

2020

# COVID- 19

*guidance for boarders*





I hope that all is well with your family.

We are excited to welcome your daughter to our Heathfield boarding community in September. We know that this is a big step for you and your daughter. I can assure you that we have done, and will continue to do all we can to reassure and assist you, and your daughter to make a smooth transition to Heathfield. Please do ask us about anything that you are not sure about or would like more information on. This is a big life event for you, your daughter and your family and we are here to help.

Firstly, we will be open from 30 August for International Boarders to undertake the necessary isolation in the comfort of their School environment.

Preparations are well underway to ensure we will continue to provide our usual outstanding standard of care to our boarders, and to make their return or transition to our community as seamless as possible. We know many of them are eager to reconnect with their boarding family or to join us for their first year at Heathfield.

Given the current global circumstances we understand that many families have questions about our planning and how we will support your daughter's arrival at Heathfield. In order to help you understand the measures we are putting in place, we have produced this

information brochure which we hope gives you further insight and reassurance.

This preliminary planning is based on the current guidance from the UK Government as at 15 June. We expect further updates in the weeks to come and will continue to adapt our boarding provision at Heathfield to ensure you and our pupils enjoy the best possible experience when the new term begins.

We are very mindful that there is much uncertainty in these current times but please rest assured we are here to support you throughout this period, and our main priority is to keep our pupils' wellbeing at the heart of all of our decision making and contingency planning at this time. As we receive updates, we will relay these to you in the coming weeks.

Meanwhile, if you have any further questions, please contact Head of Admissions, Mrs Isabel Hutchings at [ihutchings@heathfieldschool.net](mailto:ihutchings@heathfieldschool.net) or Mrs Rachel Whitton, Deputy Head Pastoral and Boarding at [rwhitton@heathfieldschool.net](mailto:rwhitton@heathfieldschool.net) and we will get back to you as soon as possible.

Wishing you and your family an enjoyable summer and we look forward to welcoming you to Heathfield in September.



Mrs Marina Gardiner Legge MA Oxon, PGCE  
Headmistress

# The start of Michaelmas Term 2020

## Quarantine for overseas boarders - as at 15 June

The UK Government has introduced the requirement for travellers to the UK to be quarantined for 14 days. Heathfield is, therefore, opening our boarding accommodation ahead of the published start of term date in order to offer a 14-day quarantine facility for all Heathfield international boarders who are unable to quarantine elsewhere.

Boarders are welcome to arrive at Heathfield between Sunday 30 August and Monday 31 August. The quarantine period would run until Sunday 13 September. There will be an additional charge for the first week. If you would like to take up this option, please email [rwhitton@heathfieldschool.net](mailto:rwhitton@heathfieldschool.net) by Friday 31 July.

We recommend that overseas families who have a UK home should quarantine there ahead of the start of term. However, the statutory guardian rules apply, in that pupils must be supervised at all times by someone older than 25 years old (our Educational Guardian Policy will offer you more details on these requirements). This will enable boarders to return to school and attend all lessons and activities immediately.

We will need a record of the arrival date into the UK for all overseas boarders to ensure a 14-day quarantine period has been undertaken before returning to Heathfield.

Should your daughter need to be collected from the airport, taxi bookings made through the School will continue to be provided by our two approved taxi companies, Gainsborough Cars and Ascot Cars. We will be liaising with both companies regarding our health and safety expectations. Owing to social distancing measures, we anticipate that girls will not be able to share taxis to school.

Dedicated staff from our residential team and teaching staff will be caring for your daughter during this time to ensure she remains happy and healthy. During quarantine, pupils would complete lessons and

associated work remotely. However, they will not be able to participate in the regular day to day activities across school until the quarantine period is over but suitable activities and exercise will be arranged in accordance with UK government guidelines.

- Pupils will be looked after in our quarantine boarding accommodation which will be for the exclusive use of Heathfield pupils and supervised by Heathfield staff.
- The school medical centre is staffed 24/7 and there will be regular medical and temperature checks of pupils and the staff supervising the quarantine boarding house.
- The school kitchens will follow strict hygiene measures and food will be delivered to the boarding house.
- There will be a strict regime of hand washing and the pupils will have clearly delineated toilet and shower facilities to minimise the number of people using each area. The boarding house will be cleaned throughout each day with key areas and surfaces cleaned regularly.
- Pupils will be expected to wear face masks when not in their bedrooms for the duration of the quarantine period.

Once a pupil has completed her quarantine she would then move to her normal boarding house and begin her full participation in the school routine.



# Arriving at Heathfield

In order to minimise unnecessary contact, and to allow time for temperature checking, we are arranging for staggered arrival times for all year groups. The arrival dates and times are for boarders who have either already quarantined for 14 days or are UK based boarders. The arrival times accommodate the various induction programmes and settling in period for all pupils.

## Quarantine for International Boarders: 30 August – 13 September.

Should you wish to take up this option, please contact Rachel Whitton to confirm arrival details: [rwhitton@heathfieldschool.net](mailto:rwhitton@heathfieldschool.net)

### Sunday 6 September

Form I Boarders - 10am  
Form V Boarders - 1pm  
UVI Boarders - 4pm

### Monday 7 September

Form I Day girls - 10am  
Form II Boarders - 12pm  
Form IV Boarders - 2pm  
LVI Boarders - 4pm

### Tuesday 8 September

Form III Boarders & Day Girls - 10am

#### Day Girl arrivals

Form I - 9am  
Form II - 11am  
Form III - 10am  
Form IV - UVI - 8am  
1pm - Pupil training on Social distancing.

### Wednesday 9 September

Lessons begin for all year groups.

## Dropping off

We will be operating a kerbside drop off only and Heathfield staff will assist your daughter with taking her belongings to her accommodation. To reduce the number of people entering the boarding accommodation, we will not be inviting parents into the boarding areas.

We understand this may be difficult for some families but trust that you will support us in this matter so that we can safeguard the health of our boarding community. Boarders will be encouraged to video call home and send photos of their new room and their boarding accommodation once they are settled so you can see where they are living for the term.

## Delays in returning to School

We understand that not all pupils will be able to return as planned due to travel restrictions or visa delays. If students are unable to return at their appointed time, please contact your Head of House or Rachel Whitton as soon as you are aware of the restrictions you face.

#### Current pupils should call: Rachel Whitton

+44 (0)1344 898319

[rwhitton@heathfieldschool.net](mailto:rwhitton@heathfieldschool.net)

#### New joiners should call: Isabel Hutchings

+44 (0)1344 898342

[ihutchings@heathfieldschool.net](mailto:ihutchings@heathfieldschool.net)



# Health and Hygiene

We are fortunate to have a very experienced 24 hour fully staffed surgery on site. We have ensured that all staff understand the symptoms of COVID-19 and they understand the process to be followed in accordance with Department of Education and Public Health England guidance.

If a child or member of staff displays any symptoms isolation procedures will be followed to minimise risk to other members of the school and boarding community and testing procedures followed. In the event of a student or staff member testing positive for COVID-19, we will isolate the individual immediately and establish a track and trace system to ensure that any relevant pupils and staff are isolated quickly. We will follow the guidelines of Public Health England and the School's risk assessment.

In this case, Government guidelines state: *As part of the national test and trace programme (and by being informed by parents), if cases are detected within the cohort or in the wider setting, Public Health England's local health protection teams will conduct a rapid investigation and will advise schools and other settings on the most appropriate action to take.*

At this time, we will not conduct any off-site academic visits to cities or more densely populated areas to minimise the risks associated with these areas. However, we will optimise the use of our large site and the proximity of suitable local amenities. Cleaning of high frequency areas will be conducted regularly throughout the day and there will be in depth cleaning of all areas, including classrooms and boarding houses, every day. The UK Government does not require pupils or staff to wear face masks, however, pupils will be permitted to wear face masks if they wish to do so.

We have also put additional measures in place including:

- Daily temperature checks for all pupils and staff.
- Pupils will be allocated to social bubbles. These bubbles will permit a relaxation on social distancing rules as they are technically classified as households.
- Additional handwashing and sanitising facilities around the site.
- Regular reminders of the importance of thorough handwashing.
- Pupils and staff can choose to wear masks.
- Additional rooms will be allocated to provide an extension of the Surgery to allow for isolation of students if any were to become unwell/show symptoms.
- Surgery will receive ongoing training regarding COVID-19.
- Increase in Surgery personnel as required.
- Rooms to be inspected before school day begins to ensure that the cleaners can thoroughly clean all surfaces. Rooms will be aired throughout the day.
- Enhanced cleaning regimes for whole school. Surfaces that are touched frequently such as desks, chairs, doors, sinks, toilets, light switches etc will be cleaned more regularly than normal.
- Lidded bins for tissues which will be emptied throughout the day.
- Where possible, ensure spaces are well ventilated.
- Doors will be propped open, where safe to do so (bearing in mind fire safety and safeguarding), to limit use of door handles and to aid ventilation.
- All boarders will be required to wash their hands on return to the boarding house as routine.
- Strict laundry guidance will be adhered to.
- All staff and pupils will clean their hands on arrival at the setting, before and after eating, and after sneezing or coughing will use a tissue or elbow to cough or sneeze into and use bins for tissue waste ('catch it, bin it, kill it').

Should a pupil display any of the medical markers for COVID-19 she will be isolated in the Surgery. Day pupils will be sent home immediately, UK boarders will be collected as soon as possible, and International boarders will be given the option to quarantine in our Surgery.

# Welcome Receptions

Given the current climate, we will unfortunately not be hosting our traditional welcome receptions or new joiners events this year. However, we are hosting two Zoom webinars on Wednesday 24 June to inform you further of our plans and to take any questions you may have. This will be with the Head and other key members of staff.

**Wednesday 24 June - 10:00 BST**

for our new international parents

**Wednesday 24 June - 11:00 BST**

for our new British parents.



# School Life



## Boarding

Boarders will be divided into rooms according to their academic (daytime) bubbles so that we reduce the risk of transmission. Where pupil bubbles mix in different sets, social distancing will be adhered to between the bubbles. Pupils can talk with others outside of their bubbles if they remain one metre apart and never within their bedrooms.

The bubble is a very important concept as it is a way to maintain a level of normalcy and yet protect against the virus.

Initially we intend to allocate boarders in their bubbles to set corridors and facilities. Shared areas such as the boarding common rooms and kitchens/service rooms will be closed. We will reopen these when we feel it is safe and appropriate to do so. Staff will be on duty during the free times during the day to monitor the girls' interactions and ensure that they are respecting the social distance guidelines.

Whilst day girls and boarders will still be taught together in their bubbles, initially, day girls will not be allowed to visit the boarding houses.

We appreciate that the measures put in place will mean the boarding experience is going to be different to what the boarders are used to or may be expecting. However, we hope everyone can appreciate that these measures

are put in place to ensure their health and safety during these unprecedented times.

To promote wellbeing, we will not be adhering to our usual rule that boarders of the same native language may not room together. We understand that during this unsettling time and particularly for new boarders, this is important in terms of communication and establishing friendships. We are also looking closely at the spaces where bubbles can social distance e.g. the Sports Hall so that pupils will still be able to interact with their closest peers.

Currently, we are not expecting our staff to be tested prior to the start of term. As with all staff, teaching and support, anyone who displays symptoms will be asked to isolate. All our community will be following good hygiene practices on site as outlined earlier.

If your daughter is permitted to go out at weekends, please collect her by car on a Friday evening (from 4pm) and return by car on Sunday evening (by 7pm). All boarders will undergo a short health check with one of the nurses on their return. If they meet any of the medical markers of COVID-19 they will be asked to go home.

If your daughter is unwell, she must not return to School and should remain at home until she is fully recovered, even if it is not a COVID-19 related illness.

Heathfield's ethos to have small classes means we can more easily than other schools satisfy the Government requirement for classes to have 15 or fewer pupils. We are following the UK government guidance regarding social distancing and provisions in school settings, and this does mean that class sizes, activities, meals and many other typical activities may look a little different at first. We would like to reassure families that our community ethos will remain the same and the wellbeing of your daughter will be of paramount importance.

We will be utilising "social bubbles" across the school to encourage the best working practice in the classroom and an opportunity for some physical and social interaction of the pupils.

A social bubble is a group of pupils who will be taught together and therefore all agree that they will socially

distance with those outside of their bubble. "It's kind of like an enclosed society": People in the bubble can interact with each other without anti-virus precautions (like masks or distancing) but have to use social distancing with everybody else. Each designated group will have their breaks together, move around the school together and have lessons as one cohort.



# School Life



## Weekends

Our weekend programme will be dynamic and shaped by the latest guidance. Initially we are planning more local activities as we anticipate no trips will be permitted. We will look to amend this as UK government advice changes and the R rate continues to lower across the UK. The R rate refers to the average number of people that one infected person can expect to pass the coronavirus on to.

On site activities will be provided to ensure a varied programme for our boarders, and of course we have excellent facilities already on site for this, including the cookery room, sports hall and netball courts as well as the extensive grounds for walking and running.

## Catering and meal provision

Heathfield's catering team already follow strict health and safety regulations. Our dishwashers use high temperatures that kill all germs so there is no need to use disposable cutlery or plates.

There will be a reduced meal service to limit pupil interaction; condiments will not be self-serve, and there will be no shared use of utensils.

Snacks at break and after school will be pre-packaged or served by catering staff.

Your daughter will be eating with her friends in her 'social bubble'. Mealtimes will be staggered to reduce the number of students eating at the same time, with social distancing between 'social bubbles' in place as far as possible with queuing and eating.

Pupils will be expected to carry a named water bottle at all times to drink from. Drinking fountains will only be available for the refilling of bottles. The school will provide facilities to ensure your daughter's water bottle can be sterilised regularly.

## October Half Term

It is our expectation that by this time, students will be able to go home or to their guardian over the October half term. However, we will consider all possible options including actively exploring keeping the school open at Half term. If this is something that you would be interested in, please contact the school directly.

.....  
**\*\* Please note that all decisions are subject to guidance from the UK government and may be updated or changed at any time. We will contact you when any changes occur. \*\***

## Discrimination

Heathfield is a kind and caring school and we experienced no incidents of any discrimination when Coronavirus first started to be in the public consciousness in the UK.

We have a robust Anti-Bullying Policy and any unkind behaviour towards another pupil will be sanctioned in the normal way. As at the start of any school year, these will be highlighted to all pupils and their importance within our community explained.

Our boarders are very respectful of one another and a community of care is created. They look out for each other and we do not anticipate any issues within our community.

We will also continue to educate pupils and not shy away from addressing some of their questions and concerns so that we as adults are role modelling and advising them on the correct way to behave.

## Risk Assessments

We have conducted thorough risk assessments for the return of our pupils to the school and we are constantly monitoring Government guidance and update our risk assessments accordingly. Heathfield is a member of the British Boarding Schools' Association and the Girls' School Association and we are attending regular virtual meetings and receiving daily updates informing us of best practice for the safe running of schools and boarding facilities at this time.



# Contact Information



Please do get in touch with us here at Heathfield if you have any questions at all. We would be very pleased to speak to you.

Phone: +44 (0)1344 898319

**Rachel Whitton**

(Director of Pastoral & Boarding DSL & Wellbeing Lead)

[rwhitton@heathfieldschool.net](mailto:rwhitton@heathfieldschool.net)



Phone: +44 (0)1344 898343

**Isabel Hutchings**

(Head of Admissions)

[ihutchings@heathfieldschool.net](mailto:ihutchings@heathfieldschool.net)







## COVID-SAFE Charter CS Charter

The BSA has recently announced its COVID-SAFE Charter. This is a voluntary code to which schools can adhere and aims to give confidence to everyone that the School is following all appropriate measures to ensure that boarding is a safe environment for pupils. Heathfield is pleased to advise parents, pupils, guardians and agents that the School has adopted the Charter. The Charter is aligned with the School's own advanced plans for the reopening of boarding, which goes beyond statutory requirements. Further information on the Charter is available on our website.

## Working with Government Partners

From the outset Heathfield has been working closely with the UK Government and industry partners to ensure a quick and safe response to guidelines and will continue to do so whilst we prepare to re-open.



Heathfield School  
Ascot

**Heathfield School**  
London Road, Ascot, Berkshire SL5 8BQ, United Kingdom  
Incorporating St Mary's School Wantage

T: +44 (0) 1344 898342 E: [registrar@heathfieldschool.net](mailto:registrar@heathfieldschool.net) W: [heathfieldschool.net](http://heathfieldschool.net)

