



Friday 27 August 2021

Education Restart Guidance – Schools in Northern Ireland August 2021

The Department of Education has confirmed guidance for pupils in **Year 8 - Year 14**

Dear Parent & Pupil

I trust you had an enjoyable summer break. It was an unusual school ending for you last year and I hope that the majority of you are looking forward to your new school year and a whole new world of learning.

Our aim will be to get to normality in a sequenced manner as we begin our new term in September so that each child who learns and lives here will find school rewarding and supportive, and achieve, his/her full potential. Pastoral, safeguarding, risk assessment and e-learning support have been revisited to ensure the school is an attractive and stimulating environment, even amidst some current constraints.

Just some reminders. Details of the entrances and zones to be used by the various groups, the timings, and the specific arrangements are set out below:

Year 8 Ground Floor – Arrival via main school entrance.

Year 9 Mobiles 25, 25a, 26, 27, 27a & 29 – Arrival via Double Gates Entrance.

Year 10 Annexe – Arrival via Double Gates Entrance, moving straight to Annexe via the Bellfort Suite.

Year 11 1st Floor – Arrival via Link Corridor School Entrance.

Year 12 The Bellfort Suite – Arrival via Double Gates Entrance, moving straight to the Bellfort Suite.

Year 13 Study Mobiles and Common Room – Arrival via main school entrance.

Year 14 Study Mobiles and Common Room – Arrival via main school entrance.

In the interim, take some time with your son/daughter to read through the updated restart guidance. There are some important changes, it is vital that we continue to adhere to, and respect the guidelines both, individually and collectively, as a college community.

Pupils will be introduced to our revised Classroom Code of Conduct and Steps to Success – these will be shared with you shortly. May I take this opportunity to wish you every success as you enter a new school year!

Yours sincerely

N Oliver
Principal



Covid-19 Guidance – Schools in Northern Ireland Year 8 - 14

1.0 Please do not send your child to school should he/she display any of the symptoms listed below:

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

2.0 Parents/Carers

- We request that parents and carers choose not to congregate at the school entrance.
- Parents/carers should maintain a safe social distance of 2m from others not in their household when dropping off or collecting children at school gates.
- Parents/Carers should remain in their vehicles until pupils are released to you.
- Parent teacher meetings will be held remotely via SchoolCloud video calls.

3.0 Arrival to school

- Upon arrival, pupils will follow the same routine and remain within their registration zones in the morning and then will move to their classrooms throughout the day whilst being mindful of the one-way system.
- The main school building will not be open to pupils until 8.30am.
 - a. Main entrance – Year 8, Year 13, Year 14.
 - b. Double Gates – Year 9 to the mobiles, Year 10 to the annexe, Year 11 pupils to their dedicated rooms & Year 12 to the Bellfort Suite.

4.0 Afternoon Departure from school - BUS and CAR!

Phase 1

3pm for a 3.05pm bus departure: Ballykeel 1, Ballykeel 2, Lettercreeve, Kells & Connor
Parents collecting children by car takes place at 3.00pm – 3.05pm. Parents should remain in their vehicles until pupils are released.

Phase 2

Remainder of school at 3.08pm for 3.10pm departure: connection buses A, C, D, E and the Direct B bus to Broughshane.

Pupils are reminded NOT to use the Town Service at any time as this for the general public.



5.0 Face coverings play an important role in reducing the risk across our communities.

- **Face Coverings:** Post-primary pupils are required to wear a face covering at all times when inside school buildings, including classrooms, corridors and confined communal spaces such as toilet areas. The Executive agreed on 12 August the requirement for post-primary pupils to wear a face covering in classrooms would, subject to review, apply until 8 October where physical distancing is a particularly difficult to maintain unless they have a [reasonable excuse](#) not to.
- **Public Transport:** it is mandatory for all pupils of post-primary age to wear a face covering on public transport or school transport unless they have a [reasonable excuse](#) not to.
- It is compulsory for post-primary pupils to wear face coverings in school and at drop off pick up areas unless an exemption applies.
- Parents/Carers are encouraged to wear face coverings in school grounds and when waiting to collect their children.
- Should a pupil be exempt from wearing a face covering, they are required to notify their son/daughter's Head of Year or Principal in writing giving full details of the reason for the exemption.
- Those pupils exempt from wearing face coverings will be provided with a small lapel pin for their blazer. This will support pupils, supervision and teaching staff and avoid any unnecessary conversations.

Face Coverings:

- MUST cover both nose and mouth;
 - MUST be changed when they become moist or damaged;
 - MUST be worn once and then discarded – hands must be cleaned after disposal;
 - MUST NOT be allowed to dangle around the neck; and
 - MUST not be shared.
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- Re-usable face coverings should be washed for each day of use in school at 60 degrees centigrade or in boiling water. A used re-usable face covering should be stored in plastic bag that can be taken home safely for washing.
 - Disposable face coverings must be disposed of safely and hygienically. They should be placed in one of the many general waste bins located around the school.
 - Where pupil behaviour contravenes the measures in place to control spread of infection, the school's behaviour policy Covid-19 will be applied.

6.0 Social Distancing

- The corridors and classrooms in use are marked out for social distancing, and we ask all students to strictly follow these arrangements. Movement around school will be limited each day, and a one-way traffic system will be in place. When moving around the school, pupils must follow the one-way system.



- Public Health guidance with respect to social distancing of 2 metres (2m) remains in place between adults and as far as possible between adults and pupils. This must be strictly adhered to.
- Pupils & Year Groups have been designated their individual break and lunch routines. Social distancing should be respected during these allocations.
- Pupils must upon arrival report to their registration zone.
- Classroom seating plans must be adhered to, hygiene protocol should be respected upon entry and departure of the room. Room layout has been considered to maximise space for all.
- Windows and doors will be opened to encourage natural ventilation.
- Emergency procedures and school evacuation will respect social distancing measures.
- Where pupil behaviour contravenes social distancing measures, sanctions under the school's behaviour policy Covid-19 will be applied.

7.0 Toileting arrangements

- During class, if required, pupils will use toilets nearest to their teaching room.
- During break and lunch pupils will use the toilets opposite the Nurse's Station only.

8.0 Hygiene

- Pupils are asked as a matter of routine to wash their hands thoroughly and more frequently than usual, and to use the many hand sanitisers which are placed throughout the school. This is one of the best ways to avoid the virus. If we always wash our hands before touching our faces and before eating, we will avoid contracting the virus.
- Outdoor sinks are provided to support regular handwashing.
- Building Supervisors and the school's cleaning team will sanitise regular touch points and hard surfaces throughout the school day and each afternoon including zone misting.
- Pupils should bring only the required items: School Bag, books, stationery, lunch box and coat.
- Pupils will be responsible for keeping their working area clean throughout the day. Staff will provide materials to support.
- Pupils are advised to carry their own sanitiser and or anti-bacterial wipes.
- Practical resources that are shared are sanitised prior to use by another class, practical zones are misted each afternoon.
- Workstations, keyboard, mouse and desk are wiped at the end of each session.
- Pupils & Year Groups have been designated their individual break and lunch routines. Both canteens are cleaned and sanitised after each sitting.
- Pupils are encouraged to arrive with a clean uniform everyday with regular washing of shirts and blazers.

9.0 Canteen – school meals

- Pupils will be able to avail of canteen services during Break and Lunch.
- Breakfast club will be available from Monday 6 September.
- Pupils will be required to wear face coverings in the canteen and should only be removed when consuming food.



10.0 Curriculum Delivery

- Pupil timetables will ensure lessons are delivered in class groupings (Junior School & Senior School) registration zones or practical areas.
- Should pupils need to self-isolate materials will be available, to follow, online through google classroom.
- In the event of local or wider closures we will revert to remote learning.
- Mobile devices may be used to support pupil learning, at the teacher's discretion. Misuse of devices, the school's behaviour and mobile policy will be applied.
- Where appropriate, work should be submitted electronically.
- Extra-Curricular activities will be arranged following agreement with Senior Staff.
- Musical activities, including singing, will resume following the EA's Music Unlocked Guidance outlining mitigating measures.

11.0 Educational Visits

- Resumption of day visits by schools from 24 May 2021. This has been extended to allow overnight residential visits.
- Educational visits outside Northern Ireland remain paused.

12.0 Uniform

- Pupils should wear their full school uniform each day.
- On the relevant day pupils should wear their PE uniform – no other alternative clothing will be permitted.

13.0 Attendance

- Attendance is mandatory for pupils in Y8-Y14 from Monday 12 April 2021.
- Attendance codes will be recorded as per DE Circular 2020/08
- Where a pupil has a health condition or live with others who have health conditions, following provision of evidence to support an underlying condition (clinically vulnerable), through discussion, it may be possible for that pupil to work from home .
- Pupils who are anxious about their return, parents/carers must make contact with their child's Head of Year to put an appropriate return plan into place. This is time-bound and short-term supported by a blended approach.
- Where evidence is not provided or work is not being completed attendance will be recorded as an unauthorised absence.

14.0 Pupils who become symptomatic onsite

- The school will continue to follow Department of Education Advice.
- Pupils displaying COVID-19 symptoms must not attend school.
- Should a member of the school community test positive, the Senior Leadership will contact the Education Authority and the PHA.
- Anyone who has tested positive must not enter the school grounds or building.
- Individuals living with anyone who displays signs of coronavirus, they must self-isolate and follow the test and trace procedures.
- Pupils or staff who display symptoms will be sent home –the school nurse will make contact and liaise with parents/carers.



- Where a parent/carer can't be contacted the pupil will remain in a designated location (triage room) until they can be collected. If this is not possible the pupil will be moved to a location that is a least 2 metres away from others.
- Where staff cannot maintain a distance of 2 metres PPE will be worn.
- Areas used by the pupil will be sanitised by the Building Supervisor as soon as possible.
- If a pupil tests positive close contacts will be identified, contact will be made with the parent/carer to collect their son/daughter.
- If an individual tests positive, he/she will be required to self-isolate in line with PHA advice.
- LFD Testing in schools is available to all mainstream staff and pupils in Year 8 – 14. Those partaking are encouraged to test twice during each week.

15.0 Definitions of Close Contacts in school settings as at August 2021

In the context of a case in a school, a close contact is anyone who has been close to a confirmed case of COVID-19 from 2 full days before the person was symptomatic* to 10 days after the onset of symptoms (i.e. the infectious period) and fulfils any of the following:

- lives in the same household
- has been within one metre and had face-to-face contact (including being coughed on or having a face-to-face conversation)
- skin-to-skin contact
- been within 2 metres of someone for more than 15 minutes (**either as a one-off contact, or added up together over one day**)
- has travelled in a small vehicle with the case
- travelled in a large vehicle / plane near the case

An interaction through a Perspex (or equivalent) screen with the person who has COVID-19 is not usually considered to be a contact, as long as there has been no other contact such as those in the list above.

*If the person who has tested positive for COVID-19 did not have symptoms, then their infectious period is counted from 2 days before their test was taken to 10 days after their test was taken.

16.0 Mental Health, Well-being & Safeguarding

- Pupils will have opportunity to reconnect with their staff and discuss their experiences during the pandemic.
- Funding has been secured to resource additional counselling.
- Opportunities will be created to support the reconnection of friendships.
- Pastoral staff will continue to liaise with parents/carers of children who are deemed more vulnerable.
- To support well-being, the school will:
 - A. Allow pupils to share their experience of school closure and express their feelings, ideas, concerns and positive experiences;
 - B. Rebuild, re-establish and reconnect relationships and friendships;



- C. Reassure the children & young people that any gaps in their skills and knowledge are understood by teachers and we will support those individuals or groups to re-engage with learning;
- D. Understand how to engage with learning and how to learn; and
- E. Build their confidence as learners.
- The school has a Designated Teacher and two Deputy Designated Teachers to support children where there is a specific need.

This information will be kept under review and will be updated should new information be released by the Department of Education/Education Authority/Public Health Agency. I appreciate your support on these matters to ensure a smooth outworking for the days and weeks ahead.