



22 May 2020

Dear Parents, Guardians, pupils and students of The Ladies' College

I wrote yesterday and this brief letter is to give you what I hope will be helpful headlines, linked to the announcement that the island is now entering Phase 4 of Covid-19 and "cantering out of lockdown" (media release attached).

Our Method Statement was ready for Phase 3, yet the move to Phase 4 gives more certainty and allows our plans to be reconfigured to ensure that we can provide for all of our girls, which I had already suggested was our goal in my letter to you yesterday. I hope, like me, that you are excited about the news that we can return and that some of the constraints that we might have needed to work around, which were challenging in themselves, are no longer needed. Some of the plans for return which were being developed are no longer advised or needed. The work has already started to review our proposals which will underpin the safe and managed return of the girls and colleagues alike. The detail and translation into practice of the new Public Health guidelines (attached), needs further thought before our document can be shared more broadly and agreed by both Public Health and the Committee for Education, Sport and Culture.

In entering Phase 4, we are no longer required to only allow vulnerable or key worker children onto our site and can, with sensible and appropriate risk assessments in place, open up to all. The fact that Guernsey and the islands are amongst the lowest risk jurisdictions in the world, gives me great confidence and I hope that it does for you too?

The headline for us is that we will plan to open to all from 1 June 2020, with the potential for some phasing to allow us to brief pupils and students and manage the change from remote learning in a calm and measured way. As I stated yesterday, a focus on everyone's well-being and health considerations are key. The onsite learning we will pick up and everyone in our community will need to understand that we should ease our way back in and not drift into things that have the potential to overwhelm.

Recent questionnaires to students in the Senior School and Sixth Form, discussions with Form Teachers and Class Teachers in Melrose and feedback from colleagues all indicate that our community is keen to be back. Our provision will be most similar to the offers in New Zealand and Denmark where most schools are now operating at usual capacity but with hygiene restrictions etc. in place, and our guidance for everyone in our community will be considered to carefully meet the new Public Health guidelines. I am grateful to the Committee for Education, Sport and Culture and Public Health for sharing their documents and we will ensure that our provision meets these standards as a minimum.

The first week back will be very busy for us all. Please be assured that if individual circumstances make it impossible for your daughter to be here, please do let us know and we will, as always, do all that we can to support. In Mental Health Awareness Week and with wellbeing in the forefront of our minds as we reunite our College community, we are also keen to support our girls and to be sensitive to their individual needs – whether your daughter is excited to be back, or may find this a challenge.

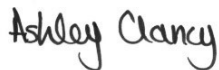
I will follow up with further details as soon as I am able next week and I do understand that there may be many questions. We will aim to provide some answers and detail in advance and, of course, to respond to queries. I would prefer these waited until next week, yet I would not want you to be overly anxious - if asking the question might help you. Please ensure that these come to me directly over the long weekend, (principal@ladiescollege.ac.gg) as I am keen that colleagues who have been working incredibly hard are able to take a short break and regroup, ready to plan for our return to onsite learning very soon.

I am incredibly proud of the way that our College community have responded to lockdown and extend my thanks to my colleagues, our girls and to parents and guardians who have been incredibly supportive. Thank you. I do also want to make special mention of my Senior Leadership Team, who have kept me propped up this week and who now have a new conundrum to work through to help us to be able to move pretty quickly next week, to be able to communicate and to plan for 1 June 2020. Thank you to them and thank you to you.

I send my very best wishes to you and your families and hope that you enjoy your weekend.

Stay safe, stay well, stay in touch.

Yours sincerely



Ashley Clancy
Principal



States of
Guernsey

Media Release

embargo until 1.15pm 22 May 2020

Date: 22 May 2020

States-run schools to open to all students from 8th June

The Committee *for* Education, Sport & Culture has decided that States-run schools will re-open to all students five days a week from Monday 8th June.

This aligns the position on schools to the decision announced today to move to Phase 4 from Friday 29th May as part of the States' overall Exit Strategy.

Public health advice available last week allowed the Committee to announce a phased return of primary school students while continuing distance learning for secondary school students. The Committee met yesterday evening to review the latest public health advice and decided to move further and faster to allow all primary, secondary and special schools to open fully from Monday 8th June with appropriate measures in place to safeguard the health and wellbeing of students and staff.

Next week students and staff will be on half term holiday. The following week – commencing Monday 1st June – distance learning will continue while schools remain closed except to vulnerable students and children of essential workers.

The College of Further Education, which is part of The Guernsey Institute, will now open to students from Monday 1st June.

Director of Public Health, Dr Nicola Brink, advised the Committee that the positive position of the island's response to COVID-19 meant there was no longer any public health reason to prevent schools from opening to all students. Dr Brink has worked closely with colleagues in the Education Office to set out the public health measures that must be in place in schools to allow them to reopen fully. Preparations for these measures will be finalised in the first week after half term while schools remain closed to most students and while students continue with distance learning.

Deputy Matt Fallaize, President of the Committee *for* Education, Sport & Culture, said:

‘This is good news for our schools, parents and students. We always said we wanted to get all students back into school as soon as it was safe to do so and that our decisions would continue to be guided by the latest public health advice from Dr Brink and her colleagues. Yesterday Dr Brink wrote to me to confirm that the much improved public health position means there is no longer a reason to keep schools closed to most students. Therefore, we decided to accelerate students’ return to school. The earliest we can prepare schools to receive all students in a safe, organised way is Monday 8th June and so we decided to provide parents with as much notice as possible of that return date. There are measures to put in place in schools and at the College of FE to promote high standards of hygiene and we will be very diligent about this so that parents have confidence in allowing their children to get back to school.’

The latest public health advice provided to the Committee acknowledges the difficulty of maintaining strict social distancing in schools, especially with younger children. Social distancing will be maintained wherever possible as part of a package of measures which will protect students and staff. Other measures include regular hand washing, encouraging students to maintain high standards of personal hygiene, rigorously cleaning desks and surfaces, students not working in small groups and not sharing equipment and taking teaching outside where this is possible. Public Health has advised that this will make environment as safe as possible under the current circumstances.

A guidance document for parents and carers will be published next week and sent to them directly by their child’s school on Monday 1st June.

Deputy Fallaize said:

‘We know some parents and students will have concerns and feel anxious about returning to school. Parents are of course welcome to talk to their child’s school if they wish to be reassured about safety and welfare. For the rest of this school term we have asked schools and the Education Office to take a considerate and supportive approach to managing attendance where parents would prefer to keep their children out of school. We do not encourage parents to keep their children out of school, but we also want to respect parents’ wishes at this difficult time and we do not want parents to feel forced to send their children into school if they have strong views about keeping them at home at the present time.’

In the early years sector, nurseries and preschools will be able to welcome all their children back from 1st June as long as they have submitted plans to the States Early Years Team and received approval for them. Preschools and nurseries will continue to adhere to enhanced hygiene and cleaning procedures, maintaining the measures set out in previous phases to ensure the health and wellbeing of their children, families and staff. Nurseries and

preschools have been provided with guidance written in partnership by the States Early Years Team and Public Health. This recognises the particular characteristics of early years education and the teaching, learning and care required in this sector.

The latest public health advice also allows childminders to welcome all their families back and reopen if they have been closed – or to extend their offer to their other families if they have remained open only for children of essential workers or vulnerable children.

Any parents with questions can call the Education helpline number on 733017, or the main Education Office number on 733000.

Any early years provider with questions is asked to contact the States Early Years Team on 268313.

Ends

Notes to Media

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EDUCATION

COVID-19 (Coronavirus)

As part of the school re-opening programme Public Health consider the following measures will help ensure a safer return to school for children.

Principles of a return to school include:

- To ensure staff and students who are unwell with any flu-like symptoms (headache, muscle aches, blocked nose), fever, sore throat, cough, shortness of breath or loss of taste or smell do not attend the school or college. This information should be made clear to parents, staff and students. The same principle applies if a household member is showing the symptoms listed above.
- Anyone developing symptoms at school should be sent home immediately.
- Children, young people and staff should be far enough away from each other so that they are not breathing on, or touching each other, coupled with good hygiene practices and regular cleaning of commonly touched surfaces. There does not need to be a specific measurement but where practicable 1 metre should be used as a guide, particularly between adults.
- Good hygienic practices with the promotion of, for example, frequent hand washing.
- Keeping a list of all staff, students and visitors that enter the school or college (avoid self-signing in/out. This should be done by a member of staff to avoid sharing pens/log books, etc).
- Maintaining teaching/activity groups as small as possible. This should apply for breaks and meal times.
- Forming classroom, as well as subject-specific bubbles. There is a need to avoid interaction beyond these bubbles. In Secondary School it is acknowledged that children will move between subject bubbles. Schools should keep an accurate record of these bubbles.
- Wherever possible, instead of having students moving from classroom to classroom to attend different subjects, each class/teaching group/school bubble should be allocated a classroom.
- Where it is not possible for pupils to remain within their main classroom bubble, i.e. when specific classrooms are required for a lesson and pupils must mix for specific lessons such as GCSE subjects, pupils should be encouraged to remain within their allocated workspace, not share equipment and teachers encouraged to design lessons that minimise the mixing of pupils within the session.
- Students and staff should be encouraged to cycle, walk or travel by car, and avoid public transport if possible. If no alternative is available then public transport should be used.

SEND School attendance

Children and young people who attend SEND Schools or provisions may have need for hands-on care due to their sensory needs, behaviours or conditions which means that there are more, or more nuanced, risks to be managed than for the majority of children and young people.

In supporting and caring for these children and young people during this time it is recognised that some/many of the principles of a return to school may not be easily met.

Therefore these schools, due to their nature, will need to operate differently, segregate less, have a need to share staff across some classes and not be limited to just one classroom. For these SEND schools, the 'bubble' will be the 'school bubble'.

It is recognised that the wellbeing of these young people is paramount so a level of consistency, structure and familiarity is essential in their daily care and education. It may be necessary for staff to meet and speak with parents and, whilst still maintaining the distancing guidance, invite them into school with their child. Again considerations to wellbeing are the main driver when taking this decision.

In addition, for many students to attend school, transport will be necessary via Education Services buses. In these cases social distancing will be observed as much as is feasibly possible whilst taking a pragmatic approach that the safety and wellbeing of the young person is key.

Parents/carers need to consider that within SEND school settings physical distancing and hand hygiene practice are compromised and in some cases impossible. Therefore the decision to return a child with a complex needs requires the parent/carer to acknowledge the different boundaries that are in place to the Public Health guidance.

It is important to recognise that in **a very few cases** for those children with the most severe learning difficulties and complex needs it might be necessary to make a risk assessment to determine whether they are able to have their needs met safely within in the school setting or if they are safer at home.

Where the risk assessment determines a child or young person will be safer at home, then they should stay at home. Where the risk assessment determines a child or young person will be as safe or safer at an educational setting, they should attend the educational setting for the period of time agreed with the school and parent/carer.

The following should not occur or be cancelled:

- All assemblies, services and other activities not directly related to lesson delivery.
- All face to face parents' evenings – consider replacing with telephone calls to parents.
- All after school clubs and events.
- All off-island trips and exchanges.



- All on island trips from one school to another.
- All off-island staff travel for educational purposes.
- All non-essential meetings of students and teachers.
- All direct contact activities – including sports, where maintaining physical distancing is not possible.

School canteens and dining halls:

- Schools canteens can operate, providing there is no cash involved for payment (alternatives could include payment by card or parents paying for a certain number of meal vouchers by transferring money to schools.)
- Students should have their meals in their assigned classroom. No meals should be taken in social areas. Pupils can eat outside if the weather and seating permits, however they should maintain a good social distance from their peers.
- Staff should limit the time spent in staff rooms to a maximum of 15 minutes and observe social distancing.
- Shared utensils, such as cups and cutlery are not allowed, unless these can be put in a dishwasher. Please refrain from using tea towels or any other shared objects.

Schools should:

- Limit staff briefings and observe social distancing of at least 1 metre at briefings, as much as possible.
- Examine their business continuity plans and how they work together in the event of staff shortages. Also account for staff shielding and those with caring responsibilities.
- Have a policy that segregates teachers and students within a school as much as possible. This includes staggered and segregated breaks and lunches.
- Form small school bubbles.
- Consider having lessons outdoors as much as possible, weather permitting. This can be applied not only to physical activities but to other subjects as well.
- Consider staggered shift patterns for staff and students to ensure numbers are as limited as possible.
- Not use rooms without natural ventilation (windows to the exterior)

School should rigorously enforce a policy whereby:

- Anyone who has **recently developed** respiratory/flu-like symptoms (cough, sore throat, running or blocked nose, muscle pain or fatigue or a fever), no matter how mild, should not attend school. This applies to teachers and students. A minimum of 48 hours after all symptoms have cleared should be observed before returning to school.



- Schools should have a clear and robust system to ensure pupils who become ill during the school day are isolated and collected immediately by a parent/guardian/carer.
- Frequent hand washing in between activities, before and after meals and after using the toilet should be practiced this might need to be supervised for younger children.

Cleaning:

- Enhanced cleaning policies should be brought in with immediate effect, paying particular attention to toilet blocks and changing rooms.

Enhanced cleaning:

Enhanced cleaning is proven to help reduce transmission during any outbreak.

- **A minimum of twice daily cleaning** of all frequently touched surfaces (with particular attention to door handles, handrails, light switches, reception desks, toilet flushes and taps), including communal areas where surfaces can easily become contaminated.
- **Thorough decontamination of these areas and surfaces should be done at least once daily.** This means using a chlorine solution of a 1000ppm or other disinfection products currently in use (please check with Public Health Services, Health Protection Team or Environmental Health for guidance on this matter).

Toys and equipment:

Toys can easily become contaminated so it is important that a written schedule is in place for regular cleaning. The cleaning schedule should identify who, what, when and how toys should be cleaned and be monitored.

- Students should be encouraged to bring the correct equipment to each lesson to avoid the sharing of stationary etc.
- School based equipment should be single pupil use for each session as far as possible. Where this is not possible equipment should be sanitized between before being passed to the next student.
- Only hard toys should be made available, as these can be wiped clean after play.
- The condition of toys and equipment should be part of the monitoring process and any damaged item that cannot be cleaned or repaired should be discarded.
- Soft toys, dressing up costumes, modelling and play dough, water play troughs or receptacles, and sandpits are not acceptable.

For further information on all aspects of the Coronavirus go to www.gov.gg/coronavirus

For health concerns call the Coronavirus helpline Tel 756938 or 756969