



Founded 1125

28th September 2020

Dear Parents,

I am delighted to share with you information which explains our approach to delivering a quality education in challenging times. This is an illustration of Reading School's perpetual intent to and opportunity where others only see barriers and problems.

The following documents are at the heart of our Covid-19 recovery planning and reflect our drive for Academic Excellence, on which we are not prepared to compromise, and Building Good Men, which is fundamental to our core values.

- 1 [Introductory guide to the Reading Way \(Michaelmas Term 2020\)](#)
- 2 [Key Stage 3 - Year 7 and Year 8 Guide](#)
- 3 [Key Stage 4 - Year 9, Year 10 and Year 11 Guide](#)
- 4 [Key Stage 5 - Year 12 and Year 13 Guide](#)

The implementation of our curriculum ambition and intent is illustrated through structural adjustments to our timetable, that are being put in place during the Michaelmas Term, as agreed by the Curriculum and Standards Committee of the Governing Body on Monday 21st September.

This structure will be reviewed on a half-termly basis, but it is our current intention that this will continue for the foreseeable future, influenced by the continued impact of COVID-19.

There are a number of reasons why we have adopted a different school day which includes a different am and pm structure, and I would like to highlight these to assure parents about the content of the curriculum. We consider that this structure:

- Helps us to prioritise exam classes for Year 13, 11, 12 and 10 students in our afternoon sessions without inhibiting the progress of others,
- Enables us to provide tailored subject support and mental health provision in afternoons to students most in need of this,
- Allows us to shift into remote learning (if this is required) much more easily than if we were scheduling 50 minute lessons,
- Provides opportunity for the supra-curricular and extension activities that would be exceptionally hard to do otherwise,
- Ensures that we are able to continue some of the very best 'asynchronous activities' we developed during the lockdown,
- Enables groups to be kept apart as much as possible: When timetabling, we have worked very hard to keep groups apart and movement around the school site should be kept to a minimum. This is why we have zoned Year 7 and Year 8 classes. As advised we have actioned staggered starts and finishes along with staggered break times. These changes were communicated in August to all parents. We have worked hard to structure start and finish times to avoid rush hour.
- Maximises the stagger between arrival and departure times of all students,
- Increases flexibility in the adjustment of group activities, if public health circumstances demand it. We seek to develop remote education so that it is integrated into school curriculum planning. We need to be realistic and realise that remote education almost certainly will be needed as an essential component in the delivery of the school curriculum for many students, alongside classroom teaching.

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- Facilitates robust assessment, without requiring students to miss a week (or two if mock exams are included) of lessons, providing a net gain of approximately 35 teaching hours per student across the year.
- Our modelling suggests that, with afternoon activities in place:

Year 13 students will have a small net gain in terms of teaching time (approximately 30 minutes per week depending on options).

Year 11 students will have a net gain of 5 minutes per week.

Year 12 students will gain time in some subjects and lose in others, but none of the subjects will have fewer than 9 timetabled hours of lessons a fortnight, which is still in excess of schools we benchmark ourselves against. We expect to increase time given to Year 12s, in the summer term at the latest.

Year 10 students and below have adjustments which bring them gains in some subjects and an adjustment overall that maximises stretch and socialisation.

The focus so far in September has been on reintegration, induction and preparing for Collections. I have been impressed by the of all students that have taken collections. I wish the Year 11 students well, as they commence their Collections this week. I have also been impressed the way our students have faced the challenge of returning to the School site after such a long absence.

We have been mindful of the DfE guidance which states groups should be kept apart from other groups, where possible.

We are in the midst of a pandemic. Our approach is mindful of mitigating risk but we are also committed to developing Academic Excellence and Building Good Men. The Reading Way seeks to turn a crisis into an opportunity for our students. Our approach is rich and broad but also targeted and focused. It enables a tailored approach to academic support and there are distinctive features for all year groups.

We are conscious that we need to be agile and seek to deal with challenges. We need to be adaptable and will respond to ensure improvements are implemented where necessary. Our flexible approach in response to the coronavirus in the current academic year, seeks to overcome pastoral barriers and academic challenges. It promotes wellness, character and academic excellence. Shaped by our values it is academically stretching and character forming.

We have developed an approach to the timetable that keeps students safe and provides them with opportunities to flourish. Influenced by some of the top independent schools nationally and internationally, such as St Paul's, the pace of the morning lessons is fast, with focused academic lessons, taking into account staggered starts and staggered breaks (which have led to improved behaviour and lessened the risk of transmission.) Sixth Form have many 70 minute lessons and in the afternoon for instance, the first lesson after Tutor Time is for one hour. As such, there is variety and scope for depth.

Through the Reading Way, our students will learn, lead and serve. In times of crisis we need to nurture new solutions. We need to take the opportunity to do things differently, because our students deserve our best. We do need to remain rooted in our values but also show an awareness that the world has changed. We cannot drift but rather need to seize the opportunity to deliver a quality education.

Ashley Robson, Headmaster

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