



COVID-19
Parent/Student Handbook

Sixth Form Students

Version 6: Return to School - March 2021

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A message from the Director of Post 16

I am delighted that the Sixth Form will be able to open again to all students.

In the week commencing 22 February, the Government published a plan for taking the country out of lockdown. Their aim is a gradual and phased approach towards easing the restrictions in a sustainable way, guided by the principles observed throughout the pandemic, beginning with the most important principle of all: that re-opening schools must be our national priority. Additional pupils and students will return to on-site education from 8 March 2021.

The Department for Education (DfE) has asked us to put in a place a 'system of controls' to allow us to fully reopen. It is important that all parents and students understand these measures and this handbook outlines how we are implementing them in our school.

Schools must comply with health and safety law, which requires them to assess risks and put in place proportionate control measures.

We have thoroughly reviewed our health and safety risk assessments and plans that address the risks identified using the system of controls.

The way to control this virus is the same, even with the current new variants. Essential measures include:

- a requirement that people stay at home
 - if they have virus symptoms, or live in a household with someone who does
 - have tested positive, even if asymptomatic
 - have been advised by NHS Test and Trace to do so
 - are household members of a positive case, even if that case is asymptomatic
 - are required to self-isolate for travel related reasons
- robust hand and respiratory hygiene
- enhanced cleaning and ventilation arrangements
- active engagement with NHS Test and Trace
- formal consideration of how to reduce contacts and maximise distancing between those in school wherever possible
- minimise the potential for contamination so far as is reasonably practicable.

How contacts are reduced will depend on the school's circumstances, including how many children need to attend during this period, and will (as much as possible) include:

- keeping children in consistent groups
- avoiding contact between groups
- arranging classrooms with forward facing desks
- staff maintaining distance from pupils and other staff as much as possible.

System of controls

This is the set of actions schools must take. They are grouped into 'prevention' and 'response to any infection.'

Prevention

- 1) Students being given the opportunity to participate in the Covid Lateral Flow tests in school.
- 2) Home testing being introduced for all students, once the three tests have been completed in school.
- 3) **Wearing face coverings in classrooms and around the school building will be compulsory unless you have a medical exemption.**
- 4) Minimising contact with individuals who are unwell by ensuring that those who are required to stay at home do not attend school.
- 5) Cleaning hands thoroughly more often than usual.
- 6) Ensuring good respiratory hygiene by promoting the 'catch it, bin it, kill it' approach.
- 7) Cleaning, including cleaning frequently touched surfaces often, using standard products such as detergents and keeping spaces well ventilated.

8) Minimising contact between individuals and maintain social distancing wherever possible.

Response to any infection

9) Engaging with the NHS Test and Trace process.

10) Managing confirmed cases of coronavirus (COVID-19) amongst the school community.

11) Containing any outbreak by following local health protection team advice.

Numbers 9 to 11 must be followed in every case where they are relevant.

The school has made careful plans to ensure that all 11 measures are in place. Measures 1 – 8 are in place all of the time and measures 9 – 11 are only used if there's a suspected or confirmed case of Covid-19 amongst the school community.

The guide you are about to read is an important part of making sure that everyone knows how to stay safe themselves and how to keep other people safe. A detailed staff guide has been issued to all staff so that everyone is aware of their role in ensuring our school is a safe learning environment.

It is vital that all parents, carers and students take the time to read this guide in full.

In addition, it is vital that no one attends school if they have any coronavirus symptoms. These are:

- **A high temperature:** this means you feel hot to the touch on your chest or back (you do not need to measure your temperature);
- **A new, continuous cough:** this means coughing a lot for more than an hour, or 3 or more coughing episodes in 24 hours (if you usually have a cough, it may be worse than usual);
- **A loss or change of your sense of taste or smell:** this means you've noticed you cannot smell or taste anything, or things smell or taste different to normal.

You MUST contact the school if anyone in your household has any of these symptoms and arrange to have a PCR test. Anyone with symptoms and then a positive PCR result must self-isolate for at least 10 days and longer if they still have a fever after 10 days. Anyone else in the household without symptoms must self-isolate for 10 days. The school will support any student with their education if they are self-isolating because of Covid-19.

Thank you for taking the time to read this guide. These are unusual times for all of us and we must ensure that we all take these arrangements very seriously in order to minimise the risk to ourselves or to others. If you have any questions after reading this guidance or have concerns around your own or others' safety in school, then you should contact your Sixth Form tutor.

Warm regards



Karen Blackburn, Director of Post 16

'Bubbles'

The school will make some temporary changes to how we work to allow the site to be Covid-secure. The biggest change we'll be making is splitting the school into year group 'bubbles.' The Sixth Form will be, as far as possible, divided into a Year 12 bubble and a Year 13 bubble.

The school routine is adapted to ensure that these bubbles are kept as separate as possible during the school day, as well as minimising the chance of year groups mixing within each bubble. This should reduce the number of social contacts an individual has in school, whilst still making sure we can teach our full curriculum to all students.

While Years 9-11 will be largely kept in separate areas of the school for teaching purposes, we are trusting in the maturity of Sixth Form students to move around the building more freely. This will enable you to access a wider range of specialist teaching rooms, suited to your courses.

During non-contact lessons, breaks and lunchtimes, we encourage you to leave site. If you remain, the following areas are for the separate Sixth Form Bubbles:

Year 12	Year 13
Common Room	Annex building
Breakout space	Study spaces in LRC
158 & 163	Computer section of LRC
Study spaces in LRC	

Although you should generally avoid spaces reserved for the other Sixth Form year group from your own, Year 13 may pass through the Common Room to access classrooms and Sixth Form reception and Year 12 may access the Annex to see their tutors if they are based there. Do not linger in any of the communal spaces in these areas. Avoid social contact with students in other year groups.

While moving around the building you should try to remain socially distanced from students in other year groups and must remain 2 metres away from staff members and other adults in school, such as visitors.

The school day

Different year groups in school will begin registration at different times, use separate entrances, have separate social times and different dismissal arrangements at the end of the day. The Sixth Form school day is shown in this table. One significant change for Sixth Form students is at the start of the day, where you will no longer have Registration but will go straight to Period 1.

Arrival to school

Sixth Form students will enter using the Sport@Gosforth entrance only. You will be expected to wash your hands at this point on arrival to school or use hand sanitiser. Use the PE toilets to wash your hands.

Hand Hygiene

The Government have stated in their guidance for full opening that *'schools must ensure that pupils clean their hands regularly, including when they arrive at school, when they return from breaks, when they change rooms and before and after eating'*.

Sixth Form	
Entrance time	8.55am
Period 1	8.55am – 9.45am
Period 2	9.45am – 10.35am
Break	10.35am – 10.55am
Period 3	10.55am – 11.35am
Period 4	11.35am – 12.25
Period 5	12.25 – 13:15
Lunch	13.15 – 13.55
Period 6	13:55 – 14:40
Period 7	14.40 – 15.30

The school will provide washing facilities/hand sanitisers/tissues around the building, in classrooms and at main entrances/exits.

Regular and thorough hand cleaning is going to be around for the foreseeable future, therefore we encourage all students to bring a small bottle of hand sanitiser with them and take personal responsibility for cleaning their hands frequently. If students bring their own and get into good habits at the times mentioned above, this will maximise learning time in the classroom without compromising safety.

Transport to School

If possible, walk or cycle to school. Avoid gathering in large groups or loitering at the beginning or end of the school day and maintain social distancing from students in Years 9-11.

If travelling by car, you should not share a car with someone from another household. Parents cannot access the site to drop you off.

All students using public transport will be required to wear a face covering as per Government guidance. When you leave the school building and want to remove your face covering, ensure that it is placed in a resealable plastic bag. Students should then wash or sanitise their hands after removing their face coverings. Avoid touching the front of your mask.

Arrival on site-Safeguarding

Students will still be expected to use the Inventory system to swipe in and out on entry and exit. This is a safeguarding rule and must be adhered to. Those who forget their ID badge will be denied entry or requested to report to the Sixth Form office to buy a new one.

Getting around site

Staff will be present on corridors during lesson changeover to encourage students to practise social distancing and behave responsibly.

Break time arrangements

Sixth Form students will spend break time in the Common Room / Breakout space / Annex, depending on year group, or leave the site via any entrance. The Sport@Gosforth café can not at present be used by Sixth Formers as a social or work space.

Lunch time arrangements

The only lunch time food provision for Sixth Form students will be in the Common Room and the Annex - there will be no hot food available but this will be reviewed as the year goes on. If you plan to stay in school for lunch we encourage you to bring a packed lunch. Sixth Form students are also encouraged to leave the school site at lunchtime in order to avoid overcrowding in any one area of the school. You should leave and re-enter the site via any entrance. If you remain on site you must stay in the Common Room, the Sixth Form Breakout space, the Annex, 158, 163 or the LRC only, depending on whether you are Year 12 or 13.

You should wash/sanitise hands thoroughly before and after eating.

Classroom routines

When you arrive for a lesson, you won't queue outside but instead will enter the room as soon as you arrive. Every student must sanitise hands when they arrive and sit where the teacher asks them to. This is important as seating plans will be referred to if the school is required to use NHS Test and Trace.

All desks will be forward facing where possible. Teachers will try to maintain a distance of 2 metres from their class and will minimise any contact that is less than 2 metres. Learning Support Assistants will also provide support but minimise any close contact with students they are supporting.

Windows and doors in classrooms will be open at all possible times to support ventilation and air conditioning is safe to be used where required. You may need to dress more warmly than usual in the colder months to stay comfortable in classrooms and other spaces.

All classrooms will have tissues, hand sanitiser and anti-bacterial wipes/spray available for use if they are needed. Gloves and anti-bacterial spray is available for use if a student sneezes or coughs over a desk area requiring cleaning. Bins are available for the disposal of tissues, anti-bacterial wipes or gloves.

IT Rooms

IT rooms will have separate cleaning arrangements. At the end of every ICT lesson, students will be asked to wipe down their keyboards, mouse and desk area using anti-bacterial wipes. This also applies if you are using shared computer spaces, such as 158, 163 or the LRC.

Toilets

Year 12 students should only use the toilets in the Sixth Form area, the toilets on the top corridor near rooms 217-219.

Year 13 students should only use the toilets in the Annex.

Dismissal from school / leaving the school site

When your lessons are finished for the day, you should leave the school site via the nearest exit. Do not congregate in groups with other students and do not shop with others in local shops.

After school clubs

After school clubs will not run until further notice. Some clubs are continuing to run remotely, such as the debating society and MedSoc. See the organisers of these for further details.

Clothing, Equipment & Behaviour

Clothing

Our usual expectations around clothing still apply. You are free to wear your own clothes, as long as they do not cause offence, for example by displaying inappropriate messages. Clothing should be kept clean but no additional cleaning is required. You must, however, continue to wear your Sixth Form ID badge at all times when on site. This is a key aspect of safeguarding that must continue to be observed.

Face Masks / Coverings

Staff and students should wear masks / face coverings as they move around the school, on corridors and in communal areas, such as the common room, breakout space, all areas in the Annex and the library. Masks should only be removed in communal spaces while you are eating and drinking and replaced immediately afterwards.

Masks are also now to be worn in lessons. Essentially, if you are indoors, you should be wearing a mask. This advice will be reviewed by the government at Easter.

Please ensure that you come to school equipped with a suitable mask or face covering. Spares are available from Sixth Form reception for any student who has lost or forgotten a mask. Please store your mask safely in a zip lock plastic bag while not wearing it outside and sanitise your hands before and after removing it. Where a face covering becomes damp, it should not be worn and the face covering should be replaced carefully. Avoid touching the front of your mask.

Some individuals are exempt from wearing face coverings. This applies to those who:

- cannot put on, wear or remove a face covering because of a physical or mental illness or impairment or disability;
- speak to or provide assistance to someone who relies on lip reading, clear sound or facial expression to communicate.

If you have a valid exemption from wearing a mask, please speak to your tutor.

Physical Education

Students with PE on their timetable should arrive at school in their PE kit. They will remain in this kit for the whole school day. Contact sports won't take place and equipment won't be shared without cleaning.

Practical subjects

Where it is safe to do so, practical activities such as science experiments will take place but this is likely to only be where class sizes are smaller. Students will be told where practical work is taking place and what equipment they require, if any. Students won't share equipment during practical activities.

Books and equipment

Staff and pupils can take books home, as long as they avoid unnecessary sharing.

Students should bring their own basic equipment into school and not share it with anyone. The basic equipment that all students should have are:

- Black/Blue/Purple Pen
- Pencil and rubber
- Ruler
- Scientific Calculator if applicable to your subjects
- Water bottle (see below)

The giving out/collecting in of books, handouts and worksheets by teachers is permitted and staff will clean their hands before and after doing so. Marking work has not been identified as a risky activity, so student work will still be marked. Staff may choose to give feedback on work remotely and will develop procedures for handing in work and giving you feedback - this may be written or via Frog.

Subject specific resources that students use can be used by students but won't be shared and will be cleaned before use by another group.

Water bottles

All students are required to bring water into school in a water bottle. Single use cups will not be available. Water fountains will be switched back on but students must take care to sanitise hands before and after using them.

Student behaviour expectations & Code of Conduct

Our high standards for student behaviour will be more important than ever. Safe, sensible conduct will be required by all students and good conduct will be recognised by the rewards system. Equally, there will be a zero tolerance approach to anyone who behaves in a way that deliberately puts the safety of others at risk.

The behaviour policy has an addendum relating to Covid-19 specific issues. The Sixth Form report system will continue to operate for students demonstrating the need for additional support with organising their time during free lessons. Detention will run as necessary for anyone who does not complete a report properly.

Fire/Lockdown drill arrangements

The normal procedure for a fire and lockdown drills remains. The priority in the event of any fire is to vacate the building in a calm and controlled manner. However, students are to be instructed to maintain social distancing where possible. You evacuate to the rear field and line up in **registration** groups in accordance with the markings behind Active Play. You will be registered by your allocated register taker. **Please familiarise yourself with the number of your registration group, which you will find at the top of your timetable.**

Student medication and first aid

Students receiving medication

A small number of students are medicated in school and this will continue as before. Medication will be issued using the First Aid room opposite student reception.

We ask that parents keep us updated with medication requirements.

First aid

If a student requires first aid then the first aider will wear PPE if required. The usual first aid room will be used for any medical issues not related to covid-19 and procedures will be in place to ensure the safety of both the first aider and the student.

Other adjustments for coronavirus

Visiting school

Parents will not be permitted on site without a pre-arranged meeting. Any contact with school should be made by phone on 0191 2851000 or via email to tutors/teaching staff/Sixth Form reception. Parents' evenings and review appointments will be carried out remotely.

Safeguarding and Child Protection

Safeguarding and child protection is always our number one priority. If you have concerns about the safety or wellbeing of any child then you should contact one of our designated safeguarding leads. The designated safeguarding lead for the Sixth Form is Mrs Blackburn. The deputy designated safeguarding leads are Mr Sheppard and Mr Mather. Mrs Milburn and Mr Chahal are Safeguarding Leads in the Main School and will be available in the unlikely event that other staff are not. All Heads of Year have also completed Designated Lead Safeguarding training.

Pastoral support & wellbeing plans

We know that a significant proportion of our school have been negatively affected by the pandemic and we will be looking to help all students who require well-being support. Many of those we wish to help have been identified through the welfare calls during school closure. We will continue to identify and support students through 1:1 and group tutorials or when students/staff raise concerns.

We ask parents to keep us informed of any concerns about their children by contacting the relevant Year Manager or Sixth Form tutor.

Special Education Needs (SEN) Support

SEN support will continue for all students on the SEN register. Anyone wishing to discuss SEN support should contact Mrs Allan-Grant who is our SENDCo.

Peripatetic music lessons

These will continue subject to further guidance.

Assemblies

Formal assemblies will not be held in school until further notice. However, we are likely use virtual assemblies in the allocated time slots (Thursday Period 3 every other week) to cover important themes and give out key messages.

Communication with Sixth Form Students

As there will be no registration until further notice, it is important that you check the day board in the Sixth Form common room or in the Annex for notices and announcements. Make sure you do this on a daily basis.

Enhanced cleaning routines

An enhanced cleaning routine will operate focussing on communal areas, break and lunchtime, frequently touched surfaces e.g. door handles and other areas as required. In addition, the site team will undertake additional cleaning responsibilities at busy times like break and lunch.

Classrooms will be cleaned thoroughly at the end of each day and during the day as required.

Student lockers

Student lockers are not in general use.

School trips & extra-curricular sport

Unfortunately, all schools trips are suspended until further notice. This includes sports fixtures but we will be reviewing this as the year progresses and will resume these once it is safe to do so.

Separate arrangements are in place for the Falcons Academy rugby players, which are overseen and risk-assessed by Falcons' personnel.

Lateral Flow Testing for possible Covid 19 Infections

As part of your return to school, you will be offered three lateral flow tests in school, which will each be spaced a few days apart. You will need to complete a consent form on Frog in advance of your first test. Sixth Form students can give their own consent to these tests, as they are over 16. The timeslots for your tests will be communicated to you separately and you will also receive advice regarding what to do if a test is positive.

Testing will take place in the gym and students must enter the school for their first test via the Sport@Gosforth entrance.

If you test positive, you will have to go home to self-isolate for ten days. Any close contacts will also have to self-isolate for ten days. At present, there is no alternative to this, as the government has suspended follow-up PCR tests after a positive result from an in-school lateral flow test.

Results from the tests will usually be available within one hour and are sent via text and email.

After your three in-school tests have been completed, you will then be issued with lateral flow tests to complete at home. These will need to be completed twice per week and the test result must be recorded on the NHS website and on the school database via Frog. Recording your result on Frog will take you to a link to the NHS website. You do not need to give consent to a home test, as consent is assumed if you take the test at home, as you will be administering it to yourself.

Testing is not compulsory and you will not be barred from attending school if you do not participate in testing. However, it is strongly encouraged and it is an important element in playing your part in the community to reduce transmission. The more people who engage in the systems designed to control Covid, the safer we all are and the sooner we can return to normality.

If you have had a positive PCR test recently, you should wait 90 days from the date of that test before starting the lateral flow testing process.

Home Testing Kits & Results

The Schools coronavirus (COVID-19) operational guidance states that pupils in secondary schools will be supplied with LFD test kits to self-swab and test themselves twice a week at home.

Students must report their result to NHS Test and Trace as soon as the test is completed either online or by telephone as per the instructions in the home test kit. Students should also share their result, whether void, positive or negative, with school to help with contact tracing. We will have a link on Frog for you to report these test results.

Students aged 18 and over should self-test and report the result, with assistance if needed.

Students aged 12 to 17 should self-test and report with adult supervision. The adult may conduct the test if necessary.

It is recommended that you test yourself in the morning before attending your education setting (so there is less chance you get infected between taking the test and attending the setting). However, you may choose to do the testing the evening before, especially the first time, to give you more time to get accustomed to the test, and to have more time for your education setting to react to a positive test result.

If you receive a positive LFD result as a result of a home test, you should book a confirmatory PCR test. The government advises visiting a community or drive through test site as this is the quickest way to get tested, or you can order a home test kit. It is important that you self-isolate until the result of your PCR test.

Students with a positive LFD test result will need to self-isolate in line with the stay-at-home guidance. **They will also need to arrange a lab-based polymerase chain reaction (PCR) test to confirm the result if the test was done at home.** Those with a negative LFD test result can continue to attend school and use protective measures.

What we'll do if someone becomes unwell

Pupil displays symptoms

The teacher will send the pupil outside of their classroom and ask the pupil to keep 2 metres away from anyone.

Teacher will inform Sixth Form reception and arrange for the pupil to be collected.

Student will be taken to the specialist medical room for assessment and supervision.

Reception staff contact home to inform parents and arrange for collection/dismissal and testing

Staff member displays symptoms

Staff member inform either the Principal or other senior member of staff before leaving the school premises, avoiding contact with others.

If teaching, staff member will inform senior member of staff and cover will be arranged

Staff member leaves site immediately and arranged for a covid-19 test.

Symptomatic pupil/staff member will be told by senior member of staff to:

- Self-isolate for at least **10 days** or until no longer symptomatic (except for a cough or loss of taste/smell), whichever is longer;
- Take a **coronavirus test** (if a home testing kit is available in school, this can be given to take home, if doing so would increase the likelihood of you getting tested);

Areas that the symptomatic individual has come into contact with will be closed and deep cleaned. If the individual is part of a class group, the rest of their group will be moved into an alternative location

Symptomatic pupil (via their parents or carer)/staff member to inform the school (via main reception) of the coronavirus test result as soon as possible.

If test is negative

The pupil/staff member can return to school if they feel well and no longer have symptoms, and members of their household can stop self-isolating. Other pupils/staff in their class group can continue to stay in school, unless they display symptoms.

If test is positive

Local health protection team will be contacted by the Principal to carry out a rapid risk assessment. They will discuss with the HPT who may have been in close contact with the individual and the next course of action.

Teachers will be asked to provide seating plans to assist with the test and trace process.

What to do if someone in your household is unwell

If your child or a member of your household develops covid-19 symptoms outside of school then:

- The person with symptoms should self-isolate for at least **10 days** or until no longer symptomatic (except for a cough or loss of taste and smell), whichever is longer;
- The person with symptoms should take a **PCR coronavirus test**;
- Everyone else in the household should self-isolate for **10 days**;
- Contact the school immediately on 0191 2851000

School will ask you some basic questions to allow us to respond appropriately. We ask that you keep us informed of any test results, even if the test is negative.

To avoid causing unnecessary distress and alarm, we request that you do not share any information on a suspected case on social media.

The school will work closely with the local public health protection team to take the appropriate action to keep everyone safe in school. It is unlikely that a single case of coronavirus in school would result in the school closure but the school will follow all advice and guidance given from the local health protection team.

Educating students who are self-isolating due to covid-19

The school has plans in place to support any student who is unable to attend school due to coronavirus so that they can continue to receive as high a standard of education as is possible. This will either be online through the Frog Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) or by hard copy through the post.

We will discuss the best way of doing this with individual parents/carers as and when required.

Test and Trace

All members of the school community will be expected to fully engage with the NHS Test and Trace programme. This is a four step process to be followed. As such, anyone with covid-19 symptoms will:

- a. Book a PCR test
- b. If result is positive, provide details to NHS Test and Trace of anyone they have been in close contact with
- c. Self-isolate
- d. We require parents and staff to inform us immediately of the results of a test.
 - i. If negative and they feel well with no symptoms a student can stop self-isolating
 - ii. If positive, the student should self-isolate for 10 days. They can return to school after 10 days unless they still have a fever.

In the case of a positive test results, the school will send home people who have had close contact with the infected individual. Close contact is defined as having:

- any face-to-face contact within 1 metre,
- contact for more than 15 minutes at a distance of between 1 – 2 metres
- been in a small vehicle with the infected individual.

These people should self-isolate for 10 days. Household contacts of those self-isolating don't need to self-isolate unless the person sent home develops symptoms.

In addition, if there are two or more cases amongst the school community within 14 days, or an overall rise in sickness absence then we will work with the local health protection team who will advise if additional action is required. Whole school closure will generally, not be necessary but a mobile testing unit may be dispatched if required.

Our contingency plan

We have a plan ready, which we can implement immediately if required in the case where we have full or partial lockdown or school closure. The plan covers a number of potential outcomes, including remaining partially open to some students or closing completely. In the event of any partial or full closure, we will look to:

- Cover the same content in lessons that we would have covered if the school was open
- Give access to high quality remote education resources
- Select online tools that allow interaction, assessment and feedback
- Provide printed resources for those without online access
- Work with families with SEND

We would inform parents of any partial or full closure by text message and post a notice immediately on the school website.

Key contacts

The Sixth Form benefits from a large team of support.

Each student will have one of six personal tutors: Mrs Hetherington, Mr Limbrick, Mrs Ramsay, Miss Howe, Mr Stephenson, Mr S Roxborough or Mr Leighton.

CE, IAG Careers Leads: Mrs Carter/Mrs Vincent

Heads of Year / Learning Managers: (Year 12 – Miss Bonello & Mrs Darrie, Year 13 - Mrs Bradley, More Able: Miss Cassidy, Transition, Progression and Empowerment - Mrs Walton)

Director of Post 16: Mrs Blackburn

If you have any questions the first port of call is your personal tutor, who will then involve other relevant members of staff at need.