



CORONAVIRUS RISK MANAGEMENT PLAN – NOVEMBER 2020

Summary

This Risk Management Plan (“the Plan”) was originally completed prior to the re-opening of the School in September to provide Governors and other stakeholders with suitable reassurance that the School should be safe for staff and pupils and give them confidence that the School would operate as far as possible in accordance with the Government’s expectations.

A similar analysis was provided in June prior to the partial re-opening of the School for limited numbers of pupils in Year 10 and Year 12. Whilst some of the provisions outlined in the earlier version of the Plan remain valid (for example the introduction of a one-way system of movement around the site), many fundamental parameters of operation have changed since that point, essentially:

- to allow for the return of all pupils (up to 900 boys on site rather than 50 at any one time);
- to adopt and incorporate the use of Year Group “bubbles”;
- to focus on keeping “bubbles” separate and avoid mixing between them;
- to adapt to the reduced emphasis on 2 metre distancing (although retained where practical).

Much of the information in the Plan had been shared previously with pupils, parents and other stakeholders in various presentations and communications from the Headmaster, but the September Plan brought those various strands together.

The document was also circulated to all staff before the start of the Autumn Term to provide them with reassurance about the precautions that had been taken to provide them with a safe working environment and allow them to raise any concerns. The September Plan was also published on the School’s website.

The original document was shared with staff in June; many of them returned to the School at some point during the last five weeks of the Summer Term, saw and were reassured at that point by many of the physical changes that had been put in place to deliver a safer environment in accordance with Government guidance at that time.

Subsequently there were further physical changes to many of the teaching spaces and to some communal areas at the School to reflect the new Government guidance in preparation for the return of all pupils in September. These further adjustments were driven by the change in emphasis from “2 metre social distancing” to “Year Group bubbles” as explained below.

Pupils were given a presentation on the changes to the site and to the running of the School on their first day back at the School in September.

A few amendments have been made to the Plan subsequently in response to changes in Government guidance and to take account of practical considerations as the term has progressed

with staff and pupils on site. These are reflected in this November Plan as well as in supporting NYCC template documents which are published on the School's website:

- NYCC – Wider Opening of Schools – September 2020;
- NYCC – Wider Opening of Schools – Music and Drama – October 2020;
- NYCC – Wider Opening of Schools – Physical Education – October 2020.

Guidance

The measures that have been taken to manage and mitigate risks at the School are based on guidance and template documents from various sources but most particularly from the Department for Education and North Yorkshire County Council.¹

On 2 July 2020, the Department for Education (“DfE”) published its “Guidance for full opening – schools” (the “Guidance”). The document required “schools to prepare for all pupils to return full time from the start of the autumn term” and to “draw up plans for the autumn term that address the risks identified using the system of controls set out below”.....“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 depend on the school's circumstances and will (as much as possible) include:

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

It would be reasonable to note that some of the practical suggestions from the DfE are more suited to primary school settings and smaller numbers of pupils, but the objective of the measures that have been put in place at Ermysted's and are outlined in this document is to address as far as possible the issues and concerns that might arise in a secondary school environment.

A large number of updates and amendments to the Guidance from Department for Education have been issued since publication of original information on 2 July. These have continued during the period in which schools have been closed for the summer holidays and indeed been changed almost daily in the week leading up to the start of the Autumn Term. The School's Senior Leadership Team

¹ Sources include:

Department for Education “Guidance for full opening – schools” – 2 July 2020 and subsequent updates
Department for Education (multiple iterations of guidance between April and September)
North Yorkshire Education Services “Risk Assessment : Wider opening of school from September”
North Yorkshire Education Services Checklist (several iterations)
Institute of School Business Leadership
NASUWT checklist
CLEAPPS Guidance Notes (several)
NHS Regional Staff Health Risk Assessment (illustrative)
Firm of professional surveyors (illustrative)
ADW

has continued to monitor and respond appropriately to these further changes as and when they have been released.

On 9 July, North Yorkshire County Council (“NYCC” or “the Local Authority”) published its Risk Assessment for the “Wider-Opening of Schools – September 2020” – this was a more targeted document outlining areas for practical analysis and preparation and developed in consultation with union representatives. This template has been completed to show the “control measures” that have been adopted at the School in response to the possible “hazards” identified by the Local Authority and it has also been published on the School’s website.

Whilst this Risk Management Plan builds on the document that was originally written in May and subsequently updated prior to the partial re-opening of the School for a limited number of pupils in Year 10 and Year 12 from mid-June, there are some fundamental revisions to address changes in the basic guidance. The over-riding emphasis of managing and mitigating risk when limited numbers of pupils returned in June was promulgated on maintaining social distancing and keeping people 2 metres apart, the focus has changed for September in order to facilitate the return of much larger numbers to get all pupils back into schools.

Although a degree of social distancing remains desirable where possible, new instructions are that the risk of transmission of the COVID-19 virus within the school environment should be reduced by measures such as:

- keeping pupils together in stable groups (“bubbles”) and avoiding mixing between them;
- setting out teaching spaces to keep pupils facing in one direction rather than facing each other;
- enhanced handwashing and personal hygiene measures.

The new guidance, however, still supports social distancing of 2 metres:

- between staff and pupils within teaching areas (so that whilst pupils may be seated closer together they should be at least 2 metres from teachers’ desks and equipment such as whiteboards);
- between staff and pupils communicating and interacting in other areas (such as corridors, the Hall or the Refectory);
- between staff (both Teaching Staff and Support Staff) more generally in other parts of the School.

Whilst the School is able to teach whole classes of pupils in a single room rather than having capacity reduced to around ten (where that was necessary to keep pupils 2 metres apart), the emphasis on Year Group “bubbles” does require some fundamental changes to the “normal” logistics of how the School operates. The adjustments that have been introduced include, for example:

- Year 7 and Year 8 classes being based largely in single rooms with reduced movement to specialised teaching areas such as Science laboratories;
- more movement of teachers between rooms in order to both reduce the number people moving around the site between each period and to keep the number of rooms that need to be cleaned for changed occupancy between lessons to a manageable number;
- staggered arrival, break and lunchtimes.

The contents of this Plan have been split under the following headings although clearly these are not mutually exclusive and there is a degree of overlap in many areas:

- Pupil Year Groups
- Classroom teaching
- Remote provision

- Social distancing
- Staff interaction
- Movement around the site and the time available to pupils outside of sessions
- Handwashing and personal hygiene
- Medical provision and personal protection equipment
- Staff health concerns
- Cleaning
- Catering
- Sports changing areas and equipment
- Communal areas and facilities
- Library
- Equipment, water and air conditioning
- Visitors to the site
- School trips and activities
- Alarms and emergencies – including consideration of revised evacuation protocols

Pupil Year Groups

The key factor for managing pupils is now on establishing separate “bubbles” based around Year Groups. The separation of pupils envisaged in the DfE Guidance is not practical in a secondary school where pupils working at Key Stage 4 and Key Stage 5 pursue different combinations of subjects depending on their optional choices. However, steps have been taken to adopt the principle as far as practical.

Each Year Group will be “based” in an area of the School for lessons (where viable) and for registration and form time as follows:

- Year 7 : Main School Lower Floor (Maths corridor)
- Year 8 : Main School Upper Floor (MFL corridor)
- Year 9 : English/DT Upper Floor (English rooms)
- Year 10 : Mobiles / S10 / RS Rooms
- Year 11 : School House
- Year 12 : Sixth Form Centre (Left)
- Year 13 : Sixth Form Centre (Right)

Nominal arrival times will be staggered slightly to spread the flow of pupils entering and leaving the School site but this can only be at the margin because of the groups of pupils sharing external public transport and school buses. Some groups (Years 9 / 10 / 11) will be registered at 8.50 before the first lessons at 09.00, and other groups (Years 7 / 8 / 12 /13) at the end of the day following the end of the last lessons at 15.25.

Break and lunchtimes will be split to reduce contact and potential interaction between Year Groups.

- Year Groups 9 / 10 / 11 will have break at 10.00 between Period 1 and Period 2 and lunch at 12.10 before their form time at 12.50.
- Year Groups 7 / 8 / 12 / 13 will have break at 11.00 between Period 2 and Period 3 and lunch at 12.50 following their form time at 12.10.

The concept of social distancing between pupils remains “where possible”, which in reality means that whilst there is some relaxation of the 2 metre rule in classrooms in order to accommodate the requisite number of pupils, it should still be applied and observed in communal areas and outdoor spaces.

Each Year Group will be issued with new lanyards in different colours in order to help staff with the identification and separation of pupils from the different cohorts when they are moving around the site.

Classroom teaching

The established approach where teachers generally work from individual classrooms and pupils move rooms between lessons has been amended for the Autumn Term to reduce the movement of students around the School site. The basic principle has been changed to ask teachers to move between rooms in many cases, although some groups of pupils will still move to specialised accommodation (in particular the Science laboratories).

In order to teach classes of up to 32 pupils in Year 7 and Year 8 and of numbers of 20 to 30 in most of the sessions in Years 9 / 10 / 11, pupils’ desks and chairs will no longer be separated by distances of 2 metres.

However, the principle of maintaining at least 2 metres between the area used by teachers (desk, computer and access to whiteboards) and pupils has been retained as recommended in the Government’s Guidance. In two rooms where this is not possible, screens have been provided between the teaching space and the nearest pupils’ desks.

All classrooms with movable tables and chairs have been set out so that pupils are facing in the same direction – some were previously arranged with tables set out for group work. Excess furniture has been removed from some classrooms to maximise the distance between pupils in the space available. Pupils’ storage lockers have also been removed from some classrooms for the same reason.

Staff have been instructed to open windows and doors wherever practical during lessons to enhance the flow and circulation of air, except where this involves fire doors without automatic closers (which should not be fixed open).

Remote provision

It is important to note that during the period of closure earlier in the year, the School delivered an extremely full programme of tuition on line. The majority of teachers worked effectively in delivering lessons to pupils across the Year Groups and many pupils successfully submitted material for review and marking.

However, notwithstanding the quality of that provision, the School has made very significant further investments in IT during the last three months for the following reasons:

- the number of users and the volume of data being exchanged via the School’s network and internet connection at times stretched the capacity available;
- the Headmaster and Senior Leadership Team are concerned that a further period of closure and/or removal of pupils for self-isolation in the coming months is likely;

- in order to help protect staff, the Headmaster wants to reduce the exchange of physical books and work for marking and any expectation for staff to take books from the School to their homes;
- some staff were able to utilise better computing equipment than others at home for teaching remotely.

These investments include:

- doubling the capacity of the School's broadband connection;
- upgrading network switches to improve efficiency;
- installing site-wide Wi-Fi;
- purchasing devices for all teaching staff to allow them to receive work online and to mark and annotate it clearly and in detail with a high quality interactive pen;
- replacing a number of projectors and screens in classrooms around the School site to improve the quality of lesson delivery;
- purchasing webcams for every member of staff:
 - to facilitate teaching lessons from classrooms which can be broadcast to pupils who are absent (for example because they are self-isolating);
 - to allow staff to participate in internal meetings without having to meet physically;
- re-cabing and simplifying connections in some classrooms;
- ensuring that all remote controls in classrooms are operating properly and are secured in the rooms to allow access to each teacher using the room.

Social distancing – general

The Senior Leadership Team has given full attention to Government guidance on matters of social distancing in preparation for the return of all pupils to the School in September and all of the associated logistical and hygiene considerations that have been recommended.

Although the expectation of 2 metre social distancing between pupils throughout the School has been relaxed of necessity in order to facilitate the return of all students, this physical distancing and alternative interaction will still be promoted and adopted where possible, in particular where staff are concerned.

Signage introduced for the return of small groups of pupils in June emphasising the importance of 2 metre social distancing will remain in place and staff should encourage pupils to observe this protocol where possible in communal and recreational areas and whilst queuing for the Refectory.

Staff will need to supervise or oversee pupils as normal in operating the School in aspects such as:

- arrival at the School in the morning, directing pupils to handwashing facilities in the Quad;
- break time;
- lunch time both outside the buildings and in the Refectory;
- leaving the School site at the end of the day including waiting in the bus pens;

but should endeavour to do so observing the 2 metre protocol.

At the end of the day, a large number of pupils congregate in the pen area at the front of the school site to wait for buses. This area has been divided up into sections with posts and ropes to allow pupils from different Year Groups to stay apart. Looking at the area from the School buildings, Year Groups should be ordered sequentially from Year 7 at the left end to Year 13 at the right end, just as they would normally be assembled in the event of an evacuation.

The Local Authority has issued its own guidance for pupils using school buses advising that those boarding fill up the rear seats first and that passengers try to occupy the same seat each day. Clearly this is not something that the School can monitor or control.

Staff interaction

The vast majority of internal meetings have been conducted virtually during the Summer Term using Microsoft Teams and this will continue. All staff have been provided with webcams and are being provided with new laptop devices to facilitate this.

Staff will be encouraged to avoid congregating in areas such as the Staff Room and strongly advised to work separately during their free time.

If staff use the Staff Room for access to hot water and to make drinks they should avoid sharing items and take responsibility for ensuring that they clean anything which they use.

Movement around the site and the time available to pupils outside of sessions

A plan has been designed to provide for one-way movement around the site and almost every area of the buildings. Where possible this uses alternative entry and exit routes from rooms including emergency exit doors to help keep groups of people apart.

In a number of cases this requires people exiting one room walking through one or more others, but it also avoids the possibility of contact with other pupils who might be waiting outside prior to using that room for a following lesson.

All staircases with the exception of the Sixth Form Block and the PE Block (where there are no alternatives options) are one-way.

Signage has been put in place around the site on both floors and walls to show the direction of one-way flows.

Similarly, guidance on distancing and marked 2 metre separation tape has also been provided on the floor in many internal areas, corridors etc.

In the event of an evacuation all staff and pupils should exit buildings via the most immediate route in preference to following the one-way system.

As indicated above, a number of measures have been introduced in order to reduce the opportunities for Year Groups mixing during the school day:

- slightly staggered starting times (accepting that the use of some transport is shared both by Ermysted's pupils in different Year Groups and pupils at Skipton Girls High School);
- staggered break times;
- separate lunch sessions and designated seating areas in the Refectory;
- separate designated outdoor areas for Year Groups at lunchtime;
- slightly staggered dismissal times;
- re-enforced messages using new barrier divisions and signage for segregation of Year Groups in the bus pen area.

Handwashing and personal hygiene

More than 40 additional handwashing facilities (both trough style sinks for multiple users and individual steel basins) have been purchased and installed in:

- English / DT Bock – upper floor near the exit from the building in the one-way system;
- Mobile classrooms – between L1 and L2;
- Quad – School House end;
- Quad – long wall;
- Quad – under Music Room;
- Quad – Science Block end.

Soap dispensers and paper towel dispensers have also been provided in each of these new locations. More than 120 hand sanitiser dispensers have been fixed on walls around the School site.

Each classroom has been equipped with:

- hand sanitiser dispensers on the wall outside the door;
- additional hand sanitiser in the classroom;
- cleaning solution for hard surfaces;
- microfibre cloths;
- box of tissues;
- new pedal-operated lidded bins.

All pupils will be directed to the Quad area to wash their hands on arrival in the morning (signs reminding them will be fixed to the gates) and on their way to the Refectory at lunchtime.

The current Guidance does not require or recommend that either staff or pupils wear face coverings whilst in the classroom. However, it is the Headmaster's decision to allow any staff or pupils who might want to take that step to do so.

The School has purchased a stock of visors for Teaching Staff who feel that they would like that additional element of potential protection to wear in the classroom.

Following amended Government Guidance, the Senior Leadership Team has decided that staff and pupils should wear face coverings in corridors and communal areas (where maintaining social distancing is difficult as a consequence of, for example, the narrowness of the corridors and the fact that pupils will on occasion have to wait outside classrooms whilst these are cleaned between lessons).

Medical provision and personal protection equipment

The Guidance provides clear instructions on how to deal with any pupils who become unwell whilst at school. Pupils who display any symptoms of COVID-19 should be referred to the qualified First Aid staff in the School Office (as would normally be the case for pupils experiencing illness or injury) from where they may be isolated in the Medical Room.

A separate toilet facility has been identified nearby for use by any pupils who have been thus isolated which will then be closed to others until it has been cleaned.

The most important PPE provision is that for any staff who may come into contact with or have to help any pupils who become unwell whilst at the School. The PPE available for staff providing first aid and medical support to pupils who report as unwell whilst at the School includes:

- goggles;
- visors for eye and face protection;
- face masks;
- disposable gloves;
- disposable aprons.

Three hand held distance thermometers and a fingertip oximeter have been purchased and are kept in the Medical Room.

New extractor fans have been introduced in the Medical Room to improve the flow of air. All soft furnishings and fabrics have been removed from the Medical Room so that only hard surfaces that can be cleaned appropriately remain.

A new screen has been installed at the Student Services desk to provide a physical separation of the Office Staff from pupils reporting there.

A large protective screen has been constructed and installed in the Library to provide a physical separation of the Library Manager or her Assistant from pupils reporting there.

Similar screens have been designed and constructed for deployment in the Refectory around the till service points. Further protective measures may be provided in the Refectory if appropriate, although following a meeting with management from North Yorkshire Catering it is anticipated that the other Catering Staff will remain distanced behind the service counter.

Staff health concerns

The detailed guidance and interpretation concerning underlying health conditions and their impact on whether staff may be at additional risk has been updated and is noted at Appendix 1. Currently it is not anticipated that any staff would be precluded from returning to the School in September or would be exposed to additional unacceptable risk in medical terms as a result of any underlying chronic conditions.

The Headmaster has invited any staff who may have underlying health conditions which they believe might cause increased risk to contact him directly in confidence to discuss those.

The Headmaster will contact all female staff on their return in September to alert them to the updated guidance concerning coronavirus and pregnancy and ask that any to whom it applies should contact him in confidence.

Any staff or pupils who exhibit symptoms of COVID-19 should arrange to have a test; information and details can be found via the following links:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-getting-tested>
<https://www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test>

Both Teaching Staff and Support Staff are included in the list of those prioritised for testing but this no longer requires an employer referral.

Anybody who receives a positive result from a test should inform the School immediately to allow appropriate follow-up by the School in consultation with Public Health England.

The imposition of a further period of lockdown in November included further guidance concerning categories of people who had been advised to shield earlier in the year. The School Business Leader circulated a further email to all staff at that point, asking anybody who believed that they were classed as “extremely clinically vulnerable” to contact the Headmaster in confidence to discuss their situation and support for changed working arrangements.

Cleaning

An enhanced cleaning regime is central and critical to providing an environment which can be safe for the return of pupils and staff.

This requires a very significant change to the previous cleaning regime in the School which was focused on cleaning after the end of the school day – essentially between 15.00 and 18.30 after pupils left the site. In response, the School has employed six additional cleaning staff to work throughout the day from the start of the Autumn Term.

The need to focus on cleaning throughout the day and deliver an achievable method of operation has impacted on the development of the structure of the school day and the construction of the teaching timetable, particularly in terms of reducing the movement of classes between rooms and the use of specialised teaching areas. Nevertheless, it is inevitable that there will be brief interruptions to clean rooms between registration, lessons and form time where rooms are being used by different Year Groups in consecutive periods.

The fundamental requirements for maintaining a safe environment include:

- emphasising and encouraging the importance of hand-washing and the use of soap and sanitiser;
- enhanced cleaning of desks and chairs, ensuring this is carried out between every use by different people;
- frequent cleaning of touch points such as door handles;
- cleaning of keyboards between each user;
- the provision of cleaning materials in classrooms for staff and pupils to enable them to supplement the programme of work done by cleaning staff should a need be identified;
- the removal of soft surfaces to ensure that cleaning can be effective.

Additional cleaning staff have been appointed and will be employed throughout the day both to ensure the cleaning of tables and chairs in classrooms between occupation by different pupils, and to provide continual cleaning of shared areas (such as toilets) and touchpoints (such as door handles and sanitiser dispensers) throughout the day.

Further, the hours for which Technicians in Science, Art, Food Technology are employed have been increased to enable them to provide additional support in cleaning their areas after lessons.

Careful analysis of the school timetable has been completed to identify which rooms need to be cleaned and when, and a detailed schedule of cleaning has been developed subsequently to identify every change of use involving pupils from different Year Groups which necessitates cleaning.

Laminated cards have been produced and distributed to various rooms, Design Technology, IT Rooms, the Library etc where workstations may be used by more than one individual. These are to

be used to indicate computers or desks which have been used and are awaiting cleaning so that others use a different computer or workspace.

These additional staff and the cleaning materials used by them and provided to pupils (such as sanitiser) will inevitably add significantly to the School's costs; no additional funding is being provided by Government to subsidise this expenditure or the even greater cost of installing sinks and handwashing facilities prior to the return of pupils.

Catering

The logistical implications of changes to the school day in order to keep Year Groups separate (in particular the very short and staggered break periods) mean that a food service will only be provided from the Refectory at lunchtime.

Pupils will need to bring a snack with them if they want anything to eat during the morning break. In addition, pupils should bring their own drinking water with them as, in accordance with instructions from the Local Authority, shared drinking water fountains have been turned off.

A survey of parents late in the Summer Term suggested that the number of pupils who would want to buy lunch from the Refectory in September would be similar to the normal level of demand. Catering for the number of boys involved whilst keeping Year Groups separate presents an additional challenge but plans have been developed to achieve this and to facilitate the appropriate cleaning of tables and chairs between use by different pupils.

Pupils will enter the Refectory for lunch by Year Group at designated times over two sittings. Each Year Group has been allocated a designated seating area and routing has been planned to allow movement within and exit from the Refectory without the Year Groups mixing.

Following discussions with management from North Yorkshire's Catering Service, it is anticipated that a range of food options will be available similar to the service prevailing in the past, with the exception of a self-service salad bar which will not be available. A choice of hot food will be offered along with sandwiches; all will be served from behind the counter rather than pupils being able to pick up packages themselves.

In order to try and minimise queuing and delays, menus will be provided in form rooms so that pupils can make their choice in advance rather than prevaricating at the counter in the Refectory.

Sports changing areas and equipment

The changing rooms in the PE Block are small and unventilated and are not suitable for that purpose if any sort of distancing between pupils or flow of air is to be maintained. In order to ensure any reasonable spacing of pupils, they will need to change in the Sports Hall and then move clothes and bags to the changing rooms.

The windows above the Sports Hall have been covered with a translucent film to provide privacy for pupils changing there.

Pegs and benches in the changing rooms will be marked so that they can be cleaned between uses by different pupils.

Shared equipment such as badminton nets will be erected and removed by staff and pupils will be provided with materials to allow them to clean individual items of equipment before and after use.

Communal areas and facilities

Chairs with fabric covers have been removed from use and stored elsewhere where feasible. These areas include:

- Reception outside the School Office;
- Library;
- Sixth Form Library;
- Staff Room;
- Sixth Form workrooms;
- Classrooms with soft covered chairs which are used by more than one member of staff.

In any areas where such chairs remain they have been segregated and stacked to avoid use.

A limited number of chairs which have soft coverings are still in use in individual offices where these are only used by a specific person. Any other soft furnishings such as cushions and curtains have been removed.

Toilet facilities have been “zoned” to avoid Year Groups mixing in those areas. Restrictions have been introduced on the number of pupils using toilet facilities – where feasible the principle of “one-in / one-out” is being adopted and is posted on the doors, but this may need to be relaxed at key times such as morning break given the limited time available for the number of pupils who may want to use them.

All those windows which had previously been secured in toilet facilities have been unlocked so that they can be opened to facilitate a flow of air. Extractor fans in toilets have also been tested and replaced where necessary for the same reason.

At lunchtimes pupils will be directed outside (when they are not actually eating in the Refectory) to designated separate recreational areas:

- Year 7 : Top Field (East) – second session
- Year 8 : Top Field (West) – second session
- Year 9 : Tennis Courts
- Year 10 : Top Field (East) – first session
- Year 11 : Top Field (West) – first session
- Year 12 : Front of School (West)
- Year 13 : Front of School (East)

Wet weather provision has also been identified if required to keep Year Groups apart.

Staff duty rotas have been amended appropriately to ensure the continued supervision and safeguarding of pupils under these different arrangements.

Library

Unfortunately, the Library will remain closed for the purpose of browsing and casual reading for the immediate future. This is both to avoid the risk of pupils from different Year Groups mixing and to prevent books being touched by different people thereby creating a possible risk for the transmission of coronavirus.

We are continuing to explore practical alternative ways for pupils to access individual titles and arrange to borrow them and return them in a way which means the books can then be identified and cleaned or quarantined.

Equipment, water and air conditioning

The majority of the School's equipment and infrastructure which requires annual servicing and maintenance has been addressed as usual during the summer holiday period.

In areas where water has been turned off or limited amounts have been used during the last five months, systems have been flushed with water run through all pipes and taps for several minutes; this is normal practice towards the end of the summer holiday period after periods of inactivity to ensure that systems are flushed. In accordance with instructions from the Local Authority, water fountains have been turned off and pupils advised to bring water with them to school.

The regular programme of legionella testing of the water supplies around the site has resumed and was also undertaken immediately before the reopening.

The School has very limited air-conditioning facilities serving the IT Suites and mobile classrooms. These units were serviced and cleaned in May.

As indicated earlier, staff have been instructed to open windows and doors wherever practical during lessons to enhance the flow and circulation of air.

All Teaching Staff have been issued with new laptop devices for their personal use in the classrooms. These will need to be connected to a power supply and to the screens in individual rooms with two cables which have been set up for that purpose in each room.

The pupils' use of computers will be managed to ensure the opportunity for them to be cleaned between users. In all shared areas keyboard covers have been added which can be wiped down easily (with appropriate cleaning materials provided). In other areas, laminated cards have been provided to indicate any machines or equipment which has been used and needs cleaning.

Visitors to the site

As a general principle, potential visitors to the site will continue to be dissuaded from physical attendance and encouraged to use alternative forms of contact or communication, telephone or virtual meetings etc. The vast majority of meetings with third parties were conducted virtually during the Summer Term and this will continue.

Meetings of the Governing Board and the Foundation Trust have similarly been held successfully and will continue online.

Parents bringing their sons to the School in preference to the use of public transport are required to drop them off or pick them up in the road outside the School. Any parents arriving to take away a boy who is unwell will be asked to wait outside the gate rather than coming into the School building.

Any visitors who do come into the School building will report to the Reception area as usual. Should they need to wait, a reduced number of suitably spaced plastic chairs remain in that area. Hand sanitiser and tissues are available. The staff in the School Office are separated from such visitors by an existing sliding window.

There are some visitors, essentially contractors, who are of course required to attend and work at the School site. Where possible, much of their work has been completed during the summer holiday period with appropriate social distancing considerations. However, there is some installation, servicing and maintenance activity outstanding. As in normal circumstances, this will be largely undertaken outside school time, but with appropriate alternative precautions in place where this may not be possible.

However, the continuing principle remains that visitors should not attend the School site unnecessarily.

School trips and activities

There is currently a very limited expectation of any off-site visits or activities taking place during the Autumn Term.

The usual Year 7 team-building excursion to Nell Bank in September is currently under consideration and the Head of Lower School is keen to try and facilitate the visit given its known value to the new pupils involved. The trip only involves pupils from a single Year Group and, therefore, does not contravene other principles of separation. The Education Centre at Nell Bank is essentially an outdoor provision and has re-opened.

The School's Duke of Edinburgh Award programme was suspended at Easter before the expeditions which had been arranged for the Summer Term could take place. A provisional programme for some of these to take place during the Autumn Term had been arranged. However, this remains under review because the current Government guidance precludes overnight camping as part of the expeditions, but it appears possible for the expedition aspect to be completed without the camping element.

Alarms and emergencies – including consideration of revised evacuation protocols

In the event of an evacuation, staff and pupils should exit buildings via the nearest available safe route in preference to adhering to the one-way system.

Any fire or emergency evacuation will be moved to our alternative assembly point on the top field to try to ensure adequate space to keep Year Groups apart and to allow a degree of social distancing to be maintained.

Appendix 1 – Guidance on staff attendance

The generic Government guidance regarding shielding was withdrawn with effect from 1 August 2020. It is anticipated that from that date all staff should be able to return to work.

The Local Authority suggested that schools should determine risk assessments for any staff expected to return in September acknowledging individual conditions and any measures required for specific individuals. Factors which may be considered are identified in Appendix 2.

The Headmaster and the School Business Leader have a record of staff who had previously contacted the Headmaster because they were classified as either “clinically extremely vulnerable” or “clinically vulnerable” when those definitions impacted on their attendance at the School site.

This information may be used to inform any changes which might be required to the working environment or expectations concerning attendance in future should Government guidance be amended.

The Headmaster contacted all female staff on their return in September to alert them to the updated guidance concerning coronavirus and pregnancy and asked that any to whom it applies should contact him in confidence.

The imposition of a further period of lockdown in November included further guidance concerning categories of people who had been advised to shield earlier in the year. The School Business Leader circulated a further email to all staff at that point, asking anybody who believed that they were classed as “extremely clinically vulnerable” to contact the Headmaster in confidence to discuss their situation and support for changed working arrangements.

Appendix 2 – Staff Risk Assessment

Government guidance indicates a number of categories or characteristics which may put individuals at increased risk from COVID-19 – these include older people, men and those from Black and Asian and Ethnic Minority (BAME) backgrounds and communities.

People in these categories who are at an increased risk of severe illness from coronavirus (particularly where multiple elements apply) should continue to be stringent in following social distancing measures.

Health conditions

This group includes any staff with an underlying health condition listed below (i.e. anyone instructed to get a flu jab as an adult each year on medical grounds):

- chronic (long-term) respiratory diseases, such as asthma, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), emphysema or bronchitis;
- chronic heart disease, such as heart failure;
- chronic kidney disease;
- chronic liver disease, such as hepatitis;
- chronic neurological conditions, such as Parkinson’s disease, motor neurone disease, multiple sclerosis (MS), a learning disability or cerebral palsy;
- diabetes;
- problems with your spleen – for example, sickle cell disease or if you have had your spleen removed;
- a weakened immune system as the result of conditions such as HIV and AIDS, or medicines such as steroid tablets or chemotherapy;
- being seriously overweight (a body mass index (BMI) of 40 or above);
- those who are pregnant.

Demographic factors associated with an elevated Covid-19 Risk

The emerging evidence suggests there are three key things that can affect people’s vulnerability, or ‘risk factor’: Age, Gender, and Ethnicity. Put simply, older people, men, and people from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) communities seem to be at greater risk from COVID-19.

Age

The evidence shows that age is a clear risk factor; compared to people in their 40s, people in their 60s could be up to eight-times more at risk, and people in their 70s could be 25-times or more at risk.

Gender

The risk for men of becoming seriously ill from COVID-19 appears likely to be between 1.5 to 2.5 times greater than for women. This seems to increase with age from 40 up to 85.

Ethnicity

Emerging data and research suggests that BAME people are at greater risk from COVID-19, compared to their white counterparts.

Religion or Beliefs

The current situation will coincide with religious events, most notably Ramadan, which will require staff to fast. This may have an impact on the ability of individual members of staff to perform their role fully, especially when wearing the highest levels of PPE.