



14 July 2021

Dear Parent/Carer,

Step 4 School Operation Guidance – an update for parents and carers

I wanted at this stage to confirm arrangements as we move towards Monday 19 July and what to expect in September in 2021.

Arrangements from Monday 19 July

After considering guidance and in light of the increasing number of cases both within Plymstock School and locally we will be following the advice of Westcountry Schools Trust (WeST) and Plymouth City Council:

- All “bubble” arrangements will be kept in place until the end of the school term, Friday 23 July.
- All our other COVID safe arrangements to mitigate the risk of transmission as much as possible will remain in place for example: one way systems, hand sanitising etc.

Face Coverings

- From Step 4, students, staff and visitors will no longer be required to wear face coverings in classrooms or in communal areas. However, given the increasing numbers both within Plymouth and all schools locally, students and staff can choose to wear face coverings in school if they wish. We would recommend this, given the narrow school corridors in some areas.
- From Step 4, face coverings will no longer be required to be worn on dedicated transport to or from school/college although recommended when busy.

Contact Tracing

In line with the guidance all schools will only complete contact tracing up to 18 July.

From 19 July (Step 4), close contacts will be identified via NHS Test and Trace.

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.

Home Lateral Flow Testing (LFT)

If the test is positive please text **07975005633** to let us know and then follow the NHS guidance for a positive LFD Test.

If you have any issues about how to carry out the tests, please see the COVID-19 self-test help which can be found by following the link [here](#). This includes a YouTube video demonstration as well as the written guide in 12 languages.

Over the last week and weekend, like many schools in Plymouth and nationally, we have had to ask students to self-isolate following a positive test, so it feels important to encourage everyone to maintain the current testing programme of 2 tests per week.



Tests remain voluntary with consent but are encouraged by both the Department for Education (DfE) and Public Health England (PHE) as it will offer additional assurance about safety in our community.

September Return Arrangements

Last week, Mr Taylor wrote to you about arrangements for the start of the new term, you can find a copy of that letter on MyEd or [here](#) on our website.

The full guidance to schools, which comes into effect from 16 August, can be read [here](#) and the parent and carer information from the DfE can be read [here](#).

In summary:

- All Secondary age children aged 11-18 are to be offered two Lateral Flow Tests upon return from the summer holidays – both of these must be done on site at School in an asymptomatic testing facility and return a negative result, *with the first LFT having to be completed before the child's first day back at school.*
- Students will have a second LFT on site, 3 -5 days after their first test, and they will be directed to leave lessons on a rota basis to allow this to happen, with minimum impact on learning.
- Upon completion of the second test, there will no further on-site testing required and home testing will continue to be encouraged twice a week for all staff and students. This guidance will be reviewed by the government at the end of September, and next steps confirmed thereafter.
- Face coverings for adults and children will no longer be required.
- There will be no requirement for social distancing.
- Good ventilation and hand hygiene remain important.
- Contact tracing within schools, unless contacted by NHS Test and Trace to help in the event of an outbreak of Covid, will cease.
- There will no requirement for children (or for adults who have been double vaccinated) to self-isolate if they have been identified as a close contact of a confirmed positive Covid case.

The expectation around onsite Lateral Flow Testing is the same requirement as when schools fully reopened in March after Lockdown; we are very familiar with the routines and expectations around this and can rapidly mobilise our testing facility, supported by a skilled and experienced testing team of staff and volunteers. Mr Taylor, Assistant Headteacher will be overseeing this work for September 2021.

The government guidance allows schools to stagger the return dates of year groups in September to enable this testing to happen, aiming for all children to be back in school having had one test by Friday, 10 September.

September	Activity	Year Group Arrangements
Monday 6th	Staff training day	No students in school as per published term dates
Tuesday 7th	Staff training day	Test 1 by appointment in the Dance Studio for: Year 7, Year 12 and Year 13 <i>pupils will then depart the school site after testing.</i>
Wednesday 8th	Induction Day 1 for Year 7	Testing by appointment in the Dance Studio for: Year 10 and Year 11 <i>pupils will then depart the school site after testing.</i>
Thursday 9th	Induction Day 2 for Year 7 Year 12 and 13 return	Testing by appointment in the Dance Studio for: Year 8 Year 9 <i>pupils will then depart the school site after testing.</i>
Friday 10th	All year groups on site and lessons begin as normal	Test 2 in the Dance Studio. Leave lesson to attend appointment then return to class immediately afterwards: Year 7 Invited Mentors Year 12

For clarity, the timeline for testing from Mr Taylor's letter and return by year group is as below:

Year Group	Test 1 Date (September)	Autumn Term start date	Test 2 Date (September)
7	Tuesday 7	Wednesday 8	Friday 10
8	Thursday 9	Friday 10	Friday 17
9	Thursday 9	Friday 10	Friday 17
10	Wednesday 8	Friday 10	Wednesday 15
11	Wednesday 8	Friday 10	Tuesday 14
12	Tuesday 7	Thursday 9	Monday 13
13	Tuesday 7	Thursday 9	Monday 13

We are delighted that with the easing of measures under Step 4 of the roadmap means we can to enable students to take part in the full range of activities and experiences that Plymstock School has to offer from September.

We will endeavour to keep you updated and informed but this may mean we will once again be communicating changes to current plans and arrangement over the holiday.

I will continue to keep everyone informed weekly of events in school life through the Plymstock School blog as well as celebrating the hard work, resilience and empathy of our students. You will find the link [here](#).

Your patience and understanding over this last year is very much appreciated.

Yours sincerely



Rob Pearsall
Headteacher