Phased Return to School Policy

Policy number	BS070
Applies to	Whole School
Endorsed by	Head Master
Responsibility	Head Master
Date reviewed	June 2020
Next review	June 2021

Phased Return to School Policy

Introduction

Bedford School is implementing a phased return to school from 1st June 2020 until such time as all staff and pupils are safely returned to school and operating in a fully open, safe and secure environment with no COVID-19 related restrictions.

This may take many months and so a phased return will require patience, resilience and considerable effort to ensure the school environment is safe, at all times, during transition.

Bedford School recognises that during this transition:

- Our core obligation is to ensure "so far as is reasonably practicable the health, safety and welfare of employees and the safety of non-employees".

- We hold the prime responsibility for ensuring the safety of, first and foremost our pupils, but also and as importantly:
  - Staff and volunteers;
  - Parents and guardians;
  - Guests and visitors;
  - Contractors and delivery services.

Ultimately, all need to know that Bedford School is a safe environment in which to operate and learn.

This Phased Return to School Policy is based on the following school documents:

- General School Risk assessment.
- Specific Risk Assessments for Departments, Year Groups, Classes and Activities.
- Analysis and Planning Guidance.

Planning the phased return and transition to school

Good planning and management are fundamental to the success of the phased return. Effective planning and consultation with all stakeholders including unions, insurers, governors, teachers, support staff, parents, pupils and contractors is essential. The level of detail is enormous and will involve all staff in ensuring this policy is implemented and complies with the strict rules set out in the school's risk assessments and plan.

The planning and coordination of the phased return to school is being conducted via the School Re-opening Group (SRG) which is chaired by the Head Master and meets regularly through the week. The SRG consists of the Core Management Team plus other key managers within the school with specific relevant expertise and knowledge.

As well as coordinating and steering the planning process for a phased re-opening, the SRG's main responsibilities are:

- Reading and assessing daily government, DofE, PHE and sector bulletins;

- Ensuring messaging is clear, regularly updated and authorised for communication;
- Maintaining a complete record of all COVID-19 documents, publications and communications;
- Co-ordinating with all staff including support staff and contractors the new and / or revised measures and their implementation;
- Making incremental adjustments and improvements to reflect lessons learned including changes to risk assessments, safety plan, social distancing and hygiene rules, any additional training requirements, and the monitoring of steps taken to ensure control measures are sufficient and agreed protocol rules are adhered to.

Phased return to school:

The phasing and manner of re-opening the school to individual year groups will be based around government guidance. The government has stated that it is keen for all pupils to return to school as soon as the scientific advice allows and recognising that this will then allow more families to return to work.

The return to "fully open" is likely to transition, if the conditions are safe, through the following stages:

- Fully Closed No one on site except residents, security and maintenance staff.
- Open R   Teaching is all achieved remotely.
- Open K   Key staff and vulnerable children in school. All other teaching remote.
- Open B   In transition: with some boarders and Open K (above).
- Open T   In transition: some teaching in school and some remotely (with some boarders)
- Open   Business as usual: with caveats – no visitors or trips.
- Fully Open   Business as usual: no travel or trip restrictions.

Risk assessments

The school is required to carry out a series of risk assessments directly addressing hazards associated with COVID-19 and operating safely. As Bedford School has more than 50 employees the COVID-19 risk assessments will be published on the school website.

Assessing COVID-19 is particularly complex as the outcome of the many and varied risk assessments for one group within school e.g. departments, year groups, classes and activities will have an impact on other groups e.g. teaching staff, support staff, visitors and contractors and pupils of other age groups. Therefore a vital part of the planning process involves ensuring that each risk assessment complements all the others to ensure risks are identified and properly mitigated across the school.

Each risk assessment will require daily review and (where required) revision. This will include (but will not be limited to) checks to ensure that:

- Social Distancing (SD) and other hygiene rules are communicated, understood and applied.
- Staff and pupils are reminded and checked to ensure they are complying with hygiene and SD rules.

- There are sufficient supplies of hygiene materials and are they well placed around the school.
- The cleaning regime has been regularly re-assessed and, if necessary, revised.
- Precautions are identified for keeping shared equipment (e.g. keyboards, pens, musical instruments) clean.
- High-risk areas are being regularly monitored (including boarding areas) for hygiene.
- Compliance with SD rules applicable to various activities (play, games, drama, music) and locations (classroom, playground, boarding house) is being maintained and properly supervised.
- Where possible, soft toys, furnishings and items that are hard to clean have been removed.
- The re-allocation of indoor and outdoor space is working effectively.
- All hazards identified in the risk assessments have been properly mitigated and are being regularly re-assessed.

The school is responsible, via the SRG, for ensuring that:

- Safeguarding, code of conduct and medical policies and procedures are updated so staff and pupils feel safe.
- Government advice is regularly accessed, assessed, recorded, communicated and applied.
- Staff are consulted on plans for significant re-opening and changes to operation.
- Changes are regularly reviewed by governors and communicated to staff, pupils and parents.
- Insurers are consulted before the school re-opens and / or plans are amended.
- The policy for the availability and use of PPE is kept under constant review in accordance with government and scientific guidance.
- Emergency procedures, fire drills and assembly points are updated.
- Access to school is controlled effectively and details of visitors etc (if allowed) are recorded.
- Plans for school events including plays, concerts, parent and teacher meetings etc are managed in strict compliance with government and scientific guidance as reflected in the main school risk assessment.
- Contingency and scenario plans are developed for the transition to full opening (or re-closing).

Space management

Departments, year and activities groups must consider the following as part of the planning and risk assessments:

- Contact and mixing are minimised.
- Maximum use of outdoor spaces.
- Altering classroom layout with desks spaced 2m apart.
- Changing timetables so assemblies, breaks, lunch, playtime, drop-off and pick-up times are staggered.
- Small consistent groups (bubbles) of pupils (no more than 15 at the time of writing).
- Pupils to remain in "bubbles" at all times during the day with a minder or own set of teachers / assistants.
- "Bubbles" stay away from other people and groups.

- Where possible in and out routes are identified in buildings.
- Spaces such as halls and dining areas are arranged to ensure social distancing parameters are observed at all times.
- Groups are staggered through the indoor and outdoor spaces.

Some risk assessments should refer to specialist medical issues noting the importance of GDPR rules:

- Who has pre-existing medical conditions and are they fully declared?
- Have all vulnerable pupils, parents and staff been identified and recorded?
- For those tested positive for COVID-19 is it recorded (for elimination purposes)?
- Who has come into contact with anyone tested positive to COVID-19?
- Been sent home with COVID-19 symptoms (a cough, high temperature or shortness of breath)?

New school rules

New school rules are included in an annexe to the Behaviour Policy covering the period of lockdown and phased return.

Planning for incidents/ emergencies

The school recognises that plans need to be revised to respond effectively to health and safety incidents and other emergencies that might occur during the COVID-19 era. Where relevant, the Bursar should ensure that emergency procedures are agreed for:

- Fire.
- Accidents and injuries.
- Infection during school hours, their isolation and return to home procedures.
- Other emergency evacuation.
- Security.
- Severe weather that limits pupil's learning, exercising or playing outside.

Inclusion for people with a disability

The school will ensure that reasonable adjustments are made where possible to ensure that people with a disability (mobility, visual and hearing impairment, medical conditions and hidden disabilities) are protected in terms of temperature testing, hygiene solutions and emergencies.

During school

Once the documentation and plan have been agreed (including governors and insurers), and arrangements put in place for regular monitoring and updating of the plan are established, emphasis will focus on the implementation, effective management and monitoring of staff, pupils and the environment. This will include:

- Ensuring communication channels and messaging are working and regularly reviewed and updated.
- Systems to communicate with parents and staff that have not returned to school for fear of infection.
- Robust feedback and reply system to ensure best practice and two-way communications for pupils, parents, staff and governors
- Registration throughout the day including temperature / health checks.
- Transit spaces (corridors), social zones (car parks, common rooms, playgrounds) supervised for SD rules.
- Maintaining information on bubbles / social class / activity groupings and where pupils / staff have travelled from (other than home and school), via app or written diary?
- Ensuring different age groups and class "bubbles" are supervised throughout and timetabling, length of the school day and exposure to other age groups is monitored and safe.
- Enforcing rules / procedures for hygiene standards for staff and pupils. Regular breaks for washing hands etc.
- School transport arrangements including SD, hygiene, PPE and cleaning.
- Drop-off and pick-up procedures – vehicle flow, in and out routes, parking, parents remaining in vehicles and SD outside gates and entrances.

All staff, volunteers, pupils [students], parents, visitors and contractors (if allowed) will be given a COVID-19 written brief before arriving at school and a verbal induction as they enter school for the first time on:

- Safeguarding, code of conduct, Health and Safety policy and their COVID-19 updates.
- SD and hygiene rules.
- Key contacts and locations (including isolation and temperature testing areas).
- Communications protocols and reporting procedures.
- Pinch points, site hazards and agreed control measures.
- Site specific instructions: speed limits, drop-off and pick-up, parking areas etc.
- Emergency arrangements (including contingency plans).
- Any specific clothing, nametags, PPE for certain groups such as visitors and contractors.