

COVID-19 FAQs for Abbey Park School September Opening

As you know, on 19 July the Government moved the country to Step 4 on the Roadmap, as a result of which most - but not all - anti-COVID measures in schools have been lifted. As has been our practice throughout the pandemic, **Abbey Park School** will continue to act in line with the advice from the Department for Education, the over-riding message of which is now that schools should minimise disruption to children's education.

The following FAQs are designed to communicate clearly how we intend to achieve that objective while still recognising that the virus will continue to circulate in society for some time to come. To help busy parents, points for action are noted in **bold type**.

What are the new rules for close contacts self-isolating?

Although **Abbey Park School** was relatively unaffected, the need for 'close contacts' of positive cases to self-isolate for 10 days caused major disruption in many schools. The Government has now removed this requirement for under-18s and double-vaccinated adults. Instead, close contacts of infected pupils will be advised to take a PCR test, a task which will now be undertaken by NHS Test and Trace rather than by schools. We would ask pupils and staff who are awaiting results of PCR tests to wear face coverings and take extra precautions until the results are known.

What do I need to do if my child tests positive, has symptoms, or if someone in our household does?

The rules in these circumstances have also changed. That is, if **someone tests positive or develops symptoms, they should self-isolate immediately and book a PCR test. In the meantime, their family/ household does not need to self-isolate if they have been double vaccinated or are aged under 18 years but should the family member test positive they will be asked to take a PCR as a close contact.** Full details can be found here [Stay at home: guidance for households with possible or confirmed coronavirus \(COVID-19\) infection - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/stay-at-home-guidance-for-households-with-possible-or-confirmed-coronavirus-covid-19-infection)

As before, it is vital that you keep us informed of any symptoms or positive cases

If my child needs to self-isolate but is in good health, will the School provide remote learning?

Yes - we shall organise for your child to join lessons remotely as soon as possible after you inform us. However, the School does not provide remote learning for pupils who are self-isolating only as a precaution.

Will the School be running an on-site testing centre at the beginning of term?

Initially yes, as the Government requires pupils to have two Lateral Flow Device tests prior to returning to school. You will have received a time for your child to be tested if you have given consent for them to be tested. After the initial tests prior to the return to school we would expect pupils to continue to test twice a week at home and the school has a stock of test kits in order to facilitate this.

Is ongoing use of LFD tests for over-11s recommended?

Yes, although we would once again emphasise that this is entirely voluntary. The School has been sent more testing kits, which we shall pass on to consenting families. Please look out for a separate communication about this. In the meantime, **we should like to encourage consenting pupils to test themselves the day before they return to School each week.**

What about face coverings?

We shall be following the Step 4 guidance that face coverings are no longer required for staff, pupils or visitors in classrooms or communal areas. However, we continue to respect the right of individuals to wear these if they wish. The guidance also makes provision for local directors of public health to request compulsory re-introduction of face coverings in schools with outbreaks of the virus.

However, and also in line with the guidance, **pupils aged 11+ without an exemption must wear face coverings on all forms of School transport. This includes coaches/minibuses to and from School, as well as transport for School fixtures and trips.**

Parents will be aware that, despite the wearing of face coverings no longer being a legal requirement on public transport, **the Government expects and recommends that they are worn in enclosed and crowded such as busy trains. Pupils should be mindful of this guidance while travelling to and from the School on public transport.**

Are lunch arrangements back to normal?

Yes. The lifting of 'bubbles' means that all pupils who have signed up for a School lunch can safely receive a hot lunch in the usual way.

Is hand and respiratory hygiene still important?

Yes, very much so. **Please continue to send your child to School with plenty of tissues and sanitiser.**

Are all School trips now allowed to run?

In theory, yes they are. In practice, however, for the foreseeable future overseas trips will be subject to a complex and fast-changing set of quarantine rules **and so no foreign trips have been scheduled for this academic year.** As for domestic trips, they should now be able to proceed **but will be limited, this academic year, to trips which are directly related to subject exam syllabuses.**

Are there any changes to the timings of the School day?

We shall be reverting to the pre-COVID timings for the School day

Arrival to school 8.40am ready for an 8.45am start.

End of school 3.10pm

Years 7-9 will enter and leave through the Pupil Gate.

Years 10 and 11 will enter and leave through the Main Entrance.