



## **(COVID-19) POLICY – FOR MICHAELMAS TERM 2021**

This Policy applies to all year groups at Thomas's Schools, including the EYFS. It reflects the ongoing Government Guidance of 27<sup>th</sup> August with regards to the new academic year.

This policy should be read in conjunction with: Thomas's Attendance Policy, Behaviour Policy, Bereavement Policy, Code of Conduct, COVID-19 Risk Assessment, Confidentiality Policy, ICT Acceptable Use Policy, Online Safety Policy, Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, Whistleblowing Policy.

Please note that for brevity in this policy "coronavirus (COVID-19)" is referred to simply as COVID-19.

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### **1. INTRODUCTION**

Throughout the course of the COVID-19 pandemic Thomas's has endeavoured to provide as full an educational experience as possible for children while maintaining a balance of minimising risks by maximising control measures. As COVID-19 becomes a virus that we learn to live with, there is now an imperative to reduce the disruption to children and young people's education, particularly given that the direct clinical risks to children are extremely low, and every adult has been offered a first vaccine and the opportunity for 2 doses by mid-September.

The guidance is updated regularly in response to changing circumstances so parents are advised to remain aware of the government guidance given in the web links provided.

## 2. AIMS

- To continue to deliver face-to-face high-quality education to all pupils.
- To put in place proportionate control measures and regularly update risk assessments as circumstances in school and public health advice changes
- To maintain clear communication between the school and families to support the education, welfare and safeguarding of all pupils and staff

The full Thomas's COVID-19 Risk Assessment can be found on our website. This is reviewed regularly and updated as circumstances in school and public health advice changes. The Schools' Health and Safety Leads will monitor whether the controls are effective and working as planned, and amend as needed.

## 3. CONTROL MEASURES

Public Health England (PHE) has recommended four main measures to control and minimise the spread of the virus. These are listed below.

### 3.1 Ensure good hygiene for everyone

- Pupils will continue to be reminded to clean their hands regularly using soap and water or hand sanitiser.
- The 'catch it, bin it, kill it' approach will continue to be promoted.
- Members of staff will not require PPE equipment beyond what is normally needed for work.

### 3.2 Maintain appropriate cleaning regimes, using standard products such as detergents

An appropriate cleaning schedule will continue to be implemented, including regular cleaning of areas and equipment with particular focus on frequently touched surfaces.

Public Health England has published revised [guidance for cleaning non-healthcare settings](#) to advise on general cleaning required.

### 3.3 Keep occupied spaces well ventilated

Thomas's will continue to strike a balance between keeping the school well-ventilated whilst maintaining a comfortable teaching environment. Measures adopted will include:

- using mechanical ventilation systems in all classrooms and offices;
- opening windows to provide natural ventilation. (In cooler weather this may be just enough to provide background ventilation and then the windows opened more fully during break times to purge the air in the space.);
- opening internal doors to assist with the throughput of air;
- opening external doors where they are not fire doors or there is no safety risk.

Steps will be taken to improve fresh air flow in any poorly ventilated areas, giving particular consideration when holding events where visitors such as parents are on site, for example school plays.

### **3.4 Follow public health advice on testing, self-isolation and managing confirmed cases of COVID-19.**

#### **3.4.1 When an individual develops COVID-19 symptoms or has a positive test:**

- Pupils, staff and other adults should follow public health advice on [when to self-isolate and what to do](#). They should not come into school if they have symptoms, have had a positive test result or other reasons requiring them to stay at home due to the risk of them passing on COVID-19 (for example, they are required to quarantine).
- If anyone develops [COVID-19 symptoms](#), however mild, they will be sent home and they should follow public health advice.
- For everyone with symptoms, they should avoid using public transport and, wherever possible, be collected by a member of their family or household.
- If a pupil is awaiting collection, they should be left in a room on their own if possible and safe to do so. A window should be opened for fresh air ventilation if possible. Appropriate PPE should also be used if close contact is necessary. Further information on this can be found in the [use of PPE in education, childcare and children's social care settings](#) guidance. Any rooms they use should be cleaned after they have left.
- The household (including any siblings) should follow the PHE [stay at home guidance for households with possible or confirmed coronavirus \(COVID-19\) infection](#).

#### **3.4.2 Asymptomatic Testing**

Testing remains important in reducing the risk of transmission within the school

- Pupils in Years 7 – 9 should take 2 on-site lateral flow device tests, 3 to 5 days apart before their return for the Michaelmas term. These should be taken from 3 working days before the start of term. They should then continue to test twice weekly until advice is reviewed.
- Thomas's Battersea and Thomas's Clapham will retain a small number of tests to offer to pupils who are unable to test themselves at home.
- Members of staff should undertake twice weekly home tests whenever they are on site until advice is reviewed

#### **3.4.3 Confirmatory PCR Tests**

- Staff and pupils with a positive LFD test result should self-isolate in line with the [stay at home guidance for households with possible or confirmed coronavirus \(COVID-19\) infection](#). They will also need to [get a free PCR test to check if they have COVID-19](#).
- Whilst awaiting the PCR result, the individual should continue to self-isolate.
- If the PCR test is taken within 2 days of the positive lateral flow test, and is negative, it overrides the self-test LFD test and the pupil can return to school, as long as the individual doesn't have COVID-19 symptoms.

## **4 TRACING CLOSE CONTACTS AND ISOLATION**

From the start of the Michaelmas term close contacts will now be identified via NHS Test and Trace and contact tracing will no longer be undertaken within Thomas's.

As with positive cases in any other setting, NHS Test and Trace will work with the positive case and/or their parent to identify close contacts. Thomas's pupils will only be contacted

by NHS Test and Trace where the positive case and/or their parent specifically identifies the individual as being a close contact.

Individuals are not required to self-isolate if they live in the same household as someone with COVID-19, or are a close contact of someone with COVID-19, and any of the following apply:

- they are fully vaccinated
- they are below the age of 18 years and 6 months
- they have taken part in or are currently part of an approved COVID-19 vaccine trial
- they are not able to get vaccinated for medical reasons

Instead, they will be contacted by NHS Test and Trace, informed they have been in close contact with a positive case and advised to take a [PCR test](#). We would encourage all individuals to take a PCR test if advised to do so.

Examples of what may be considered a close contact in school are:

- a form group or subject class;
- a friendship group mixing at playtimes;
- a sports team;
- a group in an extra-curricular club or activity.

Staff who do not need to isolate, and children who usually attend school, and have been identified as a close contact, should continue to attend school as normal. They do not need to wear a face covering within the school, but it is expected and recommended that these are worn when travelling on public or dedicated transport.

Thomas's will continue to work with health protection teams in the case of a local outbreak. If there is a substantial increase in the number of positive cases or if central government offers the area an enhanced response package, a director of public health might advise a school to temporarily reintroduce some control measures. **(See Point 7).**

If a pupil tests positive for COVID-19, the school will e-mail the families of that pupil's year group. The pupil's name will be kept confidential.

A log will be kept of any member of staff who tests positive and the Self-Isolation Service Hub will be contacted.

## **5. SCHOOL OPERATIONS**

### **5.1 Attendance**

All pupils are expected to attend school. As such the usual rules on school attendance will apply, including:

- the parents' duty to secure that their child attends regularly;
- the schools' responsibilities to record attendance and follow up absence;
- the availability to issue sanctions, in the event of non-attendance.

All clinically extremely vulnerable (CEV) children should attend school unless they are one of the very small number of children under paediatric or other specialist care who have been advised by their clinician or other specialist not to attend.

## 5.2 Recording attendance

- Pupils who are self-isolating or in quarantine will be marked as “X” in the attendance codes. This will not count as an absence in the school census.
- Pupils who have a positive test result will be marked as “I” (for illness) in the attendance codes.
- Pupils who are unable to attend school for any other reason will be subject to the usual attendance codes as listed in the Thomas’s Attendance Policy.
- Thomas’s will continue to inform the DfE daily of pupil attendance using the Education setting status form.

## 5.3 Arrival at and Departure from School

Thomas’s will revise COVID-19 procedures at the start and end of the school day. Details of these will be sent to parents in school specific communications.

- Parents may come on site to collect their children at the end of the day.
- “Namaste” will continue to be the greeting on arrival and at dismissal.

## 5.4 Uniform

Pupils are expected to wear their full Thomas’s uniform.

- Pupils should follow school specific procedures with regards to changing for PE.
- Pupils should bring their coats/jumpers to school daily as the need continues for classrooms to be well-ventilated.

## 5.5 “Bubbles”

From September pupils are no longer required to remain in consistent groups (bubbles). As well as enabling flexibility in curriculum delivery this means that larger gatherings such as Assembly and Church services can resume and pupils can mix groups during lunch and break times.

## 5.6 Face Coverings

Face coverings are no longer advised for pupils, staff and visitors either in classrooms or in communal areas. However, people may wish to wear a face covering in enclosed or crowded spaces where there is contact with people they don’t normally meet and this will be respected. Face masks are still recommended for older pupils and adults when using transport. The use of face coverings may also be temporarily reinstated should there be a substantial increase in the number of positive cases in school or in the case of large gatherings such as a school play. **(see Point 7).**

## 5.7 Curriculum and Timetable

Thomas’s will readopt the full broad curriculum with all subjects and activities on offer, notwithstanding the ongoing attention to cleanliness and general hygiene. In particular:

- sports fixtures will take place, both within the Thomas’s group and against other schools and parents are welcome to support;
- school plays and concerts will take place and parents will be invited to attend;
- educational day trips and workshops by visiting groups will take place. Risk assessments for any trip will include checks that public health advice is been followed;
- residential trips will take place although, for any international trips, contingency plans will be implemented with regards to the possibility of a country being moved from the green list to amber or red;

- parent meetings and PTA events will adopt a hybrid approach with a balance of face to face or virtual meetings as most appropriate to the situation.

## **5.8 Transport**

School bus runs will operate in full and chartered coach companies will be used for sports lessons and trips. It is recommended that adults and senior pupils continue to wear face coverings when travelling on buses or public transport.

## **5.9 Travel from abroad**

Any pupils (and their parents or family members) who are returning to the UK must follow Government guidance. Pupils aged 11 to 14 need [proof of a negative COVID-19 test](#) and those aged 5 to 17 must take a COVID-19 travel test on or before day 2. More information is provided in the government's [quarantine and testing guidance](#).

## **5.10 Pupil Wellbeing and Support**

Thomas's is aware that some pupils may be experiencing a variety of emotions in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, such as anxiety, stress or low mood.

All parents / carers are asked to inform the school if their child has experienced any key family changes (eg bereavements, changes in contact with key adults, significant events, health difficulties etc) so that school staff can ensure they can be effectively supported.

All members of staff will be asked to be particularly alert to signs of stress in pupils and enable pupils to talk about how they are feeling and support them with approaches to improving their physical and mental wellbeing.

Any safeguarding concerns will continue to be passed to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (or deputy DSLs) promptly and any necessary referrals made to the relevant agencies or services as usual in line with the guidance in our Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and Keeping children safe in education (2021). Additional support will be provided for pupils in school where appropriate and available.

## **6. SCHOOL WORKFORCE**

Social distancing measures have now ended in the workplace and all members of staff are expected to attend school.

Staff deployment, including Thomas's Training Teachers, will operate as before the pandemic and staff recruitment procedures will continue as usual.

Clinically extremely vulnerable (CEV) people are advised, as minimum, to follow the same guidance as everyone else, but may wish to think particularly carefully about additional precautions they can continue to take.

All members of staff will be supported to take up the offer of a vaccine and will be given time to attend booked vaccine appointments where possible.

Thomas's will have regard to staff work-life and balance and wellbeing. The school has a duty of care to its employees and has put in mechanisms to support staff wellbeing.

## **7. STEPPING UP MEASURES AND CONTINENCY PLANS**

Thomas's will monitor closely the number of positive cases that occur in each school and if needed, set up contingency plans outlining what to do if children, pupils, students or staff test positive for COVID-19, or if the school is advised to take extra measures to help break chains of transmission.

The overarching objective is to maximise the number of children in face-to-face education and minimise any disruption, in a way that best manages the COVID-19 risk.

Decision makers should keep all measures under regular review and lift them as soon as the evidence supports doing so.

Contingency plans will cover:

- roles and responsibilities
- when and how to seek public health advice
- details on the types of control measures to be put in place

Each control measure will include

- actions to be put in place quickly
- details of ensuring every pupil receives the quantity and quality of education and support to which they are normally entitled
- how changes will be communicated to pupils, parents, carers and staff

### **7.1 Thresholds**

Extra measures will be implemented when either of these thresholds are reached:

- 5 pupils, or staff who are likely to have mixed closely, test positive for COVID-19 within a 10 day period;
- 10% of pupils or staff who are likely to have mixed closely test positive for COVID-19 within a 10 day period

Public Health advice will be sought if a pupil or member of staff is admitted to hospital with COVID-19. Thomas's will also call the Self-Isolation Service Hub as soon as they are made aware that any member of staff has tested positive.

Each school will have specific procedures reflecting their site and cohort. However, the following guidance from the [DfE Contingency Framework](#) will be taken into consideration.

Actions that may be considered are:

- additional and/or more frequent testing;
- advised use of face coverings (not for children in Early Years);
- moving some activities outdoors, including exercise, assemblies or classes
- increasing ventilation, where this would not significantly impact thermal comfort
- one-off enhanced cleaning focusing on touch points and any shared equipment
- limiting activities such as residential visits, open days, parental attendance, live performances etc.
- recommending shielding (following national Government reintroduction);

### **7.2 Attendance Restrictions and Remote Schooling**

High quality face-to-face education remains a government priority. Attendance restrictions will only ever be considered as a short term measure and as a last resort.

Remote education will be provided if:

- a pupil or pupils have tested positive for COVID-19 but are well enough to learn from home;  
or
- attendance at school has been temporarily restricted.

Each school will provide specific remote education equivalent in length to the core teaching pupils would receive in school. However, unless a whole group is off school this will not be a full virtual teaching programme with live lessons as the teacher's main priority will be with the pupils in school.

Should a school need to close temporarily, it will aim for on-site provision to be retained for vulnerable children and the children of critical workers. If this is not possible, alternative arrangements will be discussed with the families concerned.

### **7.2.1 Education Workforce**

In the case of attendance restrictions Heads will determine the balance of staff required on-site and those who should work remotely.

### **7.2.2 Safeguarding and DSLs**

In the case of attendance restrictions Thomas's will continue to have regard to any statutory safeguarding guidance. A trained DSL or Deputy will be available on site or contactable via phone or video link. In the case that a DSL or Deputy is not physically on site a senior leader will take responsibility for coordinating safeguarding on site.

### **7.3 Transport**

Where possible school bus runs will continue to operate to the schools while extra measures are in place.

## **8. LEGISLATION AND GUIDANCE**

This Policy bears due regard to the following statutory guidance and other advice.

DfE statutory guidance '[Keeping children safe in education](#)' (September 2021)

DfE Guidance: 'Contingency Framework: education and childcare settings' August 2021)

DfE Guidance '[Schools COVID-19 operational guidance](#)' (27<sup>th</sup> August 2021)

PHE '[Stay at home guidance for households with possible or confirmed coronavirus \(COVID-19\) infection](#)' (13<sup>th</sup> August 2021)

DfE Guidance [COVID-19 Getting Tested](#) (27<sup>th</sup> August 2021)

DfE Guidance '[COVID-19; test kits for schools and FE providers](#)' (22<sup>nd</sup> April 2021)



**9. POLICY REVIEW RECORD**

<b>This policy will be reviewed following further government legislation or guidance</b>		
Created: March 2020	By:	Joanna Copland, Vice Principal
Latest Review: 2 <sup>nd</sup> September 2021	By:	Joanna Copland, Vice Principal
Approved: September 2021	By:	Tobyn Thomas, Ben Thomas, Principals Simon O'Malley, Head, Thomas's Battersea Prep School Ben Thomas, Head, Thomas's Battersea Senior School Nathan Boller, Head, Thomas's Clapham Annette Dobson, Head, Thomas's Fulham Jo Ebner, Head, Thomas's Kensington
Next Review: As needed	By:	Joanna Copland, Vice Principal Heads and Principals

**10. APPENDICES**

Appendix 1: Procedures in responding to a suspected or confirmed case of COVID 19

**COVID-19 POLICY APPENDIX 1:****A1.1 Initial response to a suspected case of COVID-19**

The symptoms of COVID-19 are a new, continuous cough or a HIGH temperature, or a loss of, or change in normal sense of taste or smell (anosmia).

In the case of anyone (member of staff or pupil) displaying these symptoms in school they must:

- go home as soon as possible to self-isolate. The isolation period includes the day the symptoms started and the next 10 days.
- follow the [Guidance for households with possible COVID-19 infection](#).
- arrange to have a PCR test, even if they have had one or more doses of the vaccine. See [Getting a test](#). These can be booked online through the [NHS Testing and Tracing website](#) or ordered by telephone via NHS 119.
- While a symptomatic pupil is awaiting collection, they should be moved, if possible, to an isolated room, depending on the age and needs of the child, with appropriate adult supervision if required. Ideally, a window should be opened for ventilation. If it is not possible to isolate them, they should remain in an area which is at least 2 metres away from other people.
- Staff caring for a pupil while they are awaiting collection should maintain a distance of 2 metres. If this cannot be maintained, (for example with a young child or a child with complex needs) they should wear suitable PPE:
  - If a 2 metre distance cannot be maintained a face covering should be worn
  - If contact is necessary, gloves, an apron and a face covering should be worn
  - If there is a risk of fluids entering the eye (eg from coughing, spitting or vomiting) eye protection should also be worn
- More information on PPE use can be found in the [safe working in education, childcare and children's social care settings, including the use of personal protective equipment \(PPE\)](#) guidance.
- If the pupil needs to go to the loo while waiting to be collected, they should use a separate loo if possible. The loo must be cleaned and disinfected using standard cleaning products before being used by anyone else.
- As is usual practice, in an emergency, if someone is seriously ill or injured or their life is at risk. 999 should be called immediately.
- Anyone with COVID-19 symptoms should not visit the GP, pharmacy, urgent care centre or a hospital, or travel on public transport.

**A1.2 Follow up to treating a suspected case of COVID-19 amongst the school community**

- Everyone who has had contact with the symptomatic pupil/adult must wash their hands thoroughly for 20 seconds with soap and running water or use hand sanitiser.
- Any members of staff who have helped someone with symptoms and any pupils who have been in close contact with them do not need to go home to self-isolate unless:
  - they develop symptoms themselves (in which case, they should have a test);
  - they are requested to do so by NHS Test and Trace;
  - they test positive from an LFD test as part of a community or worker programme.

- The area around the person with symptoms must be cleaned with normal household detergent after they have left to reduce the risk of passing the infection on to other people.
- The symptomatic person should arrange to have a test as soon as possible and inform the school of the result immediately. The Head will follow up if a test result is not received.
  - All members of the symptomatic person's household should self-isolate until the result of the test is received.
  - If the test result is negative the person feels well and no longer has symptoms they can return to school.
  - If the test result is negative but the person still feels unwell or has symptoms, they should not return to school until they are better

### **A1.3 Managing a confirmed case of COVID-19 amongst the school community**

- In the case of a member of the school community testing positive for COVID-19 they should inform the school immediately.
- The school will complete a record of any confirmed COVID-19 cases. If a threshold is reached of 5 or more cases or more than 10% of the community test positive within 10 days additional measure may be put in place.
- Parents will be informed if there is a confirmed case of COVID-19 in the school. However, the name of the person will not be shared unless essential to protect others.
- The pupil or staff member who tested positive for COVID-19 can return to their normal routine and stop self-isolating after they have finished their isolation period and their symptoms have gone or if they continue to have only a residual cough or anosmia.
- In the majority of cases the parents and the School will be in agreement that a child with symptoms should not attend school, given the potential risk to others. In the event that a parent/carer insists on a child attending school, Thomas's may take the decision to refuse the child if, in their reasonable judgement, it is necessary to protect the other children and staff from possible infection from COVID-19. Any such decision would be carefully considered in the light of all circumstances and current public health advice.