

The Good Shepherd Centre



Coronavirus (COVID-19): Guidance on reducing the risks from COVID-19 in our school



Updated: 20th December 2021

This document should be read in conjunction with the most recent GSC COVID 19 Policy

INDEX

3	Overview
4	Key Context
5	Changes to Previous Guidance <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Minimise Contacts/ Groupings - School Visitors
6	Changes to Previous Guidance <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ventilation and Heating - Asymptomatic Testing
7	Changes to Previous Guidance <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Self-isolation
8	Outbreak management
9	Guidance for Pregnant Staff
9	Children and Young people with Additional Support Needs
9	Vaccination
9	Physical Distancing
10	People in the Highest Risk Group
11	Key Mitigations in Operation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Enhanced Hygiene - Fomites
12	Ventilation and Heating
12	CO2 Monitors
16	Visitors to GSC
16	PPE
17	Face Coverings
18	Testing
18	Outbreak Management
19	School Operations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Outdoor Learning - Safe Movement - Practical Activities - Home Economics - Remote and Blended Learning
20	Organisation
21	Timetabling

Overview

Summary

This guidance reflects the change in the balance of risks following the emergence of the Omicron variant of Covid 19. It sets out that GSC will continue to apply the mitigations that are currently in place, as well as reintroducing some measures that had previously been relaxed.

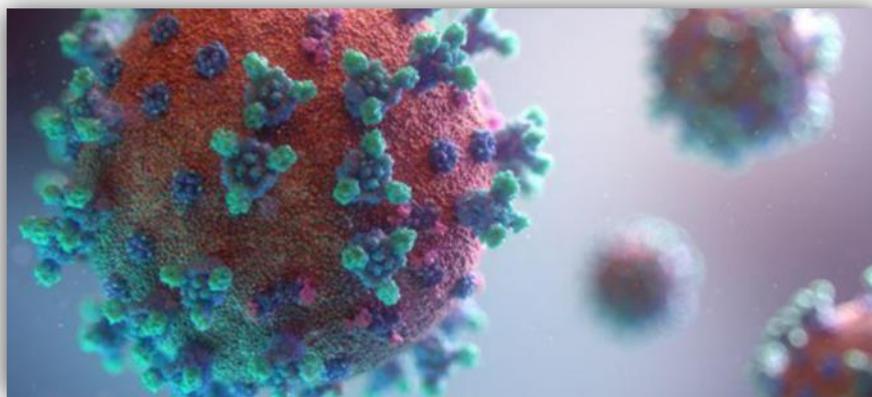
The Advisory Sub-group on Education and Children’s Issues (‘the sub-group’) as well as senior clinicians have provided advice on these changes based upon the latest clinical and public health assessment of the situation. Following that advice, Ministers decided that strengthening mitigations at this stage is important and necessary as part of a society-wide drive to minimise transmission. All children, young people and staff at GSC will continue to implement and strictly observe these mitigations. GSC has implemented these changes with immediate effect.

In the event of a significant outbreak, GSC may be expected and supported by our local health protection team (HPT) to introduce further mitigations for a temporary basis and while that outbreak is managed. Where that is the case, our local HPT will support us in that process and help ensure that any temporary mitigations are necessary, sufficient and proportionate dependent upon local circumstances.

Risk assessment

Risk Assessments will be conducted and regularly reviewed and updated (including points when guidance is updated). GSC will take a balanced approach and take every appropriate step to ensure the safety and wellbeing of children, young people and staff.

Any external organisations involved in delivering services in GSC (e.g. contracted facilities management services) are required to follow this guidance.



Key context

The Scottish Government published its Strategic Framework update and Review of Physical Distancing on Tuesday 22nd June 2021. This set out a change to the Scottish Government's overarching strategic intent, from: 'to suppress the virus to the lowest possible level and keep it there, while we strive to return to a more normal life for as many people as possible'. to one where we work: 'to suppress the virus to a level consistent with alleviating its harms while we recover and rebuild for a better future'.

More recently, the emergence of the Omicron variant has changed the previous balance of risks. Omicron is a variant of the SARS-CoV-2 virus that was designated a Variant of Concern by the WHO on 26th November. It is transmitting rapidly within Scotland and there is strong evidence that community transmission is widespread. It is believed highly probable that Omicron will outcompete Delta and become the dominant variant within Scotland very quickly, with the potential to cause high case numbers.

GSC will continue to offer support to the mental health and wellbeing of staff and pupils. As previously, a particular focus on children and young people with Additional Support Needs will be essential during this latest phase of the pandemic. Balancing progress in learning with children and young people's social and emotional needs will continue to be a priority for everyone at GSC.

Changes to Previous Guidance

This section sets out the changes that are being introduced by this revised guidance.

Minimise contacts / Groupings

Minimising contacts through the use of smaller House Based groupings is an approach that has been adopted by GSC since the beginning of the Covid-19 Pandemic. This has provided benefits due to reducing possible vectors of transmission. Our Class sizes remain a maximum of 3 Young People with one teacher and 1 other support person if required. This keeps our maximum classroom occupancy to 5 for the duration of lessons.

As part of a strengthened approach to minimising contacts, GSC will continue to avoid assemblies and other types of large group gatherings. Where it is necessary to bring groups together, alternative mitigating actions will be put in place, such as physical distancing, ventilation, face coverings, meeting outside and limiting the time spent together.

School visitors

In recognition of the positive impact on the wellbeing of children and young people, supply staff and other professional visitors can continue to visit GSC. This includes visiting teachers, psychologists, nurses, social workers, youth workers, outdoor learning specialists, SQA staff and appointees (e.g. visiting assessors and visiting verifiers), Education Scotland staff (including HMIE) and those providing therapeutic support.

Movements will continue to be limited to those that are necessary to support children and young people or the running of the Centre until otherwise advised. Such visitors should look to reduce the number of schools visited and to limit their contact time with children and young people. They should also take regular lateral flow tests when asymptomatic. Consideration will be given to the provision of this support by virtual means as appropriate by individual House Teams and the SMT.

Parents & carers may attend GSC where this is considered necessary to support children and young people. Where it is considered beneficial, parents/carers may also attend GSC for individual parental visits related to the wellbeing, progress and behaviour of children. All such visits will be risk assessed and agreed in advance as being a necessary and proportionate measure.

In line with SportScotland advice on the 'Return to sport and physical activity', parents/carers may attend GSC to spectate at outdoor events, providing all activity is consistent with relevant Scottish Government guidance on health, physical distancing, and hygiene.

Visitors are expected to comply with GSC's arrangements for managing and minimising risk (including physical distancing and use of face coverings). All temporary staff will be given access to information on the safety arrangements in place, including the GSC risk assessment. Arrangements for visitors will be communicated clearly to staff and the wider school community. All visitors must show a negative lateral flow test before entering GSC.

Ventilation and heating

GSC have invested in several mobile CO2 monitors to ensure that our spaces are being assessed regularly for ventilation issues with a view to remedial action being taken where required.

GSC has enough devices to allow every learning, teaching and play space to be assessed for a minimum of one full day per week under normal occupancy.

Areas of persistent concern will be identified during our reporting procedures at our Covid Resilience meeting and remedial action will be taken for any spaces that have been identified as showing higher levels of CO2. More regular monitoring will be considered for any areas of persistent concern until problems have been rectified.

Asymptomatic testing programme

GSC has consistently promoted use of daily at-home LFD testing to our staff and pupils, and participants are encouraged to record their results, whether positive, negative or void.

Some additional improvements have been made to processes under the testing programme, to ensure that GSC can now hand out test kits more proactively to staff and Young People and focus our efforts on encouraging greater uptake and reporting.

These involve:

- reductions in the requirements for GSC to keep test kit logs, which should reduce burdens for school staff; and
- a move away from the need for written agreement to participate, with acceptance of test kits and completion of the tests at home taken as implied agreement to participate.

GSC makes every effort to distribute test kits proactively and regularly to staff and Young People in line with the updated guidance for the programme, and we encourage participants to test and report results regularly, including over holiday periods and in advance of return.

GSC now predominantly issue the rapid flow LFD, nasal-only test kits to address previous feedback from some participants about the discomfort of throat swabbing. The new types of test kit only take around 15-20 minutes for results to be returned, reducing the amount of time involved in testing.

Self-isolation policy (including contact tracing and testing) – 5th & 7th January 2022

Any Positive Cases of Covid 19 in the Centre, regardless of vaccination status, must isolate for 10 days. However, if the person tests negative on day 6 and day 7 LFD tests (taken at least 24 hours apart, with the first test no earlier than day 6) they may leave isolation if they have no fever after their day 7 test.

Fully Vaccinated Adult Contacts (NB: definition of “fully vaccinated adult” is now 3 doses of an MHRA-approved vaccine) AND all contacts who are aged under 18 years and 4 months must take 7 daily LFD tests and report negative results instead of isolating – no requirement for a PCR test to be released from self-isolation.

Unvaccinated/Partially Vaccinated Adult Contacts (NB: this includes adults with only 0-2 doses) must take a PCR test and isolate for 10 days.

Fully vaccinated individuals who have tested positive for SARS-CoV-2 (COVID-19) within 90 days should still participate in appropriate daily LFD testing in line with NHS guidance when they are identified as contacts. Individuals who have tested positive within 90 days should also continue to participate in routine asymptomatic LFD testing.

Self-isolation for people with symptoms or testing positive

Any adult or child who develops symptoms of COVID-19 (high temperature, new continuous cough or a loss or change to sense of smell or taste) must self-isolate immediately in line with NHS Guidance and book a PCR test. They must do so even if they have a negative LFD test.

Any asymptomatic adult or child who tests positive using a Lateral Flow Device (LFD) must self-isolate immediately for 10 days, subject to the latest NHS guidance on LFD testing on days 6 and 7.

Any adult or child who tests positive using PCR tests must isolate for 10 days, subject to the latest NHS guidance on LFD testing on days 6 and 7. People living in the same household must also follow the latest NHS guidance on self-isolation and daily testing as close contacts.

In summary, anyone testing positive on an LFD or PCR test must self-isolate for 10 days regardless of age or vaccination status. However, if the person tests negative on day 6 and day 7 LFD tests (taken at least 24 hours apart, with the first test no earlier than day 6) they may leave isolation if they have no fever after their day 7 test.

Actions to be taken following identification as a high or low risk contact

When children or adults are identified as high or low risk contacts of a positive case, they are asked to take actions to limit the risk of onward transmission. These include self-isolation and/or appropriate testing in line with NHS guidance.

Actions for high-risk contacts

All contacts identified through the Test and Protect process will follow the advice on self-isolation sent to them and as set out on NHS Inform.

All those who are identified as high-risk contacts will be advised to adopt the approach that is set out in NHS guidance, dependent on their vaccination status and age. In summary, these are:

Fully Vaccinated Adult Contacts (NB: definition of “fully vaccinated adult” is now 3 doses of an MHRA-approved vaccine) AND all Young People aged under 18 years and 4 months

- take 7 daily LFD tests and report negative results instead of isolating – no requirement for a PCR test to be released from self-isolation.
- If any contact develops symptoms at any point during or after the post-contact period, they should isolate and take a PCR test in line with guidance on NHS inform.
- If you're a close contact who can end self-isolation, you can help protect others by following our guidance on how to stay safe and help prevent the spread.

Unvaccinated/Partially Vaccinated Adult Contacts (NB: this includes adults with only 0-2 doses)

- must take a PCR test and isolate for 10 days.

Outbreak management

Our Health Protection Team involved in the handling of outbreaks may still make the decision to engage with GSC in the handling of cases, as detailed in the outbreak management section of this guidance.

Accessing PCR tests

There are a number of ways for staff and Young People to get a PCR test:

- Book a test at NHS Inform for your nearest COVID-19 test site.
- Order a home PCR test kit online - this can be facilitated by the Centre Nurse.



Changes to previous guidance

A number of recent changes have been made to the guidance for the current school session (January 2022).

Guidance for pregnant staff (updated November 2021)

COVID-19 vaccines are recommended in pregnancy. Vaccination is the best way to protect against the known risks of COVID-19 in pregnancy for both women and babies, including admission of the woman to intensive care and premature birth of the baby.

GSC will continue to follow our duties and responsibilities under both the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 and the Equality Act 2010. These include ensuring that appropriate individual risk assessments are in place to inform any reasonable adjustments required to remove risk for pregnant women.

Current Guidance advises that:

- All pregnant women who are vaccinated should undergo a risk assessment in the workplace and continue to work if it is safe to do so.
- Pregnant women who are unvaccinated at any gestation should take a more precautionary approach in light of the increased risk.

GSC staff who are pregnant at any gestation must have a workplace risk assessment with us and an occupational health team. Having a COVID-19 vaccine does not remove the requirement for GSC to carry out a risk assessment for pregnant employees. They should only continue to work if the risk assessment advises it is safe to do so.

Children and young people with Additional Support Needs (updated November 2021)

Every child and young person has different levels of required support. Risk assessments play a key part in considering the individual needs of a child or young person. Where there is a need to work in close proximity with adults and children and young people, the safety measures to protect adults and children and young people alike will be followed. Staff will wear a face covering or PPE (where appropriate), and regularly wash their hands before and after contact.

Vaccination (updated January 2022)

GSC is encouraging staff who have not been fully vaccinated to seek vaccination as soon as possible, following the recommended gap between doses.

The latest JCVI advice on vaccination for children and young people, which the Scottish Government has decided, in agreement with Governments across the UK, to follow, is in summary:

- All adults aged 18+ are now eligible for a booster vaccine, in addition to their first two doses;
- All 16 and 17 year-olds are eligible for two doses of the Pfizer vaccine. They should also be offered a normal booster dose of the Pfizer vaccine no sooner than 3 months after completion of their primary course;
- All 12-15 year olds are eligible for two doses of the Pfizer vaccine. This offer comes in addition to the 12 to 15-year-olds with underlying health conditions who were already eligible for a second dose;

- Children and young people aged 12 to 15 who are in a clinical risk group or who are a household contact of someone who is immunosuppressed should also be offered a normal booster dose of the Pfizer vaccine no sooner than 3 months after completion of their primary course;
- Children and young people aged 12 to 15 years who are severely immunosuppressed and who have had a third primary dose should also be offered a normal booster dose of the Pfizer vaccine no sooner than 3 months after completion of their primary course. Appointments are not available for this group at the time of writing. More details will be available soon about when these children will be offered a vaccine – these will be published on NHS Inform.
- Children aged 5-11 years in a clinical risk group, or who are household contacts of someone who is immunosuppressed, should be offered two 10 micrograms doses of Pfizer with an interval of 8 weeks.
- Children and young people aged 12 to 17 who have a positive PCR test result must wait a minimum of 12 weeks post the date of the positive test before receiving any vaccine dose, unless a clinician recommends otherwise.

In response to rising cases of the new Omicron variant, the Scottish Government announced an acceleration of the vaccination programme with a focus on COVID boosters. The latest information on eligibility and access to appointments and drop-in vaccination is available on NHS Inform.

Physical distancing (updated August 2021)

Physical distancing between adults, and between adults and children and young people, will remain in place. Retaining 2 metres between adults who do not yet meet the criteria for exemption from self-isolation will also help to reduce the risk that they are identified as a contact.

As previously, maintaining distancing between secondary school pupils is encouraged within all of our classrooms and recreational spaces where possible.

Physical distancing between young people

GSC staff and other adults in the Centre will continue to apply physical distancing when with other adults and with pupils. There is a requirement for physical distancing of at least 2m that works well and does not limit capacity.

GSC encourages physical distancing between young people wherever practicable. These approaches do not introduce capacity constraints and/or prevent full time learning in school.

At GSC we will:

- Encourage young people to maintain distance where possible, particularly indoors – encouraging young people not to crowd together
- Discourage social physical contact (hand to hand greeting/hugs);
- Use all the available space in classrooms, halls, etc
- Adjust class space if required and maintain spacing between desks or between individual young people;
- Seat young people side by side and facing forwards, rather than face to face;

- Avoid situations that require young people to sit or stand in direct physical contact with others;

Where young people need to move about within the classroom to perform activities (for example to access a shared resource) this will be organised to minimise congregation around the point of access to the shared resource;

People in the highest risk group (previously those on the shielding list) (updated December 2021 with minor edits)

The Chief Medical Officer's advice is that people at highest risk can continue to follow the same advice as the rest of the population in the context of the baseline measures that remain in place. We do not know a lot about the new Omicron variant yet. Following the usual protective measures, including having vaccinations and boosters, will help to reduce its spread. A recent study by the World Health Organization shows that the vaccination programme has saved more than 27,000 lives in Scotland. As the number of people who have been vaccinated rises, everyone will benefit from greater protection, even the small number of people who cannot be vaccinated for medical reasons.

Over 95% of people at highest risk are now fully vaccinated and 96% have received their first dose.

Due to the new variant, it's more important than ever that everyone who can, has their booster vaccination.

Children and young people in the highest risk group

The Chief Medical Officer's advice is that children and young people on the highest risk list can follow the same advice as for the rest of the population. This includes attending education unless their clinician has advised them otherwise individually.

Household members of people who are in the highest risk group.

Household and family members of people at highest risk can attend work at GSC. It is the GSC's responsibility to make sure the workplace and duties are as safe as possible. Household members of people that are at highest risk should discuss their concerns with their line manager. The Chief Medical Officer has encouraged everyone on the highest risk list to ask members of their household over 12 years of age to use the free at-home LFDs, including staff and pupils who can access these at from the Centre.

Key Mitigations in Operations

In order to address the risks identified in our risk assessments, GSC has adopted core public health measures, including:

- symptom vigilance and a requirement that people who have COVID symptoms stay at home;
- enhanced hygiene and environmental cleaning arrangements;
- effective ventilation;
- maintaining physical distancing from others where possible;
- wearing face coverings or appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) where necessary;
- staff and secondary aged learners completing asymptomatic tests and recording results; and
- active engagement with Test and Protect.

Enhanced hygiene and environmental cleaning Personal hygiene

We strongly encourage and support all children, young people, staff and any others for whom it is necessary to enter GSC to maintain appropriate personal hygiene throughout the day.

The key personal hygiene measures that all children, young people and staff should follow to reduce the risk of COVID-19 infection are:

- frequent washing/sanitising of hands for 20 seconds and drying thoroughly, and always when entering/leaving the building, before/after eating and after using the toilet;
- encouraging children, young people and staff to avoid touching their faces including mouth, eyes and nose; and
- using a tissue or elbow to cough or sneeze, and use bins that are emptied regularly for tissue waste.

Fomites (objects or materials which may carry infection)

If school resources (for example, textbooks, jotters) are taken back to a House by a child or Young Person, there is no longer a requirement to quarantine these for 72 hours upon return to the setting. Evidence on fomite transmission has continued to evolve and Public Health Scotland have now advised that enhanced hand hygiene, as set out elsewhere, should be adhered to by all staff, children and families and is a more proportionate way of reducing the risk of fomite transmission.



Ventilation and heating

The latest scientific advice identifies that ventilation is an important factor in mitigating against the risk of far-field (>2m) aerosol transmission. GSC recognises that there is therefore a need for an appropriate supply of fresh air to assist with minimising the risk of virus infection. There is also a need to maintain indoor temperatures for reasons including user comfort, health and wellbeing, and learning and teaching.

The primary effective method of increasing natural ventilation remains the opening of external doors, vents and windows. Wherever it is practical, safe and secure to do so, and appropriate internal temperatures can be maintained in line with statutory obligations, this approach will be adopted. Keeping doors open (with appropriate regard to safety and security) may also help to reduce contact with door handles.

GSC is required to maintain internal temperatures and conditions in line with statutory obligations.

Potential approaches to increase natural ventilation while balancing temperature, the suitability of which will depend on a range of local factors including weather conditions, will include:

- partially opening doors and windows to provide ventilation while reducing draughts
- opening high level windows in preference to low level to reduce draughts
- purging spaces by opening windows, vents and external doors (e.g. between classes, during break and lunch, when a room is unused, or at other suitable intervals if a space is occupied for long periods at a time).

CO2 monitors

CO2 monitors are used by GSC to detect the amount of CO2 in a space, which will increase if adequate ventilation is not provided, thereby prompting user intervention such as opening a window or vent.

Research indicates that indoor spaces where there is likely to be an enhanced aerosol generation rate (e.g. singing/drama, indoor PE when permitted) should aim to ensure ventilation is sufficient to maintain CO2 concentrations at lower levels (a figure of 800ppm is recommended). GSC also includes additional mitigations such as face coverings and restricting the size of groups and duration of activities.

These general guidelines inform our monitoring and tracking system:

The Portable Carbon Dioxide Detector is equipped with a carbon dioxide sensor and a temperature and humidity sensor, which can measure the concentration of carbon dioxide in the air and the ambient temperature and humidity in real time.			
Green (400-800)	Green + Yellow (800 – 1200)	Green +Yellow + Orange (1200 – 1500)	Green +Yellow + Orange Red (1500+)
no remedial action required as this indicates a space is likely to be well ventilated	Increase ventilation, e.g. opening windows and doors (check issues such as fire and security)		Action required, which could include purge ventilation or reducing room occupancy.
Background ventilation should always be maintained	Purge before and after each lesson by opening windows/doors fully		
	Limit occupancy numbers where possible		
	Move high level activities such as dance, music or physical activities to well ventilated spaces		
	If CO2 level is consistently in this zone:		
	Consider additional ventilation measures e.g. derestrict window openers (with appropriate safety and security precautions such as additional guards, screens or barriers), provide additional fans to increase air flow on calm days, provided the space is already well ventilated.		Consider introducing additional natural or mechanical ventilation
	Increase the rate/duration of ventilation delivered by mechanical ventilation systems		Consider reducing room occupancy or repurposing room
Adjust timings of mechanical ventilation systems to purge air before and after lessons		Consider temporary use of air cleaning devices in exceptional circumstances where no other mitigation is achievable while continuing to work to achieve a more sustainable solution to increase ventilation.	

Minimise contacts / Groupings

In line with the scientific advice, Young people will be kept within the same House groups for the duration of the school day when in indoor spaces. Consistent groups reduce the likelihood of direct transmission and, if necessary (e.g. upon a request from a HPT), allow for quicker identification of those who may need to self-isolate. Due to the different degree of risk within indoor and outdoor settings, and the likelihood of outdoor mixing out with school hours, such groupings do not need to be maintained while outdoors.

GSC will continue to avoid assemblies and other types of large group gatherings.

Where it is necessary to bring groups together, alternative mitigating actions will be put in place, such as physical distancing, ventilation, face coverings, meeting outside and limiting the time spent together.

When undertaking fire test drills or procedures where the whole school is evacuated, GSC will prioritise fire safety, but will utilise alternative muster points to ensure a greater degree of separation.

All staff can operate across different classes and year groups to facilitate the delivery of the school timetable. Where staff need to move between classes, they will try to keep at least 2m distancing from learners and other staff as well as wearing face coverings as appropriate.

Appropriate arrangements and places are available to enable all staff to take their breaks safely. The number of people in our staff room at any one time is limited to ensure at least 1m distancing can be maintained and face coverings should also be worn.

Visitors to GSC

House Managers and the SMT will follow the procedures agreed to ensure that a series of questions are asked of any visitors before they travel to the GSC campus, so that a risk assessment can be carried out.

During the current Omicron situation (December 2021/January 2022) there will be no visitors allowed into the GSC unless absolutely essential, for example an emergency situation. Even then, as we cannot allow anyone to enter GSC who has Covid-19; or any symptoms of the virus, or who has been in close contact with or living in the same household as someone who has Covid-19 or any symptoms of the virus (unless exempted from self-isolation under Scottish Government revised guidance), we must risk assess on a case by case basis.

The risk assessment process for assessing whether or not GSC can accept a referral takes into account of risks related to Covid-19. Education and House Managers and the SMT will follow the agreed process and current national guidance for residential childcare settings and schools in this regard. During the Omicron situation and into January 2022, there will be no admissions to the GSC until Public Health and the SMT have agreed that it is safe to receive a new arrival

Signage is in place for any planned visits and Control staff and Reception staff will check that any arriving guests do not have any Covid-19 symptoms and are not coming to GSC from a household where anyone has Covid-19 symptoms.

Track and Trace compliance will continue to be essential when the GSC is able to receive visitors and Reception staff will record relevant details.

A Spacing system is in place in GSC reception and will continue until national measures are reviewed (to ensure that people are spaced two metres apart).

Signage and advice in relation to use of hand sanitisers and face coverings on arrival (visitors and GSC staff) is clear and compliance with this is mandatory.

Arrangements are in place to limit the number of people who are physically in spaces at any one time. All staff must respect this to ensure a safe working environment.

PPE

The Scottish Government Guidance states:

For the majority of staff, PPE (other than face coverings) will not normally be required or necessary. Where it is required or necessary the following arrangements will apply:

- Following any risk assessment where the need for PPE has been identified it is readily available will be provided to all staff
- The use of PPE by staff within GSC is based on a clear assessment of risk and need for an individual young person, such as personal care, where staff come into contact with blood and body fluids.

The types of PPE required in specific circumstances are set out below:

- Routine activities: No PPE is required when undertaking routine day to day care and educational activities in GSC houses, cottages or classroom and school settings.

- Suspected COVID-19: Gloves, aprons and a mask should be worn by staff if a child or young person becomes unwell with symptoms of COVID-19 and needs direct personal care.
- Eye protection should also be worn if a risk assessment determines that there is a risk of splashing to the eyes such as from coughing, spitting, or vomiting.
- Gloves and aprons will be used when cleaning the areas where a person suspected of having COVID-19 has been.
- Intimate care: Gloves and aprons will continue to be used when providing intimate care to a child or young person. This can include personal, hands-on care such as first aid.
- Gloves and aprons will be used when cleaning equipment or surfaces that might be contaminated with body fluids such as saliva or respiratory secretions.

Face coverings

It is a criminal offence in Scotland (since 10 July 2020) not to wear a face covering on all forms of public transport and in any shop or retail outlet. There are fixed penalty fines in relation to non-compliance. There are exceptions including young children and people who have certain health situations. It is also a legal requirement that face coverings are worn in corridors and communal spaces and in other circumstances in workplaces, including in rest areas:

This requirement remains in place and for GSC during the Omicron situation, the following guidance applies at GSC:

- Staff and young people to wear masks at all times where possible these should be disposable masks and not cloth.
- Masks should be worn over nose and under chin. Any deviation from this will not be accepted.
- Masks should be changed throughout the day. This will include after serving lunches, working with a young person and always after leaving an isolated room.
- Hand sanitise before and after changing mask and dispose of mask appropriately.
- Masks can be removed when seated or eating however 2 metre distancing should be applied

Testing (asymptomatic, symptomatic and contact testing)

All GSC staff are expected to complete daily Lateral Flow testing. If a member of staff is symptomatic then they are asked to isolate and book a test asap. This also applies to anybody who is contacted through Trace and Protect.

We ask all our staff to ensure that they are complying with the guidelines. We provide a statutory service – secure and intensive (close support) residential school care and through care. We are looking after vulnerable young people who are placed with us by local authorities and the Scottish Government. During and beyond the Covid-19 restrictions, all GSC employees have played and will continue to play an important role in ensuring the quality of care, education, and health and wellbeing services young people experience.

Outbreak management

The management of outbreaks of infectious disease is led by local health protection teams (HPTs) alongside local partners, such as schools and local authorities.

If GSC has two or more confirmed cases of COVID-19 within 14 days, or an increase in background rate of absence due to suspected or confirmed cases of COVID-19, this may be considered as an outbreak. In this situation GSC will make prompt contact with our local HPT and host local authority.

If an outbreak is confirmed, GSC will work with our local HPT to manage it. Actions that may need to be considered include (but are not restricted to):

- attendance at multi-agency incident management team meetings;
- communication with young people, parents/carers and staff;
- providing records of the campus and buildings layout / attendance / groups; and o implementing enhanced infection, prevention and control measures.

The HPT will make recommendations to the incident management team on self-isolation and on testing of young people and staff and the arrangements for doing this.

Any discussion of possible closure will place between the SMT of GSC, Renfrewshire Council and our local HPT.

GSC will maintain appropriate records to support outbreak control measures, e.g. young people and staff attendance, details of house and pupil groups, visitors, and clinically vulnerable/extremely vulnerable children and young people who are in GSC's care.

School Operations

Drama, Music, PE and Dance (updated August 2021)

Children and young people can continue to engage in all drama, music, PE and dance activity in schools, indoors and outdoors. Safety mitigations will continue to apply in relevant settings where these activities are taking place (e.g. good ventilation, enhanced hygiene, etc.).

Outdoor learning

GSC has considered and utilised the increased use of our outdoor spaces for the purposes of delivering Education. The Covid-19 Advisory SubGroup on Education and Children’s Issues has commented that there “is consistent evidence that the risk of transmission outdoors is low, and the benefits of outdoor activity are well recognised”. Current guidance states that the outdoors can provide extra space for distancing between consistent groups of 60 learners, help to decrease the risk of transmission and improve the physical and mental health and wellbeing of young people.

Safe Movement

To support physical distancing requirements, safe movement between classrooms and houses will be planned and facilitated to avoid busy corridors and unnecessary congregations of people at all times.

Practical activities, experiments and investigations

Practical, “hands-on” learning and activities, experiments and investigations are an important part of the curriculum across all subject areas. Our teaching staff may need to adapt their approaches to enable learners to carry out these activities in a safe way. Specific guidance relating to subject specialists has been shared and actioned.

Home economics

Guidelines on safe practice in home economics have been prepared by Education Scotland and were published on 16 February 2021 on the Education Scotland website.

Our HE teacher is fully aware of all of the required protocols and expected mitigations including:

- Physical Distancing and Ventilation
- Purchase / Storage / Retrieval of food items
- Hygiene measures and safe equipment / resource management

Remote/ Blended Learning

The majority of Learning and Teaching will take place Face to Face due to the unique nature of our context although we will continue to look for ways to deliver digital learning and teaching where applicable.

In the event of a sudden or partial school closure and to provide continuity in the provision of education for individuals when small groups of learners are unable to attend school, alternative strategies will be considered.

We have asked all of our teachers to create ‘Remote learning plans’ which will be regularly reviewed to ensure they are current and appropriate, and updated as required.

All of our staff and pupils have access to the necessary digital devices and connectivity solutions are constantly under review.

Organisation

GSC has implemented a series of additional precautionary mitigation measures that will provide reassurance to pupils, parents and the team around every Young Person.

These measures include:

- Young People will attend school in consistent House groups
- Every Class will have a maximum of 3 pupils
- All pupils should wash their hands or use hand sanitiser on entering the school.
- In classrooms, Young people will be encouraged to sit side by side and face forwards
- We will minimise the time spent congregating as a group – for example round a shared resource
- The school will make use of enhanced hand hygiene – use of hand sanitiser and hand washing
- There will be a ‘clean as you go’ process in place for staff and pupils, when they move to another classroom
- Whole school assemblies should not take place in order to avoid large gathering of pupils.
- Safe Movement procedures will continue to be in place for moving around the school; although short contact in a corridor has a very low risk.
- We will continue to operate a staggered entry and exit to the school
- It will be important for teachers to consider that Pupils are clear on the arrangements within the school and so this will require to be done in small class groups rather than whole year groups.



Timetabling

The following timetabling model will be used to maintain physical and social distancing.

The School Day
9:30 am to 10:20 am
10:20 am to 11:10 am
11:10 am to 11:25 am (Break)
11:25 am to 12:20 pm (Period 3)
12:20 pm to 1:15 pm (Period 4)
1:15 pm to 2:00 pm (Lunch)
2:00 pm to 2:55 pm (Period 5)
2:55 pm to 3:50 pm (Period 6)
Young People will be grouped in small house classes of 3 and each classroom will have a maximum occupancy number clearly placed on the door.

Break times and lunch times

Break times will continue as planned with Young people maintaining their House Bubble and staff maintaining a maximum room occupancy and respecting their relevant cohort throughout during break and lunch times.

