

Maiden Beech Academy

Lyme Road, Crewkerne, Somerset, TA18 8HG

Tel: 01460 72677

e-mail : office@maidenbeech.net

Headteacher: Carl Winch BA (Hons) PGCE NPQH



Friday 6th November 2020

Dear Parents/Carers

IMPORTANT: COVID-19 UPDATE – PLEASE READ AND ACTION

I hope you are safe and well.

Following last week's announcement by HM Government and the commencement of a second lockdown from yesterday (5th November), I wanted to update you to some important changes we are implementing, to ensure that our children and staff are kept as safe as possible. It has been categorically stated that schools will remain open for the duration of national restrictions and at Maiden Beech Academy, we will continue to operate the measures introduced in September, which we are continually monitoring and improving.

Face Masks

The Government has issued different guidance to primary and secondary schools in regard to the wearing of face coverings. As a middle school, with both primary and secondary aged children onsite, we have decided, in consultation with other middle school head teachers, to adopt a bespoke policy. Please see below.

The requirement for secondary aged children (Year 7 & 8):

In schools where pupils in year 7 and above are educated, face coverings should be worn by adults and pupils when moving around the premises, outside of classrooms, such as in corridors and communal areas where social distancing cannot easily be maintained. This was already the case for pupils in year 7 and above, and staff and visitors for those schools that were in areas where local alert level 'high' and 'very high'.

For children in years 5 and 6, **we strongly recommend** that face coverings are worn when moving around the premises; therefore, we will have a sensible, consistent approach across the school.

Yesterday, in a virtual assembly, the children were told that from **Monday 9th November**, face masks/coverings **should** be worn in the following communal areas:

- Corridors – walking between different parts of the school, including to and from lessons in specialist facilities.
- Toilets.
- The canteen.
- On school transport/in the bus queues waiting to leave the school.

It is **highly recommended** that the children also wear face coverings when waiting/lining up to enter the school site at the beginning of the school day at both the Lyme Road and Bushfield Road entrances. Children can choose to wear masks in lessons and/or the playground, if they or their parents so choose. This policy has been in place since reopening fully in September and will not change.



Whilst we expect all pupils to wear a face covering whilst in communal areas indoors, we do not want this to cause any unnecessary distress or upset to any child; therefore, if this is an issue, **the school will not enforce the wearing of masks for children. The aim of our policy is to keep all members of the school community as safe as possible, not to cause any unnecessary distress and upset. We will adopt a sensible and pragmatic approach, based on the best interest of individual children.**

Keeping classrooms well ventilated

Government guidance to schools states that it is important to ensure well ventilated and comfortable teaching environment by using natural ventilation – see below:

- natural ventilation – opening windows (in cooler weather windows should be opened just enough to provide constant background ventilation, and opened more fully during breaks to purge the air in the space). Opening internal doors can also assist with creating a throughput of air

Now that we have autumn upon us and the weather has become considerably colder this week, we are balancing this requirement to keep classrooms well ventilated yet warm and comfortable. As previously stated, children may wear sweatshirts/hoodies in addition to school uniform to help stay warm, and we will adopt a common sense approach, closing windows if it is cold and opening them for ventilation purposes at break time, lunchtimes and when individual rooms are not in use.

PARENTS EVENING – UPDATE

We were planning to hold parents' evenings for all year groups in the coming weeks; however, the second lockdown has now prevented these face-to-face meetings, which we now take place after Christmas.

As an alternative, we will send home to parents an interim report, which will include the following:

- GL Assessment standardised scores in English and Maths from recent tests.
- Attitude to learning and behaviour grades.
- A tutor comment.

It is our intention to produce and distribute the reports within the next three weeks; we will send a further letter about reports in the near future.

SCHOOL REORGANISATION IN CREWKERNE & ILMINSTER

Please see my letter in regard to the formal consultation on school reorganisation in Crewkerne and Ilminster, which accompanied a letter sent to parents and carers from Amelia Walker, Assistant Director of Education at Somerset County Council. Both letters are available to download from either the Parent Portal or Academy website.

It is essential that parents consider and realise the implications of these proposals; children currently in Year 5 would transfer to secondary school in two years' time (September 2022) rather than remaining at Maiden Beech Academy to the end of Year 8. As a school, Maiden Beech academy would be significantly changed and other schools in the area face potential closure or a reduction in the number of children on roll.

We urge all parents to share their views and thoughts through the consultation process.

REMOTE EDUCATION PLAN

Mrs Petts, Assistant Headteacher, has produced a remote education plan for our children in the event of a partial or whole school closure.

The best education our children can receive is at school, however there is an increasing likelihood that this will not always be possible. If we are made aware of any positive cases of coronavirus amongst our pupils or staff, we will inform Public Health England who will ultimately make any decisions about any closures

Self-Isolation

In the event that you inform us that your child is required to self-isolate due to close contact with a positive case, the school will inform the Director of Education at BTCT so that the Central School Improvement Team can take responsibility for their 'remote education' until they return to school.

Class or Year Group Closure

In the event of a class or year group closure, children are expected to keep to their 'normal' routine as much as possible, through remote learning, completing work in line with the timings on their school timetable, which can be viewed via the calendar function within Microsoft Teams.

Lessons will be scheduled in accordance with the normal school timetable and typically take the form of the teacher delivering a short session with practice questions or tasks for students to complete independently at home.

8.45 – Log on to Microsoft Teams and check your calendar for the day's lessons.

Lesson 1 – 9.00 – 9.45

Lesson 2 – 10.00 - 10.45

Lesson 3 – 11.45 - 12.30

Lesson 4 – 12.45 - 13.30

Lesson 5 – 14.30 – 15.15

Lessons won't fill the allocated time. The teacher will start with a short input; pupils will then have time to complete independent work with the teacher being available for online support if needed. Many of our children have already accessed Teams and the Pupil Portal during the first lockdown. If your son/daughter has not logged in yet, please check that they are able to log-in from home as soon as possible.

Teams Username

The last two digits of the year the student started at Maiden Beech followed by their surname then the first three letters of their first name then @mymba.school

e.g. 20bloggsjoe@mymba.school

Teams Password

Mba.ddmmyy! Using the 6-digit version of your date of birth and ensuring that the first letter is a capital letter.

e.g. Mba.010310!

Pupil Portal Username

Same as Teams but without the @mymba.school

e.g. 20bloggsjoe

Pupil Portal Password

Same as Teams

For technical support please contact the IT help desk by calling 01278 727362 or emailing bct.helpdesk@educ.somerset.gov.uk. You will need to leave your name and contact details so a member of IT support can help.

For general support and to contact subject teachers please use the message function on the Parent Portal or email office@maidenbeech.net

A PowerPoint guide to Remote Learning has been shared with the children and is also uploaded to both the Parent Portal and the Academy's website.

Best wishes and thank you for your ongoing support and understanding



Carl Winch
Headteacher