



St Mary
Magdalene
Academy

**COVID-19:
Return to School Handbook**

**Primary School
March 2021**

This handbook sets out the adjustments and changes being implemented in preparation for the new school year, following the widespread closure of schools in the UK in response to the global pandemic.

This plan for a return to school in March 2021 is based on regular reviews of the guidance issued by the UK Government, including from the Department for Education (DfE). It also draws upon best practice from education systems and advice from around the world. It represents the main outcomes of our risk assessment for the return to school, which itself is regularly updated as guidance is changed.

Please be aware that this guidance may change at short notice; we will write with any changes as soon as they are required.

A Summary of the Guidance

To reopen the Academy to all pupils in March, there are a series of controls with which all schools must comply.

Prevention

We must always:

- 1) Minimise contact with individuals who are required to self-isolate by ensuring they do not attend the school
- 2) Ensure face coverings are used in recommended circumstances.
- 3) Ensure everyone is advised to clean their hands thoroughly and more often than usual
- 4) Ensure good respiratory hygiene for everyone by promoting the 'catch it, kill it, bin it' approach
- 5) Maintain enhanced cleaning
- 6) Consider how to minimise contact across the site and maintain social distancing wherever possible
- 7) Keep occupied spaces well ventilated

Response to any infection

- 8) Promote and engage with the NHS Test and Trace process
- 9) Manage and report confirmed cases of coronavirus (COVID-19) amongst the school community
- 10) Contain any outbreak by following local health protection team advice

Pupils, staff and other adults **must not** come into the school if:

- They have one of more coronavirus symptoms
- A member of their household (including someone in their support bubble or childcare bubble) has coronavirus symptoms
- They are required to quarantine having recently visited countries outside the Common Travel Area
- They have been told to isolate by NHS Test and Trace or by their public health protection team (you have a legal obligation to self-isolate)

They must immediately cease to attend and not attend for at least 10 days from the day after the start of their symptoms, or the test date if asymptomatic but had a positive test (either LFD or PCR).

Symptoms consistent with a possible coronavirus infection include:

- high temperature – this means you feel hot to touch on your chest or back (you do not need to measure your temperature)
- new, continuous cough – this means coughing a lot for more than an hour, or 3 or more coughing episodes in 24 hours (if you usually have a cough, it may be worse than usual)
- loss or change to your sense of smell or taste – this means you've noticed you cannot smell or taste anything, or things smell or taste different to normal

To align with this guidance, we have instituted year phases as bubbles. Year 1, 2 and 3 and Year 4, 5 and 6 to allow for break times and lunch breaks. At all other times in the classroom, they will only be with their class bubble. Each year group will have specific gates and doors for entrance and exit. Contact with other year groups, so far as our building allows, will be kept to the absolute minimum during the school day and a one-way system is in place during transition times.

Routines will be introduced to pupils on the first day of term and they will be regularly reminded to ensure that it is fully understood by all.

Attendance

The DfE have stated that from March 8th school attendance will become compulsory for all pupils.

A small number of pupils will still be unable to attend in line with public health advice to self-isolate because they:

- have symptoms or have had a positive test result
- live with someone who has symptoms or has tested positive and are a household contact
- are a close contact of someone who has coronavirus (COVID-19)

Please read the Government's current advice on shielding for more information. Children are gradually being removed from the shielding patient list (SPL) as appropriate, following review with clinician. The advice for pupils who have been confirmed as clinically extremely vulnerable is to shield and stay at home as much as possible until further notice. They are advised not to attend school while shielding advice applies nationally. We ask that we have a copy of the shielding letter sent to CEV to confirm that they are advised not to attend school while shielding guidance is in place

If a pupil is required by COVID protocols not to attend school, work will be set on Google Classroom, as directed by the teachers. Pupils in this category who can work from home during this period should continue to do so. If families do not have access at home, they should inform the school so we can make other arrangements e.g. to loan equipment.

Parents should use primaryadmin@smmacademy.org or phone **0207 697 0123** address to inform us of any recent international travel to countries on the quarantine list.

Asymptomatic Testing

Regular testing of people without symptoms is important to help stop the virus spreading and protect your loved ones. As lockdown restrictions gradually ease we all need to play our part to help protect each other.

Staff will continue to be supplied with home testing equipment to allow them to take two Lateral Flow Device tests a week at home. If a staff member tests positive, they and their close contacts begin self-isolation until they have had the results of a PCR test.

Primary age pupils **will not** be tested with LFDs. Public Health England have advised there are currently limited public health benefits attached to testing primary pupils with lateral flow devices. Primary age pupils may find the LFD testing process unpleasant and are unable to self-swab.

As schools reopen, households, childcare and support bubbles of primary staff and pupils will be able access to regular rapid lateral flow testing and will be able to request these online.

Arrival and Departure

It is essential to prevent large gatherings of people together. Therefore, we will continue the staggered start times. These have been updated to make the start of the day quicker. These will be arranged by house groups rather than year groups so that families start and end at the same time. We will not interrogate you about the house your children are in, but it will help us if you *can* follow these times.

Regardless we ask that all adults follow the 'face, hands and space' guidelines. Adults should wear a mask, hands should be frequently cleaned and appropriate space kept between one another.

In the morning, all pupils need to wash their hands before entering the building and therefore you may be asked to wait and queue outside the gate. At the end of the day, staggered exits are less time consuming as children do not need to wash their hands therefore there is a shorter time for dismissal. Registers will close at **9.20am**

	Start time	End time
Africa	8.45 – 8.51	3.15
America	8.52 – 8.59	3.20
Europe	9.00 – 9.07	3.25
Asia	9.08 – 9.15	3.30

Parents and Carers

Throughout this our aim is to have minimal amount of people in the same area for extended periods of time to minimise the risk of contact between adults and different children.

At the **start of the day** you will drop your child at the school gate and **not enter** the playground. Please make sure you have said your goodbyes before approaching

the gate as we need to welcome large numbers of pupils quickly. A senior member of staff will be on the gate and available to take messages and answer questions you may have. Please respect distances between yourself and them. You should not enter the school building unless you have an appointment booked. All enquiries should be via phone or email. Any forms handed in should be in your child's bag.

At the **end of the day**, parents and carers will enter the playground at their time slot and immediately go to the centre of the playground. From here, staff will be able to spot you and dismiss your child to you. You will not at this time be able to speak with staff as we will be dismissing pupils from different year groups.

Once you have collected your child/dren, you must immediately exit via the top gate in the playground (which used to be the entrance). This has created a one-way system to ease any crowding around the main entrance. It is essential that you do not gather in groups in the playground or at the entrance and exit.

Signing in/out and Late Arrival Protocols

Pupils who are late to school will be signed in by the office and will go straight to class. We hope that all pupils will be on time so that they do not miss the start of lessons. Please drop them in via the school office gate, but do not accompany them to the building.

Hygiene

Pupils will be required to clean their hands more often. On arrival at school, all pupils must clean their hands using the nearest sanitiser or the new hand washing stations in the playground. Pupils should also clean their hands whilst moving around the building and before and after eating

All pupils must practise excellent respiratory hygiene by coughing or sneezing into a tissue which is promptly disposed of in a bin, or, by using their elbow if necessary. Pupils must clean their hands after they cough or sneeze. Posters reminding them of recommended respiratory hygiene and hand-washing techniques will be displayed in bathrooms and around the school.

Good hand hygiene is seen by our medical advisers as a very important and effective way of stopping the spread of the virus.

Ventilation

Good ventilation is seen as a key measure in preventing the spread of coronavirus, therefore doors and windows should be kept open. We therefore would encourage all parents to ensure that pupils have jumpers with them to wear in during the school day as we will be ventilating rooms.

Face Coverings

Pupils will not be required to wear face coverings when in their year group 'bubbles', but will continue to socially distance from pupils in other year groups around the school. Staff will wear face masks when speaking with parents or visitors. Around the school building staff will wear masks in areas where it is difficult for them to socially distance from one another.

Staffing

Supply teachers and staff are allowed to work across bubbles, but should be mindful of limiting social contact. Staff may need individual risk assessments and so may be carrying out different duties in the school or be required to wear additional PPE. We expect all members of our community to exercise respect in regards to changes in staffing and be aware that details of any changes will not be shared.

Managing any Possible Cases of COVID During the School Day

The Senior Staff and office team will follow protocols to deal with any suspected cases of COVID. The pupil will be isolated and parents contacted to request that they are collected urgently. Pupils displaying symptoms will be sent home. Up-to-date Government guidance on getting a test and isolating must then be followed and the test result shared with the school.

NHS Test and Trace

All pupils, staff, and visitors will need to comply with the NHS Test and Trace process. If anyone in your household develops symptoms you must book a test online or by phone and the whole household must comply in full with self-isolation guidelines. The Academy must be kept informed as promptly as possible via the email primaryadmin@smmacademy.org

All pupils, staff and other adults should do the following:

- **Not come into school** if they have coronavirus symptoms or have tested positive
- Book a test if they are displaying symptoms of coronavirus infection. Please inform the school immediately of the results of a test.
- In the event that they test positive for coronavirus, or if asked by NHS Test and Trace, to provide details of anyone in the school community they have been in close contact with.

It is important for parents and staff to inform The Academy immediately of any test result.

- **If someone tests negative:** if they feel well and no longer have symptoms similar to coronavirus, they can stop self-isolating. They could still have another virus, such as a cold or flu – in which case it is still best to avoid contact with others until they feel better. Other members of the household can stop self-isolating.
- **If someone tests positive:** they must stay at home and self-isolate for the advised amount of time

Once The Academy has been notified of a positive test for COVID we will immediately contact the local health protection team and follow all guidance, including what actions to take regarding the isolation of other members of the school community.

Possible Future Lockdowns and Remote Learning

Should the School close or require part-closure (e.g. for a class) we will immediately revert to remote learning using an online system. Pupils are now very experienced in using these systems. We will be able to loan some devices to families.

Mental Health, Wellbeing and Safeguarding

We understand that some pupils will be anxious about returning to school. Our website has many resources for families to support at home, staff will receive training

on this anxiety and time will be spent in class addressing this as appropriate. If pupils are worried about something or feel they need any extra support, they should speak to their teacher, our Chaplain- Fr Sam or indeed any member of staff they feel comfortable with who can refer them for further support.

Minimising Contact and 'Bubbles'

Pupils will be grouped by year group so that each year forms a 'bubble'. All pupils should minimise their contacts within their 'bubble' and socially distance as much as possible.

In lessons pupils will be seated side by side at desks in the classroom. A seating plan will be in place for each class in each classroom.

On stairwells, an up and down system will need to operate and pupils and staff will ascend or descend in single file. Bathrooms will operate a queuing system and it is important that pupils do not attempt to socialise in bathrooms and follow the good hygiene guidance around handwashing. Collective Worship will continue remotely online, which will also allow for any self-isolating pupils to join.

Cleaning

Additional cleaning routines are in place, both during the day and in the early mornings. Risk assessment of spaces and activities has given careful consideration to the use of cleaning products, as well as to the spaces/ equipment/items regularly used during the day, such as any door handles which are still in use. Clear protocols are in place should any area require a swift deep clean due to a possible or confirmed case, and cleaning staff will work in specific areas, rather than across the entire site.

Break, Lunch and Water Fountains

In the playground, at both break and lunchtime, pupils should socialise only with pupils from their own year group or within their phase. Breaks and lunches are split into bubbles and tables and chairs are cleaned in-between. There will be some equipment available and this will be cleaned between. The climbing frames are on a weekly rota and are disinfected at the end of each week.

Outside drinking fountains **have been removed** in order to minimise contamination, so pupils **must** bring a water bottle to refill at one of the internal taps. Please ensure water bottles are labelled with names. Pupils must not share food or drinks.

Books, Equipment, Stationery and Personal Items

Pupils in older year groups will have their own stationery packs to use. Younger children in Reception and Year 1 will continue to share equipment through play, but staff will clean at the end of the day.

Resources that are shared between classes, such as sports, computing, music, art and science equipment will be cleaned frequently, and a supply of cleaning products will be in each of these spaces.

We ask that pupils do not bring unnecessary personal items.

Uniform

We ask that where possible pupils are wearing full uniform, but we understand that the current national lockdown has made it difficult for families to buy clothing for growing children. We will put on some second hand uniform sales and we ask you to do your best in terms of muted colours if you are waiting to be able to get to shops. Children are allowed to wear tracksuit bottoms and trainers etc to make this easier.

Sport and Clubs

Our staff are closely following specialist guidance so that PE lessons and some sports team practice can take place with cleaning and hygiene protocols in place, within year group bubbles. Unfortunately, at the time of writing, competitive fixtures are not allowed to take place in a school environment. We will continue to review this situation in line with DfE and governing body guidance and communicate directly with all concerned.

PE

Pupils should wear their school PE kit all day on a PE day.

Music

Choirs, orchestras and music groups require specific protocols. Singing in particular has particular protocols, but will be allowed in well ventilated spaces.

After school clubs

We will offer in Spring term wrap around care for pupils whose families require them to be in school due to work. In Summer term, we hope to offer more after school clubs.

Specialist Individual Lessons

Instrumental or voice lessons, counselling appointments and other bespoke sessions will continue to run, but will follow protocols on social distancing and hygiene. We have limited spaces in the school for these to happen, so may need to prioritise them.

Fire Evacuation and Lockdown Protocols

All fire safety measures that are normally in place in the school remain in place and the systems have been tested. Teachers will remind pupils of fire drill protocol on their return.

Cycling and scooters

We have installed additional bike racks in school for bicycles to be stored safely throughout the day for those pupils wishing to cycle. All those cycling should wear a cycle helmet. We also have space for scooters. Please ensure these are collected daily.

Cars

Parking is very limited near the Academy and we have always discouraged parents from dropping off and collecting close to school because of the congestion for the neighbouring community. Islington has chosen to enforce their School Streets scheme from 3 September 2020. Vehicles will not be permitted to Lough Road and

Bride Street from Monday to Friday between the times of 8.00am to 9.00am and 3.15pm to 4.15pm during term-time unless they have been given an exemption. Those who break these rules are subject to fines. Car-sharing between different households should be avoided unless pupils are in the same family or support bubble.

School Events and Parents' Evenings

We must minimise the number of people who gather together. As such we are not allowed to hold events with audiences. Please refer to the school website and newsletters for the most up-to-date information.

Individual Parental Meetings

Wherever possible, communication should be by phone, online or by email. Should a meeting be required on a face-to-face basis these meetings this will need to be agreed by a senior member of staff and will take place after school only in a space where social distancing can be maintained between the staff member(s) and parent/pupil.

Visitors to the School

All visitors and volunteers will be expected to comply with and adhere to the School's COVID mitigation measures. This includes external speakers, peripatetic staff or teachers from other schools. All visits to the school will be by appointment only and external adults will be required to wear a mask. We kindly ask that parents also observe this and do not come into the school site unless by prior arrangement.