



## CORONAVIRUS RISK MANAGEMENT PLAN – SEPTEMBER 2021

### Key information and protocols for operation following the return of pupils on 6 September

#### Summary

The Department for Education (“DfE”) is determined to try and minimise the impact of the coronavirus pandemic on children’s continuing education. Therefore, from the start of the Autumn Term, the DfE is encouraging schools to return to “normal” operations as far as possible and to reduce the disruption to teaching and learning and to restore and encourage co-curricular activities.

Schools and individual staff still have the scope to maintain certain measures if they choose to do so in particular circumstances, but there is no continuing expectation that schools will retain the range of operational precautions that have been applied for the last 18 months.

As a consequence, the majority of restrictions and preventative measures which have been in place at Ermysted’s for the last 18 months have been dropped. However, it would be prudent to maintain the ability to reintroduce measures (for example, the use of face coverings, the reintroduction of one-way movement or zoned areas and the separation of Year Groups) in the event of a significant number of cases within the School community, or a change to Government guidance.

The latest DfE guidance can be accessed via this link [DfE guidance](#)

Notwithstanding the understandable desire to return to a sense of “normality” for the benefit of pupils, one of the most significant points for everyone, and one which all staff will support, is not to become complacent about matters just because of the desire to normalise the school experience for pupils.

For the moment the following measures and precautions remain in place at the School from the Summer Term:

- the alert email address is still monitored continually by members of the Senior Leadership Team to keep track of the notification of infections and positive test results;
- an emphasis on the importance of maximising ventilation in all areas of the School keeping windows and doors (other than fire doors) open;
- the one-way system to and from the first floor in Main School – up the stairs at the eastern end of the building by M04 and to the Staff Room / down the stairs at the western end by M11 and M01;
- protective screens in the Library and the Refectory
- protective screens in a limited number of classrooms where physical distancing of the teacher’s desk from the nearest pupil tables is limited;
- pupils attending the Medical Room will be required to wear a face covering (a disposable one will be provided if the pupil does not have one);

- additional cleaning staff on site through the day tasked with attention to touchpoints and communal areas.

In addition, staff may choose to adopt other measures including the following:

- wearing face coverings in classrooms and communal areas;
- avoid mixing with colleagues and pupils during break and lunch times.

The majority of internal meetings at the School will now take place in person, but staff will have the option to participate online if they prefer. The guiding principles governing such choice are likely to include:

- the size of room and the number of participants;
- the extent of ventilation that is possible.

So, for example, the weekly Staff Briefing each Monday morning will continue to be held online rather than 50+ people gathering in the Staff Room.

Clearly there remains the possibility that matters may have be reviewed again at some point in the coming months in response to a significant change in the wider health environment and/or direction from DfE. The School has contingency plans and will respond and adapt swiftly with the introduction of any additional measures that might be required.

Whilst all staff, governors and parents will support the desire to get pupils back into the School and to restore some sense of normality in terms of their experience, it is equally important to facilitate this in a way which does not ignore the continuing health risks from the pandemic or compromise the effectiveness of the precautions which have been adopted.

## **Guidance**

All members of the School community have become familiar with changes to the way in which the School has operated over the last 18 months. The measures and precautions have been recorded in a structured way during that time following the first Risk Management Plan which was written in May 2020.

This document (September 2021) has been produced without all of the background narrative and references that were included at the point of that original plan which have become familiar to everybody over the last 18 months. The focus is on updating all of the practical measures that were set out 18 months ago so that stakeholders know what is now expected or recommended now in relation to how the School should operate in the Autumn Term.

Separate from Ermysted's own Risk Management Plan, the School has continued to incorporate and act on recommendations and advice contained in various iterations of the North Yorkshire County Council ("NYCC" or "the Local Authority") guidance published under a number of headings around the "Wider-Opening of Schools" first released in June 2020.

These documents have outlined areas for practical analysis and preparation and were developed in consultation with union representatives. The templates was reviewed and completed to show the "control measures" that had been adopted at the School in response to the possible "hazards" identified by the Local Authority and each update has been made available and published on the School website.

In addition to the School's own Risk Assessment, the latest version of the Local Authority template document "Covid Secure Arrangements from September 2021" has been completed and added to the School website.

### **Start of Term**

In accordance with DfE guidance, all pupils will (subject to obtaining parental consent) take two lateral flow-tests separated by a minimum of three days when they first return to the School for the start of term in September. These will be organised for:

- Tuesday 7 September – Year 7 / Year 12
- Wednesday 8 September – Year 8 / Year 9 / Year 10 / Year 11 / Year 13
- Friday 10 September – Year 7 / Year 12
- Monday 13 September – Year 8 / Year 9 / Year 10 / Year 11 / Year 13

The tests will be supervised but pupils will carry them out themselves. The tests which have been provided are from different supplier to those used in earlier months and are easier to administer as they only require a nasal sample and do not involve taking a throat swab.

It is hoped that for all pupils other than those in Year 7 the testing process should be straightforward as all pupils in Year 8 and above should be familiar with what is required after testing themselves at home over recent months.

Should any positive results from a lateral-flow test be returned during this process, the pupil(s) involved will be isolated and sent home to take a further PCR test to confirm the initial result.

All staff will also be encouraged to continue testing themselves at home and kits will be available for collection from the School Office for them to do so.

The DfE has indicated that secondary school pupils should continue to follow a regime of undertaking lateral flow testing at home twice a week until the end of September when the position will be reviewed.

The School will continue to source and distribute test kits to pupils and staff to facilitate this.

### **Plans for return in the Autumn Term**

The contents of this Plan have been split under the same headings as have been applied to the Risk Assessments produced over the last 18 months to make the revised practices easier to follow (although these are not mutually exclusive and there is a degree of overlap in some areas):

- Pupil Year Groups
- Classroom teaching
- Remote provision
- Social distancing and face coverings
- 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**

In accordance with DfE guidance, the concept of Year Group “bubbles” which formed the core separation of groups of pupils and the basis for reducing opportunities for mixing last year has been abolished.

The School will continue to designate particular areas or rooms as the base for each Year Group which will produce a nominal separation for limited parts of the day, but the concentration of lessons in home areas such as the form rooms for Year 7 and Year 8 will no longer apply. Other measures such as staggered arrival and departure times have also been withdrawn.

Each Year Group is still allocated 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 : English/DT Upper Floor (English rooms)
- Year 9 : Main School Upper Floor (MFL corridor)
- Year 10 : Mobiles / M15 / RS Rooms
- Year 11 : School House
- Year 12 : Science Laboratories / School House / Sixth Form Centre (Left)
- Year 13 : Science Laboratories / Sixth Form Centre (Right)

Break and lunchtimes will continue to be split which may reduce contact and potential interaction between Year Groups to a limited extent, but the driver for this is the structure of the school day rather than anti-coronavirus measures *per se*.

- Year Groups 7 / 8 / 9 / 13 have break at 10.00 between Period 1 and Period 2 and lunch at 12.20 before registration at 13.05.
- Year Groups 10 / 11 / 12 have break at 11.05 between Period 2 and Period 3 and lunch at 12.45 following their registration at 12.20.

The concept of social distancing between pupils has effectively been dropped but pupils may still be encouraged to follow it in communal areas and corridors.

### **Classroom teaching**

The established approach where teachers generally work from individual classrooms and pupils move rooms between lessons has been restored with the removal of the restrictions on the movement of students around the School site. Full teaching practice for all Year Groups will resume in specialised accommodation (in particular the Science laboratories).

Whilst there is no separation of pupils’ desks and chairs, 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 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.

Increased airflow and an objective of maximising ventilation continue to be emphasised in the most recent Guidance to schools. 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**

During the period of closure earlier in the year, the School delivered a 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.

This provision will remain available following the return of pupils to the School in September for any boys or classes who are required to isolate over the coming weeks as a consequence of infection with coronavirus (or in practice if they are unable to attend in person for other reasons).

### **Social distancing and face coverings**

The concept of social distancing between pupils has effectively been dropped but pupils may still be encouraged to follow it in communal areas and corridors. All signage on the matter around the School site has been removed.

Similarly, face coverings are not required but staff and pupils who wish to use them may continue to do so.

Staff who 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;

may choose 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 remains divided up into sections with posts and ropes to allow pupils from different Year Groups to stay apart.

### **Staff interaction**

All internal meetings were conducted virtually during the Summer Term using Microsoft Teams and this facility will continue to be available. It will remain the normal medium for the weekly Staff Briefing given the alternative of all staff congregating in the Staff Room.

The Staff Room has been restored for regular use at break and lunchtime and for access to hot water and to make drinks. Staff are requested to take responsibility for ensuring that they clean anything which they use.

## **Movement around the site**

The plan which was devised and operated for the last 18 months to facilitate one-way movement around the site has essentially been dropped.

One exception is the use of the two staircases in Main School where the principle of up at one end (the eastern stairs by M04/M14 and to the Staff Room) and down at the other (the western stairs by M01/M11) has continuing benefits in reducing crowding.

A second exception is the use of the staircase in the English/DT Block. This should be used for staff and pupils going up to the first floor but they should exit from that level via the external fire escape to reduce crowding on the main stairs at times of changeover between lessons.

## **Handwashing and personal hygiene**

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

Each classroom continues to be 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.

## **Medical provision and personal protection equipment**

Multiple sources of guidance from DfE, NHS and PHE provide clear instructions on how to deal with any pupils who become unwell whilst at school. The Senior Leadership Team and the School's First Aid staff have repeated experience of implementing the appropriate procedures.

Pupils who display any symptoms of COVID 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 and 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.

Any pupils attending the Medical Room will be required to wear a face-covering irrespective of the reason for their attention as a protective measure for the staff involved in attending to them.

## **Staff health concerns**

Government guidance and interpretation concerning underlying health conditions and their impact on whether staff may be at additional risk has been updated and amended several times during the pandemic. Currently guidance only identifies the Clinically Extremely Vulnerable as a group to which specific attention should be addressed and individual risk assessments considered. It is not anticipated that any staff or pupils should currently be precluded from returning to the School 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 has contacted all female staff to alert them to the updated guidance concerning coronavirus and pregnancy and asked that any to whom it applies should contact him in confidence.

## **Cleaning**

The rigorous regime of enhanced cleaning in support of maintaining separate Year Group bubbles is no longer required.

However, additional benefits were recognised in having cleaning staff on site throughout the school day; therefore a limited number of cleaning staff will continue to be present throughout the day, focussed on cleaning communal areas, touchpoints, the toilets, maintaining supplies in classrooms and sanitiser dispensers around the site.

## **Catering**

The Refectory service has been restored for both breakfast and morning break time.

The separation of Year Groups at lunchtime will remain in operation as it has benefits in managing the flow of pupils through the Refectory.

Numbered seating is still in place but will not be utilised unless a regime to be able to trace contacts within the School is reintroduced.

## **Sports changing areas and equipment**

The changing rooms in the PE Block are small and unventilated and remain an area of difficulty given the overall emphasis on maximising ventilation as a precautionary and preventative measure.

However, the increased demands on usage of the Sports Hall mean that changing in that area has been dropped and the changing rooms will again be used. The changing rooms will continue to be protected to a limited degree by electrostatic fogging and a regime of cleaning each day.

Staff will continue to encourage pupils to clean individual items of sports equipment before and after use.

## **Communal areas and facilities**

Furniture and chairs with fabric covers which had been removed from use have now been reinstated in areas such as:

- the Boardroom;
- Library;
- Sixth Form Library;
- Staff Room;
- Sixth Form workrooms;
- classrooms with soft covered chairs which are used by more than one member of staff.

Basic plastic chairs have been retained in the Reception area outside the School Office and in the Medical Room which are more likely to require regular and enhanced cleaning.

Toilet facilities continue to be “zoned” to avoid Year Groups mixing in those areas but also as a measure to manage behavioural issues.

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.

## **Library**

The Library has been reopened and is operating normally.

## **Equipment, water and air conditioning**

The majority of the School’s equipment and infrastructure which requires annual servicing and maintenance has continued to be addressed as usual.

In accordance with instructions from the Local Authority, water fountains remain turned off to reduce an obvious source of potential sharing of respiratory droplets and pupils are advised to bring water with them to school.

The regular programme of legionella testing of the water supplies around the site has continued.

As indicated earlier, staff have been instructed to open windows and doors wherever practical during lessons to increase the flow and circulation of air and maximise ventilation in the buildings.

The Government has indicated that schools will be provided with carbon dioxide monitors to check the quality of ventilation but no indication of timing has been offered.

## **Visitors to the site**

As a general principle, visitors may now be accommodated on the site and people such as peripatetic music teachers and sports coaches have returned.

All are encouraged to continue to observe distancing and maintain COVID protocols where practical.

Most meetings of the Governing Board and the Foundation Trust will continue online but some may take place in person to facilitate a more valuable dialogue and interaction between participants.

### **School trips and activities**

A number of activities will resume in the Autumn Term including:

- rehearsals for dramatic productions and concerts;
- music groups;
- after school sports clubs and training;
- sports competitions and fixtures against other schools.

The School's Duke of Edinburgh Award programme has continued largely online through the pandemic but the expedition element was restored in the Summer Term in accordance with the organisation's guidelines. A fresh programme is expected to be launched and new groups formed in the Autumn Term which it is hoped will allow a return to the broader opportunities that the scheme has historically offered.

### **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. The assembly point has reverted to the grounds in front of the School but with increased spacing to increase use of the area space available in an attempt to maintain a degree of social distancing using the following allocation:

- Grass area under trees – Year 7 / Year 8
- Hardstanding bus waiting area – Year 9 / Year 10 / Year 11
- Grass area below Memorial Hall – Year 12 / Year 13
- Hardstanding along fence line – Staff not registering pupils.