

2nd September 2020

Dear Parents and Carers

Keeping Children and Young People Covid-Safe in our Schools: Blue Coat, Mayfield and St George's

I hope you are well and that you and your children are looking forward to the start of term. It will be a strange feeling after being out for so long, but our schools are ready and prepared for the return of all our young people.

Quick reminder – Who Returns When: Blue Coat and St George's

- Reception pupils will have a staggered start as notified by the school.
- Years 1-6 will have a staggered start across Thursday 3rd and Friday 4th September as notified by the school.
- Years 7 and 12 return on Thursday, 3rd September.
- Years 8-11 and 13 return on Monday, 7th September.

Mayfield

- Nursery and Reception pupils will have a staggered start as notified by the school.
- Years 1-6 return on Monday, 7th September.

The key public health controls below are in place, as are detailed plans to support our young people and get them back into interesting and interactive learning, and the ability to mix safely with one another.

Key controls:

- Hygiene – hand sanitizing, “catch-it”, “bin-it”, “kill-it”;
- Additional cleaning;
- Distancing for staff and reducing mixing for students;
- In Secondary, face coverings in corridors and communal areas

Your Headteacher will have contacted you about the specifics for their school. We were also featured in The Manchester Evening News and The Guardian (see links below) where you can find stories and photographs of the adaptations that have been made at Blue Coat, which have been mirrored in our primaries. It has been a busy summer.

<https://www.manchestereveningnews.co.uk/news/greater-manchester-news/inside-oldham-schools-set-welcome-18853886>

<https://www.theguardian.com/education/2020/aug/30/oldham-biggest-secondary-school-plans-covid-ready-reopening>

In this letter I want to explain what would happen if we had a confirmed Covid case in any of our schools.

1. **Let's try to prevent it at source.** If your child shows symptoms, please do **not** send them into school. Arrange a test as soon as possible. If COVID is confirmed, **let school know immediately**. The household must go into quarantine for 14 days.
2. If your child shows symptoms at school, s/he will be isolated, and you will be asked to come and collect them as soon as possible and take them to a testing centre.

3. If we hear from a parent or directly from the Public Health Authority, that a child (or member of staff) has tested positive, we will check who they have been in contact with. "In contact" means within 2 metres for 15 minutes or 1 metre for up to a minute within the past 48 hours.

Therefore, it will be those children they sit closest to in their lessons and who they sit close to on a school bus. **Walking** to school or from the bus stop is different because the young person is outside, but we all need to emphasise to young people that they should keep their distance. We **know** who the young person has been close to because we keep seating plans for **all** lessons. For secondary students, we know where groups normally sit/stand on the designated school buses.

4. The school will get in touch with the parents of a child who has been in contact (see above) in the past 48 hours with a confirmed case and advise them by text/email/phone call that they need to collect their young person who has to quarantine for 14 days. The rest of the household **doesn't** have to quarantine, unless their child contracts COVID. Since people can have Covid without necessarily having symptoms it is advisable that parents organise a test. The advice will be in a letter that the young person will be given for their parents.

If children are quarantined, we will do our best to ensure they are supported in learning at home.

If we had more than one confirmed case at any time, we would be analysing any possible connections between them, to see whether there is in-school transmission between a particular group of students or through a member of staff; or whether the cases are actually quite separate and distinct, a result of transmission in the community, which the Public Health Authority will follow up.

If we had several cases which are apparently linked to school transmission, we would be working very closely with the Public Health Authority to ensure that we make the right call.

5. Communication

We know how quickly rumours can fly around social media, and that this can make people anxious, so we will be absolutely transparent and will contact parents to update you on any confirmed cases and the action the school has taken. **Please trust us to be open with you, rather than any social media speculation.**

Please also bear in mind that we have done everything possible to keep the "bubbles" apart and to manage distancing in classrooms. Therefore, a confirmed case in one class will not affect all the pupils in that class or year group. Our systems mean that school contacts can be quickly narrowed down.

6. Symptoms

When young people return to school in the autumn in **any** school year, we will also experience a round of coughs and colds. In addition, the hay fever season hasn't yet finished. So, there may be cases where students appear have some potential Covid-like symptoms but actually it isn't Covid.

In the spirit of home and school working together, we expect that parents, who know their children far better than the schools can, will check symptoms at home, take a precautionary approach and arrange for young people to have a test, if appropriate.

We will monitor the situation in all our schools very closely. If we are concerned about a pupil, we will send them home and contact those who have been close to the child, confidentially, to advise them to get a test, even if COVID hasn't actually been confirmed, i.e. we will manage and mitigate risk.

Recent Government Guidance re Potential School Closures/Rotas (National Contain Framework)

This was issued on Friday, 28th August at 7.00pm. The new "tiers" of national intervention apply to educational settings **only** so whilst some boroughs in Greater Manchester (including currently Oldham) are in "intervention" status, which means that there are local restrictions on, for example, mixing in different

households, **schools, colleges and childcare will remain fully open to all** with the additional requirement for face coverings in corridors and communal areas for **students in secondary schools and colleges**.

Schools are controlled environments and have worked very hard to put all the health and safety advice in place.

The guidance states that **in exceptional circumstances, secondary schools (not primary)** may have to move to a rota model, whereby half the students are in for 10 days and then the other half are at home doing online learning.

The decision to move to a rota model is not taken by the school, but by central and local government and the Public Health Authority, working with the school.

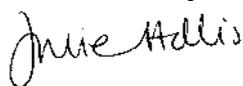
We hope not to find ourselves in this situation and are doing everything we can to prevent it. Please help us by following public health advice fully at home and in the wider community, so that together we can reduce the spread of the virus and start to return all our lives to what we all remember.

Primary schools will remain open unless there is a full lockdown (tier 4), when they would only be open for children of key workers and vulnerable students. Again, that would be a government decision.

And now the priority is to welcome all our young people back and get going!

We look forward to working with you to make this a really great year for our schools, families and wider communities.

Yours sincerely



JULIE HOLLIS
Chief Executive Officer
The Cranmer Education Trust