

COVID-19 Policy – Our Approach for Opening September 2020



Covid19 Policy

Member of Staff Responsible	Headmaster
Date of Policy	August 2020
Date for next review	Ongoing
Approved By Governors	Yes – Finance 27 August 2020
Distribution:	All

This policy should be read in conjunction with the school’s Covid-19 Risk Assessment. Its purpose is to set out how we intend to manage the continued phased re-opening of our school.

Introduction

The DfE Guidance sets out how they expect schools to manage the return to school for all pupils in September 2020. The DfE have stated that returning to school is mandatory for all pupils of compulsory education age.

Publications

The following publications have been referenced as part of our approach including but not limited to:

- Full opening of schools from the start of the autumn term
- Actions for early years and childcare providers during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak
- What parents and carers need to know about early years providers, schools and colleges in the autumn term

Our Approach

Our approach is to ensure the safety and well-being of staff, pupils and visitors to the school. Our legal obligation in this respect remains unchanged.

Whilst we are an independent school, the government has made it clear that it expects independent schools to operate under the same framework and guidance as the maintained sector. Ultimately the government has the power to enforce compliance under its Emergency Measures Act regarding the pandemic.

Therefore, working within the H&S framework and the guidance set out by the government and the DfE, the role of the Governors and the SLT is to manage and minimise the risk.

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In addition, the Governors and Senior Leadership Team have participated in various briefings and discussions with industry bodies involving industry experts and colleagues from other schools.

During the summer term we successfully managed to have pupils from all year groups back in school albeit on a rota basis for some year groups.

The areas covered by this policy are:

- 1. Who should not attend school**
- 2. System of Controls**
- 3. Covid-19 Symptoms**
- 4. Health & Safety**
- 5. The use of PPE and Face Coverings**
- 6. Cleaning Regime**
- 7. Social Distancing within classrooms and outdoor areas**
- 8. Catering Provision**
- 9. Drop-off and Collection from School**
- 10. Medical Responses**
- 11. Protecting the Vulnerable and Extremely Vulnerable**
- 12. Managing non-attendance**
- 13. Review**

1. Who should not attend school

These are the legitimate reasons why a staff member or pupil should not return to school at the start of term or attend school later in the year:

- returning from a country outside of the common travel area within the last 14 days,
- having tested positive in the last 10 days or are still recovering from the symptoms,
- within a 14 day self-isolation period.

The school must be informed immediately if any of these reasons apply.

Schools can take the decision to refuse a child showing possible symptoms, if in our reasonable judgement it is necessary to protect other pupils and staff from possible infection with Covid-19.

2. System of Controls

This is the set of actions that the DfE have mandated schools must take. They are grouped into 'prevention' and 'response to any infection'.

Prevention:

- 1) minimise contact with individuals who are unwell by ensuring that those who have coronavirus (COVID-19) symptoms, or who have someone in their household who does, do not attend school

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- 2) where recommended, use of face coverings in schools
- 3) clean hands thoroughly more often than usual
- 4) ensure good respiratory hygiene by promoting the ‘catch it, bin it, kill it’ approach
- 5) introduce enhanced cleaning, including cleaning frequently touched surfaces often, using standard products such as detergents and bleach
- 6) minimise contact between individuals and maintain social distancing wherever possible
- 7) where necessary, wear appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE)

Numbers 1 to 5 must be in place in all schools, all the time.

Number 6 must be properly considered and schools must put in place measures that suit their particular circumstances.

Number 7 applies in specific circumstances.

Response to any infection

- 8) engage with the NHS Test and Trace process
- 9) manage confirmed cases of coronavirus (COVID-19) amongst the school community
- 10) contain any outbreak by following local health protection team advice

Numbers 8 to 10 must be followed in every case where they are relevant.

We are obliged to contact the local health protection team if some-one who has attended school tests positive. People who have been in close contact with the person will be asked to self-isolate for 14 days. So it is likely that if a boy tests positive, the whole year group will be required to self-isolate and we will have to revert to remote learning during that time. In such instances we cannot share the name of the individual who tested positive and nor will we respond to speculation about who the person is.

If schools have two or more confirmed cases within 14 days, or an overall rise in sickness absence where coronavirus (COVID-19) is suspected, they may have an outbreak, and must continue to work with their local health protection team who will be able to advise if additional action is required.

In consultation with the local Director of Public Health, where an outbreak in a school is confirmed, a mobile testing unit may be dispatched to test others who may have been in contact with the person who has tested positive. Testing will first focus on the person’s class, followed by their year group, then the whole school if necessary, in line with routine public health outbreak control practice.

3. Covid-19 Symptoms

If a boy or staff member displays symptoms of Covid-19 they are to stay at home and self-isolate. They should inform the school immediately and get tested. The school is to be informed immediately of the test result.

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If the family member of a member of staff or a boy displays symptoms then the boy or staff must self-isolate in accordance with government guidelines and inform the school immediately.

We will advise other families who are within the boy's year group if there is a positive test within their year group and/or in accordance with the DfE guidance.

If any-one displays symptoms of Covid-19 at school we will immediately isolate them at school and request the parents come and pick them up and get tested.

It is important that people respond quickly and appropriately to any sign of the key symptoms:

- high temperature – this means you feel hot to touch on your chest or back (you do not need to measure your temperature)
- new, continuous cough – this means coughing a lot for more than an hour, or 3 or more coughing episodes in 24 hours (if you usually have a cough, it may be worse than usual)
- loss or change to your sense of smell or taste – this means you've noticed you cannot smell or taste anything, or things smell or taste different to normal.

Further information about testing and booking a test can be found here: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/testing-and-tracing/get-a-test-to-check-if-you-have-coronavirus/>

4. Health & Safety

The school's H&S policies and procedures continue to apply. All standard H&S checks are continuing to be carried out by our site staff and 3rd party contractors such as fire alarms, fire extinguishers, legionella testing etc. The daily checks continue to be done by the site staff and a full walk-round of the school will be done by the Premises Manager prior to re-opening.

5. The use of PPE and Face Coverings

PPE will continue to be worn where it would have normally be worn in our pre-Covid world.

Staff and pupils may wear face coverings or a visor whilst at school. They must have a re-sealable plastic bag that they can put the face covering in when not in use (i.e. meal times or games). The person must follow hygiene rules and sanitise their hands before and after removing and replacing their mask.

Year 7 and 8 boys are to wear face coverings when moving around the school and in communal areas. Year 7 and 8 boys are required to wear masks on school transport, both to/from Rokeby Sports Grounds and for the Home to School run.

Staff are expected to wear face coverings when moving around the school and in communal areas.

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Members of staff are not expected to help a boy take his mask off or put it on.

Parents are expected to wear masks when collecting their son from school. Even though the collection is outdoors this is due to the numbers of parents involved and the potential for social distancing not to be suitably maintained at all times.

We have visors, face masks, re-useable and washable aprons and gloves for first aid team and other staff needing to treat boys or come into unusually close contact with the boys.

Some individuals are exempt from wearing face coverings. This applies to those who:

- cannot put on, wear or remove a face covering because of a physical or mental illness or impairment or disability
- speak to or provide assistance to someone who relies on lip reading, clear sound or facial expression to communicate

6. Social Distancing within classrooms and outdoor areas

During the normal school day, pupils will remain in discrete groups based on year groups. We will seek to minimise any interaction between different year groups. Where possible, classrooms have been selected to minimise the amount of movement around the school between lessons and arranged to give the best spread of pupils wherever possible and practicable.

All teachers and other staff can operate across different classes and different year groups to facilitate the delivery of the school timetable. Ideally, adults should maintain 2 metres distance from any-one, but in particular, should avoid close face to face contact and minimise the time spent within 1 metre of anyone.

We will avoid large gatherings such as assemblies for more than one year group.

Boys will not be allowed to wait or meet in corridors or stairwells except when waiting outside a classroom before a lesson.

Staff will be encouraged to have the windows open whenever possible.

Break and lunch times are staggered and each group of boys has a designated play area and have to remain with that play area.

7. Cleaning Regime

An enhanced daily cleaning regime is in place which is ongoing throughout the day. Corridors, stairwells and toilets are cleaned after break, after lunch and at the end of the school day.

Normal teaching classrooms are cleaned at the end of the school day. Specialist rooms will be cleaned at break, lunch and after school. If practicable they will be cleaned on the change of year group, but that will not always be possible.

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Anti-bacterial wipes and gloves will be available in each classroom to clean any shared resources as required.

All waste will be double bagged for disposal in accordance with current guidance.

8. Catering Provision

Lunch timings are staggered and boys. After each sitting all tables and chairs will be cleaned. We will provide fresh food, cooked on site which will be pre-plated for the boys to collect from the serving counter. This will speed up the process and allow time for tables to be cleaned between sittings.

Screens are in place at the counter to prevent cross-contamination.

If any parent wishes their son to bring in a packed lunch this will be accommodated.

9. School Transport

We will provide the home to school bus services. The DfE have drawn a distinction between dedicated school transport and public transport services. The approach to dedicated transport is aligned with the principles underpinning the system of controls set out in this document and with the approach being adopted for the school. We have considered:

- pupils will be grouped together by year group with spare seats between the different year groups wherever possible.
- use of hand sanitiser upon boarding and/or disembarking
- additional cleaning of vehicles
- organised queuing and boarding where possible
- distancing within vehicles wherever possible

All boys in Years 7 and 8 and supervising adults will be required to wear a face covering on school transport both for transport to/from Rokeby Sports Grounds and for the home to school run. Whilst boys will be sitting by year group on the buses this is to minimise the risk of cross-contamination.

Some individuals are exempt from wearing face coverings. This applies to those who:

- cannot put on, wear or remove a face covering because of a physical or mental illness or impairment or disability
- speak to or provide assistance to someone who relies on lip reading, clear sound or facial expression to communicate

10. Drop-off and Collection from School

For the morning drop-off staff will assist boys out of the car with their bags. Boys will enter by the black gates by the Sports Hall and go straight to their designated classroom.

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For collection, at the allotted time parents will be invited onto the Terrace through the black gates by the sports hall whilst the boys line up on the playground ready to be collected. Once parent and son are united, the parents will be asked to leave via the black gates by the kitchen. This will ensure a one way circulation of parents. Parents will be asked to wait in lines observing social distancing protocols. No parent is to go anywhere else within the school. If a boy has forgotten anything this should be brought to the attention of a member of staff who will assist.

Parents will not be allowed inside the school unless for a pre-arranged meeting with a member of staff.

11. Medical Responses

Our first aid team were involved in putting our medical protocols in place when we partially re-opened in the summer term.

PPE is available to the first aid team which includes visors, masks, aprons and gloves.

The first aid team and the Reception Team have been trained in how to respond to and treat a suspected Covid-19 patient or deal with any other injuries or illnesses.

If a person needs to be treated for any other ailment or injury the first aid team will still wear PPE given the close nature of the contact.

12. Protecting the Vulnerable and Extremely Vulnerable

Shielding advice for all adults and children ceased on 1 August. This means that even the small number of pupils who were on the shielded patient list can also return to school, as can those who have family members who are shielding.

Clinically vulnerable staff can return to school in September. While in school they should follow the sector-specific measures to minimise the risks of transmission. This includes taking particular care to observe good hand and respiratory hygiene, minimising contact and maintaining social distancing. Ideally, adults should maintain 2 metre distance from others, and where this is not possible avoid close face to face contact and minimise time spent within 1 metre of others. While the risk of transmission between young children and adults is likely to be low, adults should continue to take care to socially distance from other adults including older children/adolescents.

People who live with those who are clinically extremely vulnerable or clinically vulnerable can attend the workplace.

Pregnant women are in the 'clinically vulnerable' category, and are generally advised to follow the above advice, which applies to all staff in schools.

Some people with particular characteristics may be at comparatively increased risk from coronavirus (COVID-19), as set out in the [COVID-19: review of disparities in risks and outcomes report](#), which looked at different factors including age and sex, where people live, deprivation, ethnicity, people's occupation and care home residence. These staff can return to school in September as long as the system of controls set out in this guidance are in place. The reasons for the disparities are

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complex and there is ongoing research to understand and translate these findings for individuals in the future.

People who live with those who have comparatively increased risk from coronavirus (COVID-19) can attend the workplace.

If rates of the disease rise in local areas, children (or family members) from that area, and that area only, will be advised to shield during the period where rates remain high and therefore they may be temporarily absent.

I3. Managing non-attendance

We appreciate that some parents may be concerned about sending their children back to school. The DfE have stated that returning to school is mandatory for all pupils of compulsory education age.

However, we hope that with this policy and risk assessment in place and the communication with parents about the steps the school is taking, the compliance with lengthy government guidance and thorough risk assessments, parents will feel reassured about the safety of their children. If parents have any concerns they should contact the school so we can discuss these with them.

I4. Review

The Senior Leadership Team will review the implementation of this Policy and the associated Risk Assessment weekly for the first half of the Autumn half-term and will report to the governors at the fortnightly Finance Committee meetings or the main Board meeting.