

The St Michael Steiner School

Policy and Guidelines during the Coronavirus pandemic

February 2022

Government and NHS guidance in this policy is indented and italicised. Government guidance says:

We expect independent schools to follow the control measures set out in this guidance in the same way as state-funded schools, and health and safety legislation applies equally to independent schools.¹

We will continue to review regularly the situation in the school with regard to COVID-19 and revise this policy as needed in our particular circumstances and as required by government, noting that the guidance states:

As COVID-19 becomes a virus that we learn to live with, there is now an imperative to reduce the disruption to children and young people's education - particularly given that the direct clinical risks to children are extremely low.... Our priority is for you to deliver face-to-face, high-quality education to all pupils. The evidence is clear that being out of education causes significant harm to educational attainment, life chances, mental and physical health.

1. Drop-off and pick-up

The normal procedure for arriving and collecting children applies (see Procedure for arriving and collecting children)

2. Hand washing

Regular and thorough hand washing has become established and is a good habit for the children. This is much better done with soap and water than with hand sanitiser, however, hand sanitiser will continue to be available in classrooms that have no water.

3. Face coverings

From 20 January, face coverings are no longer advised for pupils, staff and visitors in classrooms. From 27 January, face coverings are no longer advised for pupils, staff and visitors in communal areas.

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/actions-for-schools-during-the-coronavirus-outbreak/schools-covid-19-operational-guidance>

The St Michael Steiner School

Staff are not legally required to wear face coverings in the workplace but may choose to wear one.

4. Bubbles

There is no longer a requirement to maintain 'bubbles'; all pupils may now mix freely.

5. Cleaning

The cleaners will continue to clean toilets, basins, taps, light switches, bannisters and the handles of doors in communal areas twice every day.

6. Ventilation

All spaces should continue to be well-ventilated so teachers should open their classroom windows when they enter their rooms in the mornings and between lessons.

The school has purchased a CO2 monitor to regularly check the CO2 levels in classrooms.

7. Attendance

All pupils are expected to attend daily as usual and the school should be advised daily of the reason for any absence. (See Attendance, Punctuality and Registration Policy & Procedure) Government guidance says:

There is strong evidence that children and young people are much less susceptible to severe clinical disease than older people and that there are significant disadvantages to children and young people associated with missed education. It is of course acknowledged that this evidence may change with the emergence of new variants of concern (VoCs). The government will continue to advise baseline measures and provide thresholds at which help can be sought and extra measures may be introduced. Local spikes in COVID-19 will usually be best managed through a dynamic risk assessment approach. Attendance restrictions are unlikely to be a proportionate response to the level of risk that COVID-19 currently poses to children and young people, and public health authorities would only consider them as a last resort if all other risk mitigations proved insufficient to break chains of transmission.

School attendance is mandatory for all pupils of compulsory school age and it is a priority to ensure that as many children as possible regularly attend school.

The St Michael Steiner School

Where a child is required to self-isolate or quarantine because of COVID-19 in accordance with relevant legislation or guidance ... they will be recorded as code X.

Where they are unable to attend because they have a confirmed case of COVID-19 they will be recorded as code I (illness).

8. Testing, Tracing close contacts and isolation

Public health advice for People with COVID-19 and their contacts changed from 24 February. Contacts are no longer required to self-isolate or advised to take daily tests, and contact tracing has ended.

From 21 February, staff and pupils in mainstream secondary schools will not be expected to continue taking part in regular asymptomatic testing and should follow asymptomatic testing advice for the general population.

9. When an individual develops COVID-19 symptoms or has a positive test

Pupils, staff and other adults should follow guidance on People with COVID-19 and their contacts if they have COVID-19 symptoms. The most effective way to avoid passing on COVID-19 infection is to stay at home and avoid contact with other people.

Pupils and staff should return to school as soon as they can, in line with guidance for People with COVID-19 and their contacts.

- If anyone in the school becomes unwell with any of the recognised symptoms² of COVID-19, we will ask that they are taken home.
- If a child with symptoms is awaiting collection, they will wait in the medical room with the door closed and window open for ventilation, with appropriate adult supervision if required.

² Symptoms include temperature, loss of or change to sense of smell, a continuous dry cough but also, with more recent variants, a runny nose and a sore throat.

The St Michael Steiner School

- The bathroom will be cleaned and disinfected using standard cleaning products before being used by anyone else.
- The staff member who tends to the child will wear PPE and wash their hands thoroughly afterwards.
- In an emergency, call 999.
- Cleaning the affected area with normal household disinfectant after someone with symptoms has left will reduce the risk of passing the infection on to other people.

10. If there is a confirmed case of coronavirus in the school

Where the child or staff member tests positive, household members (including any siblings) should follow the government guidance through the link:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-people-with-covid-19-and-their-contacts/covid-19-people-with-covid-19-and-their-contacts#what-to-do-if-you-have-covid-19>

Students who live with someone who has tested positive can still come to school as long

as they have no symptoms themselves and test negative.

11. Self-isolation

Government guidance says:

From 16th August 2021, children under the age of 18 years old will no longer be required to self-isolate, if they have been in contact with someone who has tested positive.

The St Michael Steiner School

12. School Trips

School trips both in the UK and overseas can go ahead from September 2021, however, teachers planning trips should ensure that the school's insurance will cover the trip.

Government guidance says:

You should be aware that the travel list (and broader international travel policy) is subject to change and green list countries may be moved into amber or red. The travel lists may change during a visit and you must comply with international travel legislation and should have contingency plans in place to account for these changes.

You should speak to either your visit provider, commercial insurance company, or the risk protection arrangement (RPA) to assess the protection available. Independent advice on insurance cover and options can be sought from the British Insurance Brokers' Association (BIBA) or Association of British Insurers (ABI).

You should undertake full and thorough risk assessments in relation to all educational visits and ensure that any public health advice, such as hygiene and ventilation requirements, is included as part of that risk assessment. [General guidance](#) about educational visits is available and is supported by specialist advice from the [Outdoor Education Advisory Panel \(OEAP\)](#).

Outbreak management plan

Government Guidance says:

You should have outbreak management plans outlining how you would operate if there were an outbreak in your school or local area. Given the detrimental impact that restrictions on education can have on children and young people, any measures in schools should only ever be considered as a last resort, kept to the minimum number of schools or groups possible, and for the shortest amount of time possible.

For most settings, it will make sense to think about taking extra action if the number of positive cases substantially increases. This is because it could indicate transmission is happening in the setting.)

The St Michael Steiner School

For most education and childcare settings, whichever of these thresholds is reached first:

- 5 children, pupils, students or staff, who are likely to have mixed closely, test positive for COVID-19 within a 10-day period*
- 10% of children, pupils, students or staff who are likely to have mixed closely test positive for COVID-19 within a 10-day period*

Central government may offer local areas of particular concern an enhanced response package to help limit increases in transmission.

You should call the dedicated advice service who will escalate the issue to your local health protection team where necessary and advise if any additional action is required, such as implementing elements of your outbreak management plan. You can reach them by calling the DfE helpline on 0800 046 8687 and selecting option 1 for advice on the action to take in response to a positive case.