



Frequently Asked Questions - Information for families

From September 2020 the government has said that all secondary school students should continue full-time education.

The full DfE guidance can be read at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/actions-for-schools-during-the-coronavirus-outbreak/guidance-for-full-opening-schools>

The logistics of this guidance is to ensure that the site is kept clean, social distancing adhered to and that students receive lessons from subject specialists. There will be no compromise in the educational experience students receive or our care and support for their well-being.

Updated to the new National Restrictions (lockdown) from 5 November

This document aims to answer some of the many questions we know you may have.

Will schools continue to be open full-time?

Schools will remain open. The Department for Education has said that in England all students, in all year groups, will be expected to continue to attend school full-time from Thursday 5 November.

The Government will continue to prioritise the wellbeing and long-term futures of our young people and will not be closing core educational facilities, like early years settings, schools, colleges, universities and vocational training centres.

It remains very important for children and young people to attend, to support their wellbeing and education and help working parents and guardians.

Senior clinicians still advise that school is the best place for children to be, and so they should continue to go to school.

What will schools have to do?

The government has set out a system of controls for schools and said the following four points must happen in all schools, all the time.

- keep pupils with Covid-19 symptoms, or with family members with symptoms, away from school
- introduce more frequent hand-sanitising/handwashing
- promote good hygiene around the use of tissues for sneezes and coughs
- have enhanced cleaning procedures

It also wants schools to minimise contact between individuals and maintain social distancing wherever possible. In a large school such as Plymstock School, the DfE recognises this will not always be possible; we have enabled social distancing by the creation of year group bubbles.



All classrooms are arranged to maximise the space between students, who are seated 'shoulder to shoulder' and facing forward.

Which students can attend school?

All students. The only exceptions will be those:

- have tested positive to Covid-19
- have been asked to self-isolate as they have been in close contact with someone who has tested positive to Covid-19
- suspect that they have Covid-19
- are too ill to attend and so absent due to 'normal' reasons of ill health.
- who are shielding

Should my child attend school?

Yes. Parents/Carers will have a legal responsibility to ensure that their child(ren) attends.

Plymstock School recognises that for some children this will be a significant challenge, but dedicated school staff will work in partnership with Parents and Carers to ensure all students can return to their full-time education and provision.

Attendance remains mandatory again from the autumn term, unless students or a close contact develop symptoms or test positive for coronavirus. We will support families by following our attendance policy.

Guidance on shielding and protecting people who are clinically extremely vulnerable from COVID-19

Those children whose doctors have confirmed they are still clinically extremely vulnerable are advised not to attend school while this advice is in place. If you have not already confirmed your son/daughter falls into this category, you should contact the school immediately after taking advice from your child's doctor. We will make appropriate arrangements for your child to be able to continue their education at home.

What steps are being taken at school to limit risks?

We are taking a number of steps to make sure we can open as safely as possible. In summary:

- Those who either have Covid-19 or are showing symptoms of it will not be allowed on-site.
- There will be a focus on regular and rigorous hand hygiene (washing and sanitising) and respiratory hygiene (catch it, bin it, kill it).
- There will be enhanced cleaning through the day and daily 'deep cleans' of the school.
- As far as possible students will be organised in year team groups with as little mixing as possible.



- Strict seating plans are used for each class to ensure that anyone who comes in close contact with a student or teacher who does test positive can be identified and contacted as soon as possible.

Staff and student relationships

- One of Plymstock School's greatest strengths is the relationships between adults & students and adults & adults.
- This is a fundamental part of teaching and our staff welcome all children into our school; it is different but, most importantly, safe.
- The layout of our classrooms has been altered to allow social distancing. For example, additional rooms have been re-timetabled to ensure all students can face the front.
- Our focus is on ensuring the safety and well-being of our staff and students.

How will you keep my child safe?

We are operating on the principle of year group bubbles and social distancing where possible. Whilst we cannot guarantee complete separation of year groups, we take all reasonable steps to avoid social mixing between year groups when they are on site and maximise the potential for social distancing; for example, the use of face coverings in corridors to allow students to move from classroom to classroom. **Students must bring their own face mask.**

- Where possible, desks face forward, with students sitting 'shoulder to shoulder'.
- Handwashing / social distancing posters are displayed throughout the school.
- Handwashing / sanitising happens before entering and leaving every classroom.
- Staff encourage regular hand washing / sanitising.
- Toilets are sanitised regularly.
- Social distancing markers are clear throughout the school.
- Personal belongings (food, pens, books etc.) will not be shared. **Students must bring their own equipment.**
- Where subject-specific requirements mean resources must be shared, a separate risk assessment will be followed, e.g. students will sanitise hands before and after handling equipment and the equipment will be cleaned between groups.
- Doors are propped open to minimise touching door handles, as much as possible.
- When working in classrooms within a bubble, we use traditional seating plans with allocated seats by subject, this enables tracing should the need arise.
- One-way systems are in place, where possible, to minimise movement and social mixing as students and staff move around the school.
- Each year group has their own outdoor zone - they are not permitted to go anywhere else:
 - Year 7 – The New 3G
 - Year 8 – The Cricket pitch



- Year 9 – The Tennis Courts
- Year 10 – The Old 3G
- Year 11 – The areas in front of the Galley and Roundabout
- Years 12 & 13 – The Sixth Form Area
- Year Groups and Tutor rooms are organised into bubbles:
 - Year 7 – Humanities
 - Year 8 – Maths, Dance Studio 1 and the Library Classroom
 - Year 9 – Eco Block, The Temporary Classrooms (in front of Sixth form area), TE1 and TE10
 - Year 10 – English
 - Year 11 – Modern Foreign Languages and Drama 1 and 2
 - Year 12 & 13 – Science
- We are operating our Galley (school canteen) to provide students with access to food with a reduced menu that can be pre-ordered.
- We do not accept visitors on site, except in emergencies.
- As far as reasonably possible, meetings are conducted remotely via MS Teams.

Student movement around the site

Following the advice from the WHO and the DfE change on the use of face coverings in English schools, we have as a Trust decided that:

- All secondary age students will be expected to wear a face covering in corridors and any communal areas where social distancing outside of the year group bubble is difficult.

This additional preventative measure now gives Plymstock School 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.

However, in order to mitigate risk and follow the DfE guidance, we also incorporate the following:

- A strictly enforced one-way system (i.e. not passing each other F2F)
- 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 into the classroom.
- Hand sanitiser on entry to classroom before and after removing masks.
- Desks are cleaned after each lesson
- Procedures for the removal and safe storage of masks on entry, they can't be just placed on the desks. Training our students on how to take a mask off, e.g. storage, avoid touching their faces, not touching their mouths.



Other measures remain unchanged; we still use:

- 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 Senior Leadership Team, duty staff, members of our pastoral team and at lunch by Meal Time Assistants.
- The Galley remains closed to students, however, we operate our Galley (school canteen) to provide students with access to food with a reduced menu that can be pre-ordered. Please see information on how to order and download the App at <https://plymstockschool.org.uk/the-galley/>

Is there increased cleaning?

Yes.

We have increased cleaning throughout the school day. This includes:

- Touch points, such as handrails and door handles
- Toilets
- Emptying of bins
- Desks and other surfaces

Will children be social distancing?

As far as is reasonably possible. The DfE recognises that schools cannot maintain full social distancing if all students are on site. We will take all reasonable action to minimise extended, close contact between students. For example:

- All classrooms are arranged to maximise the space between students, who are seated 'shoulder to shoulder' and facing forward.
- We run assemblies using MS Teams so that large groups of students do not need to gather in close proximity.
- As far as is reasonably possible, staff ensure that students observe distancing when queuing is unavoidable.
- All secondary age pupils are expected to wear a face covering in corridors and any communal areas where social distancing outside of the year group bubble is difficult.

How are students and teachers protected?

No one with Covid-19 symptoms is allowed on site. If someone develops symptoms whilst on site, they are isolated until arrangements have been made for them to leave safely and as quickly as possible. **If a student is tested as being positive for Covid-19, all those who have been in close proximity to the student are contacted and informed that they must self-isolate.**



We have PPE available for staff.

First Aid procedures

These have been adapted for Covid-19 and, in the event of a non Covid-19 emergency, our team of staff will contact you and make arrangements for you to collect your child, should this eventuality occur.

Similarly, this applies if there is a need for support with any prescribed medication.

If you have any questions, please contact your child's Head of Year/Assistant Head of Year/Tutor or please email info@plymstockschool.org.uk

What will my child be learning?

Our aim is to deliver a curriculum that is as close as possible to that which we would offer if there were no Covid-19 to consider. Practical subjects have had to make some adjustments to the activities that they offer in order to be Covid-19 secure.

How will the school day work?

Schools are expected to teach a broad and balanced curriculum when they return, but the school day may look different to previous years. For example, we may not be able to offer all practical lessons where equipment cannot easily be cleaned between year group bubbles.

How should my child get to school?

Government advice is that students should, as far as possible, walk or cycle to school.

If you are planning to drop your child off by car, please be aware that there is no vehicle access for Parents and Carers.

Please be considerate to our neighbours, other road users and pedestrians if dropping your child off in Church Road and Lands Park.

Please refer to Stagecoach and Plymouth Citybus regarding their services.

Please remember that face coverings are now a legal requirement on public transport. (See section below for more detail.)

What about getting to and from school?

We will be staggering start and finish times to keep groups apart. Walking or cycling to school will be encouraged as part of the UK Government's overall strategy.

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

As a school we would still recommend that students wear face coverings at all times whilst travelling to and from school and that they social distance at these times as well.



Where students are present in the local community beyond what would be considered a reasonable time to travel to and from school, this is classed as leisure time. Restrictions would apply to them.

How will you stop my child mixing with other children in other bubbles once the school day is finished?

Once students have left our site, we have no authority other than to remind them of the need for social distancing and, **in lockdown, that they go straight home.** It is vitally important that Parents and Carers communicate this message clearly to their children.

Social distancing as students travel to and from school remains the responsibility of Parents and Carers.

Can parents visit the site?

Parents should not gather in groups at school gates or go on site without an appointment. We are more than happy to accommodate visitors but only by prior appointment so the correct procedures can be put in place to maintain both the necessary social distancing for adults and hygiene procedures.

For purely practical reasons, to minimise unnecessary face to face contact and, given the limited capacity of available spaces for meetings on our site, we will communicate in the first instance with parents by telephone, email or virtual platforms, such as MS Teams.

In all cases we have done everything we can to consider each situation and apply a practical way that mitigates the risk by removing the possibility for students mixing as much as we can on site.

Could schools close again?

Currently, health officials have advised that a whole school closure "will not generally be necessary" as the Education Secretary, Gavin Williamson, has said there is little evidence of coronavirus being transmitted in schools. We will of course closely monitor any further DfE and Public Health England updates on the advice for schools.

If students can't come in, schools are expected to have a home-working plan ready to go. We have our own plans and are prepared should we need to re-launch remote or distance learning for any period of time. This process has been refined based on feedback from students, staff, and parents and carers in the summer term, to ensure we provide the highest quality offer of remote teaching and learning.

I think we all appreciate that the situation in coming days/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.

Will my child have to wear uniform?

Yes. Students will be expected to wear normal uniform from September.



Government advice now states, *“Uniforms do not need to be cleaned any more often than usual, nor do they need to be cleaned using methods which are different from normal.”*

They will also need to be responsible for having the correct equipment and ensuring that they bring the correct exercise books to each lesson.

Students will wear PE kit to school on the day this is timetabled.

Students who do not have a Plymstock School branded top, bottoms or hoody **may still wear** a plain navy or black jumper and plain navy or black tracksuit bottoms. Only **small**, unobtrusive logos are permitted.

To ensure that we are complying with safeguarding, if a student does not have a branded top or hoody, **they must also wear their school blazer** on top of their kit so that they are **clearly identifiable as a Plymstock School student**.

The following link will take you to the relevant section on the school website regarding our PE uniform expectations outside of these unprecedented times.

<https://plymstockschool.org.uk/uniform/>

If you require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact the school.

Does my child have to wear a face covering?

Plymstock School and WeST schools have adopted a wide range of protective measures to reduce the transmission risk of COVID-19. However, despite these measures, there are still occasions, specifically in secondary school settings, where social distancing is difficult, such as in corridors or busy communal areas.

Our aim here is to provide a further layer of protection to both pupils and staff.

- **All secondary age pupils will be expected to wear a face covering in corridors and any communal areas where social distancing outside of the year group bubble is difficult.**

Face coverings do not need to be worn:

- By any students who is exempt (please see the exemption guidance for further information).
- By students or teachers in the classroom or during lessons, but both are still free to do so if they wish.
- Whilst consuming food and drink at break and lunch times.
- Whilst students are mixing with students within their own year group bubble only.

Public Transport

Please remember that face coverings are now a legal requirement on public transport. All secondary age pupils travelling to and from school via public transport or school transport will be expected to wear a face covering and follow all appropriate hygiene measures required by the respective companies.



It is recommended that re-usable face coverings are washed on a daily basis. Whichever type of face covering is used, it should be removed with care and your child should wash or sanitise their hands afterwards.

WeST staff and secondary age pupils should bring their own face coverings to school as they would for use on public transport, shops, and wider society. If any individual forgets to bring a face covering to school, a disposable mask will be provided.

You will find a copy of the **WeST Guidance on Face Coverings in Secondary Schools** on our website.

Will you provide lunch for my child?

Where possible we encourage you to send your child with a drink, snacks and a packed lunch from home.

Lunch is provided for students who are eligible for Free School Meals.

We are operating our Galley (school canteen) to provide students with access to food with a reduced menu that can be pre-ordered.

This is purely a practicable step, as we are unable to carry out the necessary cleaning between each bubble accessing the Galley to ensure that all students can have access to food in a timely and fair manner.

Secondly, this decision has been taken to minimise queuing and mitigate the risk of a large gathering within a confined space.

Details on pre-ordering can be found on our website here:

<https://plymstockschool.org.uk/the-galley/>

Will my child be able to use outside space?

- Yes, they will be able to go outside during breaks and lunch. Each year group will have their own outdoor bubble - they won't be permitted to go anywhere else:
 - Year 7 – The New 3G
 - Year 8 – The Cricket pitch
 - Year 9 – The Tennis Courts
 - Year 10 – The Old 3G
 - Year 11 – The areas in front of the Galley and Roundabout
 - Years 12 & 13 – The Sixth Form Area

Students will sanitise their hands when they leave and re-enter classrooms.

I've received a letter from the NHS saying I should be shielding. Does my child have to attend?

Yes, unless the letter specifically states that members of your household must also shield. **Please email** info@plymstockschool.org if you are shielding.



My child is unwell. Should they attend?

No. No one, staff or students, exhibiting any symptoms, to include coughing and/or fever, should attend.

They remain at home for the period of isolation. 

What should I do if I suspect my child, or someone else in my household, has Covid-19?

DO NOT SEND THEM TO SCHOOL.

The DfE/PHE guidance if a pupil/staff member displays symptoms

If anyone becomes unwell with a new, continuous cough or a high temperature, or has a loss of, or change in, their normal sense of taste or smell (anosmia), they must be sent home and advised to follow the **STAY AT HOME GUIDANCE** for households with possible coronavirus (COVID-19) infection or COVID-19: guidance for households with possible coronavirus infection

IN ALL CASES

Seek and follow the latest government advice.

- Currently, this would be to arrange a Covid-19 test and to isolate whilst awaiting the result, after which you must follow the guidance of the NHS 'Test and Trace' team.
- If someone tests negative, if they feel well and no longer have symptoms similar to coronavirus (Covid-19), 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 other people until they are better. Other members of their household can stop self-isolating.
- If someone tests positive, they should follow the '[stay at home: guidance for households with possible or confirmed coronavirus \(COVID-19\) infection](#)' and must continue to self-isolate for at least 7 days from the onset of their symptoms and then return to school only if they do not have symptoms other than cough or loss of sense of smell/taste.

There are health vulnerabilities in my family home. Should my child attend?

Government advice states they are fine to attend and pose minimal risk.

We have been contacted by the 'track and trace' system and advised to self-isolate. Can my child attend?

No. You should all remain at home for the period of isolation.

In addition, we would request that you contact the school and share this information so we can take advice from PHE and assess the risk to other students and staff who may be affected.



Will remote 'distance / online learning' continue?

No, as all students are expected to attend school. The only exception will be for students who are shielding, for whom we will make appropriate arrangements.

However, if the school has to close, we have a contingency plan in place to revert back to online learning.

Examinations 2021

The Government has been clear that exams will go ahead next summer, as they are the fairest and most accurate way to measure a pupil's attainment.

The Government have prioritised the need to keep schools and colleges open so that children are able to keep progressing towards exams and the next stage of education or employment.

Students now have more time to prepare for their exams next year, as most AS, A levels and GCSEs will be held 3 weeks later to help address the disruption caused by the pandemic.

Reducing (mitigating) Risk

For Plymstock School we have taken all reasonable and practicable steps to mitigate the risks as much as possible to limit interaction, for example the sharing of rooms and social spaces between groups as much as possible.

The system of controls: **Protective measures.** Prevention (5) of the DfE guidance states we need to minimise contact between individuals and maintain social distancing wherever possible.

As a school we have properly and fully considered this and put in place measures that suit our particular circumstances.

The overarching principle that we have been asked to apply is reducing the number of contacts between children and staff. The guidance has stated this once again can be achieved through keeping groups in separate in bubbles and through maintaining distance between individuals.

Keeping you up to date and informed

Further specific details will continue to be released to students, Parents and Carers using our MyEd Direct Contact App, Show My Homework (SMHW), email, a dedicated page on our school website and our school website newsfeed.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all Parents and Carers for your support throughout this period of time. Your patience and understanding, as well as feedback, has been very much appreciated.

What should I do if I have questions?

If you have subject-specific questions, please email your child's teacher. If your question is about your child's wellbeing, then please contact their tutor, Assistant Head of Year or Head of Year.



Heads of Year / Assistant Heads of Year

Year 7

Mrs Miranda Kirk, Head of Year 7: MKirk@plymstockschool.org.uk

Mr Phil Chivers, Assistant Head of Year 7: PChivers@plymstockschool.org.uk

Year 8

Mrs Cheryle Robb, Head of Year 8: CRobb@plymstockschool.org.uk

Ms Claire Offer, Assistant Head of Year 8: COffer@plymstockschool.org.uk

Year 9

Mr Simon Wookey, Head of Year 9: SWookey@plymstockschool.org.uk

Miss Kirsty Davis, Acting Assistant Head of Year 9 kdavis@plymstockschool.org.uk

Year 10

Mr David Wyatt, Head of Year 10: DWyatt@plymstockschool.org.uk

Mr Anthony Dott, Assistant Head of Year 10: ADott@plymstockschool.org.uk

Year 11:

Mrs Sophie Harris, Head of Year 11: SHarris@plymstockschool.org.uk

Mrs Sam Smith, Assistant Head of Year 11: SSmith@plymstockschool.org.uk

Safeguarding

Safeguarding issues should be raised with our Designated Safeguarding Lead, **Leeshia Walton**,
Mobile: 07950336841, email: safeguarding@plymstockschool.org.uk

If you have specific questions with regard to your child's learning, please email:

Mrs Louise Duff, DIRECTOR OF LEARNING for Years 7, 8 & 9: LDuff@plymstockschool.org.uk

Mr Mark Taylor, DIRECTOR OF LEARNING for Years 10 & 11: MATaylor@plymstockschool.org.uk

Miss Liz Monelle, DIRECTOR OF POST-16: EMonelle@plymstockschool.org.uk