

COVID-19 RISK ASSESSMENT – FROM AUTUMN TERM 2021

Although we hope to be returning to something much closer to our 'normal' school life, it is very important indeed that we all remain vigilant in keeping the school community safe from Covid-19. Even where the vaccination programme may have reduced the risk of serious illness, there are still high numbers of cases in the community, and at the very least an outbreak of infections within school could cause serious disruption to our pupils' learning. The most important message remains, as ever, the request that you do not attend the site, or send your child to school, if you, they or any other member of the household has symptoms of Covid-19. I am hugely grateful to you for your understanding of this – including if it becomes necessary for us to contact you to collect your child if they become unwell, or to ask you to secure a PCR test for any reason. P Savage

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

FOR PARENTS:

Your child **MUST NOT ATTEND SCHOOL** and **MUST SELF-ISOLATE FOR 10 DAYS** if they develop any of these symptoms:

a high temperature – this means you feel hot to touch on your chest or back (you do not need to measure your temperature)

a 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)

a 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

Read [stay at home: guidance for households with possible or confirmed coronavirus \(COVID-19\) infection](#) guidance

Parents will be reminded of these requirements prior to term, and this risk assessment will be shared with all stakeholders.

FOR ALL STAFF:

1. Person with coronavirus symptom **MUST BE SENT HOME** – Call 999 if an emergency
2. Adult should move child out of room immediately to closest well-ventilated space and call **SCHOOL NURSE (270/870)** - or Reception (205) if no answer
3. **SCHOOL NURSE**(or deputy) should move child to an allocated 'isolation' room where they can be isolated awaiting collection, with a window open:
Medical Room in main building, H8 in house, outside (at least 2m from others) if in pavilion or orchard
4. Staff caring for child should wear PPE only if they cannot maintain 2m distance or are providing direct personal care
5. Staff providing care do not need to go home unless they develop symptoms or unless the unwell person tests positive
6. All school staff and pupils are able to test themselves for coronavirus using our Home Testing programme

Supplies of masks, aprons and gloves for the above purposes have been acquired by the school and are distributed by SCHOOL NURSE

If a child needs to use the bathroom while waiting to be collected, they should use the bathroom in the medical room if possible, which will then require cleaning and disinfecting. If child uses another bathroom in the school, SCHOOL NURSE (or deputy) will then put "out of use" sign on door and communicate with maintenance team for cleaning & disinfecting

Isolation room should also be thoroughly disinfected following use.

Instructional and warning posters to be displayed across site. All staff to receive copies of 'In case of...' posters.

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1. Self-Isolating and Taking a Test

The officially recognised symptoms of Covid-19 are:

- a high temperature – this means you feel hot to touch on your chest or back (you do not need to measure your temperature)
- a 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)
- a 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

It remains vitally important that you or your child do not attend the school site if you or your child displays even just one of these symptoms. Please note that we will also continue to isolate and send home as a precautionary measure any children who, in the opinion of school staff, are displaying any of these symptoms.

1. If your child has symptoms, they should self-isolate – and you should inform the School. You should immediately order a PCR test for them. If the PCR result is negative, they can stop self-isolating (unless instructed to self-isolate for other reasons). If the PCR result is positive, they, other members of their household and any close contacts identified by NHS Test and Trace must self-isolate until 10 days after the onset of symptoms – UNLESS THOSE CLOSE CONTACTS OR HOUSEHOLD MEMBERS ARE EXEMPT (See Exemption details below)
2. If your child has a positive result from a lateral flow device (LFD) test, they should self-isolate – and you should inform the School. You should immediately order a confirmatory PCR test. If the confirmatory test is taken within two days and the result is negative, they and

other members of their household can stop self-isolating (unless instructed to self-isolate for other reasons). If the confirmatory PCR test is positive (or is taken more than two days after the LFD), other members of their household and any close contacts identified by NHS Track and Trace must self-isolate until 10 days after the LFD test. – UNLESS THOSE CLOSE CONTACTS OR HOUSEHOLD MEMBERS ARE EXEMPT (See Exemption details below)

3. PCR tests can be booked online through the NHS Test & Trace website or by calling 119.
4. PCR test results will be recorded with NHS Test and Trace automatically, but you should also communicate the result to us at School, please.

EXEMPTIONS:

Anyone with **symptoms** or a **positive LFT or PCR test** should self-isolate. However, close contacts and household members are **exempt** from self-isolation if they are a CHILD UNDER 18 YEARS 6 MONTHS or A DOUBLY VACCINATED ADULT MORE THAN 14 DAYS AFTER THEIR SECOND VACCINATION.

2. Changes to Contact Tracing

As you know, since 19 July, we have moved onto Step 4 of the Government's roadmap.

One of the key changes in Step 4 is that education and childcare settings are no longer asked to conduct routine contact tracing. As with positive cases in any other setting, NHS Test and Trace will work with either the positive case – or in the case of children – the parents, carers or guardian of the positive case to identify close contacts.

NHS Test and Trace already manages the contact tracing process for the rest of society – including children who have recorded a positive PCR test – and has expertise in supporting people to identify close contacts.

This section of the letter sets out the key processes in contact tracing:

a. Contact tracing

If your child gets a positive PCR test result, NHS Test and Trace will contact you, using the details you registered when ordering the PCR test. You and/or your child will be asked a series of specific questions designed to identify who your child has been in close contact with. Being in an education or childcare setting with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19 will not necessarily mean a person is identified as a close contact.

You will be asked to provide the contact details, if you know them, of any of the individuals – or their parents or guardians – who have been identified as close contacts. NHS Test and Trace will then get in touch with these close contacts and provide appropriate instructions or advice (see below).

b. Self-isolation and/or testing of close contacts

From 16 August, if the close contact is under 18, they will **not** have to self-isolate (in line with the policy for fully vaccinated adults) but will be asked to take a PCR test immediately, other than for very young children identified as non-household contacts, and they will **not** need to self-isolate while awaiting the results of the test. Gad's Hill pupils identified as close contacts will therefore be able to continue to attend school.

If the PCR test is positive, they will be required to self-isolate for 10 days from the date of the test. NHS Test and Trace will then get in touch to identify close contacts (see section above).

3. Protective Measures Remaining in Place

a. Good Hygiene for Everyone

Frequent and thorough hand cleaning will continue in school. Pupils will be instructed to continue to wash their hands regularly through the school day. Classrooms and entrances to school will continue to be stocked with hand sanitiser.

Although some other restrictions on eg. pupil bubbles and group sizes indoors are being dropped, pupils will still be asked to be mindful of Covid-19 and encouraged to maintain good hygiene, for example while eating, or with the '*Catch It, Bin it, Kill it*' approach. It will remain a serious disciplinary offence for any pupil to deliberately cough or spit at others, or threaten to do so.

b. Increased Cleaning Regimes

Routine cleaning of the school site by our cleaning team will continue at its current, increased levels. Additionally, classrooms and other areas will continue to be stocked with antiviral sprays and wipes and desks and resources will continue to be cleaned between classes.

c. Increased Ventilation

Colleagues will be asked to maintain the increased ventilation of classrooms and other communal, indoor spaces during the autumn term. Windows and doors, where possible and safe to do so, will be kept open. Children will be expected to wear proper uniform in the autumn term and so it is recommended that they wear a school jumper below their blazer on cooler days. As we progress towards winter, we will review uniform policy as necessary if increased ventilation of classrooms needs to remain in place.

d. Continued Wearing of Face Coverings by Senior Pupils on School Buses

Although the requirement to wear a face covering around school and in lessons has been dropped, the one part of the school where this requirement remains in place is for Senior School pupils using school transport – whether on our morning and afternoon bus routes or on school trips, including travelling to swimming. Please ensure that your child has a clean, plain face covering if they will be using school transport during the day.

Please note that all Senior pupils and staff will be welcome to choose to continue to wear a face covering anywhere on school site, should they wish to do so.

e. Trips, fixtures, concerts...

It is our expectation that an (almost) full programme of events and activities can return to Gad's Hill once again. The educational benefit as well as the impact on wellbeing of these parts of school life are significant, and the school experience will be richer for their return. However, safety and health of all our pupils and staff remains of the highest priority. For this reason, staff organising trips and events will continue to risk assess their plans against government and school guidance on Covid-19 safety and may make changes to plans as necessary.

Please note also that all of our measures in place, and those that have been withdrawn for the start of term, are liable to be stepped up or down as necessary and as directed by the Department for Education or Public Health England.

4. Measures No Longer In Place

a. The 'Bubble' System

Pupils will no longer be required to remain strictly within their 'bubble' of pupils around the school site. This means, amongst other things, that whole-school assemblies, clubs and other events can return.

b. Staggered Start and End Times

The staggered drop-off and pick-up times in place during the last academic year are discontinued.

My colleagues in the relevant part of the school will contact you prior to the start of term to confirm arrangements for drop-off and collection in the first week of term.

c. Face Coverings

Face coverings are no longer required to be worn on the school site by parents, pupils or staff. However, I would ask please that parents visiting the school wear a face covering at times when they find themselves in enclosed spaces in close contact with others.

If you need to visit the school reception, I would ask please that you continue to wait outside if the reception area appears to be busy.

As mentioned above, anyone who wishes to continue to wear a face covering anywhere in school will be allowed to do so.

5. Asymptomatic Testing for Senior Pupils

a. Testing At Home

During the Summer Term 2021, pupils in the Senior School were asked to carry out twice-weekly Lateral Flow Testing **at home** (ideally on a Sunday night/Monday morning and Wednesday night/Thursday morning). I was very grateful to families who engaged in this process – almost all pupils were regularly self-testing and reporting results to the school, meaning that we were able to limit significantly the risk of Covid-19 spreading in school.

I would like to ask please that all Senior School pupils continue to test twice weekly during the Autumn Term (the Government plan to review this guidance at the end of September).

You can collect Lateral Flow Test kits from most pharmacies and other places or even order them to be delivered to you. The following links will help:

<https://www.gov.uk/order-coronavirus-rapid-lateral-flow-tests>

<https://maps.test-and-trace.nhs.uk/>

Senior School pupils will be issued by us with test kits to take home at the start of term and these will be replenished as term progresses.

I would ask that all (consenting) pupils in the Senior School take a Lateral Flow Test immediately prior to the start of the new term.

If your child has a positive result from a lateral flow device (LFD) test, they and other members of the household should self-isolate – and you should inform the School. You should immediately order a confirmatory PCR test. If the confirmatory test is taken within two days and the result is negative, they and other members of their household can stop self-isolating (unless instructed to self-isolate for other reasons). If the confirmatory PCR test is positive (or is taken more than two days after the LFD), other members of their household and any close contacts identified by NHS Track and Trace must self-isolate until 10 days after the LFD test.

b. Testing In School

During the first week of term, in addition to the testing at home programme, we will also offer on-site Lateral Flow Tests to all pupils in the Senior School, just as we did prior to their return to school in March.

All pupils – as long as parents have given consent and the children themselves wish to participate – will be tested twice in school during the first five days back in school. These tests are not compulsory and nobody will be forced to take one.

The Lateral Flow Tests are quick and simple (although they can be slightly uncomfortable) and return a quick result. As before, children will be guided by trained colleagues to conduct the tests themselves. The test comprises a throat and nasal swab – though it can be possible to return a result using nasal swabbing only if necessary.

Unlike in March, I know that the majority of our pupils will be testing regularly at home in addition to the onsite tests and therefore it will not be necessary for children to be brought in on a staggered basis and sent home pending the result. We will endeavour instead to test all consenting pupils as soon as possible on the first day of the term and then again at some point later in the week or at the start of the second week. Pupils in Shell will be offered a test on the induction morning on Wednesday 25th August.

I am aware that we have many new pupils who have joined us since I last asked parents to provide their consent for these tests – and all of our new Shell pupils are being offered on-site tests for the first time.

If you have not already provided your consent – and if you wish to give it – please could I ask you to complete the online consent that you can find here:

<https://forms.office.com/r/SbMWmzJiCu>

Although we are now all no doubt much more familiar with the lateral flow testing process, I would be very happy indeed to answer any questions that you may have about onsite or home Lateral Flow Testing – please don't hesitate to get in touch.

Paul Savage