



# Bishop's Hatfield Girls' School

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## Protective Measures in School from 8th March

Dear Parents/Carers,

I started this academic year urging everyone to show a spirit of altruism; to show selflessness in our concern for the wellbeing of others. I am very proud to say that the Bishop's community has demonstrated altruism in very many ways over recent months and my main message in this letter is to ask that we continue in this spirit. We may not all like, or even agree with, some of the measures that we are putting in place, but I would hope that everyone will follow them to the best of their ability in order to show consideration for the safety of others. This letter contains details of the protective measures in place at school from 8th March. Please read it through with your child carefully. Much of this will be familiar to them from last term, but most children have been out of school for several months now and will need reminding. Alongside this letter we are sending out our full Risk Assessment which provides greater detail on the actions that are being taken to keep everyone as safe as possible. Although there are reasons to be optimistic, coronavirus continues to present significant risks and I would ask that you remember that we have some members of our community, pupils, staff and parents/carers, who are particularly vulnerable.

I am aware that you are receiving a great deal of information at the moment; there doesn't seem to be an easy way to avoid that! We have set up a dedicated Coronavirus page on our website where you can find anything that you may have missed.

### Response to infection

If your child develops symptoms of Covid-19 they must not attend school and must book a test via the NHS <https://www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test> or by calling NHS 119. The symptoms are: a high temperature; a new, continuous cough; loss or change to sense of smell or taste. This applies even if your child has previously had Covid-19, been vaccinated or tested negative on a LF device at home. Your child and the whole household must self-isolate until the result of the test comes back. If the result is negative then your child may return to school.

If your child tests positive for Covid-19 (either using a LF test or NHS test) they and the whole household must self-isolate for 10 days. Please report a positive test result to school immediately by calling the office during working hours. During evenings and weekends please call this number to report a positive test result: 07592 756504

It may be necessary to ask close contacts of a pupil or staff member who has tested positive to self-isolate. Close contact is defined as:

- face-to face contact within 1 metre for more than 1 minute

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- within 2 metres for more than 15 minutes (cumulative over one day)
- travelling in the same vehicle

Please note that wearing a mask does not mitigate against these definitions. Those who have been vaccinated or have previously tested positive for Covid-19 still have to isolate. If your child needs to self-isolate as a close contact we will contact you as soon as possible. We will follow Public Health advice which is to only notify you if your child needs to self-isolate and we will not be informing parents of cases in school. The rumour mill often gets going about cases in school, but please be assured that we will let you know if your child has been identified as a close contact and we are very robust in our procedures for this.

### Social distancing

We will continue to operate our system of year group and class 'bubbles'. Pupils should adhere to the seating plan in all lessons - this also enables us to quickly trace any 'close contacts'. As far as possible pupils should avoid close contact with their peers. We will continue to operate a one-way system around school and there will be yellow marker tape in corridors and classrooms to assist with this. Classrooms are arranged so that pupils are facing forwards as far as possible and equipment will be used within bubbles or cleaned between use. We will not be holding large group activities such as assemblies until further notice.

Pupils may not use internal communal spaces such as corridors, stairwells etc as social spaces. The Dining Hall will not be used at break time and should only be used at lunchtime for eating; once a meal has been finished pupils should vacate the space to allow others to sit down. We strongly encourage pupils to go outside at break and lunchtime as the risk of infection is greatly reduced outdoors. The marquee remains in place and provides additional outside covered seating. Pupils must not enter or wait outside form rooms that are not their own.

### Catering

There will be a breakfast, break and lunch service with menus for each week published on the school website. The indoor Canteen will not be open at break but pupils can purchase food from the Lunch Box outside. Only wrapped cold food should be taken to form rooms. Please check that your child has their Wisepay account topped up. We will operate a lunchtime rota for the Canteen and pupils must only join the queue at their allotted time and should sit in designated year group areas in the Dining Hall. Face masks must be worn in the lunch queue.

The voucher system for pupils in receipt of Free School Meals will finish on Friday 5th March.

### Hygiene measures

All pupils should sanitise/wash their hands on arrival at school and throughout the day, including at the start of every lesson. They should follow the 'catch it, bin it, kill it' approach when coughing or sneezing. **All pupils should bring their own supply of hand sanitiser and pocket tissues to school.** There will be sanitiser at all entry doors, in all classrooms and around the school. There will also be a supply of tissues and wipes in all classrooms. Pupils should use wipes to clean keyboards if they are using chromebooks/pcs and may also wipe down their desks before use. Pupils should bring their own equipment to school and avoid sharing this with others. Cleaning staff will be working all day and cleaning down communal areas.

### Ventilation

Doors and windows will be kept open as far as possible, though of course this needs to be balanced against ensuring that a comfortable working environment is maintained. It is important that pupils do not close windows without permission; good ventilation is often cited by scientists as one of the most effective mitigating factors against transmission. Hopefully the temperature will rise as spring goes on, but for the time being we will continue to allow pupils to wear a plain black, dark blue or dark grey jumper or hoodie over the top of their uniform. This should not be worn as a replacement for the school jumper/cardigan.

### Face masks

As previously stated, the government is now recommending that pupils should wear face masks in classrooms as well as in communal areas when moving around the school, where social distancing cannot be maintained. We are therefore asking pupils to wear masks in classrooms and this will be reviewed at Easter. This does not apply in situations where wearing a face covering would impact on the ability to take part in exercise or strenuous activity, for example in PE lessons. We do appreciate that wearing a mask all day may become uncomfortable and pupils can ask for permission to lower their mask temporarily in a classroom. Likewise, a member of staff may ask a pupil to lower their mask temporarily to ease communication and to ensure that pupils are fully understood. All classrooms have 2-metre tape at the front marking out a zone for teachers to work behind for most of the lesson. If a teacher is behind this tape then they do not need to wear a mask as they are socially distanced from the class. **Please ensure that your child has at least one mask with them and we recommend that they also have at least one spare as a mask may become uncomfortable if worn all day.** If a pupil forgets their mask then they should request one from Reception on arrival in the morning. We very much appreciate your support with providing masks as it is incredibly wasteful and costly for us to lend out disposable masks. We do allow exemptions from wearing a mask and would request that you email your child's Head of Year if you would like them to be exempt so that we can authorise this.

### Start/end of day

In the morning pupils should arrive at the normal time using entrance doors which enable the quickest access to their form room, adhering to the one-way system. 6th Form students only need to arrive in time for the first lesson of the day, or for their tutor appointment. We will continue to operate a staggered dismissal at the end of the day:

- 2.55 pm: Years 9 & 12/13
- 3.00 pm: Years 10 & 11 (unless they have a Lesson 7 for science)
- 3.05 pm: Years 7 and 8 (return to form rooms then go home)

Years 9, 10 and 11 pupils should bring their bags and coats to Lessons 5 and 6 as they will not be allowed to return to their form room at the end of the day. Pupils cannot wait in the building at the end of the day.

### Transport

Reg's Coaches will start their service again on Wednesday 10th March. If you have any questions about this then please contact them directly. The coach will leave school at approximately 3.15 pm. Masks should be worn when travelling on this service and on all public transport.

There are duplicate bus services operating on a number of routes, starting on 8th March. For a full list please see here: <https://www.intalink.org.uk/duplicateschoolservices>. Services reserved for school children, including 6th Form, are marked with an S at the front.

### Chromebooks

If your child borrowed a chromebook during this period of remote learning then please could you ensure that it is returned to school on their first day back (Tuesday 9th March for Years 10-13 and Wednesday 10th March for Years 7-9). They should bring the chromebook to Reception.

### Enrichment

We will not be running any enrichment clubs until the Summer Term. We want to make sure that we have a really strong and full programme to offer our pupils and it is difficult to set this up in the short time available. Do look out for the Summer Term programme and encourage your child to attend; we know that participating in clubs and activities has a huge benefit for pupil wellbeing and can help them to develop a range of skills.

### And finally ...

Thank you for your patience and understanding. I fully appreciate that not all of our arrangements suit all families but we always try our best. I also know that for some pupils the return to school will be a cause of anxiety. Our experience from re-opening in September was that once pupils were back, they quickly got into the rhythm of school. We also know that pupils have had very different experiences of remote learning. I want to reassure you and them that we are here to support all our pupils. Whether your child has excelled in all areas or struggled to complete their work, we will be working with them in the coming weeks and months to help them enjoy school and continue to make progress. One thing that you can support us with is to ensure that your child is fully prepared for school. They may well need help with organising their books and resources each day and please do ensure that they are fully compliant with our uniform rules. In particular we will be enforcing rules around hair colour and jewellery and it would be a great shame to send a pupil home due to non-compliance after such a long time away from school.

I have been asked by the local authority and Hertfordshire Police to remind you that national restrictions remain in place after 8th March. **Pupils should not be meeting up to socialise out of school**; the current guidance is that you can meet with one other person outdoors for the purposes of exercise each day. Pupils should therefore go straight home at the end of the day. I have been advised that Covid Marshals will be working in the area, particularly at the end of the school day.

Herts for Learning has suggested that I share these links with you all. There are ways to help celebrate and thank school staff here: [Thank a Teacher Form](#); and there is also an additional award this year of 'Lockdown Hero' which you are able to nominate school workers and family members for here: [Home | The Pearson National Teaching Awards](#). There have been many heroes over recent months and it would be hard to single any individual out, but please do make use of these links if you get a chance.

I am hugely looking forward to seeing everyone back in school next week - it has not been the same without our wonderful pupils on site!

Yours sincerely,

Mr A Wood  
Headteacher