



Returning to School
A Guide for Families
August 2021



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Academy**



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Welcome back

I hope, reading this document, you have had (and are still having) a great summer break. Families new to us this year, this is a guidance booklet that pulls together the latest DfE and PHE guidance on school settings.



This is our 7th Family Edition since March 2020. Previous versions and all current Covid 19 risk assessments can be found on our [dedicated website pages](#)

This has (thankfully) been a quieter summer from the Department for Education, and the guidance which follows builds on the Updates sent out to all schools in July this year. With every booklet we produce, we really do need to stress that guidance can and often does change frequently. This is accurate at the time of publication (20.08.21).

Context behind our policy.

*It is important to note that Since March 2020, we have followed the policies and procedures for **secondary education settings**. The DfE has not, to date, recognised Middle schools in their guidance.*

- *Of the 97 Middle Schools in England operating a Y5-Y8 curriculum, we are by far the largest school with 990 students – 8 (9 in Y5 this year) Form Groups in each year.*
- *The average size of a secondary school in England (Years 7-11) is 986 (6.5 Forms of entry per year) and in Primary (R-Y6) is 281 (1.5 Forms of entry per year).*
- *Not only are we the largest middle school, we have the largest single entry of students sitting the KS2 SATs examinations year on year, meaning whilst we are not the largest overall school (considering we only have 4 academic year groups), we are the largest primary provider by number of students in a given year group.*

This data is to demonstrate why we do not fit into the Primary model which the DfE and PHE use to create guidance. In our KS2 years, we do not operate a “one teacher, one class” experience where students remain in one room with one teacher throughout the day – the typical Primary school model. We are a very large campus site (by Primary sector standards) and offer a phenomenal curriculum, taught by a variety of subject specialist teachers. This means Years 5+6 move around more than they would in a primary school and teachers move across all years and bubbles, exactly as our secondary school colleagues do.

Fundamental principles of this plan:

- Driven by student and staff safety
- Follows the expert guidance from the PHE, DfE, NHS and our own external H+S Partners
- Considers the emotional well-being of the students and staff as a priority
- Is a measured approach
- Is evidence-based

This plan was produced in consultation with;

- BEST Health and Safety Partners
- NHS, DfE and PHE published Guidance
- The RBA Staff and Local Academy Governors
- Teacher and School Workforce Union Representation
- Based on following DfE Publications:

Guidance for Schools – August 7th 2021 Update

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/actions-for-schools-during-the-coronavirus-outbreak/schools-covid-19-operational-guidance#tracing>

What parents and carers need to know about early years providers, schools and colleges (17th August 2021 update)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/what-parents-and-carers-need-to-know-about-early-years-providers-schools-and-colleges-during-the-coronavirus-covid-19-outbreak/step-4-update-what-parents-and-carers-need-to-know-about-early-years-providers-schools-and-colleges>

Headline changes for September 2021

The key messages from the latest government guidance are:

- Nationally, education and childcare settings are open, and attendance is mandatory (for schools) and strongly encouraged (at childminders, nurseries and colleges)
- The Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health has made it clear that the overwhelming majority of children and young people still have no symptoms or very mild illness only
- Continuing to take regular rapid tests will help you to identify infections early and reduce transmission
- Secondary schools and colleges have been asked to prepare for on-site testing at the beginning of the autumn term ***(parent mails were sent in July and will be sent again before term resumes as a reminder)***
- Nationally, nurseries, schools and colleges will no longer trace close contacts - close contacts will be identified via NHS Test and Trace service instead.
- Your child does not need to remain in a consistent group ('bubble')
- The government is removing the requirement to wear face coverings in law but expects and recommends that they are worn in enclosed and crowded spaces where you may come into contact with people you don't normally meet.

For RBA, this also means;

- Year and whole school assemblies can resume when we feel the time is right
- No curricular timetable alterations needed – we will operate a full timetable from September
- Alternative arrangements to avoid mixing at lunch will cease, but we will retain the Break Time Zones
- Clubs / extracurricular provision can mix across year groups, where appropriate.
- Education day and residential visits can resume. International travel is permitted but could still be subject to Home Office Restrictions at the time of travel.

Our philosophy going into this academic year is **cautious optimism**. We have all gone on a long journey since March 2020 and we are desperate for RBA to pick up where we left off in 2019, but safety will take priority. This first term will see many of the same, effective routines in place as last year.

- A One-Way system will operate around the building
- Parents' Evenings/ Tutor Evenings this term will be held remotely
- Students will sanitise their hands with antibac on entry to classrooms and will wipe down equipment after use with cleaning wipes.

Track and Trace Update

Schools are no longer required to Track and Trace close contact students. NHS Test and Trace will work with the positive case and/or their parent to identify close contacts. Contacts from a school setting will only be traced by NHS Test and Trace where the positive case and/or their parent specifically identifies the individual as being a close contact. This is likely to be a small number of individuals who would be most at risk of contracting COVID-19 due to the nature of the close contact.

Schools will continue to have a role in working with health protection teams in the case of a local outbreak. If there is a substantial increase in the number of positive cases in a setting, or if central government offers the area an enhanced response package, a director of public health might advise a setting to temporarily reintroduce some control measures. We will ensure all families are kept up to date with developments.

What is the policy on Facemasks?

Face coverings are no longer advised (by the DfE and PHE) for pupils, staff and visitors either in classrooms or in communal areas. The government has removed the requirement to wear face coverings in law but expects and recommends that they are worn in enclosed and crowded spaces where you may *come into contact with people you don't normally meet*. This includes public transport and dedicated transport to school or college. At RBA, although we cannot enforce masks legally, we are happy for students and staff to continue to wear them in the corridors when moving around the site if they want to. They do not need to be worn in classrooms, but again, we will never ask a student to remove a mask if it is worn for personal preference. Some staff may also continue to wear masks in the classroom/ in the corridors.

Would this change?

If we have a substantial increase in the number of positive cases in our school, a director of public health might advise us that face coverings should temporarily be worn in communal areas and classrooms (by pupils, staff and visitors, unless exempt). In these circumstances, transparent face coverings, which may assist communication with someone who relies on lip reading, clear sound or facial expression to communicate, can also be worn.

Face coverings (whether transparent or cloth) should fit securely around the face to cover the nose and mouth and be made with a breathable material capable of filtering airborne particles. Face visors or shields can be worn by those exempt from wearing a face covering but they are not an equivalent alternative in terms of source control of virus transmission. They may protect the wearer against droplet spread in specific circumstances but are unlikely to be effective in preventing the escape of smaller respiratory particles when used without an additional face covering.

The use of face coverings may have a particular impact on those who rely on visual signals for communication. Those who communicate with or provide support to those who do, are exempt from any recommendation to wear face coverings in education and childcare settings.

No student would ever be denied education on the grounds of whether they are, or are not, wearing a face covering.

Do not send your child to school if:

- They are showing one or more [coronavirus \(COVID-19\) symptoms](#)
- They have had a positive test result
- There are other reasons requiring them to stay at home, for example, they are under instruction from a GP or [required to quarantine](#)

You should follow public health advice on [when to self-isolate and what to do](#).

What happens if my child becomes unwell at school?

We will operate our First Aid Facility as normal and students will be able to access Mrs Tudge and her team if they have a routine complaint, medical need or injury such as a trip or fall. If a student becomes unwell and we suspect this is related to Covid, the following procedure will apply:

- ✓ A member of the medical team will be called and they will attend to your child
- ✓ Please be aware, they will be wearing full PPE face shield, protective gown and gloves – please reiterate with your child this is routine and nothing to be alarmed about.
- ✓ The Medical Team member will take your child to our designated isolation zone
- ✓ A temperature will be taken and a short triage will occur
- ✓ We will then follow the procedures set out by the NHS for reporting and next stage assessment
- ✓ You will be required to collect your child **immediately** – please ensure your employer is aware that you will need to collect your child if requested. If you are unavailable, we will move to the next priority status on our records. This may be your designated emergency contract – please again make sure they are aware they may be called upon and are still able and willing to do so (i.e. not currently shielding)
- ✓ Your child will remain in the isolation area until collected – a member of staff will stay with your child, but wearing PPE and at a suitable distance

What happens if my child is self-isolating and Home Learning?

A small number of children may be unable to attend school in line with public health advice to self-isolate after receiving a positive PCR Test result. We will provide a remote education package, via Google Classroom, for the duration of the isolation (or quarantine if required to do so on returning from a holiday abroad). [Further information can be found on our website.](#)

What are the attendance rules in September?

Attendance is mandatory for all pupils of compulsory school age. This means it's your legal duty as a parent to send your child to school regularly. All clinically extremely vulnerable children and young people should attend their education setting unless they are one of the very small number of children and young people under paediatric or other specialist care who have been advised by their clinician or other specialist not to attend.

Where a child is required to self-isolate or quarantine because of COVID-19 in accordance with relevant legislation or guidance published by PHE they will be recorded as code X (not attending in circumstances related to coronavirus). Where they are unable to attend because they have a confirmed case of COVID-19 they will be recorded as code I (illness).

What are the school times?

Lessons will run on the normal, pre covid, schedule. [Please see our website for the school day timetable and routines.](#) **Before School (defined as anything before 8:30am)** - Some before school clubs may resume depending on staff availability. Our paid breakfast club will also continue this year. [The breakfast club](#) is a paid service and information will be communicated about reserving a place, via parentmail, in early September. **Please note**, we ask that no child arrives in school before 8:30am, unless attending a club or by prior arrangement. If a child arrives on site before 8:30am, parents will be asked to collect and/or supervise until 8:30am.

End of Day - The school day will end at 3:30. We are aiming to reinstate a full programme of after school clubs this academic year. As with any previous 'pre covid' school year, no clubs will run during the first 2 weeks of the school term. There will continue to be an after school provision in the LRC. Places are limited. A parentmail will be sent in September detailing this provision.

What should my child wear?

- ✓ Full school uniform is required at all times.
- ✓ On days when pupils have PE, they will wear their PE kit to school and remain in their kit for the duration of that day.
- ✓ We strongly advise students to have a change of clothes with them for days where adverse weather conditions could make them wet/ muddy – some sports will continue outside when it is wet. On these days, students will be able to change into dry clothes (normal School uniform) if they need to after the PE lesson.
- ✓ Effective systems of internal ventilation remain a requirement from the DfE. This means that all rooms will have doors and windows open where possible. As such, students may wear supplementary RBA branded jumper, or RBA branded hoodie (hoods down) in classrooms if they are cold.
- ✓ Bulky jackets are not to be worn in classrooms and must be placed on the backs of chairs/ pegs if provided
- ✓ Formal school shoes are required to be worn on non-PE days.

- ☞ This first day of term for Years 6, 7 and 8 (Tuesday 7th September) will not involve PE – normal school uniform is required.
- ☞ Year 5s joining us this year who start on Monday 6th September will require a PE kit and trainers on this day.

How does my child get to and from RBA?

School Buses

Please contact school.transport@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk or 0300 300 8339 for specific enquiries about your child's route and timetable. We ask that your children follow the guidance from Central Beds Council and the individual bus providers regarding the use of face coverings. **Please note** – this is a bus service provided by the Local Authority and not RBA. We

expect all students to follow the individual bus company policies and procedures. Failure to do so could result in a bus ban – either temporary or permanent.

Walking

Students entering RBA from the Kingfisher Estate will simply follow the path and enter via the Lower Playground gates. Students walking to school via Bloomfield Drive or George Street will cross over and use the zebra crossing (beside our barrier), walk along the pavement parallel to the bus lane and enter via the playground gates. We will not be using the Second Gate on Bloomfield Drive. The path from Bloomfield Drive to Shefford Lower school will no longer be used for KS3 Students and we ask all families to ensure this is kept as clear as possible to help the flow of traffic accessing Shefford Lower School and the Acorn Centre.

Driving

Cars are not permitted to enter the RBA Site - either via Bloomfield Drive or through Kingfisher Estate. Cars are also not permitted to drive through the school bus lanes. We ask all drivers to be considerate of our neighbours as well as the safety of our students and the younger students journeying to Shefford Lower School. Please park sensibly, safely and legally. Local Authority Traffic Enforcement officials are stepping up their patrols of known 'hot spots' and will ticket drivers for dangerous/illegal parking and manoeuvring.

Picking up/ Collection arrangements

It is essential that you communicate a clear plan to your child as to where you will pick them up at the end of the day. We would encourage families to walk when picking up their children, leaving any vehicle safely in a designated parking space, away from school. If your child is injured or requires a door step drop off for a medical condition, please email us asap so we can make the necessary arrangements.

What should my child bring to school?

Students should only bring their essential items for the day contained in an appropriate school backpack.

- A packed lunch in a suitable, airtight container if needed
- A named water bottle
- A pencil case (again, named) with colours, 15cm ruler, pencils x2, rubber and pens x2 black or blue
- Hand sanitiser mini travel bottle (Antibac gel will still be supplied in every classroom and around the site)
- Reading Book
- Homework planner (ths will be handed out next week).

Mobile phones are not needed during the school day and **should not be brought to school**. We appreciate some parents find it comforting to know students have access to a phone when traveling to and from school, and if it is an absolute necessity, we will allow phones to be stored in lockers or out of sight.

If seen during the school day, they will be confiscated – we do not permit the use of phones **at all** during the school day for obvious safeguarding reasons.

What are the breaktime and lunchtime arrangements?

We offer an excellent full, onsite catering service – please ensure you have updated your parentmail catering accounts before the start of term. Students may bring a packed lunch to school but all must bring a water bottle – both items should be named. A breaktime snack will be offered to KS3 to purchase as they have the second lunch sitting.

Breaktime

To ease congestion in the café for KS3 snacks, we will continue with dedicated zones.

- Years 5+6 will have full use of the front playgrounds (upper and lower).
- Year 7 will have use of the Muga and snacks will be available from the trolley service in the PE foyer.

- Year 8 will make use of the Quad and can purchase their snack from the Café.

Lunchtimes

We had a split lunch system already in operation Pre covid. Years 5+6 will have lunch from 12:10 – 13:10 (Period 4) and Years 7+8 will have lunch from 13:10 – 14:10 (period 5).

- When on lunch, both year groups will make use of the upper and lower playgrounds and field (weather permitting).
- Packed Lunches may be eaten outside or in the café. All school dinners will be eaten in the café.
- A new grab and go service will be in operation from the outdoor eatery next year. More to follow on this in due course.

What are the Cleaning and Hygiene Routines?

At RBA, we will;

1. Ensure good hygiene for everyone.
2. Maintain appropriate cleaning regimes.
3. Keep occupied spaces well ventilated.
4. Follow public health advice on testing, self-isolation and managing confirmed cases of COVID-19.

We ask everyone to play their part in this, continuing to wash hands frequently (and thoroughly) and make use of the antibac gels. The RBA site will continue to be **Deep Cleaned** daily. The definition of this, as approved by our Health and Safety Partnership, is as follows:

- ✓ Clean down all work surfaces with diluted bleach solution
- ✓ Clean down all items from daily cleaning list –
 - All door handles/door plates entering classrooms, halls, toilet and main office, stair rails.
 - Hand push buttons, light switches, toilet handles, stair hand rails
- ✓ Clean all classroom sinks and taps with diluted bleach solution
- ✓ Clean calculators/keyboards/mobile phones/phone handsets with alcohol wipes/gel or similar
- ✓ Remove “clutter” including toys. Wipe down any that cannot be removed
- ✓ Remove any soft furnishings – cushions/rugs/beanbags
- ✓ Hoover well and mop down any hard surfaces with an appropriate cleaning solution
- ✓ Ventilate well

Wellbeing Support

Your first port of call should be the Form Tutor or then Head of Year. If you have a concern that needs specific support, you can contact the Wellbeing Team directly. All contact details are on our school website. We appreciate however there will be times out of hours where you or your child may need additional support. On top of our dedicated Pastoral Support and Wellbeing Team at RBA, there are a number of recommend online resources available to help you and your child with mental health and wellbeing, including:

- [MindEd](#), is a free educational resource on children and young people’s mental health
- [Rise Above](#), aims to build resilience and support good mental health in young people aged 10 to 16
- [Every Mind Matters](#), has an online tool and email journey to support everyone in taking action to look after their mental health and wellbeing
- [Bereavement UK](#) and the [Childhood Bereavement Network](#), provide information and resources to support bereaved pupils, schools and staff

There is also support specifically for children and young people, including:

- free confidential support that can be accessed any time by:
 - texting SHOUT to 85258

- calling Childline on 0800 1111
- calling the Mix on 0808 808 4994
- online information on COVID-19 and mental health is available on the [Young Minds website](#)
- [Think Ninja](#) is a free app for 10 to 18 year olds to help build resilience and stay well
- [Rise Above](#) aims to build resilience and support good mental health in young people aged 10 to 16

Barnardo’s See, Hear, Respond service, provides support to children, young people and their families who aren’t currently seeing a social worker or other agency, and who are struggling to cope with the emotional impacts of coronavirus (COVID-19). Use the [See, Hear, Respond’ service self-referral webpage](#) or Freephone 0800 151 7015.

Acronyms

RA	Risk Assessment
KS	Key Stage
Yr	Year
HoY	Head of Year
DfE	Department for Education
H+S	Health and Safety
DfT	Department for Transport
CST	Consortium of School Trusts
CBC	Central Bedfordshire Council
LA	Local Authority
PHE	Public Health England
BEST	Bedfordshire Schools Trust
PPE	Personal Protective Equipment
BMA	British Medical Association
WHO	World Health Organisation
SLS	Shefford Lower School
LFT	Lateral Flow Testing
LFD	Lateral Flow Device
PCR	Polymerase Chain Reaction



**As with all previous handbooks, we must stress that national guidance may change at any point.
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