

# SGSAT September Re-Opening 2020



## Essential information regarding the full re-opening of schools in September.

### Introduction

This document details the very important requirements and ramifications of that reopening, and hopefully will answer any questions all members of the community will have – staff, students and parents/carers alike.

School-specific details have been or will be shared as soon as they are available, for example, about student groupings, student timetables, cleaning, catering, transport, the curriculum, catch-up and more. It is important to affirm that all these details have been developed in line with comprehensive government guidance and in line with one basic guiding principle: the overriding priority for all staff, students and parents/carers across SGSAT is our continuing safety and wellbeing.

Every one of us has a very important part to play in that.

This document is lengthy, but that is because this is such a significant moment for us all. We have attempted to answer every question you might have whilst grouping the information under as few headings as possible.

### What should I do if I suspect I have the virus?

We need to ensure that if anyone in the school becomes unwell with a new, continuous cough or a high temperature, or has a loss of, or change in, their normal sense of taste or smell, they are sent home and advised to follow the government's guidance which sets out that they must self-isolate for at least 7 days and should arrange to have a test to see if they have coronavirus (COVID-19). Other members of their household (including any siblings) should self-isolate for 14 days from when the symptomatic person first had symptoms.

Staff members and parents/carers must understand that they will need to be ready and willing to:

- book a test if they are displaying symptoms. Staff and students must not come into the school if they have symptoms, and must be sent home to self-isolate if they develop them in school. All children can be tested, including children under 5, but children aged 11 and under will need to be helped by their parents/carers if using a home testing kit
- provide details of anyone they have been in close contact with if they were to test positive for coronavirus (COVID-19) or if asked by NHS Test and Trace

- self-isolate if they have been in close contact with someone who develops coronavirus (COVID-19) symptoms or someone who tests positive for coronavirus (COVID-19)

Essential workers, which includes anyone involved in education or childcare, have priority access to testing.

Everyone should wash their hands thoroughly for 20 seconds with soap and running water or use hand sanitiser after any contact with someone who is unwell. The area around the person with symptoms must be cleaned with normal household bleach after they have left to reduce the risk of passing the infection on to other people.

Staff must immediately notify HR of any changes to their status with regard to their health or that of family members so that appropriate measures can be taken, and should observe the government guidelines for social distancing and good hygiene at all times.

Parents and staff must inform their school immediately of the results of any Covid-19 test:

- if someone tests negative, if they feel well and no longer have symptoms similar to coronavirus (COVID-19), they can stop self-isolating. They could still have another virus, such as a cold or flu – in which case it is still best to avoid contact with other people until they are better. Other members of their household can stop self-isolating.
- if someone tests positive, they should follow the ‘stay at home: guidance for households with possible or confirmed coronavirus (COVID-19) infection’ and must continue to self-isolate for at least 7 days from the onset of their symptoms and then return to school only if they do not have symptoms other than cough or loss of sense of smell/taste. This is because a cough or anosmia can last for several weeks once the infection has gone. The 7-day period starts from the day when they first became ill. If they still have a high temperature, they should keep self-isolating until their temperature returns to normal. Other members of their household should continue self-isolating for the full 14 days.

SGSAT will immediately seek guidance from Public Health in the event of any outbreak in school and follow their recommendations.

## How will schools ensure that the risk of infection is minimised?

Regular and thorough hand cleaning is going to be needed for the foreseeable future. Our schools will ensure that they have enough hand washing or hand sanitiser ‘stations’ available so that all pupils and staff can clean their hands regularly. All staff and students will be expected to clean their hands on arrival at school and before departure at the end of the day.

Using tissues and taking care not to sneeze or cough near other people is essential: we all need to use the ‘catch it, bin it, kill it’ approach.

Face coverings will not be required in school under current Public Health England advice, but must be used at all times on public transport for anyone over the age of 11. If students and staff wear face masks while travelling to school, they must take them off on arrival and put them in a covered bin (or place reusable face coverings in a plastic bag they can take home with them) and then wash their hands again before heading to their classroom. The government advises that staff and students should learn not to touch the front of their face covering during use or when removing them.

We will ensure that our schools are as safe as they can be for students and staff by

- enhancing our hygiene measures
- minimising contact as far as possible

### **Enhancing our hygiene measures:**

As well as everyone taking personal responsibility for their own good hygiene, we will provide more frequent cleaning of rooms and shared areas, remove any unnecessary items from rooms, limit the amount of shared resources, and ensure that frequently touched surfaces are cleaned more often than normal.

### **Minimising contact between individuals and maintain social distancing wherever possible:**

There are two main approaches to social distancing in school recommended by the government. These involve keeping groups of students separate as far as possible (sometimes called 'bubbles') and through maintaining distance between individuals. These are not alternative options and both measures will help, but the balance between them in our schools will change depending on children's ability to distance, the layout of the school and our aim to offer as broad and 'normal' a curriculum for students as possible after we reopen.

Where possible, we will limit interaction between groups and encourage students and staff within groups to maintain social distancing requirements. We are guided by the desire to provide the best curriculum for students within the overriding requirement of safety at all times. As part of this, there may be changes to the way students and staff arrive and leave the site, and move between lessons, as well as one-way systems within school, no-go areas for different groups, clear signage, and a reorganisation of seats and desks in rooms. Movement around school will be kept to a minimum.

It is important that everyone recognises that this will be different to normal, and will be difficult at times. It is, however, essential if we are to ensure everyone's safety.

Where staff need to move between classes and year groups, they will try and keep their distance from pupils and other staff as much as they can, ideally two metres from other adults. If students pass briefly in the corridor or playground, this is considered a low risk by the government, but we will plan the day to avoid creating busy corridors, entrances and exits, breaks and lunchtimes. Different groups don't need to be allocated their own toilet blocks, but toilets will be cleaned regularly and staff and students must always clean their hands thoroughly after using the toilet

It is in general considered to be safer to be outside and where possible, we will encourage students to be outside. It is important to remember that the same requirements to social distance and minimise mixing between groups apply outside, however.

Staff, too, should avoid congregating during breaks and the use of staff shared areas and equipment should be minimised.

## **What about getting to and from school?**

The government is encouraging staff and students to walk, cycle or drive to school rather than take public transport where possible, but we recognise that this will not always be possible. We are

working closely with school transport providers to ensure that safety is paramount where this method is used by students. Students on dedicated school services (services that are used only to carry students to school) do not mix with the general public on those journeys and tend to be consistent. We are working with transport providers on considering key issues, such as how pupils are grouped together on transport, the use of hand sanitiser upon boarding and/or disembarking, additional cleaning of vehicles, organised queuing and boarding where possible, distancing within vehicles wherever possible and the use of face coverings for children over the age of 11, where appropriate, for example, if they are likely to come into very close contact with people outside of their group or who they do not normally meet.

The advice for passengers on public transport to adopt a social distance of two metres from people outside their household or support bubble, or a 'one metre plus' approach where this is not possible, will not apply from the autumn term on dedicated transport. Further details for those students to whom this applies will be released as soon as they are available.

For staff and students who use wider public transport (ie routes which are also used by the general public) there is a requirement for everyone over the age of 11 to wear a face mask.

If students are travelling to school in a new way in September, we would encourage parents to discuss with their children the importance of travelling safely and being aware of dangers if travelling alone.

It will be important to avoid crowding during the start and end of the school day, and each school will prioritise safety in reviewing these arrangements, and provide details in due course.

So that we can take appropriate action in case of any infection, a record will be kept of all visitors.

## How do we stay safe in school?

For individual and very frequently used equipment, such as pencils and pens, it is recommended that staff and students have their own items that are not shared. Students will need to be more conscientious than usual about this, as sharing or loaning equipment will not meet our hygiene expectations. Parental support in this is likely to be of great help. The amount of equipment students and staff bring into school each day should also be minimised to essentials such as lunch boxes, hats, coats, books, stationery and mobile phones. Bags are allowed, but should be of a material that can be cleaned easily.

The government advises that classroom based resources, such as books, can be used and shared within each school group, and they will be cleaned regularly, along with all frequently touched surfaces. Equally, resources that are shared between groups, such as sports, art and science equipment will be cleaned frequently and meticulously and always between any use by different groups, or rotated to allow them to be left unused and out of reach for a period of 48 hours (72 hours for plastics) between use by different groups.

Students and teachers can take books and other shared resources home, although unnecessary sharing should be avoided, especially where this does not contribute to pupil education and development.

Outdoor sports should be prioritised where possible, and large indoor spaces used where it is not, maximising distancing between pupils and paying scrupulous attention to cleaning and hygiene. Contact sports will be avoided.

The majority of staff will not require PPE beyond what they would normally need for their work. PPE is only needed in a very small number of cases: where an individual child or young person becomes ill with coronavirus (COVID-19) symptoms while at schools, and only then if a distance of 2 metres cannot be maintained, or where a child or young person already has routine intimate care needs that involves the use of PPE, in which case the same PPE should continue to be used

## Do I have to attend school in September?

We are very aware that the period since lockdown has been emotionally and mentally difficult for staff, students and parents/carers alike, and we are taking account of this in all our plans for reopening, which will include a particular focus on student and staff wellbeing, and the swift identification of measures needed, both academically and emotionally, to catch up on missing time and get everyone back on track. The start of the year will clearly be different to any previous year, and we must all be prepared for more change through the year as we adjust to the consequences of lockdown and future developments in circumstances with Covid-19. Links that might be useful in supporting students, staff and parents/carers are included at the bottom of this letter. We will continue to work closely with social services and other agencies as necessary, of course, to support particular needs where appropriate. For students with IEPs or EHCPs or other special arrangements, the same procedures as before lockdown will apply.

School uniform and dress codes will revert to normal for staff and students. The government has advised that there is no need for anything other than normal personal hygiene and washing of clothes following a day in school.

The government has been very clear that the usual rules on school attendance for students will apply in September including:

- parents' duty to secure that their child attends regularly at school where the child is a registered student at school and they are of compulsory school age;
- schools' responsibilities to record attendance and follow up absence, including the availability to issue sanctions, including fixed penalty notices in line with local authorities' codes of conduct.

Where children are not able to attend school because they or their parents are following clinical and/or public health advice, absence will not, of course, be penalised. If parents or students have any questions or anxieties around re-opening, they should contact the school as soon as possible so that we can work with them to ensure full attendance is possible.

## What will it be like in school in September?

Whilst we all want to 'get back to normal' as soon as possible, the curriculum that students experience and staff deliver will no doubt be different in September to that which they would have experienced in a normal year. Our planning will be based on an assessment of students' starting points and by the need to address any the gaps in their expected knowledge and skills as a result of the lockdown, which we will discover when we reopen. Staff and students alike should be prepared to experience more change during the course of the year than they are used to.

The key principles that will underpin our curriculum planning are:

- the curriculum remains broad and ambitious: all pupils will continue to be taught a wide range of subjects, maintaining their choices for further study and employment, but we will also ensure that we create time to cover the most important missed content, with the aim of returning to the school's normal curriculum content by no later than summer term 2021.
- remote education, where needed, is high quality and aligns as closely as possible with in-school provision: we will continue to build our capability to educate pupils remotely, where this is needed.

You will probably have heard that the government has announced a one-off payment of schools for Catch-Up Funding. As details of this are revealed, we will of course share this with parents, students and staff, and we will do everything we can to ensure that students receive the support needed to make substantial progress by the end of the academic year.

Relationships and health education (RHE) for primary aged pupils and relationships, and sex and health education (RSHE) for secondary aged pupils becomes compulsory from September 2020, and under revised guidance our schools are expected to start teaching by at least the start of the summer term 2021. We will provide more information on this in due course.

For pupils in key stages 1 and 2, we will, of course, prioritise identifying gaps and re-establish good progress in the essentials (phonics and reading, increasing vocabulary, writing and mathematics), identifying opportunities across the curriculum so that students read widely, and develop their knowledge and vocabulary. For pupils in key stage 3, it may be necessary to address gaps in English and maths by teaching essential knowledge and skills from the key stage 2 curriculum where these are identified. It is also likely that pupils in key stage 4 and 5 will need extra support to catch up on any content they have missed, but the school curriculum may be less flexible given the requirements of qualification specifications. We still await confirmation of the government's plans for examinations in 2021, but when we have that will share it with you.

We are currently working with catering providers to deliver the best and safest possible options for September, and each school will release details of that as soon as they have them. All the normal legal requirements regarding catering will apply from September, including for those eligible for benefits-related free school meals or universal infant free school meals.

Schools will follow the government guidance and avoid all domestic overnight and overseas educational visits until further notice. Other community engagements, such as sporting fixtures and work experience, will only take place as and when the government advises that it is safe to do so.

## Further Details

If you have any further questions about the material covered here, please do not hesitate to contact us directly, but be aware that if those questions are about precise details of the broader requirements referred to in this letter, that information will be shared with you the minute it is available, and that staff are very busy at the moment trying to get everything ready for September.

## **Additional Information:**

### **Students Displaying Symptoms in School.**

For information, please note that in the event of a student displaying symptoms of Covid-19 in school, the following procedures will apply:

When a child, young person or staff member develops symptoms compatible with coronavirus (COVID-19), they should be sent home and advised to self-isolate for 7 days and arrange to have a test to see if they have COVID-19.

If a child is awaiting collection, they should be moved, if possible, to a room where they can be isolated behind a closed door, depending on the age and needs of the child, with appropriate adult supervision if required. Ideally, a window should be opened for ventilation. If it is not possible to isolate them, they will be moved to an area which is at least 2 metres away from other people.

If they need to go to the bathroom while waiting to be collected, they should use a separate bathroom if possible. The bathroom must be cleaned and disinfected using standard cleaning products before being used by anyone else.

Any members of staff who have helped someone with symptoms and any pupils who have been in close contact with them do not need to go home to self-isolate unless they develop symptoms themselves (in which case, they should arrange a test) or if the symptomatic person subsequently tests positive (see below) or they have been requested to do so by NHS Test and Trace.

### **Useful Links.**

<https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance/stay-at-home-guidance-for-households-with-possible-coronavirus-covid-19-infection>

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

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-for-full-opening-special-schools-and-other-specialist-settings>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-implementing-protective-measures-in-education-and-childcare-settings/coronavirus-covid-19-implementing-protective-measures-in-education-and-childcare-settings>

<https://www.mentallyhealthyschools.org.uk/media/1960/coronavirus-mental-health-and-wellbeing-resources.pdf>

<https://www.egfl.org.uk/elp-services/health-improvement-schools/wellbeing-and-mental-health-support-during-coronavirus>

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4ij1I0OB2hk>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iMR3WPCRuAI>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-on-vulnerable-children-and-young-people>

<https://www.childline.org.uk/info-advice/your-feelings/anxiety-stress-panic/worries-about-the-world/>