



After closing from March until September in 2020 we were so happy to welcome students back into the classroom in September. Schools were left to decide if they made students wear face masks in school and this is now mandatory. Not in lessons but when walking in corridors. Schools had to make huge changes in order to open and accomodate students. In secondary schools, students are used to moving from room to room for each of their

lessons. All this has had to change to keep students from mixing with different year groups and so subjects like Drama have really suffered as we cannot do practical work in classrooms. The teachers move around the classroom and the students stay in one classroom all day with their teachers going to them. As you can imagine this is not helpful for concentration. Things were starting to feel normal, with everyone getting used to the new ways of teaching and learning. However, as Covid became worse in the UK again schools were sending whole year groups home before Christmas because of the spread of the virus. So many staff and students were absent. We were told that we would return to school in January and did so for one day but the infection rates were so high that schools had to close immediately and we have been teaching online ever since. It is so difficult to do this, especially for practical subjects like Drama and PE. Students are getting used to this though. They have been issued computers by the government if they do not have one so that they can work from home. Every school is doing things slightly differently but many are using online forums such as Google Meet, Zoom or Microsoft Teams. Students are generally being asked to follow their usual timetable and attend online lessons during these times. It is very hard for students who have parents working from home and other siblings. Schools are trying to be creative and get students involved in extra-curricular activities by sending videos. For example, creating talent competitions and Drama clubs online. Sadly, not being in school is creating many mental health issues but schools are working hard to try and support students. The most vulnerable student and the children of key workers such as doctors, teachers, supermarket workers still go into school as this is very important that they are supported when their parents are not at home. Everyone in the UK hopes that schools can open as soon as possible but unfortunately the infection rates are too high right now.