



Merchant Taylors' School

A Safe Return to Sport

September 2020

Merchant Taylors' School prides itself on encouraging its boys to participate in a wide range of sports and in these uncertain times this will remain the case. It is clear that the sporting landscape for schools will be somewhat different in the coming year but it will be our aim, as a sports department, to maximise the opportunities for boys whilst strictly following government guidelines and allowing boys to feel relaxed and safe in their environment.

Ensuring a positive and safe sporting environment

Much planning has gone in to ensuring that boys are kept within their year group 'bubbles' whilst still being able to enjoy a well-rounded sporting curriculum. Strict health and safety, cleaning and hygiene measures have been drawn up to ensure the sporting programme can run safely. Decisions on various sporting activities will be guided by the advice from National Governing Bodies and the Government with specific reference to sport in educational settings.

It is our aim to ensure that pupils feel safe and relaxed in the sporting environment whilst being inspired and challenged in various sporting disciplines.

Throughout all sporting activities whether they are timetabled classes or extra-curricular sessions pupils will remain in their year group bubbles.

What sports will your son be involved in?

The aim is to keep sport as 'normal' as possible and follow a similar programme to previous years. However, some adaptations will be made to ensure that all COVID 19 Health and Safety Guidelines are met. Where possible, sessions will take place outdoors and group sizes will be monitored to allow staff to ensure social distancing is maintained throughout.

Boys in Years 7 and 8 and those in Year 9 who selected PE as one of their 'options' will get one 'Core PE' lesson per week. This will focus on developing their physical literacy and ability to better manage their body during physical exercise. These lessons will use a variety of different activities such as

physical fitness work, ball games and gymnastic movements.

Every pupil in the school will have a games lesson each week, which will allow them to be involved in Rugby, Hockey, Football, Cricket, health related fitness, Cross Country and Badminton as well as a host of other opportunities.

Boys in Years 7 and 8 will have swimming for half of a term during the academic year. Information regarding this will be passed on to the boys at the beginning of the school year. This decision as to when the boys start swimming will be made after rigorous consultation with the pools that we use.

How will hygiene be maintained?

After every lesson, any equipment that has been used will be sanitised before it is used again. A designated area has been set up for equipment that has been used and not yet sanitised to ensure that there is no cross contamination. Any bibs that have been used will be washed at the end of the day ready for re-use the following day. As always, only staff will be permitted to access the store cupboards to ensure that cleanliness of equipment is maintained for every pupil in the school. Boys are strongly encouraged to invest in their own equipment where possible, to limit the use of school equipment, e.g. hockey sticks and badminton racquets, but, school equipment will still be available if needed.

At the start and end of each lesson pupils will be expected and reminded to sanitise their hands.

What should my son wear for PE and Games?

For PE lessons it will be expected that your son will wear the white PE top with white shorts and socks along with trainers. For Games lessons he will be expected to be in his yellow reversible rugby top, rugby shorts and socks with boots AND trainers. In the past it may have been less important to bring both boots and trainers however, with the ever-changing sporting landscape currently, it will allow much more flexibility to have both.

On days that pupils have a PE lesson or a Games lesson **it will be expected that they come to school dressed in their sports kit along with a tracksuit over the top.** At the end of the lesson boys will be given the chance to 'freshen up' if required and they can put their dry tracksuit back on for the remainder of the day. This process is to minimise the number of changes that are needed throughout the day.

When your son is planning on attending a lunchtime/after school session we request that he comes in his school uniform and changes in a changing room that will have been sanitised ready for use.

Are there any facilities not being used?

A number of facilities will initially have restricted use. The fitness suite in the IRSC will only be open to sixth formers during Wednesday afternoon games and the weights room has been temporarily closed, along with the 'Old Gym' to allow classrooms to be set up that cater for increased distancing between pupils. The use of these facilities will be reviewed weekly and any changes will be communicated to the boys.

Will boys be transported to facilities off-site?

There will be times when boys have to be transported off-site to use the Astro turf, Hall Road and the swimming pool, however the School's guidance on bus transport will be followed throughout. This will require a face mask. Where possible we have tried to base as many activities as we can at the main school site to minimise transport.

What will my son's first Games lesson look like?

Your son will be reminded of the activity he is involved with during form time on the opening day of school. On the day of his first games lesson he will register at the appropriate venue ready for his activity. (Hockey at the flagpole, Rugby at the Pavilion, Sports Development outside the sports centre).

Boys in YEAR 9 who have a games lesson on the first day back at school MUST bring in TRAINERS and full games kit ready for their afternoon activity. On this occasion no additional equipment like boots/gum shields will be needed.

When will my son be playing fixtures?

Currently there will be no inter school fixtures during the first half term; however, this will be reviewed at half term and the moment guidelines allow, a sports fixture programme will be updated. Plans have been developed to run some weekend training sessions and inter house competitions which would still maintain the 'bubbles'. More information will be given to the boys about this in the coming weeks.

Key Points

- Boys are to come to school in sports kit and tracksuit on the day they have Games lessons and PE lessons
- Boots and trainers for every games lesson
- If you can't participate you must bring in a note from home.
- All kit and equipment will be sanitised and held in a secure 'clean' store until it is used again.

Having taken over the running of the PE and Games Department during the summer there have been many challenges that have faced the PE department and I am confident that the plans we have put in place will ensure a smooth return to sport. With an ever-changing sporting landscape there will be more challenges ahead, however I believe that we are well placed to react to these changes and as restrictions begin to be eased, we will be ready to adapt our sports programme.

In the coming months the PE department will focus on the boys' physical development and team building skills which, in the long term, should really enhance their ability to participate in sport and hopefully improve the level at which they perform. These are both key aims of mine as the new Head of Games in the coming years. I want to see an increase in participation so that more people are engaged in a wider variety of sports as well as putting a platform in place that will allow every boy to be in a position to reach the level at which they wish to perform.

If you have any sports related questions, then do not hesitate to contact me.

Regards

Mr Cooke

(Head of Boys Games)