



5 November 2020

Dear Parents and Carers

Update for Plymstock School with regard to National Restrictions from 5 November

Following my letter yesterday afternoon I am writing with a further update on how schools will operate within the National restrictions that came into force from 12:01am on 5 November.

We have waited to communicate further with you until we received the Department of Education (DfE) update to explain how schools should implement and make changes in line with national guidance on lockdown. Your patience and understanding in this unprecedented year, with ongoing and short notice updates from the Department of Education, is very much appreciated.

Here is the link: https://www.gov.uk/guidance/education-and-childcare-settings-new-national-restrictions-from-5-november-2020?utm_source=4%20November%202020%20C19&utm_medium=Daily%20Email%20C19&utm_campaign=DfE%20C19

The implications for us are that we will continue in school largely as we have been doing, with two small amendments to the previous national guidance issued in September:

- 1. Face coverings:** We have already taken action here from September and have an established WeST and Plymstock protocol; this conforms to the new guidance that, from today, face coverings will now be compulsory (and non-negotiable) in all communal areas in all schools, for all secondary age pupils and staff, unless exempt. **These will need to be face coverings rather than just visors.** Students will not be required to wear face coverings in lessons or when in their break or lunchtime bubbles (unless they wish to), but must do so at all other times.
- 2. Clinically Extremely Vulnerable groups:** Speak to your GP or specialist clinician, if you have not already done so, to understand whether your child should still be classed as clinically extremely vulnerable. Those children whose doctors have confirmed they are still clinically extremely vulnerable are advised not to attend school while lockdown is in place. Please contact the school and confirm so that we can make appropriate arrangements for your child to be able to continue their education at home.

Ventilation: The weather has turned much colder but we are still required to keep rooms ventilated for health and safety reasons. This will mean doors and windows will be kept open as much as possible. Students will be allowed to wear coats over their blazers and/or dark jumpers underneath blazers, and t-shirts under their shirts if they wish to, to enable them to keep warm.

Travelling to and from school

The new National Restrictions (lockdown) from 5 November will not apply to students in school or travelling to and from school.

The restrictions regarding leisure time would apply if students are outside in the local community beyond what would be considered a reasonable time to travel to and from school.

We, like you, have the highest expectations of behaviour when students travel to and from school. **The police have advised that they expect students to go straight home and not to gather anywhere.** If a student enters a shop on their journey to or from school, the following rules must be adhered to: face coverings must be worn and strict social distancing observed. Obviously, the school's expectations that our students remain polite and considerate to all other members of the community remain.

We live in extraordinary times. The additional rules and regulations surrounding COVID-19 can often be confusing for young people and adults alike; we have spent time this week discussing these changes with our students.

We have explained to our students that:

- Our school sits at the heart of the Plymstock community; we are known for our high expectations and standards; literally generations of families have attended here.
- Quite rightly, parents/carers and local residents expect our students to be proud of that history and their uniform. Our students need to model the good behaviour that you expect at home and that we expect, both in and while travelling to and from school every day.
- These are rules for their safety and for the safety of their families; some of these rules are becoming laws enforceable by fines outside of school.
- We recommend, for their own safety and for that of other students, that they wear a face covering to and from school, when mixing with other year groups.
- They need to maintain social distancing from other adults in public places: shops and bus queues. It is expected of all of us.

In order to continue to reduce risk as much as possible and follow the DfE guidance on the re-opening of schools, I have included a reminder for you on our main system of controls:

- Students with Covid-19 symptoms, or with family members with symptoms, must stay away from school
- Promoting good hygiene around the use of tissues for sneezes and coughs
- Enhanced cleaning procedures
- Hand sanitiser on entry to classroom before and after leaving
- The compulsory use of face coverings which gives us the opportunity for students to move across our site between lessons and access their subject specialist teachers in their rooms, rather than remaining all day in the same classroom
- A strictly enforced one-way system (i.e. not passing each other face-to-face)
- Staff supervising lesson changeover
- Teacher presence to enforce corridor behaviour (Teachers will also wear masks in corridors)
- No queuing in corridors - students will go straight in to the classroom.

Other measures remain unchanged, we will still be using:

- Separate year group bubbles where students are registered, returning at break and lunch to their year group areas
- Separate pastoral year team bases; our pastoral base, the HUB, will remain closed to students from different year groups
- Staggered start times
- Monitoring of children at break and lunch by the Senior Leadership Team, duty staff, members of our pastoral team and at lunch by Meal Time Assistants
- Where possible we encourage you to send your child with a drink, snacks and a packed lunch from home. The Galley will remain closed to students, however, we will be operating our Galley (school canteen) to provide students with access to food with a reduced menu that can be pre-ordered. Details on pre-ordering can be found on our website here:
<https://plymstockschool.org.uk/the-galley/>

You will find a copy of this letter and updated answers to some frequently asked questions (FAQs) on our dedicated page here: <https://plymstockschool.org.uk/re-opening-september-2020/>

As I stated in my letter yesterday, we all appreciate that the situation in coming weeks will or could change quickly, and I will endeavour to keep you updated as quickly and comprehensively as I can. If we are affected adversely by staff absence in the coming weeks, we may have to consider sending a year group home to continue to keep the school open for the majority of students. Currently, this is not a situation we are facing but one we wish to make you aware of as a possibility and one for which we will plan to minimise disruption for as short a period as possible.

I would like to thank you again for your on-going support in ensuring we can keep our school community safe.

We are all very much in this together, and as a school we will continue to support all of our community and provide opportunities for additional support wherever this is needed, both educationally and emotionally.

Take care, stay safe and well.

Yours sincerely



Rob Pearsall
HEADTEACHER