



Return to school Covid guidance for Autumn term 2021

Government Guidance

The government has issued updated guidance for the Autumn Term and is encouraging schools to return to normal teaching practices.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/actions-for-schools-during-the-coronavirus-outbreak/schools-covid-19-operational-guidance>

Social distancing is no longer recommended and therefore no requirement for class, year group or school bubbles. All pupils and staff can move/mix freely between buildings. Pupils can sit side by side and face each other in class. Pupil groups can mix when on transport to games. Year groups can mix when at lunch.

Use of classrooms, staff and pupils will return to use all classrooms and move between specialist areas and buildings.

Locker rooms can start to be used by pupils again.

There are no longer restrictions on group sizes, means that we will return to holding assemblies.

Face coverings are no longer advised for pupils, staff and visitors either in classrooms or in communal areas. However, anyone can wear a face covering if they feel it is beneficial to do so. If a member of staff has a cold or similar symptoms they have been asked to wear a mask.

Singing will take place but be restricted to appropriate group sizes and managed by the music department. Initially there will not be any singing in assemblies.

Parental access to school buildings will remain essential only and all meeting must be arranged between staff and parents in advance.

A one-way movement system around buildings will continue to be signed as was the practice last school year.

Control measures

Testing - All staff have completed a Covid Lateral Flow Test (LFT) before they returned to work on today for the INSET and continue to test twice a week during September.

Senior School pupils will be completing two Covid Lateral Flow Tests during the first week of the term in school – Tuesday 31 August and Friday 3 September.

Cleaning - We will continue to protect against Covid infection by carrying out a walk around wipe down of touch points during the school day.

Hygiene – It is essential that everyone continues to follow good hand and respiratory hygiene.

- Frequent and thorough hand cleaning is now regular practice. We will ensure that pupils clean their hands regularly.
- The ‘catch it, bin it, kill it’ approach continues to be very important when coughing or sneezing.

Ventilation of rooms is essential, and each staff member in charge of a room will ensure that ventilation is maximised. Air conditioning units throughout the school will be used.

Covid Contact Tracing

Covid contact tracing has changed and individuals are not required to self-isolate if they live in the same household as someone with COVID-19, or are a close contact of someone with COVID-19, and any of the following apply:

- they are fully vaccinated
- they are below the age of 18 years and 6 months
- they have taken part in or are currently part of an approved COVID-19 vaccine trial
- they are not able to get vaccinated for medical reasons

Instead, they will be contacted by NHS Test and Trace, informed they have been in close contact with a positive case and advised to take a PCR test. The school will require all pupils and staff to take a PCR test if advised to do so. The NHS Test and Trace may require an individual to isolate and this guidance must be followed.

If someone is not vaccinated they are still required to isolate for 10 days if they have come into direct contact with an individual with a positive covid test result.

If Covid symptoms are suspected the individual must isolate and arrange to take a PCR test.

Whether vaccinated or not, if a positive test on a LFT is returned than an individual must isolate and confirm the test by taking a PCR test

What will happen if local Covid cases increase or there are changes to national guidance?

We will be following a tiered system that allows us to move up or down additional control measures to best protect our staff and pupils dependant of the circumstances. We would make a judgment about what best suited the situation:

Tier 0 – Default for start of term. No social distancing, no requirement to wear a face covering, no restrictions on teaching in class. Free movement between buildings. Twice weekly LFT Covid testing for all staff.

Tier 1 – Directed use of face coverings by staff in senior school. Control of visitors into school buildings. Minimising unnecessary movement between school buildings.

Tier 2 – Restrict movement between SS/MS & JS. Use of face masks by staff and pupils in SS. Return to online meetings. No external visits to other schools.

*Tier 3 – Return to Covid controls similar to those we followed before the summer half term.
National guidance would be issued to all schools.*

Chris Godwin

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