. This included 68 of our 75 boarders, with the remainder being supported to learn remotely as they await the opportunity to re-enter the UK, and we are delighted our boarding numbers (domestic and international) remain as strong as ever.

Pupil, parent and staff engagement with the covid-safe measures we have in place has been positive. We have also been delighted by the problem solving and adaptability of you all. Drop off and pick up routines are running ever more smoothly, we ran a start of term whole school assembly (remotely), we continue to run daily Chapel services from the Rev, teaching and learning in all subjects is up and running (including Science experiments, technical work, and individual Music tuition), and our co-curricular programme is winding up.

We deliberately started term erring on the side of caution, seeing these first two weeks as a phase of introducing new routines and reviewing them. Our transition from planned theory into lived practice has achieved its fundamental goal – to reopen the school safely to all pupils and staff as outlined above. We do recognise that there are and will continue to be operational details to improve. I am grateful for the feedback in regard to these areas alongside your understanding, patience, and support over the complexity of the challenge. The following are aspects of our routines, beneath that wider, successful picture, that we are reviewing most keenly and updates will follow to the pupils next week:

1. **Hands, Face, Space.** This is the new national mantra that we would echo – routine hand washing, face coverings as advised, and 2m physical distancing whenever possible are our key strategies and apply to all.
2. **Testing.** The season of sniffles will be with us soon and the start of term always produces a few colds and coughs. In the current climate we must be vigilant, as well as realistic. Key is testing when symptoms arise (as soon as is possible). Do keep us informed as you are doing. If there is a positive Covid test for anyone in your family, please contact the School Office (Senior School) on 01872272763 and ask to be put through to our medical team, or the Reception Office (in the Prep) on 01872272616. Our Leadership Teams will immediately be alerted and will respond quickly and with clear advice. We have not had any positive tests recorded thus far.
3. **Food.** As you know, we have restructured the middle of the school day, re-purposed our assembly hall, and mobilised an increased number of serveries to ensure all pupils can still be fed in the security of year group bubbles. This has been a very significant and complex operation and all pupils are being fed as planned. In the Senior School, the variety of options has necessarily been reduced, alongside the year group defined time slots to eat, but we recognise that portion sizes have been a concern for some and we have started to increase them, whilst still encouraging pupils to eat

healthily, including salad and vegetables. In addition, we plan to re-open our tuck shop soon too. It is a significant achievement for us to have reached this point without having to erode into teaching or co-curricular time. At the Prep, provision continues as normal with the extra security of dining room zones, strict time slots, and the ending of pupils serving themselves for the time being.

4. **Water.** Some of our existing fountains we have turned off because they present higher transmission risks. At the Prep, pupils have access to water sources to refill bottles. On the Senior site, we will increase access to water (to refill bottles) across the site. We will also place juice dispensers in the assembly hall over lunch.
5. **Uniform.** Thank you for your understanding here. Whilst we still expect track suit trousers to be worn in all lessons over shorts or skirts when a pupil is on a Games day, we will permit pupils to remove the outer layer when playing at break or lunchtime so long as it can be stored safely in a bag and put back on for the next lesson. Changing rooms remain shut.
6. **Masks and physical distancing.** Our guidance requires ongoing commitment from all. We will clarify to pupils next week, in tutorials and via their pupil flyer (that will be handed out early in the week) that, with the exception of lessons and whilst eating lunch, the Senior School does expect masks or face coverings to be worn in all indoor spaces where a clear 2m physical distance is not being maintained with others. At the Prep, and in line with government guidance, masks remain optional.
7. **Circulation around School.** We have setup clear zones for the pupils, both inside and outside, which keep year group bubbles separate and safer. As the routes around School are now in action we continue to make improvements and slight changes that we communicate to pupils.
8. **Visitors to Site.** We continue to operate an appointment only approach to visitors, and ask anyone to please contact the School in advance if you need to visit so we can plan accordingly.
9. **Co-curriculum.** We continue to make adaptations to allow our highly valued co-curricular activities to happen, such as band practice spaces, in line with guidance.
10. **Outside of school.** We are aware that on site we operate stricter safety measures than perhaps in the wider community. We are also aware that the choices and actions of pupils outside of school have the potential to impact on the safety of the community in school, and we will talk about this with them in tutorials. I respectfully ask parents to do all you can to minimise the risks to our school family from the choices and actions of your children in their own time as far as you are able to, something that may perhaps be easier to do now given the latest government guidance.
11. **Feedback.** Senior School pupils will be invited to give their feedback on these areas and others in their tutorials on Monday or Tuesday next week as part of our review of this first fortnight of term. We recognise the central importance of listening to their views and understanding how they feel at this time, as always.

## Reflection from the Head

Reading the list above, I am reassured that it reflects the healthy reality that we want to develop and evolve our operations to best support the pupils and staff. We expect this and are keen to engage with it as a positive process of improvement. What is particularly heart-warming is that behind, around and above these operational details is a school that is full of learning, teaching and the energy of education. I wander around the site every day and chat with pupils and staff alike and what I hear is exactly this mixture of relief and excitement about being at school, alongside a mature understanding and patience over the frustrations and inconvenience of some of the routines in place. This speaks volumes for our pupils, their resilience and their kindness, which has been a most appropriate and uplifting theme echoed through the Chapel services led by the Rev this week.

Mr A Johnson