



**1<sup>st</sup> September 2021**

Dear Parents,

We are ready to welcome all pupils back to school on Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> September (Nursery on 2<sup>nd</sup> September) for the new academic year. As the country moves to Step 4 of the roadmap, the government continues to manage the risk of serious illness from the spread of the virus. This marks a new phase in the government's response to the pandemic, moving away from stringent restrictions on everyone's day-to-day lives, towards advising people on how to protect themselves and others, alongside targeted interventions to reduce risk.

As COVID-19 becomes a virus that we learn to live with, there is now an imperative to reduce the disruption to children and young people's education - particularly given that the direct clinical risks to children are extremely low, and every adult has been offered a first vaccine and the opportunity for 2 doses by mid-September. Our priority is to deliver face-to-face, high-quality education to all pupils. The evidence is clear that being out of education causes significant harm to educational attainment, life chances, mental and physical health.

The government's guidance will mean a number of important changes to how Swindon Academy runs next term. In particular:



**Mixing and 'bubbles':** the government no longer recommend that it is necessary to keep children in consistent groups ('bubbles'). This means that bubbles will not need to be used in school from September. If local cases rise, we may need to reintroduce 'bubbles' for a temporary period, to reduce mixing between groups.



**Tracing close contacts and isolation:** close contacts will now be identified via NHS Test and Trace and education settings will no longer be expected to undertake contact tracing. From 16 August 2021, children under the age of 18 years old will no longer be required to self-isolate if they are contacted by NHS Test and Trace as a close contact of a positive COVID-19 case. Instead, children will be contacted by NHS Test and Trace, informed they have been in close contact with a positive case and advised to take a PCR test. We would encourage all individuals to take a PCR test if advised to do so. We will continue to work with the DfE and PHE in case of a local outbreak.



**Face coverings:** face coverings are no longer advised for pupils, staff and visitors either in classrooms or in communal areas.

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**Good hygiene for everyone:**

**Hand hygiene-** frequent and thorough hand cleaning will continue, pupils and staff will clean their hands regularly.

**Respiratory hygiene** - the 'catch it, bin it, kill it' approach continues to be very important.



**Drop-off and pick-up times:** will go back to normal. Both the Alton Close and Heddington Close gates will open at 8.15am and locked at 8.30am **parents/carers will be allowed on site.**



**Parents will not be allowed to drive into the Academy** to drop off their children. For the safety of our children and local residents we continue to ask you **NOT to drive onto or park in Alton or Heddington Close.**

It is vital that parents/carers **DO NOT** wait on the playground at drop-off; please take your child to their class line and leave the playground. This allows the teachers to quickly line the pupils up and take them to class promptly so school can start on time at 8.30am. We have noticed that, particularly in KS1, the pupils have been more settled coming into school when dropped off at the gate; tears and upset have been greatly reduced and pupils have had a more settled start to the day.



Pupils **do not** need to bring any of their own equipment to school. All pupils will be given their own packs of equipment.



Pupils will continue to get two PE sessions each week, they need to bring kit to school as normal and **leave it in school for the term.** Please see the website for PE kit expectations



**Extra-curricular clubs and activities** will start in September. You have already received the options.



**New Primary uniform is expected in September.** Uniform can play a valuable role in contributing to the ethos of a school and setting an appropriate tone, please make sure your child is in full uniform with black footwear.



Missing out on more time in the classroom risks pupils falling behind. Those with lower overall absence tend to achieve less well in both primary and secondary school. School attendance will therefore continue to **be mandatory in September:**

- **parents' duty to secure that their child attends regularly at school where the child is a registered pupil at school, and they are of compulsory school age.**
- **schools' responsibilities to record attendance and follow up absence**
- **the availability to issue sanctions, including fixed penalty notices in line with local authorities' codes of conduct**



# Swindon Academy

The best in everyone™

Part of United Learning

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Thank you for your patience and understanding over the past two years. Everyone at Swindon Academy is looking forward to welcoming our pupils back. We know that there is a great deal to do and that the year ahead may still be subject to some interruptions. However, we are entirely focused on making sure that in every lesson, every day, every pupil continues to learn and thrive.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs Howarth-Barnes  
Alton Close Primary Headteacher

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