

Barrhead HS Covid 19 FAQs Re-opening August 2020

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

How will social distancing be achieved?

In Barrhead HS for August we are aiming for half the number of pupils to be in at one time, so half-size classes ie 15 for classroom subjects and 10 for practical subjects. In BHS, our classrooms would not accommodate these numbers unless the distancing requirement is reduced below 2 m. Classrooms are already set out to avoid face to face interaction and minimise infection risk. As a consequence, operational timetables have been developed for S1 – S4 to allow half of each year group to attend school at any one time. This timetable will operate on a fortnightly rotation ie. It will take two weeks to complete class contact for all subjects instead of one. S5/6 will similarly attend in half year groups but as they only study 5 subjects their timetable will allow for a three period contact for each subject studied every week. Timetables will be organised in three period blocks (morning and afternoon) to avoid the need for breaks and lunchtime and to minimise pupil movement within the building. Pupils will either attend in the morning or the afternoon but not both on the same day. As such pupils will receive approximately half the normal time in front of their teacher with digital and/or paper based work being set for them to complete online in their out of school time (or between classes)

What happens if pupils or staff are in a shielding/vulnerable group or have been instructed to self-isolate by Test, Trace, Isolate and Support officials?

Individuals shielding or in high risk vulnerable groups will not be expected to attend the school building. Staff will continue to work from home supporting online learning. Online learning will be provided for pupils to keep up with the work of their classmates with teacher/pupil interaction taking place via Google Classroom. In a similar way pupils instructed to self-isolate by TTIS for 14 days will be expected to complete the work of the class online.

What infection prevention and control (hygiene measures) will be in place? such as enhanced cleaning, hygiene and handwashing

There will be enhanced cleaning, hygiene and handwashing arrangements provided through Facilities Management (janitors and cleaners). In the school building each work space has cleaning materials. Pupils will be expected to wipe down any work station they are allocated both before they take their place and as they leave. Staff and pupils who wish to may wear masks although currently this is not the recommendation. At the entrance of the school there is an infection control station. Additional soap has been provided for pupil toilets

Will teachers and school staff 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 eg. social distancing, limiting capacity and infection control measures. As mentioned in the previous answer however staff and pupils who choose to do so can wear masks.

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

If someone on-site becomes unwell they will be isolated and/or sent home with recommendation to be tested. Following this the Government's TTIS scheme will identify and trace close contacts. The school has identified a ventilated quarantine area where anyone symptomatic can be isolated until they leave the building. Pupils will be moved to another location until the classroom in which the pupil or staff member became ill is thoroughly cleaned.

If a pupil starts to display symptoms of Covid 19 the teacher must

- Alert the SLT and school office immediately.
- The pupil will be directed or escorted to the isolation room
- The teacher and remainder of the class will be moved to an alternative space while the room being used is cleaned (a note of the pupils in the class will be taken by the teacher to inform TTIS if a test result comes back positive)
- School office will contact home for pupil to be collected by parent
- Parent advised to seek testing
- Class return to an alternative classroom

How will the school communicate information with parents and staff over the summer holiday?

Over the summer holiday there will be rota of senior staff available to communicate key messages to parents or provide a channel of communication for parents regarding concerns relating to Covid 19 safety measures. Any concerns relating to Covid19 safety should be raised directly with the HT.

Will the school be using alternative additional space to maximise the number of pupils in attendance?

Barrhead High is fortunate to be housed in a large, state of the art purpose built facility. With timetabling as proposed it is unlikely that we will need to utilise additional accommodation, however we will make best use the space available to us.

Will school uniform be expected in August when pupils are in school?

Yes, full school uniform will be expected when pupils are in school. The only exception to this will be when a pupil has Physical Education on their timetable for a session that day. Only those pupils with PE on their timetable that morning or afternoon will be allowed to wear their PE kit to school and changing rooms will not be used to minimise the infection risk

How will social distancing be maintained in corridors and stairs and at entrances and exits?

In the Scottish Government guidance corridors and stairs are deemed low risk areas because of the fleeting nature of contact ie. it is not for 15 minutes or face to face. With only half the school in attendance at any one time and a timetable designed to minimise pupil movement, there will be little movement within the building. In most cases it will be all entering or all leaving. Consequently we are not proposing to use a one-way system as that would needlessly reduce the flow. All doors in the school will be open to avoid contact with door handles etc.

How will practical subjects like Technical and Science be taught if specialised tools and equipment cannot be used?

Following discussions with East Renfrewshire Council Health & Safety Officers procedures have been put in place to allow for limited work in practical subjects eg experiments etc. This involves rigorous regimes being put in place to limit Covid 19 infection from equipment eg hand tools used by only one user and wiped down when work is finished. In science, many experiments will be demonstrated to the class by teachers with pupils given every opportunity to participate where resources and safety allow. In IT based subjects keyboards etc will wiped down by pupils before and after use.

Similar concerns relate to simple equipment like pencils/rulers etc and pupils will be expected to provide their own equipment to avoid possible touch contamination.

Will a full curriculum be on offer?

The vast majority of subjects will be offered as usual however a small number of subjects may have to be removed. This may necessitate a renegotiation of option choices for some pupils.

When will I know which mornings and afternoons will my child be in school?

A limited number of child care hub places will continue to be available for the vulnerable children and/or the children of key workers. Therefore some children will be in school for supervision when they don't have timetabled classes – similar to what has been happening over the last 12 weeks.

We are working to ensure that parents get as much notice as possible about when their child will be in school and when they will be at home. Every pupil will be in school for either a morning or afternoon each day and we are aiming to send a personalised timetable to every child before the end of term in June.

On the first day in school how will pupils know where to go?

Each pupil will be sent a timetable which will indicate which door to use and their classroom. Pupils will go straight to their designated class without socially mixing in the Big Steps or social spaces within the school. S1 pupils will be met at the main front door and directed to their

classes. Note pupils should aim to arrive no more than 10 mins before their timetabled session starts.

How will access to toilets be organised to reduce the risk of infection?

The timetable does not allow breaks or lunchtime therefore pupils will be allowed access to the toilet on request. Pupils will require to wash their hands going into the toilet and when they leave. An anti-viral wipe will be provided for users to wipe the door lock on entry and the flush button and door lock on exit. The wipe will then be binned and hands washed before return to class.

What about provision for pupils in receipt of free school meals?

Arrangements through East Renfrewshire Council will continue as at present to ensure provision for pupils entitled to free school meals. It is really important that the parents of pupils entitled to a free school meal for their child(ren) apply or re-apply for this entitlement during the summer holiday. Pupils should bring their own water and snacks with them to school and avoid sharing with others

How long will these measures last for and what about the SQA exams in 2021?

At this point, we like everyone else, do not know the answers to these questions. The school will be guided by national advice on when a return to normality is possible; however our guiding principle is that we will not endanger anyone's safety. As for the SQA exams it is hoped that national advice will be issued over the summer. When our teachers have clarity on any new arrangements/adaptations they will teach what is required to the best of their ability to support of your children as they always do. At present we continue to plan for an SQA exam diet in 2021 as we would under normal circumstances

How will teachers manage the infection risk in their classrooms?

Firstly teachers will be asked to clear away any unnecessary clutter/items to leave a clean environment allowing for quick and effective cleaning of surfaces. Secondly teachers will closely monitor the distances within their class. Chairs and desks have been arranged to ensure physical distancing. Teachers will also develop innovative ways of learning through their faculty learning plans to ensure learning activities keep pupils safe.

What will the school be doing to support pupils' mental health following lockdown?

There will be provision within the PSHE programme to focus more on promoting resilience and positive mental health. As part of our School Improvement Plan, staff will also focus on identifying and addressing any gaps in pupils' knowledge where the pupils may have fallen behind in their studies during lockdown.

What supports/provisions will be in place for pupils with additional support needs to help them through these difficult times?

In Barrhead High School we are fully aware of the support needs of all children. Transition arrangements have been made to support any children with ASN moving from P7 to S1. For children with Additional Support Needs, we will work in partnership with parents & carers, partner professionals, children and young people to establish what support and plans need to be put in place to meet their needs for both learning at school and at home. It is in everyone's interest that no pupil lacks support or is disadvantaged on returning to school.

I'm hearing that a lot of the curriculum will taught through the medium of Outdoor Learning. How is that going to work in the High School?

Barrhead High School is fortunate to have such extensive and varied grounds around us– our own and with access to Cowan Park and the wetlands area nearby. Subjects have utilised these grounds as a learning resource and will continue to explore ways to enhance the learning experiences through using outdoor learning.

Limiting access to the school for parents and visitors including drop off and pick up

We would encourage parents to drop their child off a short distance away to avoid coming into the school grounds. However parents will still be able to drop off and pick up their children from the school car park if necessary but parents must stay in their cars.

Parents should only enter the school building by prior arrangement for meetings with staff, which will be by appointment only except in emergencies. Only one parent/carer per pupil can be present for appointments.

Pupils being collected for medical/dental appointments should wait outside the main building under the covered area at the front door until their pick up arrives. Every effort should be made to schedule appointments for times when a pupil is not in school to avoid further disruption to learning.

Only pupils from one household should be transported to and from school in a single private vehicle.

Emergency procedures

With only half the pupils in the school at any one time, the current emergency evacuation procedures and mustering will be adequate to maintain physical distancing.

Ventilation

Ventilation systems in the school have been checked by engineers to ensure they do not automatically reduce/increase ventilation levels due to differing occupancy levels. The ventilation system in Barrhead High School has been set to bringing fresh air in from outside via the air handling unit on the roof and therefore does not recirculate air within the building. In August the opening of doors and windows will be encouraged to increase natural ventilation. This is common practice in Barrhead HS during the summer months. The small number of in-classroom air conditioning units that recirculate air will be turned off when the school is in operation.

A ventilated space will be available for pupils/staff who become symptomatic to wait in until they can be collected or safely get home. Anyone displaying symptoms will be quarantined in that room until they can go home. Parents will be advised to seek Covid19 testing for their child as part of Test, Trace, Isolate & Support

Digital learning

Digital and at-home learning will be a key component of the 'blended' model of education. Access to digital equipment has been identified as a potential barrier to blended learning both at national and school level. Already the school has issued a number of chromebooks to pupils who were encountering difficulties in accessing online learning. This practice will continue where this has been raised through pastoral support teachers as a potential barrier to learning. Many children identified as having difficulties around the availability of a working device and/or access to IT, have been invited to attend the "Hub" in school.

How will teachers have the time to support online learning when they are teaching classes face to face?

This will be a challenge for teachers and the way that Google Classroom online learning will be used from August will require to change. It is envisaged that when pupils are in attendance the teacher will maximise the use of that time for teaching and learning. This will also set up tasks for pupils to be completed during the home-learning sessions. Teachers will use Google Classroom to mark tasks set and give feedback to pupils (in similar way that they normally do when a class is in session). Teacher response times may be longer on Google Classrooms as teachers will be heavily class committed throughout the week. When the class reconvenes the teachers will revisit and reinforce the learning face to face (to check everyone has understood it).

When will the school year be confirmed ie. Holidays and Inservice days

We have already issued the key change dates for next session. In summary:

- Inservice Days 10th & 11th August
- Pupils Return 12th August (half for morning and half for afternoon)
- Thurs 24th - Mon 28th September – Holidays
- 12th October – 16th - October Holidays (inclusive)
- Mon 19th October – Inservice day
- Mon 21st December – Mon 5th January - Christmas Holidays (inclusive)
- Fri 5th February – Inservice day

- Mon 8th and Tues 9th February – Holiday Weekend
- Fri 2nd April – Fri 16th April - Easter Holidays (inclusive)
- Mon 3rd May – Holiday Weekend
- Thurs 6th May – Inservice Day
- Fri 28th and Mon 31st May – May Weekend
- School breaks for summer holiday at 1pm on Fri 25th June

How will it be decided which pupils are in school during which sessions?

We require to have a balance of pupils in for morning sessions and for afternoon sessions. The timetable and senior pupils' curricular choice can determine which pupils require to attend school for which sessions (either morning or afternoon). We have attempted to ensure, wherever possible, that pupils will be allocated their class teacher from the main (real) timetable during the August Recovery timetable (not always possible). This will help to ensure that when classes go back to normal pupils will just continue with their learning effectively in the same learning groups. It also means that Google Classrooms will be set up around each pupil's actual classes with their own class teacher.

This is a complex process but will be of huge benefit to pupils' continuity of learning in the long run. If there is a real issue in the am/pm slot the pupil has been allocated to, we can look at this, but it is not a simple matter of switching. Some sections will be full to their half-section limit. As previously mentioned, in answer to another question individual pupil timetables will be sent out by email to parents/pupils by the end of this term.

Do I have to send my child back into school in August if I am still concerned about Covid 19?

All of the arrangements being put in place for Barrhead High to re-open for pupils in August are based on the latest advice and guidance that the Scottish Government produces. In turn their guidance is based on best scientific advice from public health advisers. Consequently Barrhead High will re-open with the necessary safety measures in place. The expectation is therefore that children will return to school in August. If your child is absent for any reason they will still be able to access the remote learning via Google Classroom but only the online tasks set by the teacher for the rest of the class.

Will the criteria for “key workers” change by August allowing more parents to return to work full time?

The Scottish Government decides the categories for key workers. Any review of this criteria will be undertaken by the government. ERC have introduced an application process to make it easier for parents to apply for a keyworker place, where both parents or one single parent, meet the Scottish Government criteria. This has been shared with parents already and completed applications were due to be returned to ERC Education Department (via QR code or link in the communication) by Monday 22nd June.

Will Key workers families still be able to access all day provision on the days required to work?

Yes, children will have a place available to them in the Hub in Barrhead High School if their parent(s) are (both) working and are key workers who meet the criteria. As mentioned above, the Scottish Government determines the definition of “key worker”. Pupils attending the Hub will join their classmates for face to face learning for half the week (morning or afternoon sessions) and will undertake remote/online learning on the remaining sessions in school at times when they are not timetabled for face to face learning.

What will be the arrangements to ensure the safety of pupils travelling out with Barrhead High for Vocational/Other Courses?

At present the school and ERC are working on strategies to mitigate risk when transporting pupils to and from college/vocational options. It will be for ERC to work in partnership with transport operators and the vocational course providers to make sure courses can be offered safely before confirming they will run in August.

It is possible that even with the current Covid19 restrictions, consortium planning arrangements (ie. small numbers of senior pupils being able to study courses at other schools) will be able to operate. However this may require pupils to be responsible for their own transport

arrangements to get to the other school. This may also change by August as the country moves from Phase 2 of recovery to Phase 3 and other restrictions are relaxed. These consortium arrangements were never finalised until the end of August in a normal year.

Are there particular health & safety issues with uniform and bringing equipment to school?

We have sought advice on any health & safety issues around this. We are aware that Scottish Government guidance has been provided for some high risk environments such as Health and Care settings which indicates a need to change and launder clothing on a daily basis; however at this time this advice has not been extended to schools. In fact, it is recognised that soft fabrics like shirts and blazers carry less risk than some garments that hold water on the surface; some other outdoor jackets would be worse than blazers. While doctors have for some time, prior to COVID, avoided ties, this is related to infection control measures in the clinical setting. Ties and long sleeves are a risk for transmitting infections between patients but this principle is not relevant for schools.

Some queries have also been raised as to bringing stationary equipment, pencil case and bags to school. Again within the context of our timetable arrangements, with pupils entering and exiting straight to a single working area, it would be more hygienic for pupils to bring their own rather than use shared materials.

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

Vocational courses are expected to run as planned, although some may no longer be viable if numbers have fallen below a certain level. It is expected that most courses will be 'front loaded' with theory which will be taught online, with attendance at college for the practical aspects of the course 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.