

# **Ballyclare Secondary School**



## **Keeping Safe – Restarting School**

### **August 2020**

## Ballyclare Secondary School

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When we return Ballyclare Secondary School will be a COVID-Safe, welcoming and supportive environment for our entire community. I appreciate that there may be considerable anxiety around returning to school and we may all express that in different ways. It will therefore be important that we are sensitive to one another and show care, patience, empathy and understanding.

This guide has been created to outline the measures and procedures that are in place and follows the latest information from the PHA and the Department of Education, which was released, to school on 13<sup>th</sup> August 2020.

The Department of Education is asking all schools to adopt a range of approaches and actions which when implemented, create a safe environment, where the risk of transmission of infection is substantially reduced. This includes:

- Minimising contact with individuals who are unwell by ensuring that pupils or staff who have coronavirus symptoms, or who have someone in their household who does, **do not attend school.**
- Cleaning hands more often than usual - pupils and staff will be encouraged to regularly wash their hands thoroughly for 20 seconds with running water and soap and dry them thoroughly, or use alcohol hand rub or sanitiser ensuring that all parts of the hands are covered. (Note that sanitiser is not a substitution for hand washing).
- Ensuring good respiratory hygiene by promoting the ‘catch it, bin it, kill it’ approach.
- Cleaning frequently touched surfaces often, using standard products such as detergents and bleach.
- Minimising contact and mixing, as far as possible, by keeping pupils in small groups for face-to-face support and keeping those groups as consistent as possible whilst in school (e.g. for arrival, lunchtime, breaks and departure) and altering the school environment (e.g. changing classroom layouts so desks are further apart or dividing groups into different classrooms).

***“On return to school, the overriding provision will be a full class return with all appropriate and practical protections in place” (Mr P Weir, Minister of Education)***

In preparing for the new school environment guidelines have been put in place for all staff and pupils of Ballyclare Secondary School and everyone should follow these on their return to school.

An interim **School Development Plan** will be in place to provide a framework for how we go forward into what will undoubtedly be a very different academic year.

The main areas of focus within the interim SDP will be as follows:

- Supporting the physical, mental and emotional health and wellbeing of pupils and staff.
- Developing effective learning and teaching strategies that utilise remote/blended learning. (What can we learn from our remote learning experience for future use?)

## Ballyclare Secondary School

### Keeping Safe – School Restart August 2020

---

- Developing effective approaches for delivering services to vulnerable learners and those pupils who have statements of special educational needs.
- Identifying and addressing underachievement particularly for those pupils who have experienced barriers to engaging with remote learning.
- Enhancing parental engagement to support children’s learning.
- Developing an effective programme of professional learning for teachers and support staff.

This guidance aims to help staff and pupils stay safe and healthy in a school environment that has changed significantly due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

A number of key areas are covered:

1. A clean environment
2. School transport
3. School routines
4. Classrooms
5. COVID-19
6. Pupil behaviour and support

#### **A Clean Environment**

The health, wellbeing and safety of our pupils and staff remains the highest priority. Regular and thorough attention to hygiene is essential to deter the spread of the virus.

- While school has been closed over the summer the cleaning team have been completing an enhanced clean of all parts of the building. We will be implementing additional cleaning protocols to ensure exceptional hygiene standards.
- The school will be thoroughly cleaned each evening. The cleaning regime will pay particular attention to touch surfaces including desks, chairs, light switches, door handles, windowsills and bannisters. Sinks and toilets will be cleaned more regularly throughout the day.
- There will be routine cleaning and disinfection of frequently touched objects such as key boards and telephones.
- It is very important that staff play their part in this by keeping rooms tidy and teacher desks and other surfaces clear. All soft furnishings such as cushions, mats etc and any additional furniture have been removed from classrooms to allow maximum space for pupil desks to facilitate social distancing and ease of cleaning.
- Where classrooms have sinks, these will be made available for staff and pupils to wash their hands which may mean the repositioning of teacher desks.
- All classrooms will be equipped with a “**Keep Clean, Keep Safe Box**” which will contain hand sanitiser, box of tissues, hand soap and paper towels (for all rooms with a sink), antibacterial/virus wipes, “Dettox” and disposable cloths, disposable gloves and disposable masks. All staff will be provided with a personal bottle of hand sanitiser that is refillable in school.
- Hand sanitising materials will be available at the main entrance points for school. It must be noted that hand sanitising is only a support mechanism for hand hygiene and does not negate the need to wash hands. All staff and pupils are required to wash their hands as soon as they arrive at school and regularly throughout the day.

## Ballyclare Secondary School

### Keeping Safe – School Restart August 2020

---

- The practice of good respiratory hygiene should be followed the “catch it, bin it, kill it” approach.
- Signage reinforcing the hygiene messages are displayed throughout the school.
- PPE will only be required in a very small number of cases, such as those members of staff working with pupils who require intimate care needs and administering medication.
- Surfaces in dining halls will be wiped down and disinfected in between each sitting.

#### **School Uniform**

While Coronavirus can land on fabrics and remain for some time, schools are not a high risk environment and where possible all young people should be encouraged to wear clean uniform or fresh clothes each day, this is not essential and pupils should wear **full school uniform as normal**.

#### **Face Coverings**

COVID-19 usually spreads by droplets from coughs, sneezes and speaking. These droplets can also be picked up from surfaces, if you touch a surface and then your face without washing your hands first.

There is a clear distinction between PPE and face coverings. PPE is specialist medical grade equipment that has been and will continue to be used when working with some pupils whose hygiene or care needs involve the possible spread of liquids or aerosol dispersion such as vomiting or spitting. The guidance on the use of PPE is led by the underlying health need of the pupil and is unchanged.

Public Health guidance recommends that face coverings are used in particular circumstances - short periods in enclosed spaces where social distancing is not possible. Coronavirus (COVID-19) usually spreads by droplets from coughs, sneezes and speaking.

***“The best available scientific evidence is that, when used correctly, wearing a face covering may reduce the spread of coronavirus droplets in certain circumstances, helping to protect others while also providing some protection to the wearer. Because face coverings are mainly intended to protect others, not the wearer, from coronavirus (COVID-19) they’re not a replacement for social distancing and regular hand washing.”***  
***(New School Day, DE)***

This is why social distancing, regular hand hygiene, and covering coughs and sneezes are vitally important in controlling the spread of the virus.

When wearing a face covering you must wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water for 20 seconds or use hand sanitiser before putting it on and after removing it. It is very important not to touch the face covering while you are wearing it. If the mask becomes damp, it must be replaced.

**Staff and pupils who wish to use face coverings during the routine school day may do so.**

## Ballyclare Secondary School

### Keeping Safe – School Restart August 2020

---

#### Within education settings:

- It is mandatory for all pupils aged 13 and over to wear a face covering on **public transport**. It is also strongly recommended that all pupils, regardless of age, should wear a face covering on all buses, trains or taxis for the journey to school where it is appropriate for them to do so and they are able to handle them as directed.
- Face coverings must be worn in staff rooms and during adult to adult meetings lasting more than 15 minutes and by adults visiting the school site.
- Face coverings are strongly encouraged for activities that entail large numbers of staff or pupils within an enclosed space **where social distancing is not possible**.

Given the risk mitigations in place in schools to limit and contain the spread of COVID-19, face coverings are not generally recommended for routine use in schools. Staff and pupils may wish to use them during the routine school day and this is acceptable.

**Face coverings in school are not mandatory and some pupils and staff are exempt from wearing them. It is important that we all respect one another and remember the reasons for not wearing a face covering may not always be visible.**

#### School Transport

The Education Authority is responsible for ensuring the provision of all home to school transport. This is provided on either **dedicated school transport** services or on **public transport services**.

**Dedicated school transport** includes Translink buses that are only used by pupils and not used by the general public, privately operated bus services that are only used by pupils and taxis.

**Public transport services** are scheduled bus and train services that are used by both pupils and the general public.

**Limited transport provision will be available for eligible pupils who require it in those year groups returning to school on 24 August 2020 with a full service resuming from 1 September.**

Children showing any symptoms of COVID-19 **should not travel** to school.

The Education Authority is working collaboratively with transport providers such as Translink to maximise capacity across the home to school transport network. **Home to school transport, either on public bus services or on dedicated transport services, should only be used where there is no alternative available.**

**All pupils should therefore seek to use alternative methods of travel in particular:**

**Active travel** such as walking and cycling, where it is safe to do so. Using active travel for pupils' journey to school carries the lowest risk of transmission of COVID-19 and will bring a range of health benefits as part of a healthier lifestyle.

## Ballyclare Secondary School

### Keeping Safe – School Restart August 2020

---

For those children who have no alternative but to use the home to school transport service then the EA will make transport available as far as possible. Where children travel on dedicated school transport a series of mitigation measures will be put in place.

**It is mandatory for all pupils aged 13 and over to wear a face covering on public transport. It is also strongly recommended that all pupils regardless of age should wear a face covering on all buses, trains or taxis for the journey to school where it is appropriate for them to do so and they are able to handle them as directed.**

#### **Dedicated Home to School Transport**

Pupils on all buses should always seek to maintain a social distance from others wherever possible, however the **guidance for public transport on social distancing will not apply on dedicated school transport in the new school year.**

#### **Home to School Transport on Public Transport Services**

The Department for Infrastructure's Safer travel guidance for public transport users, walkers, cyclists, drivers document states that when travelling, users should keep two metres social distance at all times - where that is not possible, they should try to keep at least one metre, taking suitable precautions such as wearing a face covering.

**This advice applies for pupils aged 13 and over using public bus/train services where members of the public may also be on board. The wearing of face coverings for those under 13 on all buses, trains or taxis for the journey to school is strongly encouraged for those who are able to do so.**

Under the current social distancing guidelines, it is unlikely that there will be capacity to provide all eligible pupils with a seat on a public transport service.

**Parents, children and young people are strongly encouraged to consider alternatives to using public transport, to plan their journey to and from school and to use active travel methods such as walking or cycling.**

#### **Travelling by car**

A one- way system will be in operation on the school grounds for those pupils who travel to school by car. Cars will enter school grounds from the Doagh Road, pupils will be left off at the pupil entrance and make their way immediately into school and cars move through the playground carefully and exit onto Avondale Drive. Parents are requested not to leave pupils off before 8.30 am.

#### **School Routines.**

Ballyclare Secondary School will look a little different when staff and pupils return in September and the new protocols and measures are simple and clear so that everyone will feel reassured.

- There will be **clear signage** in and around school to assist with the flow of pupils in the building. We will be operating a **"one way" system. All staff will supervise pupil movement around the school at the change of all lessons.** This is very important for protecting everyone.

## Ballyclare Secondary School

### Keeping Safe – School Restart August 2020

---

- Pupils passing in corridors and short periods of contact does not present a significant risk to staff or pupils.
- One-way system will be in place on the bottom floor of the main teaching block. **It is vitally important that all pupils follow this particularly pupils coming down the stairs at the back of the school. Pupils must progress along the music corridor.**
- One-way system will be in place on the second and third floor of the main teaching block. Pupils must go up the front stairs and down the back stairs.  
Pupils will move up the front stairs of the main teaching block and down the back stairs.
- Pupils moving from the new English and Geography Rooms to the **bottom floor** will use the red staircase.

**Pupils must keep to the left side of the corridors and stairs when moving around the school**

#### Entering and leaving the building

At break and lunch time:

Year 8 will use the Main Front Doors – Pupil Entrance

Year 9 will use the PE Doors

Year 10 will use the PE Doors

Year 11 will use the Main Front Doors – Pupil Entrance

Year 12 will use the PE Doors

Year 13 and 14 will use the PE Doors

**We will be operating a stay- on -site policy during lunchtime for all pupils**

**At the end of the school day pupils may leave by the front door and use all sets of stairs.**

We will also limit the number of people who have access to the building. To ensure this, **parents/carers should only enter the school when it is essential to do so and with an appointment.** We must adhere to track and trace procedures.

We will be using all available space within school to ensure the best spacing of pupils can be achieved in school. This may include the use of the halls and Lecture Theatre as teaching areas. Strict social distancing requirements between all pupils has now been relaxed and there is no specific distance recommended, however, we will ensure as much social distancing as is possible.

**Good ventilation** is important to help reduce the risk of spreading coronavirus. All windows in classrooms will be open to ensure a healthy circulation of air during and between classes. Windows in the corridors will also be open at all times.

**Social Distancing** –whilst the decision has been taken to relax social distancing between pupils, staff will be required to maintain a social distance of 2 metres from other members of staff and from pupils.

**Signage** to demarcate social distancing will be displayed as a means of educating pupils on the importance of good practices.

## Ballyclare Secondary School

### Keeping Safe – School Restart August 2020

---

“**Protective bubbles**” will be used as a key mitigating action. This involves organising pupils into small groups (‘protective bubbles’) with consistent membership i.e. same pupils in the bubble each day. Given the changing public health position it is now appropriate that such ‘bubbles’ are based on whole classes, facilitating the safe return of pupils to school on a full time basis.

Keeping pupils in ‘protective bubbles’ is a means of decreasing interactions between groups until further easing of measures is possible based on the public health situation. Social distancing between the adult staff working with such groups will be maintained as much as possible.

Key Stage 3, Years 8 to 10, pupils will be in ‘protective bubbles’ which will cover all aspects of the school day including designated teaching areas and staggered times for break and lunch time.

For Years 11 to 14 there is no requirement for protective bubbles and pupils will follow as far as possible their normal timetable. However, pupils will be expected to maintain social distancing as far as possible.

There will be **no extracurricular programme during September 2020**; this will be reviewed when additional information is received.

#### School Day

8.10 am	Senior Teachers will be on duty throughout the school/in playground/school gates and driveway/entrance points.
8.40 am	<p>Pupils will arrive to school and move directly to their form class. All class teachers must be in class at 8.40 am to receive pupils.</p> <p><b>A one- way system will be in operation on the school grounds for those pupils who travel to school by car. Cars will enter school grounds from the Doagh Road, pupils will be left off and cars move through the playground carefully and exit onto Avondale Drive. Parents are requested not to leave pupils off before 8.40 am.</b></p> <p>Senior Teachers/Boys’ and Girls’ Tutors/Year Teachers will be on duty throughout the school/in playground/school driveway/entrance points.</p>
9.00 am	Period 1
10.10 to 10.25 am	<p><b>Year 8 and 9 Break time</b></p> <p><b>At 10.25 am Year 8 and 9 move to third period</b></p> <p><b>If weather is inclement, pupils in Year 8 and 9 will remain in their second period class and teachers will be required to supervise for break time. The bell will ring three times to indicate a wet break and that pupils will remain in class.</b></p>

## Ballyclare Secondary School

### Keeping Safe – School Restart August 2020

---

10.15 am	Years 10 to 14 move to third period
10.30 to 10.45 am	<b>Year 10 and 11 Break time</b>
10.50 to 11.05 am	<b>Year 12, 13 and 14 Break time</b>  <b>If weather is inclement, pupils will remain in their third period class and teachers will be required to supervise for break time. The bell will ring three times to indicate a wet break and that pupils will remain in class</b>
11.05 am	All pupils move to fourth period
11.45 am	<b>Year 8 and 9 Lunch time (Some Year 13 and 14 pupils will be on lunch)</b>
12.25 pm	<b>Year 10 and 11 Lunch time (Some Year 13 and 14 pupils will be on lunch)</b>
1.05 pm	<b>Year 12, 13 and 14 Lunch time</b>  <b>Staff who are timetabled to teach Year 12 will be required to take their lunch during period seven.</b>
1.45 pm	Period 8
2.25 pm	Period 9
<b>2.45 pm</b>	<b>School finishes for Year 8, 9 and 10</b>
<b>3.00 pm</b>	<b>School finishes for Year 11, 12 , 13 and 14</b>

#### **Classrooms**

The health and wellbeing of pupils and staff and the provision of positive learning and teaching environments are paramount. To provide capacity to accommodate social distancing rules we need to use all existing spaces within school. This will mean that we will be using the library, Lecture Theatre, Assembly Hall as learning and teaching areas to accommodate classes. Classrooms and workspaces will be reconfigured to follow the government guidelines.

- Teachers will teach from the front of the classroom to adhere to the 2 metre social distancing rule that applies to all staff.
- There will be no “at elbow” support.
- Teachers will have their own personal supply of whiteboard markers and other equipment that they may require for teaching.

## Ballyclare Secondary School

### Keeping Safe – School Restart August 2020

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- Individual pupil booklets/workbooks will be used as far as possible and these will remain in the classroom. Pupils will be encouraged not to bring anything to school from home. A plastic bag is permitted for carrying lunch. (Pupils can bring a washable lunch box and bottle for water.) All pupils will be given a washable plastic folder for carrying essential items to and from school
- Work to be marked and assessed will be submitted electronically if possible, as staff should not be carrying pupil work home at the end of the school day.
- Teachers will be moving from room to room, and will clean the desk and workstation at the beginning and the end of the lesson.
- In classrooms with sinks, pupils should wash their hands at the start of the lesson. Hand sanitiser is available in all classrooms for staff and pupil use.
- If pupils are using computers/laptops they must clean the computer and workstation using the materials provided at the end of the lesson.
- The information from DE states that cleaning of classrooms at the end of the school day should be sufficient to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Cleaning materials are available if teachers wish to clean desks throughout the day.
- Pupils will be allocated to a desk within the classroom and staff will keep a record of all seating plans. This is essential for track and trace purposes.

#### **Physical Education**

PE is a compulsory element of the curriculum at both Key Stages 3 and 4. The Department have stated that from September all children will continue to have regular access to PE within the curriculum. We appreciate the positive impact that physical exercise can have on young people's health and wellbeing. This is why the government has permitted the resumption of sporting activities outside schools. In the delivery of PE and wider sporting activities, we will give due regard to public health requirements and the guidance provided by individual sporting governing bodies around safe delivery.

**To minimise the need for changing, pupils may come to school in their PE uniform on the days when they are time tabled for PE. Pupils must wear the school PE kit and they must wear plain navy/black track bottoms and a plain navy/black hooded top or the school tracksuit.**

**Pupils will not be permitted to sit in class wearing shorts or skorts.**

#### **COVID-19**

If a pupil becomes unwell in school and it is suspected that they have symptoms of COVID-19 the pupil will immediately be told to put on a facemask, (provided in the classroom box) and will be immediately removed to the medical room. The Principal or member of SLT will be contacted immediately – this should be done by telephone. The pupil will be collected from school as soon as possible. It is vitally important that up to date contact details are available for all pupils and that there is someone available to collect your child from school should they become unwell.

While waiting to be collected the pupil will be moved to a room where they can be isolated behind a closed door. This will be the nurse's room and **not the front entrance hall.**

## Ballyclare Secondary School

### Keeping Safe – School Restart August 2020

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Appropriate supervision will be provided and the room will be well ventilated with the windows open.

If the pupil needs to go to the bathroom while waiting to be collected, they will use the hygiene room. This area will be cleaned and disinfected before being used by anyone else.

PPE will be worn by staff caring for the pupil while they await collection. All staff involved in the care of the pupil will wash their hands thoroughly for 20 seconds after they have been in contact with the pupil.

A trace of the pupil's contact and space usage over the previous 72 hours will be carried out and appropriate cleaning measures applied.

Staff and parents/carers will be informed immediately of a confirmed case along with contact and space usage.

Parents/carers will be informed if their child has been in contact with the pupil and advised accordingly.

#### **Blended Learning**

Ballyclare Secondary School will continue to have a contingency plan for the delivery of remote learning in the event of local or wider school closures, or that a class or group of pupils need to self-isolate.

#### **Pupil Behaviour**

The school **Promoting Positive Behaviour Policy** has been adapted to address COVID-19 related incidents.

***The adapted policy allows sanctions up to and including exclusion for pupils:***

- ***who fail to follow instructions relating to health and safety protocols,***
- ***who wilfully refuse to adhere to arrangements of social distancing and***
- ***who deliberately cough or spit at pupils or staff, putting them at risk.***

***This policy will be followed robustly as a means of protecting the health and safety of the entire school community.***

#### **Pupil Support**

Families have been affected in different ways during the past few months and this will have been an unsettling time for all our pupils. On their return to school pupils will be supported emotionally in a number of ways throughout the school day, from planned teaching activities to bespoke support as and when needed.

Please let staff in school know if your family has been affected directly by the pandemic and we will work together with parents/carers in order to try to help and support all pupils through these uncertain times.

(Guidance taken from Coronavirus (COVID-19) Northern Ireland Re-Opening Schools Guidance "New School Day" 13<sup>th</sup> August 2020)

**Ballyclare Secondary School**  
**Keeping Safe – School Restart August 2020**

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***Mrs K Bell***  
***Principal***