

Darwen Aldridge Community Academy

Darwen Aldridge Community Academy & Sixth Form
Sudell Road, Darwen, Lancashire BB3 3HD
Tel: 01254 819500 **Fax:** 01254 819501
Student Services: 01254 819540
www.daca.uk.com
email: info@daca.uk.com



15th July 2020

Dear Parent/Carer

I hope that you and your family are safe and well.

'Realise your potential'

We have been welcoming students from Years 10 and 12 back into school over the past few weeks to support them further with remote learning and to assess their needs and their gaps in learning ready for September. It has been lovely to see them in the Academy.

As you might be aware, we have been asked by the government to reopen to all students from September. We are very much looking forward to welcoming them back to the Academy.

Government information for parents and carers can be found here <https://bit.ly/3ecneNC>

The government clearly states in their guidance that it is safe for children to return fully to school because they are far less likely to become ill as a result of Covid 19.

The Senior Leadership Team has been busy in the time since the government announcement, looking at the DfE guidance, planning a safe return for all students and staff and minimising risk to all. We have also been planning how to deliver our full curriculum with a few changes. Our planning has been around keeping things safe, simple, easily understood by all and sustainable for most if not all of the next academic year. Our aim is also to keep subject specialist teachers delivering their subjects.

We will clearly need to make changes and adapt routines and procedures around the Academy. These are the areas we have considered and which will most likely be in place from September to keep everyone safe:

Preparing students carefully for a full return, re-establishing routines and learning habits and looking after their physical and mental well being

Social distancing within classrooms does not need to be kept to 2 metres between students. Staff do need to keep 2 metres away from students and therefore they will not be able to move round the class to support children as they usually would

Separating year groups from each other and teaching them in their own zone of the academy in 'bubbles'

Keeping students in the same class as much as possible and minimising student movement where we can

Separating breaks and lunches for year groups

Regular hand washing and hand sanitising

Good respiratory hygiene - 'catch it, kill it, bin it'

Ensuring regular and thorough cleaning of areas and surfaces

Slightly staggered starts and ends to the day to allow for orderly and safe entry and dismissal

The main priority is keeping each year group separate from all other year groups. This is a challenge in a school with 7 year groups, however we are very fortunate to have a large site and many exit and entry points. The emphasis will be on high quality teaching and learning so that students' gaps in learning are addressed even though things will look and feel different.

Year 7, 8 and 9 lessons will be taught in tutor groups and Years 10, 11, 12 and 13 students will still move to classes within their zone to be taught in their option subjects. They will have access to specialist equipment.

We will continue to have a morning break and lunch break, but these will be in separate canteens and year groups will be kept apart. We have two canteen areas and kitchens for this. The canteens will be serving food but there will be a reduced offer and students are encouraged to bring a snack and drink for break with them. We will reduce cash handled in school. Please note any school meals must be paid for in advance on parent pay.

There will be sanitizer and cleaning kits in each classroom and key areas, as well as covered bins. We ask that students bring their own equipment to school (pens, pencils, ruler, calculator) as equipment cannot be shared and ask that each student has their own belongings in a suitable school bag. For safety and practical reasons lockers will not be able to be used when we return.

We are expecting students to return in full school uniform. Please see the link to our parent handbook, where you will find our uniform expectations.

<https://www.flipsnack.com/Aldridgeitds/parent-handbook/full-view.html>

For practical and safety purposes, students will be allowed to come to school in PE kit on the day they have PE.

There will not be any extracurricular activities at the beginning of the year but we do hope to begin these as soon as possible and as soon as we can safely do so.

We are planning slightly staggered start and end times of the school day for each year group. I understand this may cause some issues for families but the guidance shows this will help reduce the risk of different year groups mixing outside of the Academy. We are located in the town so we need to support our community to remain safe. Students should therefore not arrive early to the academy but if siblings need to travel with a brother or sister, please let us know in advance of September and we will make adequate arrangements for this.

Thank you for completing the bus survey. The advice on travel is to walk or cycle if possible. If using public transport, a face mask must be worn. We will make arrangements for the disposal of any single use face masks at entry points.

In order to prepare our students for the changes, all new systems and expectations in the academy, we will have a staggered start to the new academic year. I appreciate this might be a concern to you but we have to ensure a safe start to the year and a gradual approach. Doing this properly and supporting each year group, will be safer for all in the long run.

Tuesday 1st, Wednesday 2nd, Thursday 3rd September Staff INSET days no students in school

Friday 4th September: Years 7 and 11 in the Academy

Monday 7th September: Years 7, 8, 10, 11 in the Academy

Tuesday 8th September: Years 7, 8, 9, 10, 11 in the Academy

Wednesday 9th September: Years 7, 8, 9, 10, 11 and 13 in the Academy

Thursday 10th September: Years 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12 and 13 (all Year groups in the Academy)

We will continue with our commitment to safeguarding and the welfare of your children, remains a priority. Details of support on keeping children safe are on the website.

In September, we respectfully ask parents/carers not to come to reception and ask that you make an appointment by phone to come into the Academy if this is needed.

Form tutors and pastoral staff have been contacting families throughout the lockdown period and will continue to support families and remain in close contact with parents as we start the new academic year.

We have received many applications for the role of Head Boy and Head Girl. Students will be producing their campaign videos over the summer and we are very much looking forward to starting the Year with their election and interviews. They are always such great ambassadors for the Academy.

We say goodbye and thank you this year to Mrs Hart, Mr Ryder and Mr McKiernan from maths and Mr Hallam, Vice Principal, who is taking up a Deputy Head role in Blackpool. We wish them all well in their new roles. We are delighted to welcome Mrs Brindle as new Director of Learning for maths, Miss McConnell teacher of maths, Mr Clarkson, teacher of maths, Ms Parkinson teacher of maths, Mr Riley teacher of English covering the maternity leave of Mrs Holden and Mrs Capaldi who will be joining us permanently as teacher of music. We also welcome Mrs Roxton as our new and Head of Year 7. Mr Clarke and Miss McMahan on the Senior Leadership Team, will be sharing Mr Hallam's responsibility for curriculum, exams and operational management of the academy.

I will update you over the summer as and when needed. The government is due to make another announcement on school reopening on August 11th. Please check the website and Edulink app for any messages.

A letter to Year 11, 12 and 13 about exam results will follow.

My best wishes to you all and thank you to the very many parents who have taken the time to message us and to thank staff and give positive feedback during this time. It has been much appreciated.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mrs Dolan', written in a cursive style.

Mrs Dolan