

# **Winslow Church of England Primary School**

## **Schools COVID-19 operational guidance (January 2022)**



### **Overview:**

The government continues to manage the risk of serious illness from the spread of the virus. The Prime Minister announced on 27 November the temporary introduction of new measures as a result of the Omicron variant and on 8 December that Plan B, set out in the autumn and winter plan 2021, was being enacted. As a result, these measures are reflected in this guidance for schools. This advice remains subject to change as the situation develops. COVID-19 continues to be a virus that we learn to live with and the imperative to reduce the disruption to children and young people's education remains.

The priority is for schools to deliver face-to-face, high-quality education to all pupils. The evidence is clear that being out of education causes significant harm to educational attainment, life chances, mental and physical health.

All protocol and procedures are aligned to the Risk Assessments that have been produced and revised in accordance with the latest Government Guidance and the United Kingdom Health Security Agency (UKHSA): <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/actions-for-schools-during-the-coronavirus-outbreak/schools-covid-19-operational-guidance> Schools must regularly review and update their risk assessments - treating them as 'living documents', as the circumstances in our school and the public health advice changes.

### **Changes to Previous Guidance**

#### **Mixing and Bubbles**

It is no longer necessary to keep children in consistent groups ('bubbles'). This means that bubbles will not need to be used for any summer provision (for example, summer schools) or in schools from the autumn term. This means:

Greater flexibility in curriculum delivery

Assemblies can resume

Alternative lunch arrangements to avoid mixing are not required

School must have a contingency plan (outbreak management plan) to cover the possibility that it may become necessary to reintroduce 'bubbles' for a temporary period, to reduce mixing between groups. Any decision to reintroduce bubbles would not be taken lightly and would be in response to government guidance.

Due to increasing cases of COVID in school at the end of the autumn term, and the impact of Omicron, Winslow Church of England School will continue to put in place measures to reduce intergroup mixing, including Assembly and Lunch arrangements.

#### **Tracing Close Contacts and Isolation**

Education settings are no longer required to undertake contact tracing; close contacts will be identified via NHS Test and Trace. As with positive cases in any other setting, NHS Test and Trace will work with the positive case and/or their parent to identify close contacts. Contacts from a school setting will only be traced by NHS Test and Trace where the positive case and/or their parent specifically identifies the individual as being a close contact. This is likely to be a small number of individuals who would be most at risk of contracting COVID-19

due to the nature of the close contact. School may be contacted in exceptional cases to help with identifying close contacts, as currently happens in managing other infectious diseases.

#### **14 December 2021: Daily rapid testing now recommended for contacts of all COVID-19 variants**

From 14 December 2021, adults who are fully vaccinated and all children and young people aged between 5 and 18 years and 6 months identified as a contact of someone with COVID-19 are strongly advised to take a LFD test every day for 7 days and continue to attend their setting as normal, unless they have a positive test result. Daily testing of close contacts applies to all contacts who are:

- fully vaccinated adults – people who have had 2 doses of an approved vaccine
- all children and young people aged 5 to 18 years and 6 months, regardless of their vaccination status
- people who are not able to get vaccinated for medical reasons
- people taking part, or have taken part, in an approved clinical trial for a COVID-19 vaccine

Children under 5 years are exempt from self-isolation and do not need to take part in daily testing of close contacts.

If you are a close contact but not fully vaccinated, then you will need to isolate for ten days with day zero being the day that you have had exposure to the infected person.

18-year-olds will be treated in the same way as children until 6 months after their 18th birthday, to allow them the opportunity to get fully vaccinated. At which point, they will be subject to the same rules as adults and so if they choose not to get vaccinated, they will need to self-isolate if identified as a close contact.

Settings will continue to have a role in working with health protection teams in the case of a local outbreak. If there is a substantial increase in the number of positive cases in a setting or if central government offers the area an enhanced response package, a director of public health might advise a setting to temporarily reintroduce some control measures.

#### **Face Coverings**

In primary schools, we recommend that face coverings should be worn by staff and adults (including visitors) when moving around in corridors and communal areas. Health advice continues to be that children in primary schools should not be asked to wear face coverings. Face visors or shields can be worn by those exempt from wearing a face covering but they are not an equivalent alternative in terms of source control of virus transmission.

Those who communicate with or provide support for pupils relying on visual signs for communication are exempt from any recommendation to wear face coverings in education or childcare settings.

#### **Stepping Measures up and down**

School is required to have an outbreak management plan outlining action that would be taken if we were advised to take extra measures to help break chains of COVID-19 transmission affecting the school. (Please see school website). These measures would only be considered as a last resort and for the shortest time possible. These measures are based on the government's contingency framework:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/1011704/20210817\\_Contingency\\_Framework\\_FINAL.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1011704/20210817_Contingency_Framework_FINAL.pdf)

The contingency framework describes the principles of managing local outbreaks of COVID-19 in education and childcare settings. Local authorities, directors of public health (DsPH) and UKHSA health protection teams (HPTs) can recommend measures described in the contingency framework in individual education and childcare settings – or a small cluster of settings – as part of their outbreak management responsibilities.

## **Control Measures**

Schools should:

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.

### **1. Ensure good hygiene for everyone**

#### **Hand hygiene**

Frequent and thorough hand cleaning should now be regular practice. School should continue to ensure that pupils clean their hands regularly. This can be done with soap and water or hand sanitiser.

#### **Respiratory hygiene**

The ‘catch it, bin it, kill it’ approach continues to be very important.

The [e-Bug COVID-19 website](#) contains free resources, including materials to encourage good hand and respiratory hygiene.

#### **Use of personal protective equipment (PPE)**

Most staff in schools will not require PPE beyond what they would normally need for their work. The guidance on the [use of PPE in education, childcare and children’s social care settings](#) provides more information on the use of PPE for COVID-19.

### **2. Maintain appropriate cleaning regimes, using standard products such as detergents**

School should put in place and maintain an appropriate cleaning schedule. This should include regular cleaning of areas and equipment (for example, twice per day), with a particular focus on frequently touched surfaces.

UKHSA has published guidance on the cleaning of non-healthcare settings.

### **3. Keep occupied spaces well ventilated**

When school is in operation, it is important to ensure it is well ventilated and that a comfortable teaching environment is maintained.

An initial allocation of CO2 monitors has been provided enabling indoor readings and assessment of all spaces, to help identify where to improve ventilation.

School should identify any poorly ventilated spaces as part of the risk assessment and take steps to improve fresh air flow in these areas, giving particular consideration when holding events where visitors such as parents are on site, for example, school plays.

Mechanical ventilation is a system that uses a fan to draw fresh air or extract air from a room. These should be adjusted to increase the ventilation rate wherever possible and checked to confirm that normal operation meets current guidance and that only fresh outside air is circulated.

If possible, systems should be adjusted to full fresh air or, if this is not possible, then systems should be operated as normal as long as they are within a single room and supplemented by an outdoor air supply.

Where mechanical ventilation systems exist, school should ensure that they are maintained in accordance with the manufacturers' recommendations.

Opening external windows can improve natural ventilation, and in addition, opening internal doors can also assist with creating a throughput of air. If necessary, external opening doors may also be used (if they are not fire doors and where safe to do so).

***School should balance the need for increased ventilation while maintaining a comfortable temperature.***

#### **4. Follow public health advice on testing, self-isolation and managing confirmed cases of COVID-19**

When an individual develops COVID-19 symptoms or has a positive test

Pupils, staff and other adults should follow public health advice on [when to self-isolate and what to do](#). They should not come into school if they have symptoms, have had a positive test result or other reasons requiring them to stay at home due to the risk of them passing on COVID-19 (for example, they are required to quarantine).

If anyone in our school develops [COVID-19 symptoms](#), however mild, they should be sent home and they should follow public health advice.

For everyone with symptoms, they should avoid using public transport and, wherever possible, be collected by a member of their family or household.

If a pupil is awaiting collection, they should be left in a room on their own if possible and safe to do so. A window should be opened for fresh air ventilation if possible. Appropriate PPE should also be used if close contact is necessary. Further information on this can be found in the [use of PPE in education, childcare and children's social care settings](#) guidance. Any rooms they use should be cleaned after they have left.

The household (including any siblings) should follow the UKHSA [stay at home guidance for households with possible or confirmed coronavirus \(COVID-19\) infection](#).

#### **Asymptomatic testing**

Testing remains important in reducing the risk of transmission of infection within schools. That is why, whilst some measures are relaxed, others will remain, and if necessary, in response to the latest epidemiological data, we all need to be prepared to step measures up or down in future depending on local circumstances.

There is no need for primary age pupils (those in year 6 and below) to test unless they have been identified as a contact for someone who has tested positive for Covid-19 and therefore advised to take lateral flow tests every day for 7 days.

Schools are strongly encouraged to ask parents and other visitors to take a lateral flow device (LFD) test before entering the school.

## Confirmatory PCR tests

Staff and pupils with a positive LFD test result should self-isolate in line with the [stay at home guidance for households with possible or confirmed coronavirus \(COVID-19\) infection](#). They will also need to [get a free PCR test to check if they have COVID-19](#).

**Whilst awaiting the PCR result, the individual should continue to self-isolate.**

If the PCR test is taken within 2 days of the positive lateral flow test, and is negative, it overrides the self-test LFD test and the pupil can return to school, as long as the individual doesn't have COVID-19 symptoms.

## Other considerations

All clinically extremely vulnerable (CEV) children and young people should attend their education setting unless they are one of the very small number of children and young people under paediatric or other specialist care who have been advised by their clinician or other specialist not to attend.

Further information is available in the guidance on [supporting pupils at school with medical conditions](#).

School should ensure that key contractors are aware of the school's control measures and ways of working.

**Vaccination:** We recommend all school staff and eligible pupils take up the offer of a vaccine

**Mandatory certification:** Schools are not required to use the NHS COVID Pass, unless they are holding a specific event (such as a reception, concert or party) that meets the attendance thresholds. Where applicable, schools should follow guidance on mandatory certification for events. Under 18s are exempt from showing their COVID Status but should be counted towards attendance thresholds. You should not use the NHS COVID Pass as a condition of entry for education or related activities such as exams, teaching, extra-curricular activities or any other day-to-day activities that are part of education or training.

## Welcoming children back into school

In most cases, parents and carers will agree that a pupil with symptoms should not attend the school, given the potential risk to others.

If a parent or carer insists on a pupil attending our school, school can take the decision to refuse the pupil if, in our reasonable judgement, it is necessary to protect other pupils and staff from possible infection with COVID-19. Our decision would be carefully considered in light of all the circumstances and current public health advice.

## Attendance

School attendance is mandatory for all pupils of compulsory school age and it is a priority to ensure that as many children as possible regularly attend school.

Where a child is required to self-isolate or quarantine because of COVID-19 in accordance with relevant legislation or guidance published by UKHSA or the DHSC they should be recorded as code X (not attending in circumstances related to coronavirus). Where they are unable to attend because they have a confirmed case of COVID-19 they should be recorded as code I (illness).

For pupils abroad who are unable to return, code X is unlikely to apply. In some specific cases, code Y (unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances) will apply. Further guidance about the use of codes is provided in the [school attendance guidance](#).

## **Vulnerable children**

Where pupils who are self-isolating are within our definition of vulnerable, it is very important that systems are in place to keep in contact with them, particularly if they have a social worker. Some children may be vulnerable who are not officially in statutory systems and schools should seek to support any children who they believe may have challenging circumstances at home. When a vulnerable pupil is asked to self-isolate, school should:

- notify their social worker (if they have one) and, for looked-after children, the local authority virtual school head
- agree with the social worker the best way to maintain contact and offer support

School should have procedures in place to:

- check if a vulnerable pupil is able to access remote education support
- support them to access it (as far as possible)
- regularly check if they are accessing remote education
- keep in contact with them to check their wellbeing and refer onto other services if additional support is needed.

## **Travel and quarantine**

Parents travelling abroad should bear in mind the impact on their child's education which may result from any requirement to quarantine or isolate upon return.

## **Remote education**

Not all people with COVID-19 have symptoms. Where appropriate, school should support those who need to self-isolate because they have tested positive, to work or learn from home if they are well enough to do so. The [remote education temporary continuity direction](#) has been extended to 2021-22 academic year and school is therefore required to provide remote education to pupils unable to attend due to self-isolation or restrictions on attendance.

School should maintain its capacity to deliver high-quality remote education for the next academic year, including for pupils who are abroad, and facing challenges to return due to COVID-19 travel restrictions, for the period they are abroad.

The remote education provided should be equivalent in length to the core teaching pupils would receive in school.

School should work collaboratively with families and put in place reasonable adjustments so that pupils with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) can successfully access remote education.

Full expectations for remote education, support and resources can be found on the [get help with remote education service](#).

## **Education recovery**

The government have announced a number of programmes and activities to support pupils to make up education missed as a result of the pandemic. Further information is available on [education recovery support](#). Specifically for schools, the document includes further information on:

- recovery premium
- tutoring (including the [National Tutoring Programme](#) and [16 to 19 tuition fund](#))
- teacher training opportunities
- curriculum resources
- curriculum planning
- specialist settings
- wider continuous professional development resources, including to support teacher wellbeing and subject-specific teaching

## **Pupil wellbeing and support**

Some pupils may be experiencing a variety of emotions in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, such as anxiety, stress or low mood. Useful links and sources of support can be accessed here: [promoting and supporting mental health and wellbeing in schools](#).

## **School workforce**

School leaders are best placed to determine the workforce required to meet the needs of their pupils. School leaders will need to consider whether it is possible for specific staff undertaking certain roles to work from home without disrupting to face-to-face education.

Clinically extremely vulnerable (CEV) people are advised, as a minimum, to follow the same guidance as everyone else. It is important that everyone adheres to this guidance, but CEV people may wish to think particularly carefully about the additional precautions they can continue to take. Further information can be found in the [guidance on protecting people who are CEV from COVID-19](#).

In some circumstances, staff may have received personal advice from their specialist or clinician on additional precautions to take and they should continue to follow that advice. Whilst individual risk assessments are not required, employers are expected to discuss any concerns that people previously considered CEV may have.

Employers will need to follow this specific [guidance for pregnant employees. COVID-19 vaccination: a guide for women of childbearing age, pregnant or breastfeeding](#) contains further advice on vaccination. Your workplace risk assessment should already consider 18 any risks to female employees of childbearing age and, in particular, risks to new and expectant mothers

Employers should be able to explain the measures they have in place to keep staff safe at work. The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) has published guidance on [protecting vulnerable workers](#), including advice for employers and employees on [how to talk about reducing risks in the workplace](#). For home working, employers should consider whether home working is appropriate for workers facing mental or physical health difficulties, or those with a particularly challenging home working environment. Employers should discuss concerns with staff.

## **School meals**

School should continue to provide free school meal support to any pupils who are eligible for benefits-related free school meals and who are learning at home during term time. Our catering provider Freshstart will be

asked to provide a food parcel to cover lunchtimes that a child is absent from school (in accordance with government food standards for schools).

More information on [providing school meals during the COVID-19 pandemic](#) is available.

### **Educational visits**

Given the likely gap in COVID-19 related cancellation insurance, if school considers booking a new visit, whether domestic or international, it should ensure that any new bookings have adequate financial protection in place.

From the start of the new school term, schools can go on international visits that have previously been deferred or postponed and organise new international visits for the future.

School should speak to either our visit provider, commercial insurance company, or the risk protection arrangement (RPA) to assess the protection available. Independent advice on insurance cover and options can be sought from the British Insurance Brokers' Association (BIBA) or Association of British Insurers (ABI). Any school holding ATOL or ABTA refund credit notes may use these credit notes to rebook educational or international visits.

School should undertake full and thorough risk assessments in relation to all educational visits and ensure that any public health advice, such as hygiene and ventilation requirements, is included as part of that risk assessment. [General guidance](#) about educational visits is available and is supported by specialist advice from the [Outdoor Education Advisory Panel \(OEAP\)](#).

### **Wraparound provision and extra-curricular activity**

More information on planning extra-curricular provision can be found in the guidance for [providers who run community activities, holiday clubs, after-school clubs, tuition and other out-of-school provision for children](#).

### **Inspection**

For state-funded schools, Ofsted has resumed its programme of routine inspections and will aim to inspect every state-funded school within the next 5 academic years. This will mean an extension of up to 6 terms in the inspection interval for those schools not inspected since the start of the pandemic. Within the 5-year period, Ofsted will continue to prioritise schools most in need of inspection, particularly those with the lowest Ofsted grades. It will also prioritise outstanding schools that were previously exempt from routine inspection that have gone the longest without a visit.

### **Accountability expectations**

The DfE will not publish data based on exam and assessment results from summer 2021 in performance tables and schools will not be held to account for this data.

We will not publish the results of Key Stage 2 primary assessments. We will still produce the normal suite of KS2 accountability measures and share these securely with schools, academy trusts, local authorities and Ofsted. For further information, see [COVID-19: school and college accountability](#). Primary schools will continue to inform parents of their own child's recent test and assessment results.

**Agreed by Governors September 2<sup>nd</sup> 2021 (updated following Government Guidance January 2022)**