



Back to school

Our plans for the September return



MESSAGE FROM THE HEAD



Dear Parents

It has been quite a term and one which we could never have envisaged. From September to now so much has changed and although we appear to be becoming clearer as to what the immediate future holds there is no doubt that uncertainty remains. We have made numerous plans in response to guidance in order to safeguard our school community. I do hope that one thing has been constant during this period however: our unwavering dedication to do the very best for the Kingscourt pupils.

I was so pleased that the efforts made to re-open school safely for the selected year groups have been recognised by you. In the recent survey 100% of you agreed that both you as a family and your child benefited from going back to school, 98% agreed that the return to school process was well managed by the school, and 98% thought that every possible risk mitigation that the school could have taken *was* taken. Some of your lovely comments are included at the back of this document. Thank you also for the ideas and requests some of you made as we turn our attention to September.

We do not know for certain what September will bring but we have made plans based on a number of scenarios and have closely followed the evolving government advice. By imagining and then planning for the different possible scenarios we will be faced with in September I believe we are set up to step into the new academic year with renewed confidence.

There are more details on our planning within this document and will come in the weeks leading up to the new academic year.

One overall reflection I have is that I want our school to preserve the best that came from this period – how the staff adapted their educational methods, how we embraced a new way of doing things, how the pupils coped with uncertainty and change, and how we maintained that special relationship we have as a Kingscourt family.

With that context in mind I am excited to share with you some exciting new initiatives, as part of the Cognita family of schools, later on in this booklet. These initiatives will capitalise on what we have learned over the last few months, take our educational and wellbeing provision for your child to the next level, and prepare us should a second wave require a localised lockdown.

We will of course be continuing with our enhanced cleaning regime next year and you can help by making regular hand washing part of your daily routine during the holidays.

Thank you once again for your support of the school this Summer Term, and for your encouragement and feedback. I wish you all a happy and safe summer and look forward to an exciting new academic year.

As ever, please let me know if you have any questions.

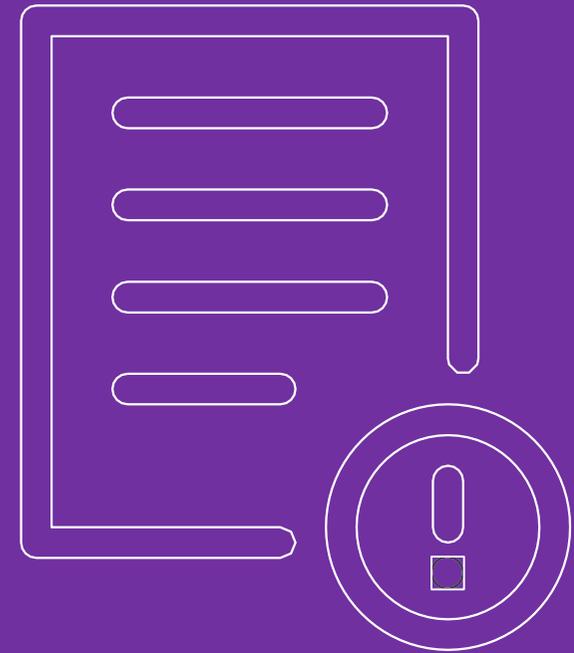
Kind regards

Jamie Lewis

Head Teacher

HIGHLIGHTS FOR NEXT YEAR

1. Back to normal - this means open and running a normal day for all year groups, within the government guidelines.
2. Wellbeing - a focus on both s and staff to help them emotionally process the lockdown experience.
3. Safety – risk mitigation to include enhanced cleaning and hygiene measures with new procedures for confirmed cases and outbreaks
4. Growth mindset - taking the lockdown experience and continuing to innovate and grow from what we have learnt.

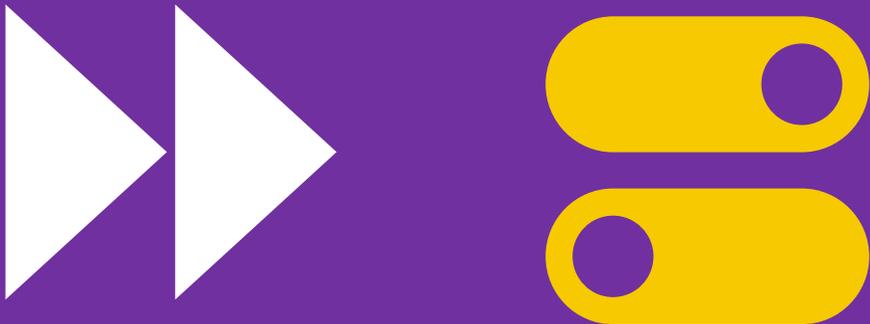


HOW WILL IT WORK?

We have done a large amount of scenario planning and we're confident we can get back to normal.

The latest government guidelines have significantly reduced the need for social distancing and as a result schools will be encouraged to return to a full timetable for all year groups.

This is great news and to the right is a summary of what we know now. This is, of course, conditional on the continued downward trend of the infection rate.



GUIDANCE SUMMARY

Based on the government guidance released on 2 July this is what we are basing our planning on:

- Primary (with specialist teachers) - the bubbles will be increased to incorporate 'whole year' bubbles. This will enable us to deliver lessons as per normal with full classes. Specialist teachers will be able to move between classes provided they maintain social distancing.
- Some of the features from this term may need to remain such as staggered timings and drop-off and pick-up systems, as will a focus on hygiene and cleaning. More detail will follow before the start of next term.
- School services such as catering and transport can return to relative normality with some adaptations to mitigate viral spread
- Track and trace in schools will be a focus

NEW INITIATIVES FOR NEXT YEAR

During the lockdown period we also took action to develop a number of other initiatives which have enabled us to lead the way in online learning and teaching and we intend to build on this next year.



- **Extended hours** – we are very pleased to be confirming that we will be partnering with an established out of school hours provider. This means that from September we will be providing 50-week coverage due to holiday 8.30-6.00 holiday activities. This new set-up will still involve current Kingscourt staff and more details will follow in due course.
- **New build** – this is a hugely exciting project which we have planned for some time. We provide a superb nursery education, but we also know an updated environment could enhance the current delivery of that experience. Therefore it is great to know that in such challenging times Cognita have maintained their commitment to this project.
- **Wellbeing monitoring** – we are hoping to introduce **AS (Affective Social) Tracking**, a key stage 2 mental health tracking tool that enables schools to identify pupils' hidden risks early. This equips teachers with targeted action plans to reduce pupil mental health and wellbeing risks and is part of our global commitment to putting mental health and wellbeing at the centre of a well-balanced education.
- **Collecting the best content from our global family** - as a Group we are developing an online platform which will host bespoke content curated from our expert educationalists from across our 80 schools. It's early days for this exciting project so more to follow soon.
- **Masterclasses** - our teachers have benefited from working with global experts on how to build curriculums that offer a **blended educational experience** and how we can approach **assessment** of student's progress in new ways.

FAQS



WILL THERE BE AN ANNUAL INCREASE TO FEES FOR THE NEXT ACADEMIC YEAR?

No. Given the exceptional circumstances, the economic situation and the value we place on our relationship with our parent cohort there will no fee increase for 2020/21 school year.

ARE SPORTS AND CLUBS RETURNING?

Yes, where possible. We are keen to return to 'business as usual' in every way that we can, and this component of education is important to the ethos at Kingscourt School. We will be following governing body advice closely over the course of the summer and will update you as to the club situation nearer to the start of term.

Certain non-contact sports are approved, and clubs can generally re-start, although there are some restrictions in the latest guidance that we will work through over the summer. We are also planning to have the wrap around care offer of before and after school clubs.

WILL THERE BE SCHOOL TRIPS NEXT TERM?

Domestic trips are permitted, but not residential. We have made the decision to act prudently this first term and we intend to hold several theme days at school where the children can dress up and we as a whole school community will enjoy activities and events linked to this. We have tentatively planned residential for next summer and will continually review other trips for the Spring term.

WILL CATERING RETURN TO NORMAL?

Yes. We may need to operate staggered mealtimes, and apply some other operational safeguards, but we intend to return to catering as it was before as far as we can, within the guidelines.

WHAT ABOUT LOCAL LOCKDOWNS?

We are planning in detail what happens if the school needs to temporarily close in the case of an outbreak or localised lockdown. If the call comes we can respond quickly, following a pre-agreed plan.

WHAT ABOUT INFECTION CONTROL?

We will continue our robust cleaning regime next year and work closely with our cleaning staff to ensure every possible risk mitigation is taken.

We are also reviewing our infection control procedures over the Summer to allow us to track confirmed or suspected cases and communicate with parents in the smoothest way possible.

OTHER FAQ

<Enter school specific FAQs>

RETURN TO SCHOOL SURVEY RESULTS

100% of parents agreed that their child benefitted returning to school

100% of parents agreed that their family benefitted from the return to school

98% of parents agreed that the return to school process was well managed by the school

98% of parents agreed every possible risk mitigation that could have been taken was taken by the school

THANK YOU FOR THE POSITIVE FEEDBACK

- *The teachers and Kingscourt staff have really welcomed and celebrated the children returning to school. Tried to make it feel as normal as possible.*
- *A fantastic effort from all teachers from the very start of this crisis. My children have happily gone back to the classroom and have enjoyed the new normal. The bubbles and music was a really clever way to help them back on day one and the children feel safe and supported while they are in your care.*
- *I think the handling has been exceptional and without being scary for the children at all, thank you so much.*

