



**WALES HIGH SCHOOL  
ACADEMY TRUST**

**Social Distancing  
Policy Statement**

**To be reviewed when required, a minimum of every three years**

**All policies are available on the school website**

Last updated 22 January 2021

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## **Statement of Intent**

This policy statement outlines the school's approach to social distancing measures in light of the current coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, and how we will adhere to the guidance published by the government and health organisations.

While we are looking forward to welcoming more of our students back, we understand the concerns of many of our stakeholders, e.g. parents and staff members. That is why we have created this policy – to outline the steps the school will take to mitigate the risk of infection spreading and, ultimately, ensure the safety of our school community.

We have consulted parents and staff members to support our decision-making and updated this policy in light of updates to government guidance.

**Updates to the original policy are shown in red text.**

## 1. Legal framework

1.1. This policy has due regard to relevant legislation and guidance, including, but not limited to, the following:

- Coronavirus Act 2020
- DfE (2020) 'Coronavirus (COVID-19): implementing protective measures in education and childcare settings'
- DfE (2020) 'Safe working in education, childcare and children's social care settings, including the use of personal protective equipment (PPE)

1.2. This policy operates in accordance with the following school policies:

- Infection Control
- Behaviour for Learning
- Coronavirus (COVID-19) Reopening Plan
- **Covid Risk Assessment**

## 2. Risk assessments

2.1. Before reopening the school to more students, a risk assessment has been carried out to ensure sensible measures are put in place to protect staff members and students, including appropriate social distancing measures.

2.2. Staff members have been consulted as part of the creation process to ensure everyone's needs are understood and accounted for.

2.3. The risk assessment addresses the following areas:

- Safety of the school premises
- Home to school transport
- Cleaning measures
- Infection control and the ability to implement protective measures, e.g. social distancing
- Supporting staff and student wellbeing
- Supporting Students' learning
- Safeguarding
- Communication of plans and procedures
- **Remote learning**
- **Lateral Flow Testing**

## 3. Social distancing measures

### Class sizes

3.1. The school will re-open to all students on 1 September 2020.

3.2. Students will remain in these year group bubbles and crossover of year groups will be discouraged during the school day or on subsequent days. Some essential crossover

of year groups is acceptable but this will be limited and only take place where deemed necessary.

- 3.3. In the event there is a shortage of teachers, a TA can lead the class under the direction of a teacher.
- 3.4. Where possible, social distancing measures will be adhered to, including the metre plus rule, and desks will be front facing with students sitting side by side to avoid close face to face contact.
- 3.5. Classrooms have been adapted to support distancing where possible.
- 3.6. The Headteacher will decide whether it is viable to hold lessons or classroom activities outdoors to help with adherence to social distancing measures.

### **The School Day**

- 3.7. The Strategic Leadership Team, led by the Headteacher, will review the school timetable and make amendments to reduce movement around the school. The start and finish times of lessons will be flexible within a set time limit to help movement.
- 3.8. Staff and students have sight of their finalised timetable and will be informed of any changes to this timetable.

### **Travelling To and From School**

- 3.9. Students are encouraged to walk or cycle to school where possible.
- 3.10. Where students are using public or dedicated school transport, they must wear a face covering, maintain social distancing at all times and avoid contact with hard surfaces.
- 3.11. On dedicated school transport, students should aim to sit with others in their family or year group bubble.
- 3.12. On arrival at school, **face coverings may be removed whilst outside of the buildings** and students will be encouraged to sanitise their hands prior to entering the school building. **The wearing of face coverings is dependent on Tier restrictions – see risk assessment for further detail.**
- 3.13. Parents are encouraged to drop off and pick students up at the end of the road, should not gather at the school gates and access to school at drop off and pick up times are discouraged.

### **Assemblies**

- 3.13. Assemblies will not be held in large groups. Classroom teachers will hold assemblies with the students in their group.

### **Break and Lunchtimes**

- 3.14. Students will take their breaktimes and lunchtimes with the students in their set group to avoid mixing.
- 3.15. Different areas of the school are allocated for students to take their break and lunchtimes, to support distancing of student groups.
- 3.16. Students are able to go outside during their breaktimes and lunchtimes; however, they will be required to follow social distancing guidelines. If social distancing rules cannot be followed outside, students will remain inside.

- 3.17. Students will collect and eat their lunches in an area allocated to them to minimise mixing with other groups.
- 3.18. Students will wash their hands before eating.
- 3.19. All tables and relevant surfaces will be cleaned before and after students eat.

### **Staffroom**

- 3.20. The use of the staffroom is discouraged. If the staffroom needs to be used, occupancy will be limited, to stop staff members mixing. The two-metre social distancing will be enforced in the staffroom.

### **PE Lessons**

- 3.21. Students will be required to follow social distancing guidelines in PE and sports activities. Class sizes will be limited to make adherence to the guidelines easier during team sports and activities.

### **Extra-curricular clubs**

- 3.22. Extra curricular clubs will only go ahead where staff are available and are confident in ensuring the safety of all participants including social distancing practices. Students will remain in their groups to avoid mixing.
- 3.23. Parents will be asked to provide their children with their own equipment for participating in sports to minimise sharing and the potential for infection to spread.
- 3.24. Only individual sports, like tennis and badminton, where social distancing can be practised will be played. Team sports, like football and rugby, will not be played under any circumstance until the government allows it.
- 3.25. All equipment, e.g. tennis racquets and balls, and areas will be cleaned and disinfected before and after use.

### **Behaviour**

- 3.26. The school's Behaviour for Learning Policy has been amended to include an appendix outlining how social distancing will work when implementing the measures in the policy.
- 3.27. We understand that following some of the social distancing principles will be extremely challenging. Where staff or students breach social distancing guidelines, SLT will consider the reason why the breach has occurred and whether further action which may include a sanction is required.
- 3.28. If a staff member is unable to follow the principles, they should speak to their line manager.
- 3.29. If a student is unable to follow any social distancing measures, relevant staff members will discuss whether it would be more appropriate for the student to remain at home.

### **Transport**

- 3.30. The school liaises with the LA and the school's transport providers to ensure an appropriate plan is in place to protect students and staff members who use public transport to get to school.
- 3.31. Students and staff are encouraged to drive themselves, walk or cycle to school or be dropped off by a member of their household. If this is not possible, and students and

staff need to use public transport, they are required to follow guidelines on social distancing.

- 3.32. Students and their families will be informed of any new arrangements before they are implemented.

### **Supporting Students**

- 3.33. The SENDCo will review EHC plans and risk assessments to determine whether it is safe for students with SEND to return to school, if they have not already been attending.
- 3.34. The SENDCo will consider the capacity for the student to understand and follow social distancing measures that have been put in place as part of their decision to determine whether a student with SEND should return to school.
- 3.35. When planning for each stage of reintegration, the implications for the wellbeing of students, staff and families will always be considered. One of the school's key priorities in relation to wellbeing is ensuring that the school community feels safe as we re-open more widely.
- 3.36. The school will liaise with the LA to discuss what wider support services are available and to secure additional support and early help, where possible.

### **4. Infection Control Measures**

- 4.1. We know that implementing social distancing measures in a school setting is extremely challenging. Therefore, we have also implemented robust infection control measures to help ensure the safety of our school community.
- 4.2. Infection control measures are implemented in line with the Infection Control Policy, which contains a section on coronavirus measures.
- 4.3. All staff members are briefed on what they can do to mitigate the risk of infection, and they will be reminded of their responsibilities relating to control measures daily by senior colleagues in a daily briefing.
- 4.4. The school will communicate regularly with parents to outline the infection control measures in place and to explain parents' responsibilities in mitigating the risk of infection spreading. This is done to reassure parents and further mitigate the risk of infection spreading.
- 4.5. The following measures have been implemented across the school:
- Minimising contact with individuals who are unwell by ensuring that those who have coronavirus symptoms, or who have someone in their household who does, do not attend the school for 7 or 14 days.
  - Cleaning hands frequently – wash hands thoroughly for 20 seconds with running water and soap and dry them thoroughly or use alcohol hand rub or sanitiser ensuring that all parts of the hands are covered
  - Ensuring good respiratory hygiene by promoting the 'catch it, bin it, kill it' approach
  - Cleaning frequently touched surfaces using standard products, such as detergents and bleach

- Minimising contact and mixing of students and staff by altering, as much as possible, the environment (such as classroom layout) and timetables
  - Limiting the number of shared resources for staff and students
  - Discouraging students from touching their faces or putting objects in their mouths
- 4.6. The school will review guidance from the government regularly, and update this policy and other documents where necessary.

## **5. Personal protective equipment (PPE)**

- 5.1. Reference to PPE in this section means:
- Fluid-resistant surgical face masks.
  - Disposable gloves.
  - Disposable plastic aprons.
  - Eye protection, e.g. face visor or goggles.
- 5.2. The government has advised that the majority of school staff do not need to wear PPE beyond what they normally would for their work, even if they are not always able to maintain a distance of two metres from others.
- 5.3. In accordance with government guidance, PPE will be provided to staff in the following circumstances:
- Where staff are caring for students whose intimate care needs already require the use of PPE
  - Where a student becomes unwell with symptoms of coronavirus at school and requires direct personal care until they can go home, a fluid-resistant surgical mask should be worn by the staff member caring for the student. If contact with the student is necessary, the staff member should wear disposable gloves, a disposable apron, and a fluid-resistant surgical mask. Where there is a risk of splashing to the eyes, e.g. from coughing, eye protection should be worn.
- 5.4. When using face masks, staff will ensure the masks:
- Cover both the nose and mouth.
  - Do not dangle around the neck.
  - Are not touched once put on, except when carefully removed before disposal.
  - Are changed once they become moist or damaged.
  - Are only worn once and then discarded.
- 5.5. When using PPE, staff members will follow [PHE's guidelines](#) on putting on and taking off equipment. PHE's infographics will be displayed in areas of the school where PPE is likely to be used.



- 5.6. The safety of our staff is paramount, so additional risk assessments will be conducted to determine whether PPE is required for other tasks and activities, and we will do our utmost to ensure staff are provided with the PPE they need.
- 5.7. Where the wearer of PPE does not have coronavirus symptoms, the equipment will be placed in a refuse bag and be disposed of as normal domestic waste.
- 5.8. PPE that has been worn by, or near, someone with coronavirus symptoms will be disposed of by:
  - Putting it in a plastic rubbish bag and tying it when full.
  - Placing the rubbish bag in a second rubbish bag and tying it.
  - Putting it in a suitable container and secure place marked for storage for 72 hours.
- 5.9. Waste will be stored safely and securely kept away from students. Waste will not be put in communal waste areas until it has been stored for at least 72 hours. This waste does not require a dedicated clinical waste collection.
- 5.10. In line with government guidance, students and staff will be asked to remove homemade non-disposable face coverings when they arrive at school. The wearer will be asked to bring a plastic bag to school to put the face covering into in order to take it home – the wearer must clean their hands once they have removed the face covering. If a staff member or student (or their parent) does not want to remove their face covering while at school, they should speak to most senior member of staff on site.

## **6. Communication**

- 6.1. All social distancing measures will be communicated to all relevant stakeholders, including students, parents, staff, visitors, suppliers and contractors.
- 6.2. Staff will be informed of all relevant plans, including safety measures, timetable changes and staggered arrival and departure times, and will have opportunities to discuss training on the new measures.
- 6.3. Staff will be engaged regularly to get their feedback on the arrangements that are in place.
- 6.4. Visual aids will be placed around the school to remind our community of the measures that we have put in place.

## **7. Monitoring and review**

- 7.1. This policy will be reviewed regularly and after the release of additional government guidance.