

19th July 2021

Dear Parent/Carer,

Step 4 – new government guidelines for schools

We are writing to you to share the new guidance for schools from the government that will apply as the country enters Step 4 of the roadmap.

As the country moves to Step 4, the government will continue to manage the risk of serious illness from the spread of the virus. This marks a new phase in the government's response to the pandemic, moving away from stringent restrictions on everyone's day-to-day lives, towards advising people on how to protect themselves and others, alongside targeted interventions to reduce risk. As COVID-19 becomes a virus that we learn to live with, there is now an imperative to reduce the disruption to children and young people's education - particularly given that the direct clinical risks to children are extremely low, and every adult has been offered a first vaccine and the opportunity for two doses by mid-September. The priority is to deliver face-to-face, high quality education to all pupils.

Tracing close contacts and isolation

From Monday 19th July, schools will no longer need to do contact tracing and close contacts will be identified via NHS Test and Trace. As with positive cases in any other setting, NHS Test and Trace will work with the positive case to identify close contacts. From 16 August 2021, children under the age of 18 years old will no longer be required to self-isolate if they are contacted by NHS Test and Trace as a close contact of a positive COVID-19 case. Instead, children will be contacted by NHS Test and Trace, informed they have been in close contact with a positive case and advised to take a PCR test. Self-isolation continues for those who have tested positive for Covid-19.

Asymptomatic testing

Over the summer, staff and secondary students should continue to test regularly, using a lateral flow device test, if they are attending settings that remain open, such as summer schools and out of school activities based in school settings.

As students will potentially mix with lots of other people during the summer holidays, all secondary school students should receive 2 on-site lateral flow device tests, 3 to 5 days apart, on their return to school in the autumn term. Settings can stagger the return of students across the first week to manage this. Students should then continue to test twice weekly at home until the end of September, when this will be reviewed.

Staff should undertake twice weekly home tests whenever they are on site until the end of September, when this will also be reviewed.

Operational changes being brought in with Step 4

The following areas will remain in place in WMAT for the remainder of this school year and the changes will be made at the start of the new school year in September:

- Mixing and 'bubbles'

There will no longer be the requirement for children to be taught in consistent bubbles and kept separate at breaks and lunchtime. As well as giving more flexibility in curriculum delivery it will mean that activities such as assemblies can resume.

- Face coverings

Face coverings will no longer be advised for pupils, staff and visitors either in classrooms or in communal areas. The Department for Education recommends that face coverings are worn on dedicated transport to school or college when there are a high number of cases of Covid-19 in the community. We will review the situation in September and will continue to make this a requirement if this is the case.

- Stepping measures up and down

Each school will have outbreak management plans outlining how it would operate if there were an outbreak in the school or local area. This could include a temporary return to measures such as bubbles or face coverings in secondary classrooms.

- Control measures

The measures to help control the spread of infection in schools are being reduced to four:

1. Ensure good hygiene for everyone – particularly hand washing and safe disposal of tissues
2. Maintain appropriate cleaning regimes
3. Keep occupied spaces well ventilated
4. Follow public health advice on testing, self-isolation and managing confirmed cases of COVID-19.

Attendance and Remote Education

School attendance is mandatory for all pupils of compulsory school age and it will continue to be a priority to ensure that as many children as possible regularly attend school. The normal procedures and sanctions will be applied. Schools will continue to provide remote learning for pupils who are unable to attend school because they have tested positive, to enable them to work or learn from home if they are well enough to do so.

Over the summer holiday our Trust's Risk Assessment will be reviewed to reflect these new guidelines. It will be available on the Trust website by the start of the new school year at www.futuralearning.co.uk

We have arranged a staggered start for all year groups in September. This will enable us to arrange a Lateral Flow Device test for students upon their return (subject to consent by the parent or carer), and to arrange induction and tutorial sessions to welcome them back for the new academic year. We will contact you separately with the details relevant to your son or daughter.

Testing is voluntary but strongly recommended. Students who do not take a test should return to school at the same time as their year group.

The government has produced an information leaflet for parents on the new guidance, which can be viewed [here](#).

If you have any questions about the new arrangements please email your questions to enquiries@wellswayschool.com.

May we take this opportunity to thank you in advance for your continued support as we work together to address these new guidelines.

Yours faithfully,



David Cooper
Joint Acting Principal



Sophie Francis
Joint Acting Principal



Andrea Arlidge
Chief Executive