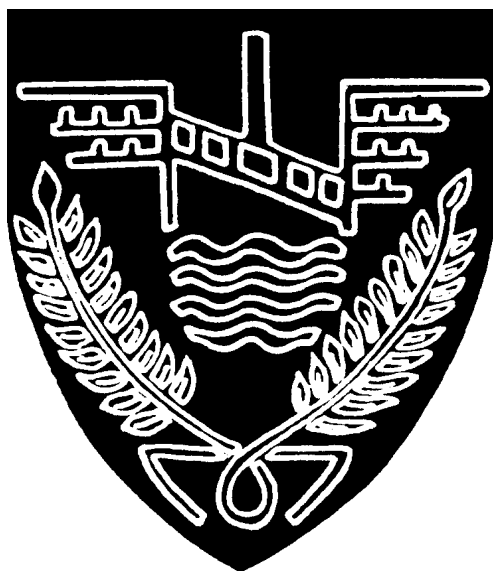


Ballyclare Secondary School



Keeping Safe – Restarting School

March 2021

Ballyclare Secondary School

Keeping Safe – School Restart March 2021

On Monday 22nd March 2021 Ballyclare Secondary School will reopen for all pupils in **Years 12, 13 and 14**. The information in this booklet explains how we will do this in a safe, phased way to ensure the safety of our entire school community. The strategic objective is to achieve maximum face-to face teaching time for all pupils at the earliest opportunity in line with DE guidance.

When we return Ballyclare Secondary School will be a COVID-Safe, welcoming and supportive environment. 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 3rd March 2021.

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 who have coronavirus symptoms, or who have someone in their household who does, **do not attend school**.
- Cleaning hands more often than usual – pupils 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 our return to school guidelines have been put in place for all staff and pupils of Ballyclare Secondary School and everyone should follow these.

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Return to School

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 since Christmas the cleaning team have been completing an enhanced clean of all parts of the building. We will continue to implement 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.
- Additional furniture has 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 pupils to wash their hands.
- 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, disinfectant and disposable cloths, disposable gloves and disposable masks. All pupils are encouraged to bring a personal bottle of hand sanitiser with them to 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 pupils are required to wash their hands as soon as they arrive at school and regularly throughout the day.
- 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. It is very important that pupils adhere to hygiene routines.
- Surfaces in dining halls will be wiped down and disinfected in between each sitting.

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School Uniform

While coronavirus can land on fabrics and remain for some time, schools are not a high risk environment 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.

“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)

The latest scientific advice from the World Health Organisation, and from the Chief Medical Officer and Chief Scientific Officer, is that face coverings should be worn within education settings, unless a reasonable excuse applies under public health guidance.

Social distancing, regular hand hygiene, and covering coughs and sneezes are also 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.

Within post-primary settings:

- **It is compulsory for post-primary pupils to wear face coverings in school** and at drop off pick up areas unless an exemption applies.
- **All pupils must bring their own face- mask to school.**
- Face coverings are **compulsory for pupils in post-primary schools** when moving about the school in corridors and confined communal areas (**including toilets and Sixth Form Study Rooms**) where physical distancing is particularly difficult to maintain.
- **As post-primary pupils must use face coverings during the routine school day**, it is considered best practice for teachers and support staff to wear them.
- Schools should also be aware that some persons (including children) are exempt from wearing face coverings and this should be treated sensitively.
- **No one will be excluded from school for failure to have or wear a face covering, however, I would ask you to support staff and fellow pupils by encouraging your children to wear face coverings in school.**
- Face coverings **should not be shared** with others.

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School Transport

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

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

Active travel is encouraged 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.

It is mandatory for all pupils aged 13 and over to wear a face covering on school and public transport.

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

Cars **are not permitted** on the school grounds and parents/carers should leave children off at the school gates on the Doagh Road or Avondale Drive. Parents/carers **should not leave pupils off before 8.30 am.**

School Routines.

New protocols and measures are in place to keep everyone safe. They 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.
- Even though pupils passing in corridors and short periods of contact does not present a significant risk to staff or pupils. **All pupils and staff must wear a face mask in the corridors.**
- 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.

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- 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.

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 – Staff will be required to maintain a social distance of 2 metres from pupils.

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

“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. ‘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.

Key Stage 3, Years 8 to 10, pupils will be in ‘protective bubbles’ which will cover all aspects of the school day 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.

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There will be **no extracurricular programme during March and April 2021**; this will be reviewed when additional information is received.

School

8.15 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 will be in class at 8.40 am to receive pupils.</p> <p>Parents/Carers should not to leave pupils off before 8.30 am.</p> <p>Senior Teachers/Boys' Tutor/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>Year 8 and 9 Break time</p> <p>At 10.25 am Year 8 and 9 move to third period</p> <p>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. An email message will be sent to indicate a wet break and that pupils will remain in class.</p>
10.15 am	Years 10 to 14 move to third period
10.30 to 10.45 am	Year 10 and 11 Break time
10.50 to 11.05 am	<p>Year 12, 13 and 14 Break time</p> <p>If weather is inclement, pupils will remain in their third period class and teachers will be required to supervise for break time. An email message will be sent to indicate a wet break and that pupils will remain in class</p>
11.05 am	All pupils move to fourth period
11.45 am	Year 8 and 9 Lunch time (Some Year 13 and 14 pupils will be on lunch)
12.25 pm	Year 10 and 11 Lunch time (Some Year 13 and 14 pupils will be on lunch)
1.05 pm	<p>Year 12, 13 and 14 Lunch time</p> <p>Staff who are timetabled to teach Year 12 will be required to take their</p>

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1.45 pm	lunch during period seven. Period 8
2.25 pm	Period 9
3.00 pm	School finishes for all pupils. Teachers will begin to release pupils in Years 8 to 10 from 2.50 pm and pupils in Years 11 to 14 at 3.00 pm.

Classrooms

The health and wellbeing of pupils 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.
- Individual pupil booklets/workbooks will be used as far as possible and these will remain in the classroom or in the pupil school bag.
- Work to be marked and assessed will be submitted electronically if possible, to limit teachers carrying pupil work home at the end of the school day.
- In classrooms with sinks, pupils should wash their hands at the start of the lesson. Hand sanitiser is available in all classrooms for 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

When pupils return on Monday 22nd March 2021 they will not take part in any practical PE lessons. Pupils **must wear full school uniform** to school every day – **not PE Kit.**

This will be reviewed on 12th April 2021

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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 must 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**. 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 provide remote learning for all pupils in Years 8 to 11 for the week beginning Monday 22nd March 2021.

Remote learning will also be provided for pupils in Years 12 to 14 who may be required 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.

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Examinations

On 6th January 2021, the Minister of Education, Peter Weir MLA, announced that the Summer 2021 examination series would be cancelled to help fight the spread of the COVID-19 virus. Grades for GCSE and GCE will be awarded using a range of evidence that teachers will use to make a holistic judgement for each learner and determine **Centre Determined Grades**.

This change to examination processes has required us to adapt our learning, teaching and assessment procedures.

On 2nd March 2021 the Minister stated that the approach to awarding grades in Summer 2021 will be based on teacher professional judgements, with moderation.

Teachers are asked to use a range of evidence to arrive at a **professional and academic** judgement of the standard at which each pupil is performing in the **context of the specification** for which they are entered **and from this provide a grade to CCEA**.

All pupils in Years 12, 13 and 14 should return to school on Monday 22nd March 2021.

When pupils return to school staff will provide detailed information on the work to be completed and assessed in order to award Centre Determined Grades. It is very important that pupils attend school in this week before the Easter holiday.

(More details can be found in the document; “Ballyclare Secondary School Staff Information – Alternative Awarding Arrangements for Summer 2021 Exams” which is available on the school website)

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” 3rd March 2021)

Mrs K Bell
Principal

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