

Mearns Castle High School

Protocols for Covid Secure Operation

Last Updated: 5/8/21

Summary of distancing for adults

It is essential that staff maintain a minimum of 1m distance from each other and from pupils, other than brief transitory interactions.

It is expected that whilst 1m is now the minimum distance, the well-established approach to 2m distancing will be able to be maintained in most activities, other than those where this is not logistically possible.

Where logistically possible, the expected distancing will remain for staff as 2m from other adults and pupils other than transitory movements (counted as 15 mins max at 1-2m and 1min max at 0-1m). However, transitory movements should be minimised as much as possible. This applies at all times, including – staff undertaking supervision duties, staff supervising fire drills and social times. If departmental meetings/discussions do not allow for adequate space they must take place online or not at all.

Summary of distancing for pupils

It is essential that pupils maintain a minimum of 1m distance from staff other than transitory movements. Where logistically possible, this distance should be maintained at 2m, except for transitory movements (counted as 15 mins max at 1-2m and 1min max at 0-1m). However, transitory movements should be minimised as much as possible and should be limited to brief movement/transitions where possible.

Whilst distancing between pupils is not needed, all space should be utilised to maximise distance where possible.

Entrance to School

- All pupils and staff will sanitise hands on entry to the building. A hygiene station will be located at each entrance for any pupils who do not have their own sanitiser. Pupils should enter the school building at the Main Entrance or at the entrance at English/Open Area. Staff will be on hand to assist with movement and access to any required sanitiser. Sanitiser will also be available at the start of P1.
- Pupils should arrive at school wearing full school uniform unless they have PE period 1, in which case they may arrive in their MCHS PE kit. If they have PE last period, they may leave in their kit.
- Pupils should arrive as close to the start of period 1 (8.45am) as possible to avoid congregating and should enter at the point closest to their period 1 class. Warning bells will ring at 8.40am and 8.43am. Pupils should start to make their way to class from 8.40am. Principal Teachers (or a designated member of staff) will open up classrooms and circulate in departments to ensure supervision of pupils if their own teacher is not yet in class.
- School entrances will be supervised each day.

School Uniform Protocols

Usual school uniform protocols will apply.

- The uniform store will be re-organised to ensure a week long quarantine for any used items.
- There is no change to our uniform policy. However, pupils may wear a plain black hoodie/jumper (no logos) under their blazer if they wish (during the period of increased ventilation).

In Class

- During the time pupils are in class Faculty/Department Risk Assessments/Operational Protocols should be applied.

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- Departments will utilise all available capacity to allow the maximum possible distancing between pupils.
- On entry to the classroom, pupils should enter immediately (no lining up), collect a wipe to wipe down their work area on arrival. Where access to sinks is available within a classroom the handwashing using soap and water is preferable. Where possible, teachers should spray the desks between periods and pupils use blue roll to wipe desks. It is recognised that this may limit the ability of teachers to supervise in corridors between classes.
- After interval and lunchtime, pupils should sanitise their hands on entry to the class.
- Pupils should be seated to face the front of the class (not in group formation) and there should be a 2m/6ft teaching zone at the front of the classroom. The teacher's interactions with pupils must either maintain this distance or be brief and transitory in nature (less than a minute).
- Subject specific guidelines are released on an on-going basis and should be closely followed.
- Any equipment used by pupils must be washed or wiped down in line with departmental protocols. Quarantine is no longer required for objects/books/jotters. Stationery should not be shared unless essential. Teachers distributing paper etc should ensure they have washed or sanitised their hands first.
- Class activities should be planned to avoid congestion.
- Staff distributing practical equipment should ensure hand sanitisation takes place before distributing.
- All practical equipment should be washed or fully wiped down following use.
- Teachers should exercise their professional judgement on dealing with pupil requests for a toilet break but this should be avoided where possible. Only one pupil should be allowed out at a time with a red permission slip. Pupils should be directed to the toilets close to the Ace Base and instructed to use appropriate hygiene protocols.
- Pupils should sanitise their hands on entry to class after interval and lunch (either class sanitiser or their own).
- At the end of the school day, pupils should be instructed to sanitise their hands in preparation for exit.
- Pupils will be dismissed from workstations in an orderly and gradual manner.
- At interval, lunchtime and the end of the day S5/6 classes will be dismissed when the class are ready to pack up (within the last 5 minutes of the lesson) and S4 classes will be dismissed 3mins before the bell.

Class Seating

- Teachers should ensure they have seating plans for all classes. Due to changes in contact tracing protocols it will no longer be necessary to seat classes alphabetically.

Face Coverings

- Pupils wear face coverings on entry to school. The school office will take names of pupils without a face covering, provide a temporary one and compile a list for contact home. If parents/pupil support advise the pupil has an exemption then they will be provided with an exemption card. The office will maintain a list of exempt pupils for reference.
- Start of P1 – As pupils arrive to class they should be wearing their face covering. Similar to a uniform check – the teacher should check if any pupils do not have a face covering. Any pupil who does not have their face covering should be sent to the school office to collect one and give their details. Pupils with an exemption card are allowed not to wear a face covering and should not be sent.
- Pupils will keep their face covering on at all times except when seated for a snack during interval or lunchtime as outlined below.
- At break time, pupils may remove their face covering when either they have gone outside or they are seated for their snack/lunch. They should maintain face coverings whilst in

the queue at the Dining Hall and/or Open Area. They should put on face covering if they are moving between areas. They should wear face coverings when going to the toilet.

- All adults/staff will follow the above protocols for movement around the building at class changeover and social time periods.
- Staff should wear their face covering around the building but may remove it when seated for a socially distanced (2m) tea/lunch break or when seated for work in isolation, strictly 2m away from anyone else and with adequate ventilation in place.

School Library

- Short term book reference/borrowing is possible in line with Library protocols.
- Computers and work stations should be wiped down before each use.
- Planned book lending is now possible without a quarantine period.

Movement/Building

- All building users will keep to the right of corridors during times of congestion. Floor dividers and arrows will be in place to remind all staff and pupils.

To avoid congestion at the crossroad next to the ACE Base we will continue operating the corridor movement strategy to maintain a flow around the corridor and stagger numbers passing through this area.

Pupils should be advised to move as follows (arrows will be displayed outside classrooms)

E Corridor – exit towards school office

F Corridor – Exit towards Social Subjects Stairwell

Science Corridor (including A14-A18) – Exit towards Science Base/ Biology corridor

English Corridor – Exit towards Business corridor

ART/ HE/Music/ Drama - staff to continue to monitor movement

RE/ Bus/ Comp/ M Languages - staff to continue to monitor movement

- In order to decrease pupil interaction on leaving the school building, teachers should instruct pupils to use the agreed exits identified on the table below.
- All doors (except internal fire doors) should be wedged open to increase ventilation and minimise contact with door handles. In the event of a fire evacuation, classroom/office door wedges should be removed and the door should be closed (but not locked) by the teacher when the room is emptied.
- Windows should remain open throughout the day. Staff may reduce this in inclement weather to one window. Fan heaters may be used where additional ventilation is in place.
- Staff fridges should be used for storage of milk and one Tupperware box for each staff member which clearly identifies owner (labelled). Bags of items etc should not be left in the fridge and good hand hygiene is essential when accessing items in a shared fridge.
- Utensils should be thoroughly washed and stored safely for each staff member.
- Staff should not congregate in corridor spaces – it is important that corridor interactions remain transitory. Holding doors is a brief transitory interaction and is permissible.
- Staff should endeavour to use the same toilet facilities and this should be the staff toilet closest to their working location. Social distancing should be maintained in staff toilets.
- All classrooms and work spaces should be kept 'clutter free' to aid effective cleaning.

Practical Subjects

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As with all subjects, a department's own protocols should be followed at all times as these have been produced in line with the whole school risk assessment and regularly published subject specific guidance. PTs should maintain an awareness of subject updates and update Risk Assessments and protocols accordingly.

Within the current Level 0 (and beyond) phase there are no restrictions to any curricular activity. Practical subjects will ensure careful attention is paid to additional hygiene and distancing mitigations where possible/necessary.

Social Times (to be reviewed at October Holiday):

- S1/2 pupils will begin Period 3 at 10.25am for 20mins. S1/2 pupils and teachers will then have their interval at 10.45am.
- S1/2 pupils will begin Period 5 at 12.20pm for 20mins. They will begin lunchtime at 12.45pm and complete lunchtime and continue with period 5 at 1.20pm.
- In order to decrease pupil interaction on leaving the school building, teachers should instruct pupils to use the agreed exits identified on the table below.
- The theatre will be available as an overspill area on poor weather days.
- Staff should encourage pupils to utilise space available to increase distancing.
- All pupils will be advised it is preferable for them to remain in school for interval and lunch but to follow community protocols when outside of school during the school day.
- S1/2 will not be allowed out of school at social times, as normal.

Visitors

- Parents should not enter the school building (other than in exceptional circumstances by agreement of school staff and by appointment in order that this can be planned).
- Communications may be organised through telephone/email or virtual meeting.
- If it is necessary for parents to drop off/collect items from the school office, contact should be made by telephone/intercom and instructions provided.
- Guest speakers/visitors who contribute to the delivery of school activities may visit the school but all protocols must be closely followed, including 2m distancing from staff and pupils.
- Office protocols for deliveries should be followed at all times.

Staff Activities

- All activities in which staff are asked or invited to participate must allow a minimum of 1m physical distancing (or access to PPE for those staff supporting pupils where this is not possible).
- Staffrooms/Bases/Storerooms etc should all display a maximum number of users permitted and should remain spaced for 2m distancing unless in exceptional circumstances in which case the minimum will be 1m distancing.
- All departmental and school meetings must be conducted in venues which allow a minimum of 1m distancing and adequate ventilation. Virtual meetings should still be considered where possible.

Lost Property Protocols

Lost property should either be handled with gloves or the staff member should sanitise their hands before and after handling. Lost property should be bagged and labelled with content and date and handed into the office.

- The uniform store will be re-organised to ensure a week long quarantine for any used items.

Assemblies/Group Activities

- Whole Year Group assemblies should be avoided for the foreseeable future other than in exceptional circumstances (for example organisational/settling in arrangements for new S1) for short periods.
- Year Groups could be split into smaller groups to conduct Year Group assemblies – this should be in line with good practice protocols being followed by places of worship.
- Any small group assemblies should be kept brief where possible and additional ventilation should be implemented at the venue.
- Virtual assemblies should be considered where possible.

Off-site Learning

- School day trips are possible during the period the local area is in Level 3 or below. These must be closely risk assessed. Residential trips are currently under review.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

- Staff may be provided with a face covering if they do not have their own.
- First aiders should have access to the necessary PPE (in line with the First Aid protocols).
- Each department will be provided with hand sanitiser, disinfecting wipes, paper towels and bottles of disinfectant spray. Wipes or sprayed paper towels can be utilised for cleaning of workstations. PTs should alert the Senior Janitor if supplies in bases require to be replenished.

Symptomatic Pupils & Staff

- Current advice on Covid-19 symptoms should be accessed at www.nhsinform.scot
- Where a teacher suspects pupil symptoms could be covid related the following should take place:
 - Teacher requests pupil sanitises their hands and goes to school office. They should not be accompanied unless there is a concern they require support. If so, supporting pupil must maintain 2m distance. The teacher should not assume the symptoms are covid related until this is confirmed.
 - Pupil should report to school office who will confirm if symptoms are covid related.
 - If the symptoms are covid related – high temperature, new continuous cough, loss/change of taste/smell - the school office will provide a mask (where needed) and request pupil attend the isolation room. Office will print the pupil timetable and confirm with them the rooms they have been in so far that day.
 - Office staff will alert janitors to undertake a spray of each location and request that pupils are displaced. It should be clear there is no need for alarm and this is a precaution. A spray of the isolation room will take place when the pupil has departed.
 - Office will alert Year Head who will contact parent and request the pupil is collected (if under 16) or that they are allowed to go home (if over 16 and the parent is unable to collect). If no Year Head is available a member of office staff will contact the parent. Given the pupil is displaying covid-related symptoms, the pupil (and household) should self-isolate until the test result is confirmed. Test can be booked through www.nhsinform.scot Pupils/parents will be reminded that symptomatic pupils must not visit any locations and should only use public transport as a last resort (with appropriate face covering).
 - Office will alert Environmental Health that a symptomatic pupil has been sent home.
 - If testing shows a positive case, this will be reported immediately to ERC Education HQ, Environmental Health and the Health Protection Team who will advise on next steps.
- Staff who become concerned that they are experiencing potential symptoms of Covid-19 should contact I. Phillips or a member of SLT by telephone (preferably their own mobile telephone, if not ensure phone is wiped) and should leave the building as soon as possible. SLT will then request Facilities Management undertake a protective spray of the room utilising appropriate PPE.

- On reporting potential Covid-19 symptoms, staff should arrange a Covid-19 test through www.nhsinform.scot, if they have any difficulty arranging one themselves they should alert the school office. The staff member must continue to self-isolate until the results of the test are confirmed.

Information Management

Following any positive diagnosis for a member of staff, the colleague should immediately alert I Phillips (out of hours, please contact him on his mobile) and then await contact from S Clark to undertake a school contact tracing discussion. This information should remain confidential. The staff member will confirm any close contacts with S. Clark. It is obviously crucial that staff follow the protocols on distancing at all times on an on-going basis.

The staff member should then confidentially confirm with their Line Manager/PT if they are well enough to work/self-isolating or if they are now absent through ill health. If the staff member is self-isolating and therefore working from home, they should confirm arrangements for working from home with their PT/Line Manager, this may include live lessons to ensure continuity of learning for classes, activity upload to Teams/Classroom, instructions for cover teachers being sent in, assessment of pupil work and/or other development activities agreed with the PT/Line Manager. The staff member should liaise with their PT on any resources/materials required to assist home working during the self-isolation period.

Following any positive pupil diagnosis, the SLT will follow the protocols advised by ERC and NHS Test and Protect. Staff/parents will be informed that contact tracing is underway and will be kept informed weekly of the extent of positive cases within the school. It is recognised that individual staff will be concerned about the potential for positive cases to have worked within their classrooms, however, it is not possible to share details of the specific pupil or staff member who this relates to.

Where staff require to self-isolate as close contacts they should have an initial conversation with I. Phillips/S. Clark and liaise with their Line Manager on working from home arrangements (as outlined above).

Where staff have caring commitments for a child who has been identified as a close contact they should have an initial conversation with I Phillips/S. Clark who will discuss the options available to reduce the impact on the service. The staff member should then liaise with their Line Manager on working arrangements.

Exit from School

In order to decrease pupil interaction on leaving the school building, teachers should instruct pupils to use the agreed exits identified on the table below.

- The main school exits will be supervised each day.
- Pupils will be instructed not to congregate at exits of the school or in the school grounds but to make their way home immediately.

| Classrooms | Exit arrangements |
|--------------------|---|
| E1 – E6, F7,F8, F9 | Fire Exit at the end of the E (Social Subjects) corridor |
| F1 – F6, F8 – F15 | Main Entrance |
| D2 – D18 | Main Entrance |
| C6 – C15 | Down stairs to Fire Exit at Main Entrance end of Science corridor |
| C3 – C5 | Down stairs to Fire Exit at PE end of Science corridor |

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| C1 – C2, Downstairs Drama Studio, D1 | Exit at S6 Base door |
| A1 – A5 | Fire Exit at PE end of Science corridor |
| A6 – A15 | Fire Exit at Main Entrance end of Science corridor |
| T3-T4 | Fire Exit at Main Entrance end of Science corridor |
| T1 – T2 | Fire Exits within classrooms |
| A16 – A18 | Main Entrance |
| B12 – B15 | Main Entrance |
| B1 – B11 | Back door at end of English corridor |
| Support for Learning and Personal Development | Main Entrance |
| PE | Nearest exit to work area / changing room |

School Bus Protocols

Pupils should sanitise their hands before use of the school bus. At the end of the day school bus users may use the class sanitiser, their own or the units positioned at the school entrances/exits. Pupils will be advised to maintain the same seats on the bus where possible and must wear a face covering.

Responding to concerns/suggestions

A School Recovery Group has been formed and will meet regularly throughout the session. It is comprised of the SLT, trade unions, a PT, a Teacher, a Support Assistant, Senior Business staff, Senior Janitor, Pastoral/Wellbeing link. It maintains an overview of the implementation of protocols and the on-going monitoring of school response. Updated Risk Assessments, school calendar plans and protocols will be discussed by the group.

Clubs/Extra Curricular

These may commence from the start of session. The specific arrangements should ensure good hygiene and risk reduction/mitigations in line with the protocols above. For example, maintaining a seating plan would be useful should this be required.