

Ardingly College September Return to School Plan (PrePrep School and Nursery)

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Introduction

This communication summarises our plans for a full return to school for the Michaelmas term 2020 and details the measures we will put in place for the start of term to protect the safety of pupils and staff whilst still offering as broad an educational offering as possible. It offers an overview and further information is available to parents if they wish to contact the relevant staff listed. Comprehensive Risk Assessments have been completed to cover all aspects of a safe return to school, and these are available to parents on request. Updates may well be made to the Government guidance (last minute if recent experience is anything to go by) and this summary will be amended if necessary. It will be resent to parents and posted on the College website whenever significant changes are made.

On July 2nd the UK Government published its guidance for the full opening of schools. This was most recently updated on August 7th and parents may wish to read the document in full: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/actions-for-schools-during-the-coronavirus-outbreak/guidance-for-full-opening-schools>

It is clear that the Government wants all schools to return in September with a full complement of pupils and staff. The guidance, whilst setting out clear expectations on how to make schools as safe as possible, does allow decisions to be made by schools themselves to ensure a full curriculum is delivered. The Government has prioritised hygiene measures over social distancing to make this possible. We will therefore require a selfless and conscientious approach to personal hygiene from all pupils, staff and visitors in September and would greatly appreciate parental support in this matter.

Despite the seemingly endless planning that is going on to respond to the demands of Covid-19 in a school context, we are all extremely excited about welcoming all pupils back to the College. We hope that this information proves informative and valuable but please do not hesitate to get in touch with me if you have any further questions or concerns.

1. The Principle of the guidance

The principle behind the guidance is to prevent transmission by limiting pupil contacts where possible and to have a process to respond to any outbreak.

The guidance states that the essential measures include:

- a requirement that people who are ill stay at home
- robust hand and respiratory hygiene
- enhanced cleaning arrangements
- active engagement with NHS Test and Trace
- formal consideration of how to reduce contacts and maximise distancing between those in school wherever possible and minimise potential for contamination so far as is reasonably practicable.

How contacts are reduced will include:

- grouping children together
- avoiding contact between groups
- arranging classrooms with forward facing desks where appropriate.
- staff maintaining distance from pupils and other staff as much as possible

In Lower Primary schools and Early Years settings it is accepted that social distancing is, in most cases, not practical.

2. College cleaning and hygiene

From the first day the children return to school we will remind them about how to wash their hands correctly and introduce 'catch it, bin it, kill it'. We will reinforce these messages throughout the term and supervise the children to help them understand how to keep themselves safe.

In the classroom we will provide additional tissues and a separate bin for tissue waste. We also ask that parents send tissues and pocket hand sanitiser in with the children. The small pocket tissues are particularly useful for use at breaks or when out and about.

Staff will not usually be wearing PPE, including masks, except for where it is usually worn, such as first aid, nappy changing or if we are caring for a child with symptoms of COVID-19 while awaiting parents. There is no requirement for children to wear masks.

Surfaces that the children are touching, such as toys, books, desks, chairs, doors, sinks, toilets and light switches will be cleaned more regularly than normal. Staff will also wipe them down as often as possible throughout the day.

We have adopted a three-part cleaning system to provide additional layers and frequency of cleaning across the campus. Please see details at <https://www.ardingly.com/coronavirus-update/>

One part of the trilogy system uses Stabilised Aqueous Ozone, which is in effect oxidised water that kills bacteria and virus particles. Because it is non-toxic, SAO can be used by teachers and pupils to clean surfaces, laptops and frequent touchpoints. Cleaning rotas have been increased in all areas, the Dining Hall will be cleaned between sittings and teachers will wipe down classroom desks and touchpoints regularly.

3. Arrival at school and temperature testing

No pupil, member of staff, parent or visitor should come to the College if they have any symptoms of Covid-19. Parents should check their child's temperature each day before leaving home. All pupils (day and Boarding) will have their temperatures checked each day on arrival with a non-contact thermometer. Government guidance does not require us to test temperatures but, for as long as an elevated temperature remains one of the three key symptoms of the illness, we will continue to do so in the interests of all pupils and staff.

In addition to home checks, all pupils will have their temperature taken on arrival at the College campus with a non-contact thermometer. Pre-Prep children will have their temperature taken on arrival at the gate. If any pupil's temperature is 37.8C or above, when taken either at school or at drop off, they will be directed to the Health Centre for a second temperature test with another, in-ear, thermometer.

If the temperature is still 37.8C or above parents will need to collect their child from school as soon as possible.

4. Personal Hygiene

To be successful in preventing or minimising transmission, this plan relies significantly on every child and adult in the College community maintaining rigorous personal hygiene.

Pupils must come to school with their own hand sanitiser and pocket tissues each day.

Pupils are expected to wash their hands on arrival at school, after each break, before and after eating and to wash or sanitise their hands regularly.

Hand sanitiser will be available at the entrance to all classrooms, in the dining hall and at various other points around the College campus. Tissues will be available in all classrooms so that pupils can properly catch and bin any coughs or sneezes if they have failed to bring their own. All surfaces in classrooms will be cleaned by staff before the beginning of each session.

5. School Transport

The Government guidance distinguishes between the rules and expectations on general public transport and what is referred to as 'designated transport'. College buses fall into the second category and this will allow us to run the service at usual capacity. Pupils travelling on College buses will sit next to others from their own year group when possible and will need to use the hand sanitiser provided when boarding the vehicle.

Pupils over the age of 11 will wear masks, provided by parents, on school buses. Parents may choose whether these masks are disposable or washable but the College would prefer the use of washable masks. On arrival at the College, disposable masks will need to be safely removed and thrown away into a refuse bag provided by the driver. Washable masks will need to be removed and placed in a freezer bag kept by the pupil for the duration of the school day before being used again on their return journey. A limited number of disposable masks will be kept by the driver on buses in case of emergency, but it is the pupil's and parents' responsibility to provide the mask routinely.

Parents whose children use public transport, in addition, or as an alternative, to the College's designated buses, must familiarise themselves with the rules for such transport before any journeys to school are made.

If parents have any questions about the routine for school transport please contact Lance Brown, Compliance and Projects Manager, at Lance.Brown@ardingly.com

Travel to, and from school in cars:

Children travelling to school with parents should avoid sharing lifts where possible. If lift-sharing is necessary, then you will need to follow government guidance (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-safer-travel-guidance-for-passengers#private-cars-and-other-vehicles>). Which includes the following:

- share the transport with the same people each time
- keep to small groups of people at any one time
- open windows for ventilation
- travel side by side or behind other people, rather than facing them, where seating arrangements allow
- face away from each other
- consider seating arrangements to maximise distance between people in the vehicle
- clean your car between journeys using standard cleaning products - make sure you clean door handles and other areas that people may touch
- ask the driver and passengers to wear a face covering

Please be aware that if someone your child travels with tests positive for COVID-19, then all car occupants would need to self-isolate for 14 days.

6. Masks

The use of masks remains a hot topic of debate as we approach the return to school. As set out already, this plan prioritises hygiene measures over the wearing of masks in order to enable a more normal school environment and facilitate face-to-face communication.

Although we are not mandating the use of masks indoors at the start of term, ***all pupils over the age of 11 must have a supply of masks in school for use at short notice and if required by a change of policy. Pupils and teachers who wish to wear masks in school are welcome to wear them so that they are able to feel confident of their own health protection.***

In the guidance published on July 2nd and updated on 7th August the Government does not advise pupils or staff to wear masks in schools. The argument is that they are often not used safely and that they may well impede learning. At the same time, the Government asked that face coverings or masks should be worn by everyone over the age of 11, in all shops, from 24th July onwards and many other settings have been added since. We are also acutely aware of the different attitude to masks in a number of other countries around the world. The guidance published also states that the recommendation not to wear masks in schools will be kept under review.

To complicate matters further, many of you will no doubt have read recent advice for the World Health Organisation that children over the age of 12 should wear face masks in line with recommended practice for adults in their country. In addition, the Scottish Government has just announced that all pupils over the age of 12 will wear face coverings in school corridors, communal areas and on school buses from August 31st and, in a now predictable volte-face, the UK Government announced late on 25th August that, in areas under local lockdown, pupils would need to wear masks in corridors and communal areas in schools. At present we are continuing to follow the Government guidance for schools in England. Staff and pupils will not be instructed to wear masks, but we will allow any staff or pupils who feel more comfortable doing so to wear face coverings of their choice. Such face coverings should be appropriate in style and design for a school context and those choosing to wear them must be sure that they follow the guidance on how the masks should be used safely. ***All visitors to the campus however, including parents, will need to wear masks whenever they enter any of the school buildings.***

It is possible, even likely, that Government guidance on masks in schools may change in the future. We also know that there are certain situations in which our pupils already need to wear masks (pupils on school buses who are over the age of 11 for example). Our request at this point, so that we are ready for any future change in policy, is that parents ensure all Senior School pupils have several washable, named masks available if required or that they have a sufficient supply of disposable masks. This will leave us well prepared for changing our approach at short notice.

This will not directly affect any of the pupils within the PrePrep as we will remain within our Bubbles throughout the day, however, should staff need to go to areas in the main College they may be required to wear masks.

7. Year Group Bubbles

The guidance now permits schools to operate with larger bubbles so that all children can return and the necessary breadth of education can be offered. Each Year group will form a single bubble and will work in their usual classrooms.

- 1 Bubble for Y2
- 1 Bubble for Y1
- 1 Bubble for R
- 1 Bubble for Piglets (16 pupils per session, however the overall bubble may be larger as children attend different sessions).
- 1 Bubble for Lambs and Ducklings will be put together to begin with as there are very few Ducklings at the start of term. (max 16 pupils per session, however the overall bubble may be larger as children attend different sessions). Staffing ratios will be maintained, and the groups may choose to use the Lambs rooms in the pigsty and sensory room in the Farmhouse.

Nursery children

Nursery Children can now attend more than one Nursery setting but we need to be informed of this arrangement as staff are required to make contact and ensure they work through the systems of control collaboratively.

8. Classrooms

We are now able to have the normal range of toys and equipment, including soft toys, in a classroom. These will not be shared between bubbles and will be cleaned daily.

Reception and Year 1 will use their usual round tables as these more effectively distance children working independently but Y2 classrooms will use forward facing tables. In KS1 children will have their own sets of pencils, scissors etc and will be discouraged from sharing any resources including those for maths, phonics, science etc.

Blankets and soft toys for rest time can be sent in from home and not shared. These will be sent home at the end of the week for cleaning.

The Playground will be divided into separate areas for each bubble. The main playground will be split into 3 and the Nursery garden into 2.

Toilets may be shared by different bubbles and will be cleaned at lunchtime as well as at the end of the day. Bubbles will not mix in the toilets and separate toilets and handbasins will be identified for each group.

9. Catering

All pupils will be provided with lunch, breakfast and supper as usual. All pupils will remain in year group or after/before school care bubbles for these meals.

Between serving each bubble tables, chairs and equipment within the Barn will be washed or changed. Tables will be spaced out to allow social distancing when entering and leaving the Dining Hall.

10. Assemblies

There will be no whole school assemblies such as Special Assembly. Children will still have assemblies within their bubbles and teachers will present their awards to the children each Friday. We will record these presentations and post them on Tapestry so you can still share this special moment at home.

11. Attendance

All pupils are expected to attend school from September 2020 unless authorised otherwise by the College.

12. Uniform and book bags/PE kit:

Children will wear normal school uniform, which can be washed as normal. PE kit and Bookbags can be brought in. Book bags will be used for reading books and other schoolwork but no other items from home should be brought in.

Nursery children can bring in a toy and blanket for rest time.

13. Calendar

Based on the assumption that changes may need to be made to the original plans for this term, we have chosen not to print hard copies of our Calendar (the usual Yellow Book distributed to all parents). This Calendar is, however, available in PDF format on the College website here <https://www.ardingly.com/news-events/school-calendar-printed/>. We would recommend that parents consult the digital calendar here <https://www.ardingly.com/news-events/events-calendar/> for the most up to date version of the term's events and we thank parents in advance for their understanding of the alterations that may need to be made.

14. Normal school day (8.45am – 3.15pm)

Normal drop off (8.30 – 8.45): from 8.00 onwards the gate to the school will be locked to parents and no parent should enter the site without an appointment. Children arriving between 8.00 and 8.30 can be dropped off at the Gate by Reception. From 8.30 – 8.45am Children will be collected from the 3 school gates by classroom staff in their bubbles. Drop off will be similar to our return in June, with the exception that Hedgehog class will now enter through the gate near Reception and Year 2 will enter through the gate nearest to the barn. We will send you more details and a reminder of how this will work nearer to the start of term.

We will continue to take temperatures on arrival. If your child is distressed or crying we will do all we can to encourage them into school and we can lead them in by the hand, but we will not be able to carry a child or take them from a parents' arms.

As the whole College will be returning all PrePrep and Nursery parents should park in the PrePrep car parks and walk to the appropriate gate to avoid congestion on the road through the college.

Parents will still need to maintain socially distant at the gates and children must enter the site independently. On arrival the children will wash their hands and go straight to the classrooms.

Children arriving after 8.45 will need to contact the school office and Mrs Turner will call for a member of staff from their bubble to come and collect them.

Handwashing will take place regularly throughout the day and at least:

- On arrival
- At break time
- Before lunch
- After lunch
- Mid-afternoon
- Before going home or to clubs

Lessons

These will commence at 8.45 with Registration as usual. We will follow a normal curriculum and timetable with the following restrictions:

- Assemblies will take place in class and within the Year group only. Please note that there will be no whole school assemblies or parent events, such as 'stay and play' or special invite assemblies.
- PE and dance lessons will take place with specialist teachers but will not involve contact and the teacher will, where possible, remain socially distant. Any equipment used will not be shared between bubbles and will be cleaned after use.
- Music and library lessons will be taken by staff working within the bubbles and not by specialist teachers.
- Forest School lessons will continue as normal.

Where possible we will continue to try to take the learning outdoors, particularly while the weather is good.

Most marking and feedback will be given verbally during the lesson and any not done at the time will be completed using Tapestry.

Reading books

Reading books will be sent home but when returned will be stored in a separate box for 72 hours before reissuing. Library books will be used in school but not sent home. When used they will be stored in a separate box for 72 hours before reissuing.

Lunchtime

Each bubble will eat lunch separately.

Cleaning of teeth will not take place for the foreseeable future.

End of day (3.15pm)

Children finishing at the end of the normal school day will be taken to their designated gate by a member of staff and handed over to parents at the gate. Parents will not enter the school site.

15. Extended school day (7.00 – 7.00)

The guidance for care taking place outside the normal school day allows us to mix children from different bubbles. However, please be aware that this means that if there is a confirmed case of COVID-19 in a child attending before or after school care, all the children in the class plus all the children who attended before/after school care on the same days as that child would have to self-isolate for 14 days.

Before School Care

PrePrep and Nursery will open from 7.00am for Before School Care which will take place in the Pigsty. The children from Year 2 to Pre-Nursery will attend in one bubble and parents will be able to enter the site and drop their children off at the Pigsty door.

Parents will be asked to ring the doorbell on arrival and step back to a 2m mark. Staff will then answer the door and take the child in. The parents will not be allowed to enter the building.

If your child is distressed or crying the staff will do all they can to encourage them into school and they can be led by the hand, but we will not be able to carry a child or take them from a parents' arms.

On arrival all children will wash their hands. They will also wash their hands before breakfast and after breakfast.

At 8.00am the Reception and KS1 children will be taken out into the playground where they will be supervised in their separate year group bubbles until the start of the day. In the case of bad weather, they will go straight into classes.

KS1 parents dropping off between 8.00 and 8.30 will take the children to the gate next to Reception where a member of staff will let the child in, take their temperature and take them to their bubbles. A member of the Nursery staff will be present to collect Nursery children.

Parents may not enter any of the school buildings and must leave the site immediately.

After school Clubs

After school clubs with external providers can run but to reduce the risk of transmission, clubs will be restricted to children within the same year group ie. Y2 football will be separate to Y1 or R football clubs, to avoid mixing bubbles. Providers taking the clubs will remain socially distant where possible. Any equipment used will be cleaned afterwards and should not be shared between clubs. Providers will keep their own registers of pupils and parents will not be required to sign registers.

Children in clubs will be returned to their class teacher at 4.25pm and the class teacher will take the children to the relevant gate to be collected by their parents. Parents will not enter the school site.

Children attending After School Care after their club will be taken there directly.

After school Care

Children can attend After School Care as usual in the Cowshed or Pigsty depending on their age.

Nursery children will combine as a single group for After School Care and be cared for by the Nursery staff on duty.

Reception and Year 1 children will be cared for in one bubble and Year 2 in a separate bubble each with their own Teaching Assistant.

Children finishing care **at 4.30pm** will be taken to the gate next to the Reception classroom by a member of staff and handed over to parents at the gate. Parents will not enter the school site.

For children leaving **after 4.30pm**, the main gate will be unlocked, and parents will be able to enter the site. Parents can then collect the children from the classroom door or Pigsty by ringing the bell and stepping back. Then the children will be brought to the door by staff. Parents will not enter the school buildings.

16. Sport, Music and Drama

The guidance on extra-curricular activities is changing frequently at present. The Government plan for a return to school in September does not provide total clarity for sport and states that 'schools have the flexibility to decide how physical education, sport and physical activity will be provided whilst following the measures in their system of controls'. We have been told to prioritise outdoor sport where possible but that indoor venues can also be used as long as appropriate measures are in place to restrict close contact between pupils.

We will be able to run an effective sports programme for all pupils. Group sizes will be limited to class bubbles and equipment will be sanitised after use.

We hope that parents will be patient with us and understand that the situation with sport is constantly evolving. Please direct any of your questions to Ross Millard, Director of Sport, ross.millard@ardingly.com

At the moment the guidance on music in schools is again lacking the detail we would like. Peripatetic teachers are allowed to move between schools so most lessons with Visiting Music Teachers will resume in September. Because of the increase in space that will be required to conduct lessons at a safe distance, not all VMTs will be able to teach in person every day and pupils and parents should therefore expect a mixture of in person and online lessons.

Richard Stafford, our Director of Music, richard.stafford@ardingly.com can answer any parental questions on our music provision next term.

LAMDA lessons will continue as normal with individual lessons socially distanced and those who work in pairs only being with others from their Year Group bubble. Any questions about Drama should be directed to Bronwen Carr-Bates, Director of Drama, at bronwen.carr-bates@ardingly.com

17. Trips

UK domestic and overseas trips are still not possible but schools have been given permission to run day trips within the UK if they wish. We have decided to err on the side of caution and there will be no day trips in the Michaelmas Term.

18. Parents and visitors on-site

As we are sure all parents appreciate it is essential for us to keep visitors to the College site to a minimum and to ensure that various safety measures are in place when visits do take place. Parents should only visit the College site by appointment and should not enter any school buildings or day/boarding houses without prior agreement from the relevant staff. If parents or visitors do enter any school buildings they will be required to wear masks. Larger events involving parents coming to the campus (Parents' Evenings for example) are under review and will likely be rescheduled for later in the academic year or run online where possible.

19. Procedures if a Pupil Develops Symptoms in School

Any pupil developing symptoms of Covid-19 during the school day will be taken out of circulation in school until such time as they have either a) a negative test result b) spent 10 days in isolation and do not have an elevated temperature.

All day pupils and UK boarders who develop symptoms will be expected to be taken home from the school campus as soon as possible and certainly on the same day.

If a student is sent home with symptoms, other members of their household (including siblings) should self-isolate for 14 days, or until a negative test result has been confirmed.

We have created a Covid isolation room in the Farmhouse where children can be monitored while awaiting collection.

1. Day pupil becomes symptomatic:

- Member of staff caring for the child reports to the Head and takes the child to the isolation room in the Farmhouse where they will be monitored until collection. Staff monitoring will wear PPE.
- Parents immediately contacted to come and collect pupil
- Pupil goes home and test is arranged by parents asap
- Pupil's household to self-isolate (including siblings) for 14 days or until pupil is confirmed negative
- If test is negative pupil returns to school whenever well enough and household isolation ends
- If test is positive the pupil must remain at home for the minimum 10-day period and all close contacts and the household of this pupil will need to self-isolate for 14 days. Close contacts will be defined by Public Health England in consultation with the College

All parents should note that during any period of isolation the school will continue to provide some form of remote learning for the affected pupils.

Sick staff

Sick staff will have to follow the same guidance as the children and will be asked to stay at home and undertake appropriate testing..

Many thanks for taking the time to read this lengthy document. As a College community we face a number of challenges next term but if we all take individual responsibility, follow the guidelines and continue to communicate in an open fashion I am confident that we can offer the pupils the education they deserve.

Please do contact me if you have any questions or concerns.

Hilary Nawrocka

Head Teacher
Ardingly PrePrep