



Bishop's Hatfield Girls' School

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Dear Parents/Carers,

On Monday the Department for Education published revised operational guidance to schools regarding the protective measures to be in place from Monday 17th May. The country will move to step 3 of the easing of lockdown restrictions on this date and there are some specific implications for schools. Largely, the measures we already have in place will remain for the time being, but there are some changes in some areas and other elements that it is worth reminding you about.

Face coverings

The updated guidance states that face coverings are no longer recommended in classrooms. We know that there are a range of views about wearing masks and that many pupils, staff and parents get reassurance from the fact that we have all been wearing them.

We have decided that it is no longer necessary for pupils to wear face masks in lessons, though they may do so if they choose. Face masks can be a barrier to communication and so pupils who choose to continue to wear a mask may be asked to temporarily remove it by a member of staff in order to make this easier. Likewise, there may be circumstances where a member of staff requests that a pupil wears a mask, either because social distancing is not possible in that situation or because they fall into a vulnerable group. Exemptions remain in place for pupils where we have had a request from home.

We have decided to return to the arrangements that we had in place for the Autumn term whereby **we expect pupils and staff to wear a mask when they are moving around the school either between lessons, before or after school or at break and lunchtimes**. This is because social distancing is not always possible in these areas. Face masks must also be worn in the lunch queue and when choosing food. This will provide continued reassurance for everyone and we will review this at half term. We expect that there will be further guidance from the government in due course and it may be that masks will no longer be required at all in the coming weeks.

Please note that face masks should be worn when travelling on public transport and all pupils using Reg's Coach's should continue to wear a mask.

"This is an OUTSTANDING school" - Ofsted 2016



It is therefore important that pupils continue to bring a mask to school each day and wear it as required. It is useful to keep a spare with them too.

I would like to express my thanks to pupils for being so adaptable to all the changes that have been made over recent months. They really have shown an impressive attitude to so many other things.

Home testing

Please continue to support your child in carrying out a Covid test bi-weekly using the home test kits. We recommend testing on Wednesday and Sunday evenings. The results should be reported to the NHS and to the school using this Google Form (also available on our website) <https://forms.gle/yRHofvzUJqL19Eim9>. This is an important part of keeping everyone safe as up to a third of Covid cases are asymptomatic. By picking up cases early we can help to prevent the spread of infection. Although cases locally are down, there is still a risk of infection and I know that other local schools have experienced positive cases in the last few days.

If your child tests positive then you must report this to the school immediately by contacting the school office. Please use this emergency number if it is out of office hours: 07592 756504. The whole household must self-isolate for 10 days from the date the test was taken. You should book a PCR test via the NHS here [Get a free PCR test to check if you have coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#) to confirm the result. If the PCR test is negative then the whole household can come out of self-isolation. If it is positive then isolation must continue for the full 10 days for the whole household.

Covid symptoms and isolation

It is still the case that anyone with Covid symptoms must self-isolate, as must their household. A reminder that these symptoms are: new and persistent cough; fever; loss of sense of taste or smell. If any pupil presents with these symptoms at school then they will be sent home and you must book a PCR test for them (home test kits should not be used to check on Covid symptoms). The whole household must self-isolate until the results of the test have come back. There is now a government compensation scheme for those who have to self-isolate and you can check whether you may be eligible here: [Claiming financial support under the Test and Trace Support Payment scheme](#).

If we get a positive case at school then we will be identifying close contacts and asking those pupils to self-isolate for 10 days on advice from local public health. We do try to avoid sending pupils home unless absolutely necessary, but we must follow public health advice.

Please note that all of the above still applies, regardless of whether anyone has been vaccinated.

Other measures

In most other respects we will continue to operate in the ways we have become used to over recent months. As far as possible pupils remain in class or year group 'bubbles' and we enforce social distancing wherever we can. Although dispensing with hoodies was a little chilly at first, the school is now a comfortable temperature and everyone should stick to uniform rules. It has been a little

disappointing to find a small number of pupils attempting to hide nose piercings or additional ear piercings behind a mask. These are not allowed and will be confiscated until the end of term if found.

The government has announced that school trips can resume and we are hoping to restart these soon. I would also like to remind you that we have already re-started our full enrichment programme and it has been wonderful to see so many pupils taking part in clubs over recent weeks. There really is something for everyone on offer and I would encourage you to look at the schedule on our website with your child to see if there is anything that they might be interested in joining.

Drop off / pick up

I need to take this opportunity to remind you that the drop off/pick up zone should not be used at the end of the school day. We have a number of pupils with disabilities who do need to be collected from the car park, and we have a school bus each day. There have been occasions recently where parents with permission to use the car park and the school bus have not been able to drive into the site due to other cars blocking the way. This is not only inconsiderate but potentially putting others at risk. There really is no need to use the drop off zone at the end of the day - there are many alternative car parks or roads just a short walk away that are quiet and uncongested with no parking restrictions. Please show consideration for others by using them.

Wellbeing

I have been encouraged to see that the Department for Education is beginning to recognise the impact that the pandemic has had on the wellbeing of pupils, staff and parents/carers. As their own guidance states:

Some pupils may be experiencing a variety of emotions in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, such as anxiety, stress or low mood... It is important to contextualise these feelings as normal responses to an abnormal situation.

As we come to the end of Mental Health Awareness week this is an opportune moment to check in with ourselves and others. Some pupils may be experiencing emotional difficulties such as problems with friendships or anxiety about work and not recognise that indirectly these are related to the pandemic, which has disrupted our lives in a range of ways. We have been running a range of activities for Mental Health Awareness Week as outlined in the letter from Miss Lawrence, but our support is not constrained to just a few days a year. I would particularly like to remind you that it is so important to us that all our pupils feel that they have a trusted adult at school to whom they can talk if needed. This may be a Form Tutor, Head of Year or any other member of staff. Please do speak to your child about this and if they say that they do not feel that they can name anyone, I would encourage you to get in touch with their Head of Year so that we can follow this up.

As ever, thank you for your support and encouragement. There has been lots going on at school over the last few weeks so please do look at our social media pages or the School News section of our

website to see what our pupils have been up to [School News – Bishop's Hatfield Girls' School](#) . They and our staff continue to find many and varied ways to make me feel proud of our school!

Yours sincerely,

Mr A Wood
Headteacher