



Morton Academy

The best in everyone™

Part of United Learning

RMCG/KRE

7th July 2021

Dear Parent/Carer

I am absolutely thrilled to be writing my first letter to you as your child's new Principal. I hope to give you some clarity as to how the academy will open in September, what changes to expect at the academy and how we will make sure your child is welcomed properly to their new community. I am delighted that we will have over 180 students joining us in September, I am humbled that you have chosen our academy for your child and I take the responsibility for your child's education, welfare and safety as seriously as I would for my own child.

Summer School:

We look forward to seeing the children who have signed up to our Summer School week commencing 23rd August 2021. We have a great week of activities planned. Students will be on site from 10am to 2pm and we will provide lunch. It will be a great chance to meet new friends and learn about how Morton Academy works.

September Arrangements:

It is difficult to say with absolute certainty how the academy will re-open in September. We believe that it is likely that students will have to test for asymptomatic cases of Covid before returning to school. If this is the case, I would expect that the academy will re-open as follows:

- Wednesday 1st September 2021 – INSET Day
- Thursday 2nd September 2021 – INSET Day, Year 7 and Year 11 students will come in for appointment tests only, then go home.
- Friday 3rd September 2021 – Year 7 and Year 11 students return to the academy, Years 8, 9 and 10 students come in for appointment tests only, then go home.
- Monday 6th September 2021 – All students return to the academy.

This is subject to change; we will write to you in late August when we are absolutely clear on government plans for returning children to school. We will write to you in August to confirm your appointment time for the asymptomatic testing. Please be assured that we will take all necessary steps to keep your children safe.

So for clarity our new Year 7s will come in by appointment on Thursday 2nd of September to be tested for Covid 19, they can then go home. All Year 7s will then start school for their Induction Day on Friday 3rd September 2021 at 8.35am.

Additional Bank Holiday:

You may have read in the press that there will be an additional Bank Holiday next year. This may mean there is an additional closure day for schools. We are awaiting guidance from the Local Authority as to when this may be.

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Structural Changes:

Following on from 18 months of covid disruption we have explored different ways of making the building work better. Some of the adaptations we plan to maintain are:

- All students enter the building at 8.35am unless they are taking part in an activity before school.
- Year Groups will have their own zones where their Tutor Rooms, lockers and toilet block will be.
- Split lunches and breaks will be kept in place to help manage queue times and social spaces..

We are going to re-organise the school day to ensure students have as much time as possible to embed deep concepts. We plan to move from six 50 minute lessons in a day to three 100 minute lessons in a day to improve learning and to tackle any gaps that may have appeared during the lockdown phases. This means that students will spend more time in lessons and less time moving around the building. The window of the school day remains the same (8.35am – 3.00pm) and this allows for lunches to be slightly earlier than in our previous school day structure. We are trialling this for the autumn term and we will be asking for you and your child's views on this regularly so please do share when we ask. An example of how the school day will look is below:

Year 7 and Year 11		Year 8, Year 9 and Year 10	
Activity	Time of Day	Activity	Time of Day
Lesson 1	08.35 – 10.15	Lesson 1	08.35 – 10.15
Lesson 2	10.15 – 12.15	Break	10.15 – 10.35
Break within Lesson 2	11.05 – 11.25	Lesson 2	10.35 – 12.15
Tutor Time/Reading	12.15 – 12.50	Lunch	12.15 – 12.45
Lunch	12.50 – 13.20	Tutor Time/Reading	12.45 – 13.20
Lesson 3	13.20 – 15.00	Lesson 3	13.20 – 15.00

You will see that we are allocating time with Tutors during the school day alongside our whole school reading programme. In September you will also be given the Home Learning Timetable for all year groups as we want this to be clear for you so you know when your child has been set homework and when it is due.

Other Changes:

We also plan to introduce some new opportunities for our students. Currently, students are voting for the names of our new House system. This will underpin our new rewards strategy which will be used more frequently to recognise those students who are achieving well. We also plan to introduce a new outdoor catering service called a 'Snack Shack' with new outdoor seating to give students a bit more space at lunchtime. We are also investing in outdoor table tennis and table football equipment to give students more activities during social times. We have also successfully applied to be involved in the Skills Builder Accelerator programme that will start in September 2021. This programme aims to empower students to build and articulate their essential employability skills, helping to ensure that they succeed in whatever they choose to do post 16.

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Uniform:

You are now able to purchase uniform from our new supplier Your School Uniform.com. The link for our part of the site is: <https://www.yourschooluniform.com/schools/index/the-morton-school-4989>

The Uniform Shop in Carlisle still has some stock available should you wish to purchase from that supplier. Please refer to the website for our uniform expectations ([Uniform](#)). The academy will also be operating a Swap Shop for most of our uniform items. This will be advertised on social media. Please note that jewellery is not permitted in the academy and that footwear should be black leather shoes.

Equipment:

When students arrive in September they should have adequate supplies of pens, pencils, rubbers, rulers and a calculator. The academy will supply your child with a Planner, Knowledge Organiser and Self-Quizzing book. Students will be provided with a lanyard and card to ensure they can access the canteen and printing services. Our new Year 7s will have photos taken early in the academic year. Our rules on mobile phones are clear, these devices should not be seen in the academy.

Parent App:

The Academy is using a Parent App called Arbor. This system will provide detailed information such as your child's lessons, attendance, assessment results, behaviour information, and school reports. The app will also allow you to communicate with the school through the in-app messaging system where you can read and send messages to/from the school. For a full guide on how to access the app and how to use it, please visit our website:

<https://www.rrma.org.uk/information/transition> or watch this You Tube video:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=znuzCX-oimw>

Form Tutor/Other Information:

We are happy to be able to tell you that your child will be in form XX and their Form Tutor will be XXXX.

We also have a parental handbook available on our website that has all the information you need to know about your child starting at the Academy, including: The Morton Pledge; Catering; Parent Pay; Attendance; Equipment; Co-curriculum; Support. This can be found at: rrma.org.uk/information/transition.

Further information will continue to be posted on our Facebook page and website. We have also have an email address 'transition@rrma.org.uk' especially for parents to communicate with the Head of Year, Mr Devlin, prior to September.

Initial Assessments:

During the Induction Day on Friday 2nd September we will be carrying out some initial assessments of all Year 7s to gain as much information as possible to help us understand your child's academic ability. These will include:

- MidYIS Test – this is an online test which is used by schools to gain a sense of academic ability and is very accurate in predicting GCSE success.
- NGRT – this is an online reading assessment which provides us with reading ages for your child.
- There may also be some specific English and Maths tasks at the start of the academic year.

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It is not our intention to make our new students sit assessments all day. We will have a variety of ice breaking activities and other fun tasks to introduce them to their new school. But it is important that we have an opportunity to fully explore the current academic profile of students in order to address any potential issues caused by the disruption to learning as effectively as we can.

Safeguarding:

The safeguarding of our students remains our highest priority and during the holiday period there can often be situations in which our families or students need support. I would like to take this opportunity to remind you of the pathways of reporting that are available to students and parents. During school closure you can contact the academy via email using the safeguarding@rrma.org.uk or complete the anonymised form on our website ([Anonymous Reporting](#)). Those methods of reporting are checked at points throughout the holidays by members of the Safeguarding Team and will be reviewed at the start of the next academic year. There are also links and support on our website that you can follow to gain advice from external agencies such as NSPCC, Kooth and Mind, if you or your child are concerned about mental health issues or need some advice and guidance. However, if you require immediate support or advice or are concerned that a child is at immediate risk of harm please contact the Cumbria Safeguarding Hub 0333 240 1727, the police 101/ 999 or Childline FREE 0800 1111.

I can't wait to meet our new students during the Summer School and in September. We are already hearing lots of positive things from your Primary Schools and I hope you will have a happy time at Morton Academy. I hope all our new students and families have a restful summer break.

Yours sincerely

Richard McGuire
Executive Principal