

Getting Back to Normal

Our school always seeks to create an environment with safe boundaries, good relationships and empowered learning, with hope at the centre. We have done this throughout the pandemic. Sometimes, we had to emphasise safety at the expense of freedoms, related to learning in the best possible way. We can start to redress the balance: still being safe but with much more flexibility and emphasis on empowered learning.

These updates include our response to the most recent Schools Covid-19 Operational Guidance (July 2021) and the Contingency Framework (updated 25 June 2021).

The guidance emphasises the following control measures:

1. Ensure good hygiene for everyone
2. Maintain appropriate cleaning regimes
3. Keep occupied spaces well ventilated
4. Follow public health advice on testing, self-isolation, and managing confirmed cases of Covid-19

We will tackle each of the points in turn after a few points of principle.

Balancing and Minimising Risk with Providing a Good Educational Experience

The vaccine programme has resulted in a reduction in the link between becoming ill with coronavirus, hospitalisation and death. This means we can function more normally with some precautions. These precautions will help reduce the impact of all respiratory infections, such as flu, as well as coronavirus.

Where options exist we have erred on the side of caution and minimal risk.

1. Good hygiene for everyone

On arrival in school proceed to wash your hands before doing anything else. Wash them frequently throughout the day. When you can't wash them, use the hand sanitiser which you will find in your room. Please remind students to wash their hands at the start of break and lunch or after using the toilet. There are bins and tissues in every room to facilitate respiratory hygiene. Please ensure that students place any used tissues into the lidded bins provided.

2. Maintain appropriate cleaning routines

We are avoiding touching shared surfaces as much as possible by propping doors open. All shared surfaces, particularly toilets, are cleaned frequently. Wipes will be available to clean desks or resources when required. Enhanced cleaning schedule remains in place.

3. Keep occupied spaces well ventilated

Good ventilation reduces the concentration of the virus in the air, which reduces the risk from airborne transmission.

Please keep your classroom door open. Doors to the outside and the stairwells are kept open. Please contact the site manager if a doorstopper is missing. Please check that your classroom window is open before you teach in these buildings.

In addition, we will ensure that the majority of students go outside during break and lunch times, to maximise socialising in fresh air.

4. Follow Public Health guidance on testing, self-isolation and managing confirmed cases of Covid-19

A requirement that all people who are ill stay at home

If you have any of these three coronavirus symptoms (**high temperature, new continuous cough, loss of or change in sense of smell or taste**), NHS guidance is to stay off school and book a test.

APS guidance is based on the current research and the World Health Organisation information. With symptoms of **headache, gastrointestinal symptoms** (tummy upset, abdominal cramps, off food, nausea, diarrhoea), **sore throat** and **runny nose**, stay off school. These symptoms can be symptomatic of Covid-19 and they are all contagious symptoms that will spread illness to other people.

As part of step 4 of the Government's COVID-19 roadmap, double vaccinated adults and also children will no longer be legally required to self-isolate if they are identified as a close contact of a positive Covid-19 case.

Young people and double vaccinated individuals identified as close contacts will continue to be advised to take a PCR test, to detect the virus and variants of concern. Anyone who tests positive following the PCR test will still be legally required to self-isolate, irrespective of their vaccination status.

Other people who are not vaccinated or unvaccinated will need to self-isolate for 10 days if they are in contact with a positive case.

Here is a link to the test site (<https://www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test>).

The responsibility for contacting close contacts moves to the NHS test and trace service.

If a pupil becomes unwell, please ensure the child is safely escorted to the first aid area.

For Staff:

In any of these circumstances inform SLT. You must also contact the cover manager in the usual way regarding your absence (see Staff Handbook for details).

September testing

We are asking all staff to take 2 lateral flow tests at home on regular days before returning to school in September. We will also ask people to continue to use them during September. If you are using the Lateral flow tests these should be used twice a week following the guidance you have been given. They are ideally done on a Sunday night and also on a Wednesday night – the result must be recorded on the NHS website and our school system. You will need to get a PCR test to confirm a positive result, and you will need to self-isolate irrespective of your vaccination status. Remember that Lateral flow tests are really useful for picking up asymptomatic or pre-symptomatic cases and keeping other people safe. They are not very sensitive so they will only pick up about 50% of cases. If you get a negative result you could still have coronavirus so you should still be aware of symptoms and follow social distancing rules.

If you have any questions, please speak to SLT.

Reducing Contact

We are no longer required to reduce contact between year groups as fully 'bubbled' arrangements are not required.

Corridors and One Way Systems

Pupils must continue to walk on the left of corridors, to remain as distant as possible from others.

Staff should lead by example, and follow the one-way system during changeover/ transition times. Before/after school and during lesson time, staff may use any stairwell as up or down.

Outbreak Management Plan Overview

As we move from pandemic to endemic, we may continue to experience coronavirus cases in school. In liaison with our Local Authority, Director of Public Health, and DfE Regional Schools Commissioner, we can put in place actions that manage transmission at the same time as continuing to provide top quality education and care.

The measures that APS is prepared to take if necessary are as follows.

1. Emphasising not to attend school if poorly.
2. Testing. We can ask staff to use Lateral Flow tests at home. It is not appropriate to test using Lateral Flow tests on our school site due to infection control. If we suspect an outbreak in a particular year group, we can contact parents/carers and ask them to access PCR tests for symptomatic individuals.
3. Distance. We can ask staff to maintain either a one or two metre distance from colleagues and students.
4. Shielding. If we are advised by national government to reintroduce shielding for clinically extremely vulnerable colleagues, we will make it possible for them to carry out their duties from home.
5. Other Measures

If we are advised that number of cases in our own region are sufficiently high, we are prepared to provide virtual alternatives to some events:

- open days;
- transition or taster days;
- parental attendance on site.

We would not wish to cancel all the extra-curricular and on-site activities that enrich the lives of students, but if needed, we could:

- cancel or adjust the nature of residential trips;
- cancel or adjust the format of school performances;
- lettings of our school premises for local community use can be withdrawn, reduced or adjusted to minimise infection risk, for example by prioritising external facilities of our site rather than internal facilities.

Attendance Restrictions

We will work with the Local Authority, Director of Public Health, and Health Protection Teams (HPTs) to carefully think through whether any restrictions to attendance are needed as part of outbreak management. These arrangements are a last resort.

We will continue to use Google Classrooms for remote learning and provide laptops where needed, utilising our current systems. Our top priority groups to attend on site are:

1. All vulnerable children and Critical worker children

If the number of students on site is reduced, we will make decisions appropriate to the context as to whether any staff should work from home or whether staff should continue to work on-site.

If our region is asked to enable clinically extremely vulnerable staff to work from home, we will ensure they are able to do their job, e.g. by Google Classrooms teaching.

Safeguarding

We will utilise the same safeguarding practices we did during recent periods of remote learning, asking staff to call and check-in with students daily and log conversations and any concerns. Students who are particularly at risk and not attending on site learning, will be followed up by contact with our Welfare Officer and Deputy DSL. Wherever possible, vulnerable students will be encouraged to attend on site during periods of restricted attendance.