

MCB RETURN TO SCHOOL PROTOCOLS

1. Promoting a safe and healthy school environment

It is essential that everyone continues to:

- practise social distancing as much as humanly possible
- wash their hands thoroughly throughout the day
- ‘catch it, kill it, bin it’ when they sneeze or cough

2. Safe social distancing in line with government guidance will be practised where possible.

- a. Adult to adult 2m;
- b. Adult to pupil 2m;
- c. Pupil to pupil, 1 m if possible.
- d. Pupils will be encouraged to remain in their year group bubble.
- e. The number of adults permitted in a Staff Room or Offices will be limited to allow for social distancing to be maintained. A ‘maximum number of occupants’ sign will be displayed outside these rooms.
- f. Where possible a one-way system will operate across the campus. This will be clearly signposted.
- g. Lunchtimes will be split.
- h. At break and lunchtime pupils should be outside unless the weather is particularly inclement.
- i. There will be no indoor clubs and societies before during or after school until further notice.
- j. Sports activities will take place in line with the guidance issued by the relevant governing body.
- k. Before any planned meeting or activity an assessment of the venue must ascertain if safe social distancing is possible.
- l. School lockers will not be available.

3. Face coverings

Public Health guidance (<https://www.publichealth.hscni.net/covid-19-coronavirus/covid-19-information-public#face-coverings>) recommends that face coverings are used in particular circumstances i.e. short periods in enclosed spaces where social distancing is not possible.

- a. All staff will be provided with a Perspex visor which they are encouraged to wear where safe and practicable on school premises;
- b. Where practicable, face coverings must be worn in staff rooms and during adult to adult meetings lasting more than 15 minutes and by adults visiting the school site;
- c. Pupils in all year groups are strongly encouraged to wear a mask when indoors (school buildings, school transport etc.) where it is safe and practicable to do so;
- d. Face coverings are strongly encouraged for activities that entail large numbers of staff or pupils within an enclosed space where social distancing is not possible.
- e. The use of face coverings on public transport is mandatory for pupils aged 13 and over;
- f. Please be aware that some persons (including children) are exempt from wearing face coverings.

Further information on face coverings can be found [here](#).

- g. There is a clear distinction between Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and face coverings. PPE is specialist medical grade equipment that has been and will continue to be used when working with some pupils whose hygiene or care needs involve the possible spread of liquids or aerosol dispersion such as vomiting or spitting. The guidance on the use of PPE is led by the underlying health need of the pupil and is unchanged. Further information on the use of face coverings is available at: www.nidirect.gov.uk/face-coverings

To be effective face masks:-

- 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 touched once put on, except when carefully removed before disposal.

4. Classrooms:

- a. Staff and pupils will access classrooms in accordance with their timetable.
- b. Floor markings will be put in place in classrooms to indicate a 2m distance between staff and pupils.
- c. Perspex screens will be installed in classrooms where it is not possible to establish a 2m distance between the teacher's desk and the nearest pupil desk. The teacher's desk may be angled to establish the 2 m distance.
- d. Where practicable all pupil desks should be organised to be forward facing.
- e. Each classroom will have care kit to allow staff to facilitate safe hygiene.
- f. The opening of doors and windows is encouraged to increase natural ventilation and also to reduce contact with door handles. However, propping open of doors into corridors, external doors, security access systems and any other fire safety doors is prohibited. It should be sufficient for windows to be open dependent on climates and for existing mechanical ventilation where desired to achieve thermal comfort. Where centralised or local mechanical ventilation is present, recirculatory systems will be adjusted to full fresh air, if this is not possible systems should be operated as normal.
- g. Pupils should bring their own learning materials to school e.g. books, stationery, pencil case etc.
- h. Staff should avoid pupils sharing books.
- i. Where material/equipment has to be shared it must be cleaned before use by other pupils. Wipes will be provided for this purpose.
- j. An enhanced cleaning programme will take place during the school day.
- k. Additional enhanced cleaning will be carried out within any classroom in which an individual who has developed COVID-19 has been to minimise risk of the spread of the virus.

5. Maintaining good hand hygiene

- a. Pupils will be reminded orally and visually of the need to wash their hands regularly and thoroughly.
- b. Pupils should wash their hands on arrival at school and frequently throughout the day.
- c. Hand gel sanitisers have been installed at the entrances to all building and beside water fountains.
- d. Pupils and staff may bring their own hand gel.

- e. Pupils and staff should avoid touching their faces including their mouth, eyes and nose; use a tissue or elbow to cough or sneeze and use bins that are emptied regularly for tissue waste.

6. School Day, Break and Lunchtimes

- a. Until otherwise informed, the timings for the school day will be as follows:

	Monday – Thursday	Friday
Staff in tutor room	08:50	08:40
Tutor group	08:55 to 9:10	08:45 to 08:55
Period 1	9:10 to 10:00	08:55 to 09:45
Period 2	10:00 to 10:50	09:45 to 10:35
BREAK	10:50 to 11:10	10:35 to 10:55
Period 3	11:10 to 12:00	10:55 to 11:45
Period 4/Early lunch	12:00 to 12:45	11:45 to 12:30
Late lunch/Period 4	12:50 to 13:35	12:35 to 13:20
Period 5	13:35 to 14:25	13:20 to 14:10
Period 6	14:25 to 15:15	14:10 to 15:00

- b. Bells will not be sounded to allow for soft classroom changeover.
- c. There will be no assemblies.
- d. Forms 1 to 5 go to their tutor group at the start of the day to register. Lower 6th register in tutor group and should sign out and leave after their last timetabled lesson of the day. Upper 6th will register in their first teaching class of the day and should sign out and leave after their last timetabled lesson of the day.
- e. At break and lunchtime pupils should be outside unless the weather is particularly inclement. In the event of inclement weather pupils may use the following areas:

Year Group	Break Time	Lunch Time
Form 1	Tutor Group	Atrium
Form 2	Tutor Group	Whitla Hall
Form 3	Tutor Group	Whitla Hall
Form 4	Tutor Group	Whitla Hall
Form 5	Tutor Group	Whitla Hall
L6 & U6	Whitla Hall or 6 th Form Centre	6 th Form Centre

- f. Lunches will be split as follows:
- i. First sitting Period 4 12:00 – Forms 1, 2, 3 and Lower 6th
 - ii. Second sitting 12:50 – Forms 4, 5 and Upper 6th.
 - iii. Lower 6th will attend the second sitting on Wednesdays, their Games day.

Pupils in the first lunch sitting will go to their timetabled period 4 class at 12:50.

- g. 6th Form pupils are permitted to go off campus at lunchtime and when they do not have a timetabled class. Those 6th Form pupils doing so must follow the rules in place for wider society, for example wearing a face covering when entering a shop. With the exception of lunchtime, they must sign in and out if leaving the premises and follow good hand hygiene on their return.
- h. The canteen will be open and operating in compliance with the guidance on coronavirus for food businesses: <https://www.food.gov.uk/business-guidance/reopening-and-adapting-your-food-business-during-covid-19>
- i. Catering staff will have access to appropriate PPE in addition to the normal disposable gloves and aprons usually available. Sanitiser will be available for Catering Staff, delivery persons and visitors to kitchens.
- j. Sanitiser and or wipes will be used on Bio Metric till between each pupil.

7. PE and Games

- a. On the days when a pupil has PE or Games on their timetable they should attend school in their tracksuit, with their kit underneath.
- b. Pupils not able to participate in Games must provide a letter from a parent/guardian to the PE Department, in advance explaining the reason for their non-participation and their acceptance of their responsibility for their child who will be released from school at the start of the Games period.
- c. Those who forget their kit, will accompany their year group to Games. This should not be an issue as the pupils should attend school in their Games kit that day.
- d. Forms 2 and 3 should be released to go to Games buses at 1.30 pm and Form 1 at 1.15 pm.

8. Transport to and from School

- a. Guidance from the Department of Education is that pupils should avoid if possible traveling to and from school on public transport.
- b. Those pupils travelling on public transport must comply with the requirement to wear a mask when travelling.
- c. To control the number of visitors on campus, parents must not enter school campus unless they have a pre-arranged appointment. As with other visitors to the College, they should wear a mask while on campus.
- d. Parents of children with complex needs or disabilities, who may normally drop their children off within the school building, should contact the College to agree suitable arrangements for their child.

9. Visitors to School

- a. As far as possible commercial deliveries will be made outside school hours.
- b. The numbers to the site will be kept to a minimum.
- c. Any visitors must report immediately to reception in McArthur Hall, and provide contact details for test and trace purposes.

10. Pupil Attendance at School

Any pupil who has symptoms of coronavirus or a positive test, will need to stay at home for at least 10 days.

Where an individual has had a negative result, it is important to still apply caution. If everyone with symptoms who was tested in their household receive a negative result, the member of staff can return to work providing they are well enough and have not had a fever for 48 hours.

Pupils Who Develops Symptoms on Site

If a pupil develops symptoms of COVID-19 while at school they must follow the procedures set out in Section 11 below.

Enhanced cleaning will be carried out within any classroom in which an individual who has developed COVID-19 has been to minimise risk of the spread of the virus.

Pupils Who Are Clinically Vulnerable

The College will follow the latest guidance on attendance for children and young people who have health conditions or who live with individuals who have health conditions or are pregnant. Current guidance on these categories is published on NI Direct and by PHA [here](#).

Where medical guidance would be to refrain from school, evidence should be provided to the school by the parent/guardian that the pupil is shielding due to underlying medical conditions. If this is not possible then an unauthorised absence has to be recorded.

People who are clinically vulnerable are those with pre-existing conditions who have been advised to stringently follow the social distancing guidance and remain at home where possible. A small minority of children will fall into this category and parents should follow medical advice from their hospital Consultant if their child is in this category.

Pupils Who Were Shielding (clinically extremely vulnerable people)

This is a different group to those who are clinically vulnerable. Those who are shielding are clinically extremely vulnerable and require a different set of measures to keep them safe.

The most up-to-date guidance and list of underlying health conditions that necessitate shielding should be checked on the NI Direct website under the [shielding section](#).

Pupils with serious underlying health conditions are strongly advised to follow shielding measures to keep themselves safe and not to attend school in person.

Distance learning and support for the needs of pupils who are clinically vulnerable will be put in place by the College following discussions with pupil and their parents/guardian.

Pupils Who Live with Someone Who is Clinically Vulnerable

If a child or young person lives with someone who is clinically vulnerable (but not clinically extremely vulnerable), including those who are pregnant, they can attend their education or childcare setting.

While Coronavirus can land on fabrics and remain for some time, schools are not a high risk environment and while all pupils are encouraged to wear clean uniform or fresh clothes each day, this is not essential. Pupils who live with someone who is clinically vulnerable may attend school wearing a school tracksuit instead of normal school uniform to allow for more frequent washing of their clothes. Permission for this should be made in writing to the relevant Head of Section.

Pupils Who Are Living with Someone Who Was Shielding

Pupils who have household members who were considered clinically extremely vulnerable (at high risk of severe illness and requiring 'shielding'). These restrictions eased over time and from 1 August 2020 'shielding' has been paused. Such children should have an individual risk assessment conducted before the most appropriate place of care is determined.

11. People Who Become Symptomatic Onsite

If anyone becomes unwell in school with:

- a. a new, continuous cough or
- b. a high temperature/fever or
- c. anosmia (a loss or a change in your normal sense of smell, which can also affect your sense of taste),

they will be sent home and advised to follow the PHA guidance for households with possible coronavirus infection. A full record of such actions will be recorded and request a parent/guardian record their acknowledgement of this action.

A pupil awaiting collection will be moved to the San, where they will be isolated behind a closed door. Appropriate adult supervision will be provided. A window will be opened for ventilation. If it is not possible to fully isolate the pupil, they will be moved to an area which is at least 2m away from other people. A risk assessment will be undertaken by the school to address this. The College will fully document this process. To this end a record will be kept of who made the decision, who was contacted, who provided supervision and who picked up the pupil.

If the pupil needs to go to the bathroom while waiting to be collected, they should use a separate bathroom if possible. The bathroom will be cleaned and disinfected before being used by anyone else.

PPE should be worn by staff caring for the pupil while they await collection if direct personal care is needed and a distance of 2m cannot be maintained (such as for a very young child or a child with complex needs).

If the pupil is seriously ill or injured or their life is at risk, call 999. Do not visit the GP, pharmacy, urgent care centre or a hospital with the pupil.

If a member of staff (who was wearing the appropriate PPE and adhering to the social distancing guidelines) has helped someone with a new, continuous cough or a high temperature or loss of taste/smell, they **do not need to go home unless they develop symptoms themselves**. They should wash their hands thoroughly for 20 seconds after any contact with someone who has developed symptoms. Cleaning the affected area with available cleaning products, followed by disinfection after someone with symptoms has left will reduce the risk of passing the infection on to other people.

Pupils can return to school when they have completed the necessary period of isolation as advised by the Test, Trace and Protect service. This will help contain any potential transmission to those staff/pupils and will also assist in protecting the wider community.

[COVID-19: Information for the public.](#)

Enhanced cleaning should be carried out within any classroom in which an individual who has developed COVID-19 has been to minimise risk of the spread of the virus. This should be clearly communicated to staff, parents and pupils to provide assurance that the environment is safe.

12. Test, Trace and Protect

Pupils and Staff who exhibit any symptoms associated with COVID-19 should not attend school. The N.I. Executive has rolled out a Test and Trace and Protect strategy designed to control the spread of COVID-19 and symptomatic pupils and staff are expected to follow the advice and obtain a test for COVID-19.

Where an individual has had a negative result, it is important to still apply caution. If everyone with symptoms who was tested in their household receive a negative result, the member of staff can return to work providing they are well enough and have not had a fever for 48 hours.

Anyone who tests positive will be contacted by the Contact Tracing Service in the Public Health Agency, and will need to share information about their recent interactions. This could include household members, people with whom you have been in direct contact, or been within 2 metres for more than 15 minutes. Passing in corridors and short periods of contact does not therefore present a significant risk to staff or pupils. All household members should follow PHA isolation guidance which currently requires everyone in the house to stay at home.

Staff and pupils over 18 are encouraged to download the free StopCOVID NI Proximity App, released in July 2020.

PHA guidance under the Test and Trace and Protect programme will be applied for all staff or pupils in contact with someone who tests positive for COVID-19. Test and Trace staff will contact anyone

with a positive test and trace their contacts over the previous 48 hours seeking information on where that individual has been in contact with someone for 15 minutes or more and less than 2 m social distance. Isolation guidance will then be provided that is context specific and may result in friendship groups, regular contacts and potentially an entire class or 'bubble' being instructed to self-isolate at home.

The guidance is as follows:

- if you have symptoms of coronavirus or a positive test, you will need to stay at home for at least 10 days;
- if you live with someone who has symptoms or a positive test, you will need to stay at home for 14 days from the day the first person in the home started having symptoms;
- however, if you develop symptoms during this 14-day period, you will need to self-check in accordance with Test and Trace guidance and stay at home for 10 days from the day your symptoms started (regardless of what day you are on in the original 14-day period);
- 10 days after your symptoms started, if you do not have a high temperature, you do not need to continue to self-isolate. If you still have a high temperature, keep self-isolating until your temperature returns to normal. You do not need to self-isolate if you just have a cough after 10 days, as a cough can last for several weeks after the infection has gone;
- if you have symptoms and live with someone who is 70 or over, has a long-term condition, is pregnant or has a weakened immune system, try to find somewhere else they can stay for the 14-day isolation period;
- it is likely that people living within a household will infect each other or be infected already. Staying at home for 14 days will greatly reduce the overall amount of infection the household could pass on to others in the community.