



City of Armagh High School

Principal:

Mr C Douglas, BEng, PGCE, MEd

Vice Principal:

Mrs K P Mulholland, BSc (Hons), PGCE, PQH(NI)

24th August 2021

Dear Parent/Carer

I hope you and your family are well and had an enjoyable summer. We received further guidance on 18th August, and we are now able to update you on the plans for City of Armagh High School.

It is essential that we all work together as a community to minimise risk in the school setting. It is important that all members of our school community understand that there will continue to be significant changes as to how the school community will function and that we will continually evolve and adapt in order to address challenges we may face.

Using the most up-to-date guidance, the information attached provides the plans we intend to put into place to mitigate risk for all members of the school community. It is important that parents/carers and pupils take time to read and consider all attached documentation. I appreciate that the documentation is very lengthy, however, as you will be entrusting the school with the care of your son/daughter, we consider that fully informing parents/carers of our planning for return is essential. **City of Armagh High School reserves the right to adjust planning in light of updated guidance from the Department of Education at any stage, including when students arrive at school.**

The table below details return arrangements for all year groups, and pupils should report to school as indicated. **We are very much looking forward to welcoming our pupils back to City of Armagh High School; if, however, any changes need to be made to the re-opening plans in light of changes to public health and scientific advice, we will communicate via text and / or the school website. All correspondence will be placed in the School Correspondence section in Information tab of the website.**

Date	Year group/s	Time
Monday 30 th August	Bank Holiday – School closed	
Tuesday 31 st August	Year 8 Welcome Day	8.45am - 12.30pm
Wednesday 1 st September	All years Induction Morning and then normal timetable	8.45am - 3.15pm

Unfortunately, due to the current restrictions we are unable to have our normal coffee morning for parents at 12pm on the Year 8 Welcome Day. As a result of these restrictions, school prefects are not needed on the Year 8 Welcome day. Please note there are no school buses on this day, so please make alternative travel arrangements.

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Normal bus routes to school will be running from 1st September.

On behalf of all colleagues at City of Armagh High School, I thank you for your continued support and we look forward to working with you and your children in the coming academic year.

Yours sincerely

C Douglas
Principal

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Supplementary information for parents/carers and pupils

Parents/carers and pupils should note: this information is the school's position as of the print date and the school reserves the right to adjust planning in light of updated guidance from the Department of Education at any stage, including when pupils arrive at school.

1. Arrival at and departure from school

- Pupils must not arrive on site before 8.30am. Pupils should not enter the school building until 8.45am and must leave site at 3.15pm (unless engaging in an afterschool activity).
- While waiting outside to enter the school building, pupils should stay within their own year group and socially distance where possible.
- Parents who are driving children to school are encouraged to drop their child off in the local area and the remainder of their journey can be completed on foot. If parents must come onto the site, it is essential that they do not leave the vehicle.
- Pupils who are travelling home via bus must socially distance and continue to wear their face covering at the bus stand area. Where pupils are walking home independently, they should leave the site immediately and maintain social distancing.

2. Induction for all year groups

- Year 8 mainstream and new pupils from LSC & ASC will have a welcome day (half day) and an induction morning.
- All other years will have an induction morning upon return to school.
- Year 8 mainstream (on Tuesday 31st August) and Year 9 (on Wednesday 1st August) should make their way to the assembly hall where staff will be on site to support pupils. Pupils will be divided into form classes and then taken to their form room.
- Year 8 LSC/ASC (on Tuesday 31st August) should be dropped off at the lower carpark where they will be met by staff members who will direct them to their classrooms.
- All other year groups should go straight to their form rooms via the entrances given below.
- Any new pupils to years 10-12 should go to reception where they will be met and taken to their form class.

Form	Form room	Entrance to school
8E	Room 91	Technology foyer doors
8O	Room 14	Stairwell at HE – walk past canteen to access
9E	Room 5	Stairwell at HE – walk past canteen to access
9O	Room 111	Technology foyer doors
9C	Room 7	Stairwell at HE – walk past canteen to access
10E	Room 58	Assembly Hall doors
10O	Room 10	Stairwell at HE – walk past canteen to access
11E	Room 98	Library
11O	Room 56	Assembly Hall doors
12E	Room 95	Library
12O	Room 96	Library
LSC/ASC	Rooms 109, 114, 124 & 126	Tunnel entrance at Science/Lift area

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3. **Positive Behaviour Policy**

- The positive behaviour policy has been reviewed to ensure that it covers COVID-19 related incidents and has made provision for the school to be able to sanction pupils who wilfully refuse to adhere to arrangements of social distancing, deliberately cough etc, putting others at risk.
- The updated policy is available on the school website.

4. **Parental Support**

Parents have a key role in making schools safe and should continue to:

- Promote compliance with COVID-19 guidance including in schools and on both public transport and dedicated school transport, including explaining the importance of doing so to their child.
- Ensure compliance with PHA guidance of child isolating due to:
 - The child having COVID-19 symptoms, in which case parents should book a PCR test and support the child to isolate with close contacts of the child following PHA protocols for self-isolation.
 - The child being identified as a close contact, either as a household member of a symptomatic or confirmed case, or as a close contact of a case not in their household.
 - The child having returned to Northern Ireland from another country and isolating in line with NI Direct Travel advice and regulations.

5. **Dress code**

- All pupils should arrive on their first day at school in school uniform (including school blazers).
- If pupils are cold in classrooms (due to requirements for increased ventilation) pupils are able to wear a coat **over** their school blazer or a school hoodie **under** their blazer as an additional layer of clothing (not instead of their blazer). This will be reviewed when necessary.
- Pupils are recommended to bring a coat to school for when they are outside at break and lunch.
- On days where pupils have a PE lesson, they should wear school PE kit to school. Black tracksuit bottoms can be worn with the PE kit. Pupils can wear their school hoodie (and blazer if they wish) on these days.
- **No other hoodie/top is allowed under blazers or for PE lessons. These will be confiscated and can be collected from reception by a parent/carer after 3.15pm.**

6. **Bubbles/Movement around school**

- Due to the requirement for schools to resume all practical activities across the curriculum, which requires access to specialist equipment and accommodation, pupils will be moving around the school using a one-way system.
- Pupils must adhere to the one-way system to help ease travel around the school.
- The bubble approach we adopted last year will continue to be implemented at break and lunch times. Pupils will not be permitted to be elsewhere at these times.
- At break and lunch, pupils will primarily be outside.

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- All entrance/exit areas, entrances to practical rooms and ICT rooms will be fitted with hand sanitiser stations and all pupils must sanitise hands upon entrance/exit to the school building and specialist/ICT rooms.
- Pupils will be expected to wipe down their own desk surfaces and computer keyboards when they leave the room with materials provided. This “clean as you go” policy will be rigorously enforced and we would ask you to take some time to explain to your child why it is important for them to fully cooperate with this approach.

7. **Personal belongings and shared resources**

- School bags, personal belongings, stationery etc. are permitted in school.
- As in a normal school year, pupils should ensure they have their own basic equipment (schoolbag, pencil case, pencils, ruler, rubber, calculator, black & red pens, pencil sharpener, colouring pencils, head/earphones).
- While sharing equipment is considered low risk, if pupils have their own basic equipment the risk will be reduced even further.

8. **Catering**

- Break and lunch provision in the canteen will be available from the beginning of September.
- Pupils will access the canteen provision in their year group bubbles. Staff members will support pupils with these arrangements.

Please note: our school is a nut free school.

9. **Visitors and contacting the school**

- Should parents need to contact the school for any reason, the first contact should be made by telephone.
- Visits to school by parents/carers must be by appointment only; where a parental visit is agreed only one parent should be in attendance.
- Public health guidance with respect to social distancing of 2 metres remains in place between adults therefore all parents/carers/visitors attending school must adhere to this guidance.
- All visitors to school must supply and wear their own face covering.

10. **Blended learning**

- Home learning will frequently be set online, as will learning for pupils who cannot access school due to self-isolation.
- All pupils will be expected to access learning online (preferably from a device other than a mobile phone).
- Teachers will support pupils with how to access the various online platforms that are used by the school (MS Teams, OneNote, email etc.) at a subject and form class/pastoral level.
- Parents/carers should familiarise themselves with the blended learning policy which is available on the school website and when possible, support pupils at home with their online learning.
- If an individual child or a small number of pupils within a class or across a year group have to self-isolate for a designated period due to COVID-19, the Department has advised that parents should talk directly to their school about provision of education materials.
- We will wish to support pupils as much as possible however, clearly in these circumstances, teachers will be continuing to teach all classes during the school day so expectations must be realistic.

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11. After school clubs/extra-curricular clubs and physical education

- Both indoor and outdoor PE are permitted.
- As per the information in the dress code section above, on days where pupils have a PE lesson, they should wear school PE kit to school. Black tracksuit bottoms can be worn with the PE kit. Pupils can wear their school hoodie (and blazer if they wish) on these days.
- No other hoodies/tops will be allowed for PE.
- Extra-curricular activities, when possible, will resume in the new term. Appropriate mitigations will be in place to allow these to proceed.
- When able, staff will communicate to pupils how and when extra-curricular activities will proceed.

12. Hygiene

- Hygiene is essential as a means of reducing the transmission of COVID-19. Whilst hand sanitisation is encouraged, it is not intended as a replacement to hand washing.
- Pupils will be instructed to engage in handwashing regularly throughout the day.
- Parents/carers **must** supply children with tissues and hand sanitiser.

13. Face coverings

- The Executive's position on the use of face coverings by post-primary pupils in classrooms is that they should continue to be worn inside all school buildings, including classrooms, from the start of the new term.
- The Executive agreed that the requirement for post-primary pupils to wear a face covering in classrooms would, subject to review, apply until 8th October.
- Children must come to school with their own face covering. This should be appropriate to the school setting - free from logos or slogans.
- Coverings should be worn appropriately and washed regularly if reusable.
- Should, for any reason, a pupil be exempt from wearing a face covering, parents/carers should complete an exemption request form which can be found [here](#) not later than 3pm on Monday 30th August.
- Those pupils who were exempt last year do not need to complete the exemption request form and will automatically be added to the exemption list.

14. Supporting children who become unwell and minimising contact with individuals who are unwell

- You will find protocols relating to symptoms of COVID-19 being displayed at home and at school [here](#).
- It is essential that contact details of parents/carers are accurate. Recently a link was sent to all parent/carers to complete a data capture form. If you have not yet completed this, please do so without delay and not later than 30th August. The link to the data capture form can be found [here](#).
- Schools are required to cooperate with the Public Health Agency (PHA) and the Test, Trace & Protect process. This includes notifying the PHA about a positive case and close contacts.

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15. Pastoral support

- Our pastoral structures are well-embedded and pupils should feel free to raise any concerns with any member of staff, however the form tutor is often the best means of contact.
- All pupils will be afforded a full induction morning where they will spend this time with their form tutor to familiarise themselves with the routines and procedures for the new year.
- Each year group also has a Head of Year who will be available each morning. It is considered crucially important that all pupils arrive to school on time each day to attend morning registration.

16. Transport

- To ensure the overall safety of the school population, children showing symptoms of COVID-19 should not travel to school.
- It continues to be mandatory for all post-primary aged pupils to wear a face covering on both public transport and school transport services.
- Pupils using public transport, which is also used by members of the public, should try to keep a one metre distance at all times.

17. Southern Regional College

- Details regarding arrangements for the Southern Regional College pupils on Friday 3rd September will be shared as soon as possible.

18. Asymptomatic Testing – Lateral Flow Device (LFD) testing

- LFD testing programmes aim to identify pupils who are infected but do not realise it so they can be advised to isolate, so reducing the risk of them unwittingly spreading infection in the school and elsewhere. This will help to break the chain of transmission of the virus. It is for this reason that the Department encourages all staff and pupils who are offered these testing programmes to participate.
- The LFD testing programme is an additional layer of mitigation against COVID-19 in schools and is now available to **all** post-primary pupils.
- Testing is voluntary and no pupil should be tested unless informed consent has been given by the child's parent/carer, or the child if they are over 16, and the child is willing to be tested.
- Further information regarding the LFD testing programme and consent forms will be shared with pupils, parents/carers when pupils return to school in the new term.

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Important Safety Notice

Please be aware that pupils and parents/carers must not come to school if they are displaying any of the following symptoms:

- **New/continuous cough** – This means coughing a lot for more than an hour, or 3 or more coughing episode in 24 hours (if you usually have a cough, it may be worse than usual).
- **Fever (high temperature)** – This means you feel hot to touch on your chest or back (you do not need to measure your temperature).
- **Anosmia** – The loss or a change in your normal sense of smell (it can also affect your sense of taste).

If you have any of these symptoms you must self-isolate and book a PCR test. You should continue to isolate until the result of the test is available.

If you're a close contact of someone who has tested positive for Covid-19, self-isolation and testing requirements will depend on whether you're fully vaccinated, your age and where you work.

Rules for young people (aged 5 to 17):

- Young people (aged five to 17) who are not fully vaccinated and are identified as a close contacts should self-isolate and book a PCR test as soon as possible.
- If the PCR test is negative, they can end their self-isolation and should arrange to take another PCR test eight days after the last known contact.
- If the young person who is a close contact develops symptoms at any time they should immediately self-isolate and book a PCR test, even if the earlier PCR tests were negative.
- If any of the PCR tests are positive, this means they have the infection and they should self-isolate for 10 days, in line with advice for confirmed cases.

Further details for all groups can be found through this link:

<https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/coronavirus-covid-19-self-isolating>

If you have recently returned from travel abroad

Please see the link below for the latest travel advice and the requirements for your return.

<https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/coronavirus-covid-19-travel-advice>

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