



## ROYAL SCHOOL, ARMAGH

### Start of Michaelmas Term 2021

Dear parent or guardian,

We are very excited at the prospect of a return to school by pupils. Over the summer we have been working hard to implement the most recent Department of Education (DE) guidance across the school to ensure that the safety of our pupils, parents and staff remains our priority.

The following information builds upon and should be read in conjunction with my letter of late June, and follows updated guidance from DE on 13 August. At the outset I would like to thank you for your cooperation and ask for your understanding over the next few weeks as we move through a continually changing situation.

#### **Visitors to School**

We are always happy to meet with parents or guardians to discuss pupil progress or wellbeing and we ask that, where possible, this be done by prior appointment. For the immediate future all visitors to school must wear face coverings (unless they are medically unable to do so). Throughout the school 2 metres social distancing will be observed between all adults and between adults and pupils. We regret that the practice of shaking hands will not be resumed in the immediate future. Visitors are required to use the sanitising stations upon arrival and departure.

If you need to address a safeguarding concern in person an appointment will not be necessary; please report to the concourse office and ask to speak to a member of the Safeguarding Team.

#### **Social distancing & Hand Hygiene**

Under the most recent guidance, "strict social distancing requirements between pupils will be relaxed". Social distancing at 2m will remain between adults in school and between pupils and adults. There may be occasions such as in practical subjects when pupils and staff are in closer proximity but we will endeavour to ensure that other mitigations will be in place. Pupils and staff will be required to wash their hands regularly throughout the day and we recommend that in addition to this they bring a small bottle of hand sanitiser with them.

Seating plans will operate in each class and we ask pupils to adhere to them at all times. Pupils will be encouraged to sit near the same pupils in each room and to mix with a consistent group of pupils at break and lunch time in order to reduce the impact of self isolation in the event of a positive case of COVID 19 in their peer group. If a pupil is unable to do this for pastoral reasons they should speak to their Head of Year as soon as issues arise.

We greatly appreciate the cooperation of all our pupils last year and look forward to continued cooperation in the months ahead.

The previous system of Key stage 3 'bubbles' whereby pupils stayed in the same room all day and teachers moved between classes will not be continued. We will continue to operate a one-way system in corridors to reduce congestion.

### **Facemasks**

In keeping with Department of Education guidance all visitors to school are required to wear a facemask unless they are medically unable to do so.

Pupils will be required to wear facemasks on all public and school transport and in the buildings. Pupils are asked to wear facemasks in plain colours. The Executive will review the use of face coverings on 8 October.

The wearing of a face covering does not exempt someone from the requirement to isolate in the event of being identified as a close contact.

### **Uniform and personal belongings**

We are advised that although every effort should be made to clean uniform as much as is practicable wearing it does not present an enhanced risk. Changing rooms are regarded as a 'higher risk' environment and we will aim to minimise their use wherever possible. To that end we will permit pupils to wear PE kit on the days when they have PE or games. If senior pupils do not have school PE kit as such, they should wear RSA branded items of sportswear where possible.

Pupils may bring schools bags and other necessary materials with them and we are advised that there is no need to restrict pupils in sharing resources with others although it might be wise to keep this practice to a minimum.

Sixth Form pupils are encouraged to bring their own device in line with our Bring Your Own Device Policy. A number of lap top lockers will be available.

### **Attendance**

The Department of Education regards attendance at school as mandatory. If your child is classified as **clinically vulnerable** or **clinically extremely vulnerable** (with pre-existing medical conditions) you may wish to seek guidance from their doctor about returning to school. You should make contact with Mr Hooks, the Head of Pastoral Care so that an individual risk assessment can be prepared for them prior to their return if necessary.

Pupils who live with someone who is clinically vulnerable, including someone who is pregnant, should attend school. Pupils who live with someone who is **clinically extremely vulnerable** can attend school but you may wish to consult your doctor before contacting the Head of Pastoral Care if an individual risk assessment is required.

In keeping to Department of Education guidance remote learning provision will only be available to pupils who are unable to attend school upon documented medical advice (COVID related) or those who are part of a group of pupils required to isolate.

Pupils who display any of the symptoms of COVID 19 must not attend school. Please advise the concourse office as soon as possible if your child is not attending school for that reason.

## Extra Curricular Activities

We are looking forward to the resumption of many of our extra curricular activities this year. An appropriate risk assessment will be conducted for each activity and mitigations put in place where necessary. We would encourage all our pupils to connect with our extensive extra curricular provision and get involved in at least one thing. Educational visits and residential stays in Northern Ireland are able to resume.

## Positive cases & isolation

If anyone becomes unwell with a new, continuous cough or a high temperature/fever or anosmia (a loss or a change in your normal sense of smell, which can also affect your sense of taste) in school, they and any members of their household in school will be isolated and cared for until they can be collected. School will keep a full record of such actions and request a parent, carer or guardian to record their acknowledgement of this action. [If your child tests positive for COVID 19 please inform the school as soon as possible so we can assist the PHA in tracking close contacts.](#)

The information on isolation below is taken from the latest information on the indirect website. We recommend that parents satisfy themselves that they understand the guidance.

If you have [symptoms of coronavirus](#) (COVID-19), however mild, you should begin self-isolating and book a PCR test. These are widely available and are free.

You should continue to isolate until the result of the test is available. If the result is positive you should continue to self-isolate for 10 full days after the symptoms started.

You can end self-isolation 10 days after your symptoms started, as long as you do not still have a high temperature. If you still have a high temperature, you need to continue to self-isolate until your temperature has returned to normal for 48 hours.

You do not need to continue self-isolating for more than 10 days if you only have a cough or loss of sense of smell/ taste, as these symptoms can last for several weeks after the infection has gone.

More information is available at:

- [Stay at home: guidance for households with possible or confirmed coronavirus \(COVID-19\) infection\(external link opens in a new window / tab\)](#)

## Close contacts of COVID-19

If you're a close contact of someone who has tested positive for COVID-19, self-isolation and testing requirements will depend on whether you're fully vaccinated, your age and where you work.

A close contact can be:

- anyone who lives in the same household as someone with COVID-19 symptoms or who has tested positive for COVID-19

OR

- anyone who has had any of the following types of contact with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19 with a PCR test:
  - face-to-face contact including being coughed on or having a face-to-face conversation within one metre
  - skin-to-skin physical contact for any length of time
  - been within one metre for one minute or longer without face-to-face contact
  - sexual contacts
  - been within two metres of someone for more than 15 minutes (either as a one-off contact, or added up together over one day)
  - travelled in the same vehicle or a plane

### **Aged 18 and over and not fully vaccinated**

If you are aged 18 and over, but not fully vaccinated, you should self-isolate for 10 days following last contact with the positive person.

You will be asked to take a PCR but, even if this is negative, you still need to complete the isolation period.

If you are not able to be vaccinated for a clinical reason, you should complete a period of self-isolation for the full 10 days, even if you receive a negative PCR test result.

### **Fully vaccinated close contacts**

Since 16 August, **if you are fully vaccinated** (more than 14 days since you received the second dose of an approved COVID-19 vaccine), you do not need to self-isolate for 10 days if someone you have been in close contact with tests positive for COVID-19.

You should get a PCR test on day two and day eight of the 10-day period following last contact with the positive person.

If the PCR test is positive, whether or not you have symptoms, you should complete a period of 10 days self-isolation from the day you first had symptoms, or the day the test was taken if there were no symptoms.

Even if you're fully vaccinated, if you have been identified as a close contact, you are advised not to visit hospitals or care homes for 10 days and to minimise contact with those known to be at higher risk if they contract COVID-19, such as the [Clinically Extremely Vulnerable Group \(CEV\)](#) for 10 days.

### **Young people (aged five to 17)**

Young people (aged five to 17) who are not fully vaccinated and are identified as a close contacts should self-isolate and book a PCR test as soon as possible.

If the PCR test is negative, they can end their self-isolation and should arrange to take another PCR test eight days after the last known contact.

If the young person who is a close contact develops symptoms at any time they should immediately self-isolate and book a PCR test, even if the earlier PCR tests were negative.

If any of the PCR tests are positive, this means they have the infection and they should self-isolate for 10 days, in line with advice for confirmed cases.

### **Induction Days**

Year 8 pupils will start school on Thursday 26 August, they should wear school uniform and go straight to the Assembly Hall at 09:00. There will be people available to show them where this is. No school transport will be available that day.

Year 11 pupils will have an Induction on Wednesday 25 August. Pupils should make their way straight to the Assembly Hall for 09:00. No school transport will be available that day. They will return to school for classes on Friday 27 August at 08:50.

Year 13 Induction will be on Wednesday 25 August they should wear school uniform and go straight to the marque for 09:00. Induction will end at 12:30. No school transport will be available that day. They will return to school for classes on Friday 27 August at 08:50.

### **Start of Term**

Pupils in Years 9,10, 12 and 14 will start back to school at 08:50 on Friday 27 August and should go straight to their Form Room as indicated below.

<b>9A – H1 (Mr Forrest)</b>	<b>10A – L2 (Mr Maclaine)</b>	<b>12A – S5 (Ms McDowell)</b>
<b>9B – H2 (Miss Mullan)</b>	<b>10B – L3 (Miss Sproule)</b>	<b>12B – S6 (Mr McClure)</b>
<b>9C – G1 (Mrs Welshman)</b>	<b>10C – L4 (Mr McElhatton)</b>	<b>12C – S7 (Dr Holland)</b>
<b>9D – G2 (Mr Graham)</b>	<b>10D – L5 (Dr Swann/Mrs Donnelly)</b>	<b>12D – S8 (Ms McBride)</b>

<b>14A – MC1 (Miss Thompson)</b>
<b>14B – MC2 (Mrs Rafferty / Mrs Gallagher)</b>
<b>14B – CP1 (Dr Addis)</b>
<b>14D – CP3 (Mr Fowles / Mr Parker)</b>
<b>14E – AV1 (Mr S Thompson)</b>

## **Dismissal**

Last year we operated a procedure of releasing Key Stage 3 pupils early. This will not continue this year. Pupils will be advised to leave the building via the nearest exit to reduce congestion.

## **Curriculum Delivery**

We aim to ensure that the learning experience of each pupil is as meaningful as possible; and we are delighted that many of the restrictions in place last year have been ended. Practical activities will return in subjects like HE and science.

Thank you for taking the time to read this letter. I hope it answers many of your questions, if you have any outstanding concerns or require further information or clarification please do not hesitate to contact us. I am sure that with a spirit of cooperation and a shared understanding that we want the best for our young people we will be able to deliver a safe and meaningful school experience in the months ahead.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'G Montgomery', written in a cursive style.

G Montgomery

**Headmaster**