



26 August 2021

Dear Parents and Guardians

RETURNING TO SCHOOL AND COVID-19

Ahead of the return to school in September I am writing to update you about the latest COVID-19 guidelines, our preparations ahead of the new school year, and what you and your children will need to know before returning to school.

As you will know, while many requirements for schools and individuals have changed, we must still remember that the virus remains a significant risk for our community and it has not gone away.

For the new school year:

1. Risk Assessment

- Our COVID-19 Risk Assessment has been updated and the new version will be available on the website at the start of next week: <https://www.stchris.co.uk/covid19/>
- COVID-19 Risk Assessments are still required across departments and areas around the school, and each department will consider formal and dynamic risk assessments to ensure they are maintaining the safety of students and staff.

2. Mixing and “bubbles”

- Student “bubbles” are no longer required – mixing between groups can take place;
- Lunch service will resume as per pre-COVID for students and staff. The dining room has been laid out for students and staff to eat together to enable the St Chris sense of community and engagement. Advisers/Personal Tutors or class teachers will confirm lunch times and arrangements with students at the start of term;
- For Senior School and Sixth Form students, you can enter the School using any of the pupil entrances/exits. (Junior School families have received a separate update from Katie Wright.)

3. Tracing Close Contacts and Isolation

- NHS test and trace will conduct contact tracing as required;
- The procedures for close contacts are different from before: Individuals are not required to self-isolate if they live in the same household as someone with COVID-19, or are a close contact of someone with COVID-19, and any of the following apply:
 - they are fully vaccinated
 - they are below the age of 18 years and 6 months
 - they have taken part in or are currently part of an approved COVID-19 vaccine trial
 - they are not able to get vaccinated for medical reasons
- Instead, they will be contacted by NHS Test and Trace, informed they have been in close contact with a positive case and advised to take a [PCR test](#);
- Those who are not required to self isolate by NHS test and trace should attend school as normal.

5. Face Coverings

- Face coverings are not required in school for pupils, staff or visitors in classrooms or communal areas;
- If St Chris experiences a significant number of cases this situation will be reviewed locally and amended as required;



- Students and staff who wish to wear a face covering are welcome to do so.
- Face coverings are recommended for dedicated and public transport.

6. Control Measures

- COVID-19 control measures remain in place:
 - maintain hygiene (hand hygiene, "catch it, bin it, kill it");
 - regular and thorough cleaning regimes;
 - ventilate occupied spaces (classrooms, etc).

7. Testing:

- Staff and Senior School/Sixth Form students should continue to conduct twice weekly home tests;
- On-site Asymptomatic Testing at St Chris will be conducted for Senior School and Sixth Form students only in the first week back in school. This will involve two tests three to five days apart;
- Senior School and Sixth Form students and all staff should continue to conduct twice weekly home testing until the end of September when the Government will review the situation and issue further direction;
- **If anybody tests positive for COVID-19 via a home or on-site test they should immediately self-isolate and request a PCR test. They should continue to self-isolate until they receive the PCR result and then follow NHS test and trace direction.**

The latest Government guidance for schools can be read in full by following this link:

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

In summary the approach for the new school year is based on the requirement to "live with the virus". As highlighted above that means many of the restrictions have been lifted but we should maintain a sensible hygiene approach.

Further details for students in the Senior School and Sixth Form regarding in-school asymptomatic testing at the start of the year will follow next week. For now I wish you a good Bank Holiday weekend and we look forward to seeing you at the start of term.

Best wishes

Martin Scoble
Bursar