

Policy and Guidelines for returning to school during the Covid-19 pandemic Sept 2020

The St. Michael Steiner School is looking forward to receiving all students back in September.

Government guidance indicates that the risk to children themselves of becoming severely ill from coronavirus (COVID-19) is very low, and we have to weigh this risk against the negative health, educational and social impact on the children of being out of school.

The Office of National Statistics' analysis suggests that staff in educational settings are not at any greater risk from the disease than those in many other occupations, and there is no evidence that children transmit the disease any more than adults.

Therefore, whilst it is clearly not possible to ensure a totally risk-free environment, we feel the benefits of returning to school outweigh the risks and it is our intention to make this transition as normal as possible, while taking all reasonable measures to inhibit the spread of the virus.

For younger children, this means introducing and promoting good habits such as hand washing and taking certain routes through the school building without discussing COVID-19, which could make them anxious or fearful.

Older children, students, staff and parents will be expected to take individual responsibility for the collective safety and peace of mind of the school community and to follow the guidelines below, regardless of their personal feelings about them.

These guidelines have been drawn up with regard for the current government guidelines, and what we believe is in the children's best interests. They will be reviewed and may be amended in light of further guidance received in the coming weeks and months. Parents will be informed of any changes. They will be explained to staff during the INSET days before term starts, and to older children and students on the first day of term. This policy will be sent to parents before term starts.

A risk assessment has been conducted, taking into account the points above, and the College has decided to implement the following measures:

1. Beginning of the day

- Children should arrive at school by 8:25am as usual (except on the first day of term, 9th September, when the start time is 10am). Children, anyway, arrive at different times so there is no problem with congestion at the gate in the mornings.
- There will be a member of staff on duty at the gate as usual.
- Kindergarten parents will be allowed to bring their children to the Kindergarten gate/door and to settle them as needed, trying as far as possible to keep a distance from other parents, staff and children.
- Class 1 parents will be allowed to enter the school on the first day of term but are kindly requested to drop off their children at the gate and not enter the school from the second day onwards, if at all possible.
- Lower and High School parents will not be allowed into the school grounds unless they have booked an appointment.
- Classes 1 – 5 will keep their indoor shoes in a bag hanging from their peg in the boot room so that they can put them on right after they have taken off their outdoor shoes.

2. Signing-in (High School students, Parent & Child groups and visitors)

- High-school pupils will sign in in Class 11's Classroom, not at reception
- Parents wishing to attend the Parent & Child group must book half-termly in advance and will not be able to join the group without having booked previously. They will sign in with Silvia in the garden, not at reception, in order to avoid entering the building unnecessarily. They will enter the school grounds through the second side gate at the back of the woodland garden and should use the compost toilet in the garden. The number of children and parents allowed inside the P&C hut will be limited.
- All other visitors must make an appointment and sign in at Reception on arrival.

3. Use of masks

- Government guidance says: *"The use of mask is recommended for pupils above 12 years old, in communal areas outside the classroom where the layout of the schools makes it difficult to maintain social distancing when staff and pupils are moving around the premises, for example, corridors."*
- Because of the layout of our school, pupils will not be required to wear a mask:
- Classes 6, 7 and 8 are located in the classroom block which is separate from the main building. Each classroom has windows on both sides and a door that leads directly outside; there are no corridors in which pupils can meet each other. These pupils will not be entering the main building except to use the toilets, which are immediately inside the door.
- Classes 9 and 10 will be the only Classes to enter and exit the school through the main door leading into the front garden. Class 11 will be in a separate room (green portacabin next to car entrance). Class 11 students will use the toilet outside the reception entrance and so will only enter the main building for science blocks, when they will use the lab and access it through the reception entrance.

4. Corridors, entrances and exits

- Pupils using the main building will be limited as has been described at 3 above.
- Classes will access the building via different doors
- Each class in the main building will be shown routes through the building whereby the corridors will not become congested, with the aim that these become habitual.

5. Choir and Orchestra Lessons and Assemblies

- For the time being all assemblies will take place outside, in the garden or under the marquee in case it rains. If the weather is particularly bad and does not allow for an outdoor gathering then the assembly will be cancelled for that day.
- Choir and Orchestra Lessons will either happen under the marquee or in the Church Hall, where the pupils will be asked to sit/stand at a distance from each other. Pupils will have their own sheet music and instruments and when using school equipment, this will be wiped before and after use.

6. End of the Day

- In order to avoid congestion, there will be different timings for the end of the day for each class:
 - Kindergarten: 12:30
 - Class 1: 14.40
 - Classes 2&3: 14.45
 - Classes 4&5: 14.50
 - Classes 6&7: 14.55
 - Class 8 and Kindergarten (afternoon care): 15.00
 - High School: 16:00
- Children will wait with their Class Teacher, separately from other classes, until their parent arrives at the gate and will then be released.
- Parents should not enter the school grounds unless they have an appointment. Messages can be sent to the Class Teacher by email or text.
- Parents should try to maintain a distance from each other while waiting outside the gate.
- There will be a teacher on duty at the gate who will signal to the Class Teachers when parents arrive.

7. Hygiene

- Children and staff will be reminded to wash their hands frequently.
- Children should wash their hands:

- before leaving home
- upon arrival at school
- before meals
- before leaving school
- upon arrival at home
- All rooms that have water will have soap, paper towels and bins.
- Bins will be emptied daily.
- All classrooms will have hand sanitisers and antiviral wipes and teachers will be wiping surfaces, door handles and other frequently-touched areas as needed during the day.
- Professional Cleaners will continue to clean the school every evening, following government guidance with regard to the coronavirus.

8. If someone has symptoms of COVID-19

- If a child/student/staff member has symptoms they should not come to school, should seek a test and if the virus is confirmed, they should inform the school and follow government instructions. The government provides:

- **Remote test sites** - these are drive-in only;
- **Local test sites** - these are walk-in;
- **Mobile test units** - these are mobile and move around every few days

The test sites are generally open seven days a week from **8am to 8pm**.

In order to book an appointment for a test or order one please visit the link:

<https://self-referral.test-for-coronavirus.service.gov.uk/antigen/name>

- If a case is confirmed among children or staff, the school community will be informed immediately.
- If someone is taken ill with symptoms of COVID-19 at school, they will be isolated in the medical room and sent home as soon as possible (not via public transport) and will be asked to be tested at a testing centre.
- The school has home test kits that will be offered to the parents of the child that has developed symptoms at school only in **exceptional circumstances**, which are:
 - The person has developed symptoms while at school and
 - We believe they may have **barriers** to accessing a test **elsewhere**
 - We believe that if we sent the individual home without a kit, they would **not** receive a test at all.
- Parents who are given a home test by the school will also be given written instruction and the link to an instructional video.
- The school will not be conducting coronavirus tests at school.
- The staff toilet will be designated as the medical room toilet and will not be used by anyone else while the medical room is occupied.
- Two signs will be kept in the medical room and will be fixed to the door of the medical room and the designated toilet.
- The staff member attending the sick person will wear PPE. They do not need to be tested unless they have shown symptoms.
- The medical room and toilet will be thoroughly cleaned after use and the signs removed to indicate that this has been done.
- The results of a test, even if provided by the school, will be sent to the parents and not the school. The school cannot ask for evidence of a negative test before allowing individuals back on site.

This policy will be reviewed as needed and as government guidance changes.