

Dear Parents,

I hope that you and your families are all enjoying the summer. It seems to be racing by and I know that many of you are beginning to turn your thoughts to the start of term.

I am very pleased now to write to you all with information about how Godstowe will welcome everyone back to school in September. We are all very excited to see our pupils and looking forward to welcoming them all to the new school year.

We have focused on three priorities for our whole community and these are as follows.

**Health and safety:** following DfE guidelines and our own risk assessments there will be arrangements in place to minimise the risk of COVID19, as well as all of our usual risk management and health and safety procedures.

**Education:** it is crucial now that we focus on our pupils, ascertain where they are with their studies, and ensure that all are engaged and challenged appropriately. For older pupils we know that they will be preparing for Senior School assessments and interviews and that it is crucial that all preparation is in place.

**Looking after our community:** as a community, we have faced and managed a challenging period since January. Challenges remain and I believe that it is vital for us all to work together and look after each other. Governors, staff and parents must collaborate to bring about the best outcomes for our pupils to ensure a smooth and happy start to the term and the academic year ahead. At the same time we all need to look after each other and appreciate that we all face challenges in common as well as challenges that are particular to our personal circumstances. Guidance is clear that parents may not come onto site other than dropping off or picking up unless they have made an appointment in advance, that cannot be conducted remotely. We appreciate that this is very different than previously and we shall ensure that our communications to parents are clear and informative. There will be ample opportunities for video meetings and telephone calls and we shall do everything we can to continue to involve parents as much as possible in life at Godstowe.

To fulfil the three criteria above, the information that follows may seem quite lengthy. For the first four weeks of term we have planned carefully so that we can all get a feel for how our plans are going and then adjust as we become more informed. I have tried to avoid too much detail in this letter but I want to reassure you and answer as many questions as possible. Later this week a series of Teams Meetings are scheduled so that you may ask questions that may occur to you as you read through this information.

**Drop off and Pick ups-** drop off and pick up times will be staggered and we shall offer you a choice of time slots both in the mornings and the evenings; these may differ day to day but we shall ask you to commit to a weekly schedule for the first four weeks so that we may know our staffing requirements. An arrangement for siblings in Lodge will be part of the offer so that it is not necessary for parents to wait. When pupils arrive they will have their temperature taken before parents leave. We shall be writing to you shortly with more information about this, asking you to book into drop off and pick up times. Mini Buses will be operating with guidelines being followed.

**Year group bubbles-** every year group will form one 'bubble'. Each bubble will have its own teaching rooms, its own toilets and areas for storing possessions and Sports Kit. Most lessons will take place in these rooms. Science, DT, Art, Music and ICT will still have their own specialist rooms and pupils will follow the one way systems in place to travel to and from these rooms. As this means that teachers of the older girls will be moving around much more than previously, we shall be asking

pupils in Upper School (Years 6-8) to bring their own device, if they have one, into school: Mrs Sellers, our Director of Learning and Teaching will be writing to you soon about this. Year group assemblies will take place at lunch times and whole school assemblies will be delivered into the form rooms remotely as it is not possible for more than one bubble to meet together.

Cleanliness and Hygiene- we have adapted the PSHE schemes of work so that all pupils can focus on these important matters for the start of term, whilst habits become ingrained, although there will of course be ongoing reminders in various forms. Form tutors will also be talking to their pupils regularly about this. Hand sanitising stations have been installed around the school and foot-operated pumps at external doors will ensure that everyone sanitises their hands before entering the building. All rooms will have foot-operated bins and a ready supply of tissues, antiviral spray, and cleaning materials. The cleaning schedule has been reviewed and enhanced. Regular hand washing will be built into the school day. Pupils may wear face masks if they wish but they must be worn correctly and removed safely.

Before and After school care- Breakfast club will run for day pupils who need it, from 7.30am. For Lodge pupils this will take place in Lodge and for Main School pupils within the JK theatre, with each group having its own area. At the end of the day Lodge pupils may stay until 5.25pm as usual, and Main School girls may stay until 6.30pm. For the first four weeks Main school pupils who stay after 4.10 will have tea and then go to a prep session in their year group rooms which will run until 5.30pm. Anyone who needs to stay until 6.30pm may do so and weather permitting will have the opportunity to spend some of this time outside and then enjoy a variety of activities within the classroom. After four weeks we may be able to introduce some additional activities into the schedule but there will be no external providers for the time being.

Break and lunch times- timings for these will be the same as previously. Each year group bubble will be allocated its own outdoor and indoor space. We really want to encourage the pupils to be in the fresh air as much as possible so do please ensure that your children have warm and waterproof Godstowe coats and hats ready for this term. Snacks for both break and tea will be delivered to the pupils to avoid congestion in the dining room and corridors. Lunch times will be staggered with two year group bubbles eating at the same time but the dining room will be partitioned into two to allow for separate dining.

Sport-sport will be taught within the timetable as usual but with some differences. Our Director of Sport, Miss Hearnshaw, is liaising with all the professional organisations and other schools to ensure that we are doing everything we can to maintain the high standard of our sport which pupils can enjoy, whilst at the same time minimising risk. There will be no fixtures against other schools for the first half of term, at least. To ensure that the bubbles remain intact the changing arrangements will be different than previously. The swimming pool is ready and we expect it to be used for lessons from the start of term. When the new routines are established and as soon as possible we hope to be able to offer swimming to pupils again before and after school.

Visiting teachers- visiting music teachers and visiting learning support teachers will be teaching remotely for the first half of term. We have made this decision to minimise the risk of COVID19 being spread from other schools.

Boarding- we are looking forward to welcoming nearly all our existing full boarders back to Godstowe and 30 new full boarders. To minimise risk we shall be operating only full boarding for the first few weeks of term and there will be no part-time or ad hoc boarding during this period. Boarders will be returning from Wednesday 2nd September and most are scheduled to have arrived by the end of Sunday 6th September having completed their 14 day quarantine where necessary. All boarders and residential staff will arrive with a negative COVID19 certificate. This has been at our

request as the risk to our boarders is different than to our day pupils. All boarding pupils will stay in school until at least the first Exeat.

Staff- our staff have been consulted about the return to school in September. Some staff require or would like to wear face masks or other PPE and this is entirely down to the individual. We have listened carefully to staff ideas and concerns and staff on the whole feel confident about the return to work. All of the staff are looking forward to having the girls in school and teaching them again.

COVID19- no pupil or staff member will be permitted on site if they are showing any symptoms. Tests can be arranged promptly and results come quickly. Pupils and staff must self-isolate until they have a negative result. In the case of a positive result, following the guidance, we shall contact our local Public Health England team who will follow their protocols about which members of our community should self-isolate and how this is to be communicated. The Medical Centre will hold a list for each bubble about which children and immediate families are more vulnerable. The guidance is clear that anyone who tests positive will remain anonymous and I would ask for your caution with regards to the use of Whatsapp groups in this, as indeed in all COVID related matters, as I would like to protect our community from misunderstandings and anxieties that can arise.

Government Guidelines- as members of a close-knit community it is very important that we all follow the guidelines. Anyone who has been overseas must follow the regulations about quarantining. The guidelines for social gatherings and meeting in each other's houses are still quite limited. I understand that it may be frustrating but I do ask you, for the benefit of everyone, to act responsibly and to follow these guidelines.

Having read the above information, if you have a specific question which you would like to ask, please email my PA, Joanna Blake ([jblake@igodstowe.org](mailto:jblake@igodstowe.org)) confirming to which year group your question relates, and where possible the nature of your query and she will send you the relevant link for the Teams meeting.

Teams meetings:

Wednesday 26th August-

2pm Meeting for Boarding Parents

4pm Meeting for parents with daughters going into the Fourths (Yr 8)

Thursday 27th August-

9.30am Meeting for Nursery Parents

11.00am Meeting for Beginners (Reception) Parents

1.30pm Meeting for Kindergarten (Yr 1) and Transition (Yr 2) parents

Friday 28th August-

9.30am Meeting for parents with daughters going into Form I (Yr 3) and Form II (Yr 4)

11.00am Meeting for parents with daughters going into Lower Thirds (Yr 5)

12.30pm Meeting for parents of daughters going into the Middle Thirds (Yr 6) and the Upper Thirds (Yr 7)

I do hope that all of the above information is helpful and I look forward to seeing you all in September.

Best wishes,

Sophie Green

Headmistress