EBOR ACADEMY TRUST

Guide for parents and carers

Preparing for a full return to school in September 2020

Updated from the version issued in July 2020 to include latest government guidance

Introduction from Gail Brown, Chief Executive and Executive Headteacher

The full return of all children to school is a major step forward for the country to start to get back to normal following the coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic.

Chief Medical Officers across the UK have said that risks to schools and everyone in them are now low and that it is a greater risk to the nation's children to keep them away from school. We agree that children and young people need to return to the routines that schools have to offer.

Staff at schools are ready, willing and able to get back into the swing of delivering a high quality education that enables pupils to thrive and progress. We pledge to do this in the safest way possible – we know many of you are, understandably, still very worried about Covid-19.

For us, the first half term in September will be all about reconnecting children with their schools and the return to a more structured education environment. Every child has missed learning and missed their friends and we want to reassure parents and carers that both pastoral and academic considerations will be of utmost importance. We will provide quality support for everyone. There will remain a focus on hygiene and 'bubble' groups will be organised to help minimise risks.

We first produced this Guide for Parents and Carers in July, to explain how we are preparing for a return to school with as few risks to everyone's health as possible. This information has now been reviewed and amended in line with latest government guidance issued on 28 August, which you can access at: https://bit.ly/3fe9ovh.

Ebor is a multi-academy trust comprising 24 schools spread over four local authority areas. As such, we can only provide overarching principles to which all our schools subscribe. The government accepts that leaders at individual schools are best placed to interpret their recommendations and we support our schools to issue their own specific guidance, relevant to their schools and communities. For any queries, therefore, please contact your school directly.

Parents and carers always have a key role to play in working collaboratively alongside the school and developing these relationships will be increasingly important. We want to work with you and your child to alleviate any concerns and provide reassurance where we can. Please, talk to us.

Remember, you can also help your school community by not sending your child to school if they, or any members of your household, are showing any symptoms of Covid-19.

We are all looking forward to welcoming children back to school. We have missed them.

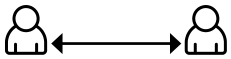
Mrs Gail Brown
Chief Executive and Executive Headteacher

Our pledge to our school communities

We are committed to the safety and wellbeing of staff and children.

We will continue to listen and respond to official guidance from all sources to keep our practices in school up to date.

We have developed a risk assessment framework focused on the safety of children and staff, from the best sources of official guidance and advice which we will continue to monitor. These are published on our school websites.

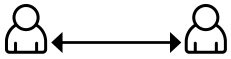


With social distancing in mind, we have redesigned the physical layout of some of our schools especially in the areas of drop off and pick-up; safe ways of walking around our schools; and lunch arrangements.

If they need them, all our schools have Personal Protective Equipment including soap and hand sanitiser, thermometers, face masks, visors, aprons and gloves.

We will stay in touch through letters, phone calls, text messages, social media and school and Ebor websites. Please contact your school if you have any queries.

What we ask of you...



Please follow social distancing and hygiene guidelines – drop off and pick-up rules as applied by individual schools, hand washing prior to arrival at school and on return home.

Please keep your school informed of all relevant health and attendance issues – for your children and family members – so we can continue to support you and your children as best we can.

If your child is displaying symptoms, you must not send them to school. Self-isolate, stay at home and arrange a test.

Why it's important to be back at school

Returning to school is vital for children's education and for their wellbeing. Time out of school is detrimental for children's cognitive and academic development, particularly for disadvantaged children. This impact can affect both current levels of learning and children's future ability to learn, and therefore we need to ensure all pupils can return to school sooner rather than later.

The risk to children themselves of becoming severely ill from coronavirus (Covid-19) is very low. We know that school is an important point of contact for health and safeguarding services that are critical to the wellbeing of children and families.

For many households, school closures have also affected their ability to work. As the economy begins to recover, the government needs to remove this barrier so parents and carers can return to work.

The Chief Medical Officers from all four nations in the UK have made it clear that the overall risks to children from Covid-19 in relation to education settings is low and that the risks associated with not being in school outweigh those of being in school.

The government wants to start to reverse the enormous costs of missed education. This will be an important move back towards normal life for many children and families.

How we will welcome children back to our schools and some of the steps we are taking

We will minimise contact and reduce mixing between people at our schools to reduce transmission of Covid-19.

This can be achieved through keeping groups separate (in 'bubbles') and through maintaining distance between individuals. These are not alternative options and both measures will help, but the balance between them will change depending on:

- Children's ability to distance
- The layout of the school
- The feasibility of keeping distinct groups separate while offering a broad curriculum, especially at secondary school.

For younger children the emphasis will be on separating groups, and for older children it will be

on distancing. We recognise that younger children will not be able to maintain social distancing, and it is acceptable for them not to distance within their bubble.

We will continue to implement heightened hygiene awareness, regular hand washing and regular cleaning of all surfaces, classrooms, public areas and toilets.

All teachers and other staff can operate across different classes and year groups in order to facilitate the delivery of the school timetable.

It will not be possible to maintain social distance when working with many pupils who have complex needs or who need close contact care. These pupils' educational and care support will be provided as normal.

Schools will make small adaptations to classrooms to support distancing wherever it is possible to do so. That may include seating pupils side by side and facing forwards, rather than face to face or side on, and might include moving unnecessary furniture out of classrooms to make more space.

Classrooms and other areas will be well-ventilated and where possible lessons will take place outside.

Bubbles will be kept apart and schools will avoid large gatherings. We will use technology, where possible, for assemblies and for collective worship in our church schools.

In secondary schools, bubbles are likely to need to be the size of a year group to enable schools to deliver the full range of curriculum subjects and students to receive specialist teaching.

At our primary schools we may be able to implement smaller bubbles the size of a full class, but they can look to implement larger bubbles if smaller bubbles are not compatible with the logistics in and around school.

Supply teachers, peripatetic teachers and/or other temporary staff can move between schools. Specialists, therapists, clinicians and other support staff for pupils with SEND will provide interventions as usual.

Individual schools will advise of their instructions if they are implementing staggered start times and if there is any variation in which school entrances to use.

What about wearing Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)?

The government is not recommending face coverings in primary schools.

In secondary schools in areas of local lockdown, face coverings should be worn by adults and students when moving around the premises, such as in corridors and communal areas where social distancing is difficult to maintain. They will not be required in classrooms.

All Ebor staff will be issued with face visors which they can choose to wear, or not, at their discretion.

If a parent would prefer their child to wear a face covering in school, we will allow them to do so.

Face coverings are required at all times on public transport (for children over the age of 11) or when attending a hospital as a visitor or outpatient.

The majority of staff in education settings will not require PPE beyond what they would normally need for their work. PPE is only needed in a very small number of cases, including:

- where an individual child or young person becomes ill with Covid-19 symptoms while at school, and only then if a distance of 2 metres cannot be maintained
- 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.

Attendance expectations

It is vital for all children to return to school to minimise as far as possible the longer-term impact of the pandemic on children's education, wellbeing and wider development.

Missing out on more time in the classroom risks pupils falling further behind. Those with higher overall absence tend to achieve less well in both primary and secondary school.

The government insists school attendance will therefore be mandatory again from the beginning of the autumn term. This means from that point, the usual rules on school attendance will apply, including:

- Parents' duty to secure that their child attends regularly at school where the child is a registered pupil and they are of compulsory school age;
- Schools' responsibilities to record attendance and follow up absence;
- The availability to issue sanctions, including fixed penalty notices in line with local authorities' codes of conduct. We recognise that many parents and carers have concerns about returning to school and we are sympathetic. We want to work with

families to try to allay those concerns and we have support structures in place so that no-one should feel isolated in their worries.

Please contact your school directly, if you have not already done so, in order for us to work through any problems with you. While everyone understands the importance of regular school attendance, we know there are many reasons that for some people this may be an issue. Please let us try to find ways around these together.

School uniform

Individual schools in our trust have their own rules concerning school uniform and will communicate them directly.

As a trust, we are encouraging all schools to return to their usual uniform policies in the autumn term. Where it is worn, school uniform can play a valuable role in contributing to the ethos of a school and setting an appropriate tone.

Uniforms do not need to be cleaned any more often than usual, nor do they need to be cleaned using methods that are different from normal.

Personal equipment and resources

Please make sure your child brings to school only essential equipment – pen, pencil, ruler – but not in a pencil case. They must not share their equipment.

In their own class on the first day back at school, teachers will advise what stationery will be needed.

Classroom based resources, such as books and games, can be used and shared within the bubble; these will be cleaned regularly, along with all frequently touched surfaces.

Resources that are shared between classes or bubbles, such as sports, art and science equipment, will be cleaned frequently and meticulously and always between bubbles, or rotated to allow them to be left unused for a period of 48 hours (or 72 hours for plastics) between use by different bubbles.

Breakfast and after school clubs

Individual schools will advise of their own arrangements, as these vary from school to school.

Some schools may need to respond flexibly and build this up over time. Such provision will help ensure pupils have opportunities to re-engage with their peers and with the school, ensure vulnerable children have a healthy breakfast and are ready to focus on their lessons. Many clubs also provide enrichment activities and are a service to working parents.

Key principles concerning our curriculum

All our children and young people will receive a high-quality education that promotes their development and prepares them for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of the next stage in their development and later life.

The curriculum at all our schools will remain broad and ambitious: all pupils will continue to be taught a wide range of subjects, maintaining their choices for further study and employment and developing into well rounded, compassionate global citizens.

The pandemic has focussed attention on the need for schools to provide high quality remote education quickly. We are building on an already robust IT infrastructure so our schools will be prepared in the event of a further lockdown or outbreak of infection at school.

Music, dance and drama lessons

Individual schools are working to find creative ways to incorporate music, dance and drama into their curriculum and will advise parents directly. Singing, together with wind and brass instrument playing, should not take place in large groups such as school choirs or school assemblies.

PE and physical activity

Schools have the flexibility to decide how physical education, sport and physical activity will be provided whilst following the measures in their system of infection controls.

Children will be kept in consistent groups, equipment thoroughly cleaned between each use by different individual groups, and contact sports avoided.

Outdoor sports will 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. This is particularly important in a sports setting because of the way in which people breathe during exercise.

Activities such as active miles, making break times and lessons active and encouraging active travel, will help enable pupils to be physically active while encouraging physical distancing.

Wellbeing and support

Children and young people – and their families – may be experiencing a variety of emotions in response to the pandemic, such as anxiety, stress or low mood.

We know some children will display a variety of worries and vulnerabilities. It is our aim to support and nurture every child's individual concerns, whilst ensuring we harness the positive aspect of children regaining their normality and day-to-day routine. We will work with any outside agencies and children's services where a child or a family require a more bespoke package of support.

Some may need support to re-adjust to school; others may have enjoyed being at home and are reluctant to return; a few may be showing signs of more severe anxiety or depression. Others will not be experiencing any challenges and will be keen and ready to return to school.

The return to school allows social interaction with peers, carers and teachers, which benefits wellbeing. Our schools will be providing more focused pastoral support where it is needed. This is why it is important that we work closely with families and external agencies where necessary to be sure we are providing the right support to the right people at the right time.

School staff will be extra vigilant as we move into the new school year so as to identify and help any newly vulnerable members of our school communities.

Please do not hesitate to contact your school if you have any concerns over your child's wellbeing.

Behaviour expectations

Some children will return to school having been exposed to a range of adversity and trauma over the last few months. This may include bereavement, anxiety and possibly welfare issues. In turn this may lead to an increase in social, emotional and mental health concerns and some may need additional support.

With this in mind, our schools will be sensitive to setting out clearly the consequences for poor behaviour and deliberately breaking the rules.

We will work with pupils and parents to ensure that behaviour expectations are clearly understood, and consistently supported, taking account of individual needs.

Schools will also consider how to build new expectations into current rewards system.

What to do if you, or someone at school, becomes unwell

IF YOUR CHILD HAS SYMPTOMS

If your child is unwell, with a new, continuous cough or a high temperature, or have a loss of, or change in, your normal sense of smell and taste, **then do not send them to school. Arrange a test and self-isolate until the outcome of the test is known. Advise school.**

If your child is unwell, with a new, continuous cough or a high temperature, or have a loss of, or change in, your normal sense of smell and taste, **then other members of your household should self-isolate until the outcome of your child's test is known. Please keep school informed.**

If, despite initially having symptoms, your child **tests negative** and if they feel well, **then they can stop self-isolating. Other members of your household can also stop self-isolating. Advise school, who will tell you what to do.**

If you **test positive, then you must self-isolate for at least 10 days. Other members of your household should self-isolate for 14 days from when you first had symptoms. Advise school.**

IF SOMEONE IN YOUR BUBBLE GROUP AT SCHOOL HAS SYMPTOMS AND TESTS POSITIVE

If someone at school tests positive, the school will contact Public Health England who will provide advice on next steps. A person who has been in contact with someone who has tested positive will be sent home and **be asked to self-isolate for 14 days. School will advise you what to do.**

If a person has been in contact with someone who has tested positive and is sent home to self-isolate for 14 days, then **their household does not need to self-isolate, unless the person who is self-isolating subsequently develops symptoms.**

If a person who has been in contact with someone who has tested positive subsequently develops symptoms themselves within their 14-day isolation period, then they should **stay at home and get a test.**

If the test delivers a **negative result**, then they must remain in isolation for the remainder of the 14-day isolation period as they could still get symptoms after being tested.

If the test delivers a **positive result**, then they should inform their school immediately, and must isolate for at least 10 days from the onset of their symptoms.

If the test delivers a **negative result**, then their household can stop self-isolating if they do not have symptoms.

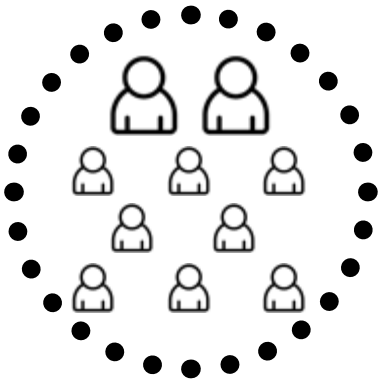
If the test delivers a **positive result**, then their household should self-isolate for at least 14 days from when the symptomatic person first had symptoms.

Information at-a-glance

Is it safe to return to school?

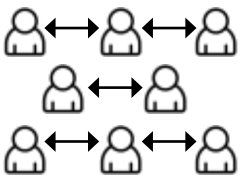
We have carried out risk assessments at all our schools (they are published on our school websites) and these will be continually monitored.
Chief Medical Officers from all four nations in the UK have made it clear that the overall risks to children from coronavirus (Covid-19) in relation to education settings is low and that the risks associated with not being in school certainly outweigh those of being in school.

What is a 'bubble' group?



A bubble is a community which will stay together in school. It will usually comprise a teacher and teaching assistant plus a number of pupils. The size and numbers of bubbles will vary – it could be class-wide or it might comprise an entire year group or larger.

How will social distancing work?



Social distancing is not possible with young children but it is with older children and young people.
We will minimise risk with a mixture of distancing and bubble groups.

If your child is displaying symptoms, you must not send them to school. Self-isolate, stay at home and arrange a test.

How are you keeping school safe?

We will continually check for any risks and find ways to mitigate them.

If a child or family member is sick, they must not come to school.

Everyone will wash their hands regularly.

School will be cleaned regularly.

The "catch it, bin it, kill it" routine will be established. Sneezes are caught in tissues and good respiratory hygiene is followed.

What might change at school?

The time you drop off and pick up your child may change – individual schools will advise.

Can parents/carers come into school?

If parents/carers need to speak with a teacher, please do so over the phone or by email.

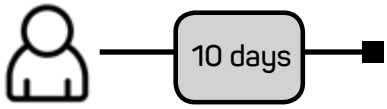
Face coverings

In primary schools, face coverings will not generally be necessary in the classroom even where social distancing is not possible. Staff have been issued with visors which they may wear in school if they wish to do so. Face coverings should only be worn by staff and students in secondary schools in areas of local lockdown.

What if there is a case of Covid-19 at school?

If anyone at school tests **positive**, the bubble group must self-isolate for 14 days (subject to guidance from Public Health England) and then people should only return when they are well.

The people they live with must self-isolate for 14 days.



If you think you have symptoms, self-isolate and take a test. Do not go to school or your GP. If negative, return when you feel you are able to.
If positive, self-isolate for at least 10 days until you feel well again.

EBOR ACADEMY TRUST

“Sorry, can’t stop”

Help prevent the spread of infection. Don’t stay behind to chat.

Be quick to leave school premises at drop off and pick up times.

If you are just one metre apart, you can catch the virus within a minute of speaking face to face with someone who has it.

Don’t be a contact