

FAQs

What is in place to protect my child?

An increased programme of cleaning is in place, along with social distancing, Key Stage ‘bubbles’, residence ‘bubbles’ and mandatory Covid-19 testing for all boarders and staff. Additionally, all students and staff will have daily temperature checks and day students will be expected to take 2 lateral flow tests, 3 to 5 days apart before returning to school after any holiday.

Additionally, traffic flows around the site have been organised to minimise contact along with signage and cleaning products in classrooms and boarding residences. Classroom seating plans are in place to identify close contacts of any positive cases and the school has been split into different Key Stage areas to reduce potential contacts. Additional risk assessments are in place to ensure safety on site. Students and staff may wear gloves and/or masks in school should they wish to, but these will not be mandatory outside of classrooms unless social distancing cannot be maintained.

What are the arrangements for uniform fitting and purchasing?

Buckswood School has its own shop on the school site, where all items of uniform can be bought. However due to Government COVID-19 guidelines we now need to operate in a slightly different way: The shop is open for online orders to click and collect and wherever possible parents and guardians should order online and arrange a suitable time for collection. Please go to <https://www.buckswood.co.uk/school-life-and-pastoral/school-shop/> for more information. Orders placed can be collected from the shop by pre-arranged appointment only, and only one person at any one time will be allowed into the shop due to social distancing. Please do try and help the school by placing your orders and appointments throughout the holidays and not leaving them until the last minute. Enquiries/questions should be directed to the Shop Manager by email to shop@buckswood.co.uk

Are changes planned in the sleeping arrangements in Boarding Houses to reflect social distancing?

Yes – and the extent of these will be determined by ongoing government guidance. We hope to be able to permit some sharing for younger boarders in the larger of our shared rooms in Residences (at appropriate distance) to maintain the positive social benefits of this.

What are the school bus arrangements for Day students?

Please see the details in the wider guidance under Arrival at School protocols for Day students. We will be running our usual routes for Day pupils, and using any mitigating features required for those using shared transport (eg the use of masks) in accord with government guidelines. Parents are asked to complete the Transport booking Form on the website if they wish to book school transport to and from school each day.

Will pupils need to wear school uniform?

Yes. Guidance encourages schools to return to their usual uniform policies, indicating that uniform can play a valuable role in contributing to the ethos of a school and setting an appropriate tone. It states: ‘Uniforms do not need to be cleaned any more often than usual, nor do they need to be cleaned using methods which are different from normal.’

Will weekend leave for boarders still be allowed?

Weekend Leave will be restricted during the pandemic, with students expected to remain at school over the weekends. If there is a pressing need for weekend leave then these requests can be

assessed on a case-by-case basis, but any travel away and back to school must be booked through the school on an approved provider or the student is collected and returned ‘in person’. Public transport will not be allowed. The school reserves the right to administer a Covid-19 swab test on any student returning from weekend leave.

Will town leave on Saturdays still take place for boarders?

Town Leave for boarders on Saturday afternoon is currently on hold, but when it resumes students will be travelling only on school transport initially. Students will travel according to a rota which changes each week, with different ‘residence bubbles’ travelling together. The buses will be cleaned between ‘bubbles’ to minimise the chance of transmission of Covid-19. Timings will be published prior to the weekend. Boarders will wait in their boarding residences to be called to the transport to minimise the students congregating together and must wear face coverings on the bus. The first bus will leave at 13:30 and buses will leave approximately every 30 minutes after this.

The return schedule will follow that of the departure schedule, with students from each ‘bubble’ travelling to and from school together. Students failing to follow this protocol face permanent exclusion from school for potentially endangering other students and staff. When in town, students are expected to follow guidance in place (face coverings in shops and social distancing) and to make sure that they are washing/sanitising their hands regularly. There will be members of staff in town to provide supervision.

Students do not have to go to town on the weekend – there will also be activities in place at school for them to take part in!

Will school be open at half term for boarders?

Yes, the school will remain open to boarders should you not wish for your child to travel home and then require testing and isolation upon their return. There will not be half term trips running over the October half term, but students can remain on site for a fee. Please check the school website at <https://www.buckswood.co.uk/permissions-forms/> to book.

My child is a day pupil. Can they stay over occasionally?

We are sorry but this will not be possible initially. We very much hope to be in a position soon where this flexibility can be extended again, but at the start of term we cannot do this in order to keep pupils as far as possible in ‘bubbles’.

If my child is quarantined for two weeks before they start, will this be in their residence?

Students from countries not on the UK government’s list of ‘travel corridors’ who are unable to quarantine with guardians prior to the opening of school must contact the school to make arrangements to quarantine under the care of the school. This may or may not be on the main school site prior to the start of school. Once term has begun there is limited availability to students to quarantine ‘off site’ but the school will work with you to arrange something – we cannot guarantee that this will be in their residence at school.

If my child becomes unwell with Covid-19 during term, where will they be isolated?

If they are a boarder, they will be isolated as per guidance from the Department for Education which is found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-on-isolation-for-residential-educational-settings/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-on-isolation-for-residential-educational-settings>. They will be isolated in their boarding residence. During isolation, students will be supported by our staff and will have access to learning via Microsoft Teams.

If they are a day student, they will be isolated at home.

Should my child limit what they bring into school (home clothes, decorations for their room etc)?

Absolutely. Good cleaning regimes and hygiene will be really assisted by bedrooms and study spaces being as uncluttered as possible, and if we need to move pupils for any reason into different areas of the campus then having rooms which can be swiftly packed up and items easily stored will make this much easier.

What will happen if my child starts to display symptoms during the school day?

Any child displaying symptoms will be immediately isolated on site in a dedicated Covid-19 room. Parents of day students will be immediately notified and asked to collect their child as soon as possible. Boarders will be assessed and if they can go home (UK boarders) this will be arranged and if not they will be tested and remain isolated as appropriate. International boarders will be isolated at school as described above.

If a boarder/student displays COVID-19 symptoms or is tested positive, will the rest of the boarders/ students in the same boarding house/teaching class require isolation?

Consultation with the local Health Protection Team will give the school individual guidance on this. The government guidance indicates that only those who have been in 'close contact' would require self-isolation.

Close contact is defined as: Direct close contacts – face to face contact with an infected individual for any length of time, within 1 metre, including being coughed on, a face to face conversation, or unprotected physical contact (skin-to-skin) . Proximity contacts – extended close contact (within 1 to 2 metres for more than 15 minutes) with an infected individual; Travelling in a small vehicle, like a car, with an infected person.

The school will use seating plans and interview with the affected individual and their teachers to identify those who have been in close contact with anyone testing positive for Covid-19 so this will be done quickly.

During any period when a pupil was in isolation, will they be able to continue lessons via remote learning?

All teachers are familiar with Microsoft Teams and are able to deliver instruction through this online portal. Students in isolation will not be guaranteed 'live' lessons at the same time as their peers, but they will receive instruction and support via Microsoft teams – both academic and pastoral.

Can a parent choose to take their child home each weekend until normal service resumes?

Absolutely, but please see the answer to the question on weekend leave. We would see this as being similar to a child visiting different Households if their parents were not living together, so able to move between the Household of home and the Household of school. Return to school may require the administering of a lateral flow test.

How much does a Covid-19 swab test cost?

PCR tests for boarders provided by Oncologica will cost £120 per test plus the cost of courier service which will be added to the school bill. This cost is significantly lower than can be found on the open market and has been negotiated by the school's finance department to ensure best value for money. Government issued Lateral Flow tests which will be used at the start of term for boarders and day

students, along with regular testing of staff will have no cost to parents. Boarders displaying symptoms of Covid-19 will receive a test kit from the NHS which has no cost. Day parents must take their child to get tested at a local testing centre. The school also has a supply of Rapid Antigen tests that some countries allow to be used for pre-travel testing and these cost £40. Should a PCR test be required for pre-travel testing, this is £120 plus courier fees.

Will parent events/gatherings be running on site as normal?

In line with government guidance to minimise large gatherings of people, assemblies will currently be held online or in Key Stage groups, appropriately socially distanced. Due to UK government restrictions on gatherings of people being very limited, Parent consultation evenings and other such gatherings are currently suspended or will be arranged online.

Further Resources

The UK Government's full portfolio of guidance for education and childcare can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus/education-and-childcare>

Additional sources of information and guidance include:

World Health Organisation: <https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019>

National Health Service: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/>

UK Government/Public Heath England: <https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus>

Boarding Schools' Association: <https://www.boarding.org.uk/467/safeguarding/-covid-19>