

# St Benedict's High School

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Head Teacher: Alan Taylor



Renfrewshire  
Council

Children's Services

Dear Parent / Carer

I am writing to provide a further update following on from my previous communication issued during the summer holiday.

The following provides a more detailed overview of our key arrangements introduced as a result of COVID-19 and also a brief summary of our first week of term.

During these unprecedented times it is through working together that we will ensure the best outcomes for our young people.

In order to ensure effective communication with pupils and parents in the weeks and months ahead, I will be introducing a weekly update. This will be available on the school website [www.oraetlabora.co.uk](http://www.oraetlabora.co.uk)

In the meantime, please do not hesitate to contact the school if you have any queries.

## **Week 1**

We were delighted to welcome all our young people back into the building to continue with their education. I would like to thank parents for passing over the information I shared in my summer communication letter. As a result of this pupils arrived to school fully prepared ensuring a smooth and safe start to the session.

All pupils received a welcome back message and safety briefing from myself through a virtual assembly presentation. I highlighted the following main points.

- The importance of maintaining a 2m distance from staff and social distancing from other pupils as much as possible.
- Sanitising on entry and exit on the school building.
- As much as possible washing hands with soap and water throughout the day.
- Reporting ill-health to a member of staff immediately.

Throughout the week subject specific information was shared by staff.

## **School COVID arrangements**

To ensure the safety of all, we have implemented a range of protocols. These are summarised below:

- All classrooms cleared of any unnecessary clutter/items to leave a clear environment allowing for more effective cleaning of surfaces.

Director of Children's Services: Steven Quinn

- Implementing an enhanced cleaning regime, which includes more cleaning throughout the day of touchpoints such as door handles, light switches etc.
- Increased ventilation and most doors remaining open to reduce contacts.
- Teachers closely monitoring the distances within their class to ensure the 2m rule between adults and young people is maintained.
- Chairs and desks arranged to face forward.
- Learners wiping down their working area and equipment when entering and exiting the class.
- Increased and prolonged vigilance on good hand hygiene at regular intervals throughout the school day.
- Learners being asked to provide their own equipment to avoid possible touch contamination.
- Any resources shared between groups, are cleaned thoroughly between contact groups, or rotated to allow them to be left unused and out of reach for a quarantine period.
- Teachers developing innovative ways of learning to ensure learning activities keep pupils safe.

### **How will safety procedures be maintained in corridors and stairs and at entrances and exits?**

To assist in the safe movement of pupils throughout the school day we have increased our number of entry and exit points to the building. During change of periods all pupils follow a one-way system to get to their next class. The movement of pupils during this time is closely monitored by all members of the senior leadership team and school staff.

### **What are the arrangements for Interval/Lunchtime**

In line with the Scottish Government guidance we aim to limit the mixing of year groups and maximise space available for distancing.

- Year groups have been allocated separate areas for use inside and out with the building. We are very lucky to have a significant amount of space in our school grounds.
- The canteen will continue to offer a “grab and go” packed lunch service. From week beginning 17<sup>th</sup> August a limited service at interval will be made available – Hot roll/bottle of water.
- Any pupils visiting shops whilst travelling to/from school or during the lunchtime must follow the community safety protocols on distancing and wearing of face masks. I have been in communication with our local shop partners.
- There will be an increased and prolonged vigilance on good hand hygiene at regular intervals throughout the school day.

Please note there will be no access to water fountains, learners must therefore bring a full bottle of water each day.

## **What happens if a pupil or member of staff becomes ill with Covid19 symptoms when in school?**

If someone on-site becomes unwell with potential Covid19 symptoms they will be isolated and sent home with recommendation to be tested. Following any confirmation of a positive test result, the government's Test and Protect scheme will identify and trace close contacts. The school has identified a quarantine area where anyone symptomatic can be isolated until they leave the building. Following this, a clean of this space will be carried out. If a pupil starts to display symptoms of Covid-19 the teacher will:

- Alert the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) and school office immediately.
- The pupil will be escorted by a member of staff wearing a face covering to the isolation room. The pupil area will be cleaned thoroughly and a note of the pupils in the class will be taken by the teacher to inform Test and Protect if a test result comes back positive.
- School office will contact home for pupil to be collected by parent.
- Pupil to self-isolate and parent to seek testing and confirm result to the school.

### **Drop off/pick up**

Our drop off and pick up area is still available in the morning and after school. Parents should stay in their cars. There will undoubtedly be an increase in the number of cars entering this area and a delay in movement during this time. I would ask for your patience. I would however encourage parents to drop their child off a short distance away, if possible, to avoid coming into the school grounds.

### **Entry to the school building**

Parents should not routinely visit the school during this period. Contact with staff should generally be by telephone/email. Parents must only enter the school building by prior arrangement for meetings with staff in extreme circumstances.

### **Ventilation**

Where possible, classrooms will have increased ventilation through open windows and doors.

## **How will the school support learners with Additional Support Needs?**

For children with Additional Support Needs, we will work in partnership with parents & carers, partner professionals and young people to review individual plans and plan targeted interventions to ensure all our young people achieve their potential.

The emotional wellbeing of our young people as they re-connect with learning will require careful planning. The Support for Learning staff will be supporting learners to understand the new procedures in place to reduce anxiety and to ensure they feel safe and supported to return to school. Parents who feel their child's Additional Support Needs means they need additional planning should contact the school.

## **How will the school support clinically vulnerable and BAME learners?**

Our risk assessment and our guidance to learners will reinforce increased hygiene and behaviours around physical distancing to protect our learners. If you feel your child requires an individual risk assessment please contact the school office and we will contact you to proceed with this and agree any specific protocols related to your child.

## **My child is in the clinically vulnerable/extremely clinically vulnerable category should they return to school?**

Young people who are clinically vulnerable or extremely clinically vulnerable, should continue to adhere to the latest medical advice. The current advice from the Scottish Government is that that all children, young people and staff who are shielding should be able to return to school, unless given specific advice from a GP or healthcare provider not to. If you have concerns, please contact the school.

In the event of an outbreak, the school will be in touch to discuss whether any additional precautions may have to be taken to support your child if you have highlighted that they are clinically vulnerable. This will be undertaken on a case by case basis.

## **Will a full curriculum be on offer?**

Yes, all subjects will be offered. We will adapt how we teach lessons to allow our young people to do practical activities safely. Rigorous cleaning regimes will be put in place to limit infection from equipment e.g. hand tools used by only one user and wiped down when work is finished. In IT based subjects keyboards etc. will be wiped down by pupils before and after use.

Sport and physical activities are important for mental health now and in the future. We are planning how we can best use outdoor space to allow our young people to do sport and physical activities in line with national guidance.

Pupils who have PE period 1 may arrive in kit and pupils who have PE last period may leave in kit. Further information will be shared with pupils by the PE Dept in due course.

Scientific and medical advice is still being developed for safely returning to activities such as singing, talking loudly, or playing wind/brass instruments. Your child will not be able to do these activities at the start of term.

For senior pupils currently engaged in courses through consortium arrangements I will provide an update next week. Courses at this stage continue to be online.

**My child was accepted onto one of the vocational college courses. Will the courses still run?**

Vocational courses will run as planned, although it is expected that most courses will commence with theory which will be taught online, with attendance at college for the practical aspects of the course hopefully happening later in the year. Further information will come from the colleges in due course and will be communicated to pupils (and parents) through the Pupil Support team.

**Will school staff/learners be wearing Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)?**

The Scottish Government Guidelines for the re-opening of schools states that PPE should not be required for teaching staff in normal circumstances if other mitigating measures are in place e.g. physical distancing. Where adults cannot keep 2m distance and are interacting face-to-face for a sustained period (specified as around 15 minutes or more), face coverings will be worn. Face coverings should not be required for most young people (those clinically advised to wear a covering are an exception), however all staff and learners who choose to do so can wear masks.

**What will the school be doing to support health and wellbeing following lockdown?**

There will be provision within our SE programme to continue to focus on promoting resilience and positive mental health. We will also be consulting with learners and parents to ensure health and wellbeing is a priority and plan further interventions.

Learners and parents/carers can speak to their Pastoral Care Teacher to ensure individual support is in place if this is needed.

**What will the school be doing to identify and address gaps in learning?**

Teachers will identify gaps through learning conversations to inform learning and teaching. Staff have already taken time during the in-service days to plan teaching approaches in these new circumstances – this will be an on-going area of staff development. Additional support sessions will be planned for the senior phase later in the session based on learner voice.

## **What will happen in the event of a school closure?**

We are developing plans for all future scenarios. We will be seeking pupil and parent views on what worked well during lockdown and what would help further.

Information on accessing out of school learning will be made available to pupils to ensure everyone is prepared in the event of any outbreak. It is important that schools have up to date emergency contact detail for every child / young person.

I hope you are reassured by the precautions we have put in place. I am available if you have any queries.



Alan Taylor

Head Teacher