

19 June 2020

Dear Parents and Carers

RE: Plans for reopening Birmingham Ormiston Academy from 29 June onwards

I hope this letter finds you and your family members in good health. I am writing to keep you abreast of BOA's plans for reopening to larger cohorts of students in Year 12 from the end of June onwards. At this stage – even though I have not made a firm decision – it is important to pass on the Academy's tentative plans so that a) you are fully aware of the day(s) your child can attend face-to-face support lessons at BOA, and b) you are able look into any necessary travel plans, should I announce that the Academy will be open from Monday 29 June onwards.

Current guidelines, as set out by the Department for Education (DfE), instruct secondary schools and academies to open to a quarter of students in years 10 and 12 at any one time. In addition, to avoid 'mixing' of different 'bubbles' of students, schools and academies should avoid split day rotas. As a result, students can expect to be invited into BOA one day per week, when they will receive face-to-face support lessons for their arts pathway subject. To adhere to the guidance on social distancing and 'mixing', students will remain in static groups (of up to 15 students) and will be taught in the same classroom while on site. Students will also have contact with the same 'bubble' of teachers each week, to further reduce 'mixing'.

*NB: I have attached a useful guide for parents, carers and students on **Covid-19: Infection Prevention and Control**.*

The Academy Day:

To avoid the early morning and early evening rush hours, lessons at the Academy will operate as follows:

Lesson 1: 10.30am to 12.30pm
Lunch: 12.30pm to 1.00pm
Lesson 2: 1.00pm to 2.00pm

NB: The lunch break for Year 10 students, who will also be on site but in smaller numbers, will be at a different time to the lunch break for Year 12.

Your child's personalised timetable:

We will send you a personalised timetable, via email and in the post, by the end of this academic week. The personalised timetable will contain the following:

Name:	
Pathway:	
Allocated day:	
Rooming details:	

Please note: In line with Guidance from the DfE, you have the right to withdraw your child from the on-site support sessions, if you so wish. BOA remains committed to providing high-quality online learning activities and online support sessions.

Remote education:

The DfE has stated that remote learning is the predominant mode of education for the remainder of this academic year. If BOA opens – in line with the arrangements above – students will receive a combination of on-site, face-to-face support lessons and online learning activities. We will publish a revised timetable, which sets out how students can access online virtual classroom sessions with their teachers, which will complement their online learning activities and on-site support lessons.

In Post-16 education, it is rare for students to be taught in the exact same class with the exact same peers across all subjects. To further reduce ‘mixing’, lessons for the A’ Level subjects and GCSE retake subjects will need to be taught remotely, via our online platforms, for the remainder of this academic year.

Behaviour and Conduct:

BOA expects all students who attend on-site support sessions to follow the guidelines concerning social distancing and ‘mixing’, which have been put in place to reduce the risks of Covid-19 transmission. The maximum number of Year 12 students on site at any one time will be 83, with class sizes of no more than 15. As Year 10 students will also be on-site in smaller groups, the maximum number of BOA students on site on any one day will be 128. Year 10 students will be taught in a separate part of the building to Year 12 students, and will have different arrival and departure times, in addition to a different lunch break. With such reduced numbers and the measures in place to reduce ‘mixing’, we are confident we will uphold all health and safety measures put in place to reduce risk. This – of course – is dependent on the good conduct of students when they are on the academy site. Students do not need to wear BOA uniform as guidance from the UK Government advises us all to wear clothes that can be easily washed and/or changed. We expect students to dress appropriately and they must bring their identity cards / lanyards when attending lessons on the academy site.

NB: Please refer to the addendum in the Behaviour Handbook on BOA’s website, which outlines expectations of students whilst on academy site and during virtual classroom sessions.

Lunch arrangements:

BOA’s canteen will not be in operation during the final three weeks of this academic year. Students must bring a packed lunch and any snacks they require. On a related matter, the water dispensers have been taken out of service to reduce the risk of possible cross-contamination. As a result, please ensure your child brings a suitable supply of drinks.

Travel:

One of the main factors delaying my decision over reopening BOA to larger cohorts of students is public transport. The majority of our students travel into the city centre on buses, coaches and trains. At the time of writing, many bus and train companies are running reduced services, and we are aware that passengers must pre-book tickets for their in-bound and out-bound journeys. Parents and carers should check the levels of service available when reaching a decision to send their child into the Academy. You must also be mindful of the requirement to wear face coverings on all forms of public transport and I would also advise students to carry hand sanitiser with them.

Survey results:

I would like to thank you for your swift response to the survey I sent out. I have received 270 responses (out of a possible 330) and a high percentage of parents/carers would like their child to attend face-to-face support sessions at the Academy. Please be assured that I will consider the preferences of stakeholders when making my final decision.

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September 2020:

Guidelines from the DfE for the new academic year (September 2020 onwards) are vague at present and I am not able to pass on any definite details, but we remain committed to delivering high quality education to all learners. In anticipation of any announcements from the DfE, BOA has recently entered into a partnership with the Birmingham Repertory Theatre (which is located in Centenary Square – a short walk from the Academy) and we will have exclusive use of their rehearsal spaces, main stage and 1000-seat auditorium throughout the Autumn term. As well as providing BOA with additional spaces across the city centre, our students will also be able to work alongside one of Birmingham's most renowned theatre companies. It is also important to note that we will continue to utilise the teaching spaces at the historic Old Repertory Theatre, which is located behind Grand Central in the city centre.

As I bring this letter to a close, I would like to stress that – if BOA does open – parents and carers have the right to withdraw their child from the on-site support sessions, should they have any concerns over the health and safety of their child. I have – of course – taken every appropriate step to ensure the wellbeing of your child whilst on the academy site. I will continue to review all measures in place and will contact you by **Thursday 25 June** to inform you whether BOA will open from Monday 29 June onwards.

In the meantime, I hope you all remain in good health. Please contact me directly if you have any queries.

Yours truly,



Alistair Chattaway
Principal

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