



(COVID-19) POLICY – Autumn Term 2021

This Policy reflects the ongoing Government Guidance of 27th August with regards to the new academic year.

This policy should be read in conjunction with: COVID-19 Risk Assessment and [COVID-19 Contingency Plan](#).

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1. INTRODUCTION

Throughout the course of the COVID-19 pandemic Thomas's Academy 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 national 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

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

- 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 taken to the isolation room. 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

- 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

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 Academy 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.

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 Academy 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).**

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 abroad and unable to return should be marked as "Y" (unable to return due to exceptional circumstances)

5.3 Arrival at and Departure from School

Thomas's Academy will adopt the following procedures at the start and end of the school day. Details of these can be found in school specific communications.

- Arrival and departure times will revert to standard timings from before the pandemic.
- We will avoid morning queues in the playground by allowing a window of 10 minutes for each class to enter before registration
- For departure, parents are requested to wait around the perimeter of the playground
- Nursery will use a new separate entrance

5.4 Uniform

Pupils are expected to wear their full Thomas's Academy uniform.

- On days when pupils have PE, they are expected to wear their kits to school.
- 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 Assemblies 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. The use of face coverings may also be temporarily reinstated should there

be a substantial increase in the number of people in school or in the number of positive cases in school (**see Point 7**).

5.7 Curriculum and Timetable

Thomas's Academy will readopt the full broad curriculum with all subjects using the specialist classrooms, 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, workshops by visiting groups and residential trips will take place. Risk assessments for any trip will include checks that public health advice is been followed;
- parent meetings and PTA events will be held in person or remotely as decided by the organisers

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 Academy 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 Readers, 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 Academy 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 CONTINGENCY PLANS

Thomas’s Academy will monitor closely the number of positive cases in the community and have 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 most likely scenario will be to re-implement some or all of the procedures (such as bubbles, distancing etc) in operation during Tier 4 of the pandemic and listed in the previous version of this policy.

Given the detrimental impact that restrictions on education can have on children and young people, these measures will only ever be considered as a last resort, kept to the minimum number of groups possible, and for the shortest amount of time possible.

7.1 Remote Schooling

Thomas’s Academy will maintain the capacity to deliver high-quality remote education for the next academic year, including for pupils who are unable to attend school because they are complying with clinical or public health advice or in quarantine, or facing challenges to return due to COVID-19 travel restrictions,

However, unless a whole group is off school this will not be a full remote programme as the teacher’s main priority will be with the pupils in school.

8. LEGISLATION AND GUIDANCE

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

DfE Guidance [‘Schools COVID-19 operational guidance’](#) (27th August 2021)

PHE [‘Stay at home guidance for households with possible or confirmed coronavirus \(COVID-19\) infection’](#) (13th August 2021)

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

DfE statutory guidance [‘Keeping children safe in education’](#) (18th January 2021)

DfE Guidance [‘COVID-19; test kits for schools and FE providers’](#) (22nd April 2021)

9. POLICY REVIEW RECORD

This policy will be reviewed every two years unless there is a change in legislation		
Created: March 2020	By:	Joanna Copland, Vice Principal
Latest Review: 28 th August 2021	By:	Joanna Copland, Vice Principal
Approved: August 2021	By:	Tobyn Thomas, Ben Thomas, Principals Simon O’Malley, Head, Thomas’s Battersea Prep School

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