

With regards to managing the Covid situation, we will take a cautious and considered approach to any relaxation of mitigations, taking account of PHA and DE guidance. In the meantime, here is a summary of the protocols that we will operate in order to provide a safe and healthy environment for the pupils, staff and members of the Methody community.

### **If you have Covid Symptoms**

Stay at home and follow the guidance from PHA on self-isolating.

### **If a pupil is identified as a close contact**

- They should stay at home, even if they are double vaccinated.
- They should get a PCR test no sooner than day 2 after the date of the close contact. They must stay at home until the test result is received.
- If the test is negative, they can return to school and take a further PCR test on the 8th day after close contact.
- If the test is positive, they must self-isolate for 10 days from the time of the close contact.

The same arrangements will apply to staff.

### **Social Distancing**

Social distancing remains a key aspect of measures to be taken in school to mitigate the risks of virus transmission. While the Executive agreed that the stringent application of social-distancing requirements between pupils would be relaxed from August 2020, we will continue to endeavour to implement as much social distancing as is practical where physical capacity and curriculum delivery permit. **Public health guidance with respect to social distancing of 2 metres remains in place between adults and as far as possible between adults and pupils.** Social distancing guidance applies across all areas of the school estate, both indoors and outdoors.

For Methody, this means that adults should maintain a distance of 2m from each other and from pupils.

Pupils should maintain a distance of 2m from adults.

Where 2m is not viable, a minimum of 1m is recommended with consideration being given to other risk mitigations e.g. protective screens, ventilation, hand hygiene.

### **Face Coverings**

Staff and pupils should wear a face covering while indoors, unless exempt from doing so.

- DE strongly recommend that post-primary pupils wear a face covering at all times when inside school buildings, including classrooms, corridors and confined communal spaces such as toilet areas.

- The Executive agreed on 12 August the requirement for post-primary pupils to wear a face covering in classrooms would, subject to review, apply until **8 October**.
- It is mandatory for all post-primary school age pupils to wear a face covering on all public and school transport unless they have a reasonable excuse not to.

Outside of the classroom setting, where a 2m distance cannot be maintained from other persons either indoors or outdoors on a school site, all adults should wear a face covering. This includes all adults visiting the school site.

## **Uniform**

As changing rooms continue to be considered a higher risk environment, pupils may come to school wearing navy tracksuit bottoms and an MCB PE/Games top on days when these lessons are timetabled. Please note that **leggings and shorts are not acceptable**.

## **Extra-curricular Activities**

DE advice is that Schools are encouraged to resume all extra-curricular activities for pupils. We will restart our extra-curricular activities when it is safe to do so. The maximum number of pupils able to avail of an extra-curricular activity will be based upon a risk assessment of the venue for the activity.

**Assemblies in the Whitla Hall** These will run on a fortnightly rota for Forms 2 to U6 and weekly for Form 1. Only one year group will attend the assembly to allow for distancing to take place.

## **Educational Visits**

- Both day and residential visits by schools are able to take place.
- Educational visits outside of Northern Ireland remain paused and should **NOT** be arranged.

## **Advice if you're clinically extremely vulnerable**

People at high risk (clinically extremely vulnerable) from COVID-19 are advised to follow the same guidance as everyone else. You are no longer advised to stay at home (shield). But there are still things you can do to help keep yourself safe.

Read more about advice for people at high risk from COVID-19

These measures will remain under review and will be adapted as necessary as guidance or circumstances change.

As the number of staff and pupils who are fully vaccinated increases, the likely impact of Covid on the College community will reduce. However, we will continue to be vigilant and take the necessary precautions that will allow us to return to normal as soon as possible.