

# St Nicholas CE Primary Academy



## Return to School Policy Plan and Procedures for all Year Groups January 2022

*“Learning, loving and encouraging through Christ.”*

### **COVID-19 return to school policy**

Updated December 2021 in line with Government advice

#### ***Vision Statement***

*St Nicholas provides a welcoming, inclusive and aspirational learning environment at the heart of its community. We nurture, encourage and support all children, adults and their families to be the best as God intended. Following God’s example of love and trust, we develop resilience and creativity in all we do.*

**The following policy is written to provide the school community of St Nicholas CE Primary Academy with an awareness of how we are going to approach a return to school for all pupils. St Nicholas CE Primary will continue to follow Government guidance, considering the needs of our local community.**

**This will be amended following advice from central Government, The Aquila Multi-Academy Trust Board and Kent County Council.**

### **Rationale**

The government continues to manage the risk of serious illness from the spread of the virus. Plan B was introduced over the Christmas period. 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 vaccine and a booster.

While we look forward to having all pupils at school from January, we continue to make sure our contingency plans (The Outbreak Management Plan) covers the possibility that in some areas it may become necessary to reintroduce 'bubbles' for a temporary period, to reduce mixing between groups to ensure that all children, parents and staff are safe at all times.

We use the terms 'must' and 'should' throughout this guidance. We use the term 'must' when the person in question is legally required to do something and 'should' when the advice set out should be followed unless there is a good reason not to.

### **Aims**

This document provides a framework for all our children, regardless of background or circumstances, to fulfil their God given potential. Our school values of Ambition, Community, Friendship, Perseverance, Respect, and Trust are applied when following this policy.

We will follow Government guidelines but we will be guided by our risk assessments throughout.

## **PREVENTATIVE GUIDELINES**

### **Public Health Advice**

We will continue to follow Government and Public Health Advice to reduce the risks.

#### **You should:**

1. Ensure good hygiene for everyone.
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.

### **1. Ensure good hygiene for everyone**

#### **Hand hygiene**

Frequent and thorough hand cleaning should now be regular practice. You should continue to ensure that pupils clean their hands regularly. This can be done with soap and water or hand sanitiser.

We will ensure that pupils clean their hands regularly, including

- when they return from breaks,
- when they change rooms and
- before and after eating.

Regular and thorough hand cleaning is going to be needed for the foreseeable future. We will build these routines into the school culture, supported by behaviour expectations (see the updated behaviour policy) and help ensure younger children and those with complex needs understand the need to follow them.

## Respiratory hygiene

The 'catch it, bin it, kill it' approach continues to be very important and must be promoted. The [e-Bug COVID-19 website](#) contains free resources for you, including materials to encourage good hand and respiratory hygiene.

We will ensure we have enough tissues and bins available in the school to support pupils and staff to follow this routine. As with hand cleaning, we will ensure younger children and those with complex needs are helped to get this right, and all pupils understand that this is now part of how our school operates. Some pupils with complex needs will struggle to maintain as good respiratory hygiene as their peers. The SENDCo will ensure this is considered in risk assessments in order to support these pupils and the staff working with them.

### Use of personal protective equipment (PPE)

Most staff in schools will not require PPE beyond what they would *normally* need for their work. If a child or young person already has routine intimate care needs that involve the use of PPE, the same PPE should continue to be used.

Guidance on the [use of PPE in education, childcare and children's social care settings](#) provides more information on the use of PPE for COVID-19.

## 2. Maintain appropriate cleaning regimes, using standard products such as detergents

As a school we have in place and maintain an appropriate cleaning schedule. This includes regular cleaning of areas and equipment, with a particular focus on frequently touched surfaces. Reducing clutter and removing difficult to clean items can make cleaning easier for everyone concerned.

### Kitchens and communal canteens (staffroom)

It is very unlikely that COVID-19 is transmitted through food. However, as a matter of good hygiene practice, anyone handling food should wash their hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds before doing so.

Crockery and eating utensils should not be shared. Clean frequently touched surfaces regularly. **Remember. If you use it, clean it and put it away!**

Where cloth towels are used, these should be for individual use and laundered in accordance with washing instructions.

### Toilets

Ensure suitable hand washing facilities are available including running water, liquid soap and paper towels or hand driers.

## 3. Keep occupied spaces well ventilated

When our school is in operation, it is important to ensure it is well ventilated and that a comfortable teaching environment is maintained.

We will identify any poorly ventilated spaces as part of our risk assessment and take steps to improve fresh air flow in these areas, giving particular consideration when holding events where visitors such as parents are on site, e.g school plays or meetings.

Opening external windows can improve natural ventilation, and in addition, opening internal doors can also assist with creating a throughput of air. If necessary, external opening doors may also be used (if they are not fire doors and where safe to do so).

You should balance the need for increased ventilation while maintaining a comfortable temperature. DfE is working on a pilot project to measure CO2 levels in classrooms and exploring options to help improve ventilation in settings where needed. We will have more information on this in the autumn.

## 4. Follow public health advice on testing, self-isolation and managing confirmed cases of COVID-19

### When to self-isolate

Self-isolate straight away and get a PCR test (a test that is sent to the lab) on GOV.UK as soon as possible if you have any of these 3 symptoms of COVID-19, even if they are mild:

- a high temperature
- a new, continuous cough
- a loss or change to your sense of smell or taste

You should also self-isolate straight away if:

- you've tested positive for COVID-19 – this means you have the virus
- someone you live with has symptoms or tested positive (unless you are not required to self-isolate – check below if this applies to you)
- you've been told to self-isolate following contact with someone who tested positive – find out what to do if you're told to self-isolate by NHS Test and Trace or the NHS COVID-19 app

### **When you do not need to self-isolate**

If someone you live with has symptoms of COVID-19, or has tested positive for COVID-19, you will not need to self-isolate if any of the following apply:

- you're fully vaccinated – this means 14 days have passed since your final dose of a COVID-19 vaccine given by the NHS
- you're under 18 years, 6 months old
- you're taking part or have taken part in a COVID-19 vaccine trial
- you're not able to get vaccinated for medical reasons

Even if you do not have symptoms, you should still:

- get a PCR test on GOV.UK to check if you have COVID-19
- follow advice on how to avoid catching and spreading COVID-19
- consider limiting contact with people who are at higher risk from COVID-19

### **Other measures**

#### **Asymptomatic testing – Lateral Flow Tests**

Testing remains important in reducing the risk of transmission of infection within schools. Staff should undertake twice weekly home tests until this is reviewed by the government.

#### **Mixing and 'bubbles'**

The government no longer recommend that it is necessary to keep children in consistent groups ('bubbles'). This means that bubbles will not need to be used in schools from the autumn term.

As well as enabling flexibility in curriculum delivery, this means that assemblies can resume, and we no longer need to make alternative arrangements to avoid mixing at lunch.

As a school we will make sure our contingency plans cover the possibility that in some local areas it may become necessary to reintroduce 'bubbles' for a temporary period, to reduce mixing between groups.

Any decision to recommend the reintroduction of 'bubbles' would not be taken lightly and would need to take account of the detrimental impact they can have on the delivery of education.

#### **Face coverings**

Face coverings are no longer advised for pupils, staff and visitors either in classrooms or in communal areas.

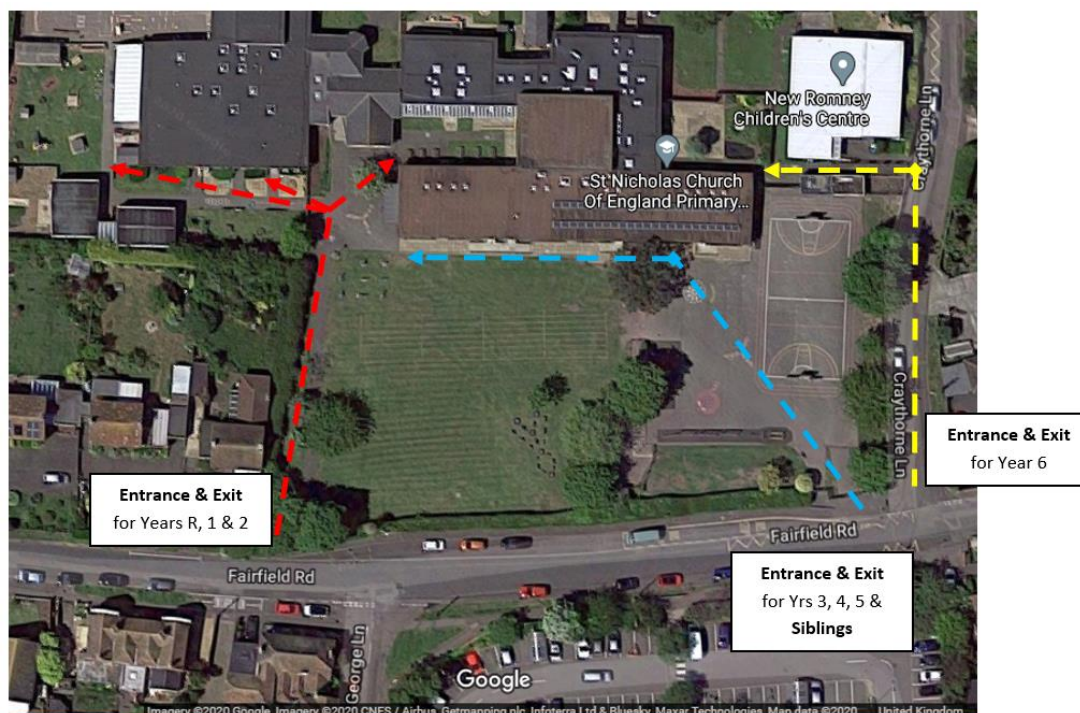
The government has removed the requirement to wear face coverings in law but expects and recommends that they are worn in enclosed and crowded spaces where you may come into contact with people you don't normally meet. This includes public transport and dedicated transport to school or college.

#### **Movement around the school**

Movement around the school should continue to be limited. While passing briefly in the corridor is low risk, we will avoid creating busy corridors, entrances and exits as much as possible.

#### **Arriving and leaving school**

We will continue to operate a three gate entry system as this eased congestion onto and around the school site. The gates will continue to be monitored by members of the leadership and welfare team. Please see below which gate you and your child should use.



- If you have a child in **Year R, 1 or 2**, please use the side gate entrance, located on Fairfield Road opposite George Lane. This is represented by the **red** arrow.
- you have a child in **Year 3, 4 or 5** please use the main gate entrance, located on Fairfield Road. This is represented by the **blue** arrow.
- If you have a child in **Year 6**, please use the side gate, located on Craythorne Lane, next to the Children's Centre. This is represented by the **yellow** arrow.
- If you have more than one child in our school, please use the 'Sibling Entrance' to drop off and pick up your children. This is represented by the **blue** arrow.

**The school gates will open at 8.30am and close promptly at 8.45am  
At collection they will open at 3.00pm**

### Other considerations

#### **SEND**

Some pupils with SEND (whether with EHC Plans or on SEN support) will need specific help and preparation for the changes to routine that this will involve, so staff will work to support these needs, for example using social stories.

#### **GENERAL ORGANISATION**

##### **Attendance**

It is vital for all children to return to school to minimise as far as possible the longer-term impact of the pandemic on children's education, wellbeing and wider development.

Pupils who miss out on time in the classroom risk falling further behind. Those with higher overall absence tend to achieve less well in primary school. School attendance and daily reporting of all absences to the DfE will start again at beginning of the autumn term. This means, the usual rules on school attendance will apply, including:

- parents' duty to secure that their child attends regularly at school where the child is a registered pupil at school and they are of compulsory school age;

- schools' responsibilities to record attendance and follow up absence
- the availability to issue sanctions, including fixed penalty notices in line with governors and local authorities' codes of conduct

### **Safeguarding and support**

- We will continue to follow our safeguarding policy.
- There will always be a Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) on site daily.
- There will always be a trained first aider on site daily.
- The Learning Mentor & Family Liaison Officer (FLO) will be available to support children and families.

### **Behaviour expectations**

Behaviour expectations need to be clearly understood and supported by all members of our community.

We also acknowledge that some pupils will return to school having been exposed to a range of adversity and trauma, including bereavement, anxiety and in some cases increased welfare and safeguarding risks. This may lead to an increase in social, emotional and mental health concerns and some children, particularly vulnerable groups such as children with a social worker and young carers, will need additional support and access to services such as educational psychologists, social workers, and counsellors. Additionally, provision for children who have SEND may have been disrupted during partial school closure and there may be an impact on their behaviour. We will need to work with local services (such as health and the local authority) to ensure the services and support are in place for a smooth return to schools for pupils.

### **Drop off and pick up**

The day will no longer start with staggered opening and finishing times. We will however encourage the use of separate gates to minimise the numbers of adults entering and leaving the school via any one gate. We will no longer be operating a one-way system on site.

### **Lunch times/Play times**

- We will have staggered play times and lunch times for KS1, LKS2 and UKS2.

### **Lunches**

- Children will eat in their KS groups in the hall; KS1, LKS2 & UKS2
- There will be 3 sittings for lunchtime service 11.30am, 12.00noon and 12.30pm
- Please see the extensive menu available on the [school website](#).

### **Water and mid-morning snack**

- Children are to be encouraged to bring named water bottles to school.
- Drinking water taps will only be used to refill water bottles and not for direct drinking.
- In KS2 a mid-morning piece of fruit or vegetable can be provided by parents. No other snacks will be allowed. The normal KS1 fruit and Veg scheme will be in place from September
- Milk will be offered to EYFS children in the morning for the start of the school year up to the term of their 5<sup>th</sup> birthday.

### **Toilets**

- Pupil numbers in communal areas such as toilets will continue to be limited.
- The hygiene suite will be allocated only for pupils or staff who are poorly.
- We are unable to provide toilet facilities for parents or preschool children at present.
- If children have a toileting accident, parents will be called in to support their child.
- Children will be encouraged to wash and dry their hands properly.
- They will wash their hands frequently throughout the day.
- PHE and H&S posters will be displayed to remind children of what is required.



## **Parents and visitors**

- The office screen will be open during the school day from 8.30am to 4.00pm – please only use the office when really necessary. Where you are able we would appreciate it if you would communicate by phone or email.
- Parents are encouraged to communicate with teachers via Dojo or phoning the school office.
- Parents must implement their own social distancing.
- Visitors to the school site will be limited.
- Suppliers and contractors will be encouraged to attend the site for essential business only and if possible, outside of the teaching hours.
- Staff will be told not to have personal deliveries to school.

## **Communication**

- Communication with teachers will need to come through the main office or Class Dojo
- Staff to contact parents via the office email, telephone or Class Dojo with less important matters
- Please refer to the Communication's Policy on our website.

## **Curriculum**

The key principles that underpin our curriculum planning:

- Education is not optional: all pupils receive a high-quality education that promotes their development and prepares them for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of later life.
- The curriculum remains broad and ambitious: all pupils continue to be taught a wide range of subjects, maintaining their choices for further study and employment.
- Remote education, where needed, is high quality and aligns as closely as possible with in-school provision: schools and other settings continue to build their capability to educate pupils remotely, where this is needed.

Our aim will be to teach an ambitious and broad curriculum in all subjects from September, but make use of existing flexibilities to create time to cover the most important missed content.

Substantial modification to the curriculum may be needed at the start of the year, so teaching time will be prioritised to address significant gaps in pupils' knowledge with the aim of returning to the school's normal curriculum content as soon as possible. However, as a school we feel that all curriculum areas should be addressed from September 2020 ensuring our children receive a broad and balanced curriculum whilst still addressing any gaps in learning.

Our curriculum planning will be informed by an assessment of pupils' starting points and addressing the gaps in their knowledge and skills, in particular making effective use of regular formative assessment (for example, quizzes, observing pupils in class, talking to pupils to assess understanding, scrutiny of pupils' work).

## **Develop remote education so that it is integrated into school curriculum planning**

Remote education will continue to be an essential component in the delivery of the school curriculum for some pupils, alongside classroom teaching, or in the case of a local lockdown. We will plan to ensure any pupils educated at home for some of the time are given the support they need to master the curriculum and so make good progress. We may consider it appropriate to suspend some subjects for some pupils in exceptional circumstances.

There will be online provision of educational activities for children to access when they are at home if they have to self-isolate. The school will use where it needs to the Oak National Academy site for its provision alongside Class Dojo. Teachers will try all they can to continue to support online learning as far as reasonably practicable in terms of commenting on pupils work etc. Please refer to the Remote Learning Policy

## **Physical activity**

Pupils will be kept in consistent groups. Outdoor sports will be prioritised where possible, and large indoor spaces used where it is not. We will continue to work with external coaches, clubs and organisations for curricular and extra-curricular activities where they are satisfied that this is safe to do so. Activities such as the daily mile, making break times and lessons active and encouraging active travel will help enable pupils to be physically active while encouraging physical distancing.

## **Pupil wellbeing and support**

Pupils may be experiencing a variety of emotions in response to the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak, such as anxiety, stress or low mood. This may particularly be the case for vulnerable children, including those with a social worker and young carers. It is important to contextualise these feelings as normal responses to an abnormal situation. Some children may continue to need support to re-adjust to school and the national situation.

School allows social interaction with peers, carers and teachers, which benefits wellbeing. We will ensure pastoral support is there for all pupils designed to:

- support the rebuilding of friendships and social engagement
- address and equip pupils to respond to issues linked to coronavirus (COVID-19)
- support pupils with approaches to improving their physical and mental wellbeing

We will continue to provide more focused pastoral support where issues are identified that individual pupils may need help with, drawing on external support where necessary and possible.

## **PPA Time (for teachers only)**

PPA time will be continued as normal with the same adults providing release to the same classes

## **Trips**

School trips will resume during the school year but only after risk assessments have been carried out.

## **Uniform**

- Our high expectations in terms of our uniform and footwear will resume from September. Uniform plays a valuable role in contributing to the ethos of our school and sets an appropriate tone. All pupils will need to follow our policy.
- Uniform should be washed regularly - preferably every second day to maintain good hygiene as part of the Covid-19 requirements.

## **Belongings**

- Children will only bring limited belongings to school. We will be using cloakrooms; however, staff must limit the numbers using the cloakroom at any one time.
- Cloakrooms must be completely cleared at the end of each week.

## **Conclusion**

I'm sure you can appreciate that although these measures may seem quite severe, we need to ensure the health and safety of our whole community. All schools will be interpreting the guidance differently but we hope that you recognise that at St Nicholas CE Primary we have been proportionate in our response. We have tried to balance the risks of Covid-19 and the omicron variant with the fact that we are a school educating and supporting children. We will always aim to do our best endeavours especially when it relates to social distancing, but we need to be realistic in our response and consider not only health and safety needs but mental health also.

We appreciate that members of our school community continue to be worried about the present situation, but hopefully this document will help everyone feel much more informed about the measures we have in place.

Thank you once again for your support and understanding.

**Christopher Dale**  
**Headteacher**