



The  
Portsmouth Academy

# Welcome Back to School



4 September 2020

Dear Parents,

We're busy getting ready for the start of term in September and looking forward to welcoming everyone back after the summer holiday. We know that for some pupils it's quite a while since they've been here with us at school, so we want to make sure your family has everything it needs to help you look forward to September.

If you or your children are feeling anxious about the start of term, let us reassure you that our first priority in September will be looking after the health and emotional wellbeing of our pupils. In school, they will be able to draw on the support they need to thrive. Please do speak to us if you have specific concerns about your child and we can discuss how best to help them settle back into school life.

You can see more about how we're getting ready for September and the coronavirus safety measures we have in place here [www.theportsmouthacademy.org.uk](http://www.theportsmouthacademy.org.uk) and via the Parent Bulletin.

Also on Portsmouth City Council's [welcome back to school](#) page, you can also find:

- tips on how to get ready for the new school year
- links to organisations that can offer help and support if you're feeling anxious about the start of term.

We look forward to seeing your child in September and we're confident they will find school to be a safe and familiar place where they can enjoy spending time and learning alongside their friends.

We have addressed some frequently asked questions below-

## FAQs

### *Will my child struggle with school at the start of term? I'm worried they are behind and/or too anxious to return.*

- When we return in September our priorities will be helping pupils settle back into the school community and looking after their health and emotional wellbeing. Our teachers and staff will be dedicated to supporting the transition back to school and looking after every pupil's wellbeing above all else.
- We have seen that pupils who came back before the summer holiday returned eagerly and settled very quickly. Children and young people are resilient and able to cope with change with the right support.
- Speak to us about any specific concerns you have. We will listen to your concerns and work with you to make sure you have the information and support you need to feel comfortable about going back to school.

### *Will school be different in September because of coronavirus safety measures?*

- We have been working hard to prepare our buildings and classrooms for the new school year. Our priority is to keep pupils as safe as possible while making sure that the school day and classrooms feels familiar and normal. Please see the Parental Bulletin and Mr Hatherley's 'Re-opening of school' video on website or Facebook for specific information.
- We will be following national and local guidance on the pandemic as it is reviewed and updated over the coming months. We will provide more information about the plans we have in place for September on our website/in our newsletter.

### *What happens if there is an outbreak once term has begun?*

- In the event of an outbreak within the local community, all schools will follow local guidelines and the outbreak plan created by Portsmouth City Council. [www.portsmouth.gov.uk](http://www.portsmouth.gov.uk) is a good source of up-to-date information on local plans and procedures in the event of an outbreak.

### *What support will be available at The Portsmouth Academy?*

- We will have support available for any pupils who may have lost a loved one during the pandemic or experienced difficulties over the past few months.
- We will be talking to pupils when they return about how everyone can work together to create a safe and enjoyable environment within the school.
- If you are worried that your child won't be able to cope returning to school, please contact us directly. We will be able to talk about the steps we are taking to resettle all pupils and how we can help your child individually.

- Vulnerable children, or those with underlying health conditions, shouldn't feel excluded from returning to school in September. We will work with you to create an individual 'Welcome Back Plan' for your child that meets their specific needs and addresses any worries or concerns you may have.

### **Tips for preparing for going back to school**

We have prepared some practical tips and advice to help families get ready for going back to school. These can be used on your website and within information sent to families. We have also prepared some graphics with tips that would work particularly well for social media.

- Talk to your child about what they are looking forward to about going back to school. For example, seeing their friends, the playground, or their favourite subjects.
- Chat about what school may be like when they go back. Some schools will share videos or pictures of the classrooms online that you could look at together.
- Listen to your children's concerns and let them know its ok to feel anxious about going back to school. Address any misinformation they have and encourage them to ask questions.
- Let them know that teachers and staff will be there to support them and answer their questions. Teachers will be focussing on helping them feel settled, safe and happy above all else.
- Think about your school routine. Try on the uniform, check arrangements for breakfast and after school clubs and get into the habit of getting up early and going to bed at the right time.
- Plan ahead for how you will get to school. Think about a fun way to actively travel to school. Try out the route before terms starts and consider if there are any social distancing measures in place on the way.

### **Additional resources**

Here are some helpful sources of information about preparing your child to come back to school-

[Portsmouth City Council](#) has up-to-date information and advice about returning to school in September on its coronavirus information pages for schools and families.

[The Association for Child and Adolescent Mental Health](#) has prepared a video and information to help parents and teachers deal with apprehension and anxiety when returning to school.

We are looking forward to your return,



Mr Andrew Hatherley

Vice Principal