



# Guidance for Parents

## September 2021



## Updated Guidance

The Department for Education has published new guidance on the measures that schools should take from September 2021. The guidance can be found in full [here](#)

Schools will continue to:

- Complete a risk assessment to identify risks of infection and how these will be reduced
- Ensure good hygiene (Frequent hand washing, catch it, kill it, bin it)
- Maintain appropriate cleaning regimes
- Keep occupied spaces well ventilated
- Carry out twice weekly home testing of staff using lateral flow tests
- Follow public health advice on testing, self-isolation and managing confirmed cases

Changes include:

- An end to the use of bubbles and staggered start and finish times
- An end to the wearing of face coverings in secondary schools
- The removal of the need for children and double vaccinated adults to self-isolate if they have been in close contact with someone who has COVID-19
- Schools no longer have a role in Track & Trace

Despite the change in guidance, infection rates in Tower Hamlets remain high and therefore the school has chosen to continue the use of some restrictions designed to minimize contacts, where they do not impact on the quality of education that we are able to provide

Current government guidance states:

**Coronavirus remains a serious health risk. You should stay cautious to help protect yourself and others.**

- Meet outside, or open windows and doors for indoor visitors
- If you think you have symptoms stay at home and take a PCR test
- Wear face coverings in crowded places and on public transport
- Check in to venues when you go out
- Wash your hands with soap regularly, and for at least 20 seconds
- Get vaccinated

## Before Your Child Leaves Home in The Morning

Please check your members of your household for any of the following symptoms:

- a high temperature;
- a new, continuous cough;
- a loss of, or change to the sense of smell or taste.

Anyone who has symptoms must remain at home and self isolate

A PCR test should be arranged to check whether or not they are positive for COVID-19.

If any adult members of the household have not been fully vaccinated, they too must self-isolate.

Adults who are double vaccinated and other children in the household, who do not have symptoms, can attend work or school as normal

If your child has symptoms please call the school attendance line on 020 8980 3020 before 9.30am to let us know that they are not coming to school. We will ask you to let us know the result of their PCR test.

### **We recommend the following morning routine:**

- Check all members of the household for symptoms
- Ask everyone to wash their hands before leaving the house
- Only one adult to accompany the children to school
- Walk or cycle to school if possible
- Do not bring unnecessary items. The children only need to bring a water bottle.
- **PE bags** should be brought in **every Monday** and will remain in school for the week.
- Book bags are only in use for Y5 and Y6.
- If your child has glasses, please ensure these come to school each day.



## Travel to and from school

We encourage parents, staff and pupils to walk, use a scooter or cycle to school if at all possible.

If possible, avoid using public transport at peak times. Face coverings are still required at all times on Transport for London services, including buses, tube & DLR.

Children and families should try to maintain distancing whenever possible to minimize contacts.

Government advice on safer travel must be followed and be found [here](#).

## Morning Drop Offs

- To minimize contact, parents will not be allowed to access the school site.
- Staff will be at the school gates waiting to receive the children.
- Staff by the gate will wear a face covering. As the area by the school gate is likely to be busy we would advise parents to also wear a face covering
- To help reduce congestion children can be dropped off between 8.50-9.00am
- Once the child has been dropped off, parents should leave the area immediately.
- Year 6 are encouraged to come to school on their own. If parents bring them, they should only be accompanied to the corner of St Leonard's Street. Year 6 children should not bring siblings.
- Staff will direct the children. KS2 children will wash their hands and go straight to class; Reception & KS1 children will line up and be escorted to the KS1 playground
- We need to get the children in quickly. If you have a query please call or email the school, as staff will not be able to discuss any issues during drop off.
- Please ensure your child arrives at school by 9am.  
Lates will be recorded and referred to the Attendance Welfare Advisor

## End of Day Collection

- Children in **Reception and KS1** (Years 1 & 2) will be dismissed at **3.20pm**
- Parents of KS1 children will be able to enter the KS2 playground at 3.20pm.
- Please line up next to the sign with your child's class on it.
- Children with siblings in KS2 can remain in the ball court with their teacher until 3.30pm
- Children in KS2 (Years 3, 4, 5 & 6) will be dismissed at 3.30pm
- We encourage parents to allow Year 6 pupils to go home alone if possible to reduce the number of parents on site
- We ask that parents of KS2 children do not enter the KS2 playground until 3.30pm to allow time for KS1 parents to leave the site.
- Please line up next to the sign with your child's class on it.
- We ask that once parents have collected their child/ren, they exit the site immediately
- Parents should distance as much as possible and should consider wearing a face covering
- If teachers need to update parents on an incident during the day, parents will be informed before home time and told where to wait
- If parents need to speak to the child's teacher they should call or email the school to arrange an appointment.
- Children under the age of 16 are not permitted to collect children from the school
- As these routines are new, we would appreciate your patience at this time which will help us dismiss your children safely.

### **It is important that pupils are collected on time.**

When children are not collected on time their teacher will need to supervise them within their classroom. This prevents them from completing their work and places them at greater risk if they have to travel on more crowded public transport as a result of leaving late. After 3:45 any children who have not been collected will join the wrap around care and parents/carers will be charged.

**We will continue to review collection arrangements to ensure they are working effectively and we are happy with the safety precautions in place.**

### Learning resources

For individual and very frequently used equipment, such as pencils and pens, staff and pupils will have their own items that are not shared. Resources can be shared across the year group but steps will be taken to reduce the number of children they come into contact with, for example by using name labels. Equipment will be cleaned regularly, along with all frequently touched surfaces. Where resources need to be shared between year group bubbles, such as sports, art and science resources, the equipment will either be cleaned meticulously or be stored for a period of 72 before being used by a different bubble.

### Library Books

Children will take 2 library books home fortnightly. We will send a reminder text to let you know which Monday they need to return. Once returned to school, they will be placed in a box and left for 72 hours before returning to the shelves.

### Coats and Bags

Children will need to bring a coat every day – this can be stored in the class cloakroom. We ask that children bring their **PE kits to school on Monday**; these will remain in school **until Friday**, when the children will take them home to be washed. They should then be brought back the following Monday. If your child wears glasses, please ensure these are brought into school with them in the morning. No other items are required to come in.

### School uniform

It is an expectation that all children will wear the approved school uniform.

Please visit the school website for more information-

<https://oldpalaceprimary.co.uk/parents/uniforms/>

As windows need to be kept open to provide good ventilation, classrooms may be colder than normal. Please provide additional layers such as a vest or T-shirt that the children can wear under their school jumper to keep them warm.

### Face coverings

Primary school children are not required to wear face coverings and so should not bring them into school. Staff are advised not to wear a face covering in the classroom, but are advised to wear one in crowded indoor spaces.

### Playtimes

Reception will have their breaks in the Reception outdoor area

Children in KS1 will have their playtime in the KS1 playground

The use of the KS2 playground will be staggered so that Years 3 & 4 and Year 5 & 6 use it at different times. This will help minimise the number of contacts.

Each day different classes will take part in adult led sports activities on a rota basis. This will further limit the mixing of the children during playtimes.

## School lunches.

Reception children will continue to be served in their classroom

All other year groups will now eat in the dining hall.

Only children from one phase will use the dining hall at any given time. The tables and chairs will be disinfected after each phase has finished

The children will not be sat directly facing one another and will always wash/sanitise their hands before and after eating.

## Packed lunches

If you choose to send a packed lunch for your child, it needs to be sent with your child in the morning in a sealed container along with all the cutlery the child needs. Their meal needs to be easy for them to manage on their own. Please remember we are a healthy school so please follow the guidance on our school website for what can/cannot be included in a packed lunch.

## Availability of water on site

All children should bring their own water bottle to school each day. The children will have the opportunity to refill their bottle during the day, so if it still contains water when they bring it home, this does not mean that the children have not been drinking water during the day.

Playground water fountains are currently not being used.

## Enhanced cleaning regimes

Enhanced cleaning systems are in place, including use of a cleaner during the school day to ensure more frequent cleaning is taking place. We pay particular attention to those surfaces that are frequently touched like door handles and banisters. All classroom surfaces are disinfected during lunchtime before the children return for the afternoon session.

## The importance of fresh air and good ventilation

Higher lever windows and doors will be left open throughout the day to provide good ventilation.

## Behaviour

Some changes have been made to our behaviour policy to support safety procedures. The policy can be found on the school website.

Our Old Palace values and ethos remain unchanged, and children are expected to uphold them. In addition to our Old Palace golden rules, children must be aware of the following expectations:

- Avoid unnecessary physical contact;
- Use their own specific equipment (including resources);
- Not share any food, drinks, cups or water bottles;
- Work, eat and play in our designated group and minimise contact with children from other groups (including in the playground, anywhere on the school site and on their way to and from school)



- Move around school as instructed by their teacher/adult and avoiding other people
- Never cough, sneeze or spit towards another person; catch all coughs and sneezes in a tissue and throw it away (catch it, bin it, kill it), then wash their hands
- Wash hands frequently (including whenever asked to), with soap and water for 20 seconds (e.g. by singing Happy Birthday twice) or with hand sanitiser if soap and water are not available.

### Broad and balanced curriculum

From September 2021, the school will be teaching the full curriculum

Many of the previous restrictions around PE, Dance, Drama, Music and Singing have been removed. When taught indoors, PE, Dance and Singing will take place in the school halls to provide space for distancing and good ventilation.

### Assemblies

Assembly will take place in phases: KS1, LKS2 & UKS2, to help minimise the number of contacts.

### Mental Wellbeing

Staff have training to help them identify pupils who may be suffering emotional distress. We understand that pupils may be experiencing a variety of emotions in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, such as anxiety, stress, grief or low mood. Staff will therefore remain vigilance in order to identify pupils who may benefit from additional support. We will be introducing weekly PHSE lesson this academic year, instead of holding Feelings Week. These will help pupils to consolidate their understanding of healthy lifestyles and relationships.



### Remote Learning

Hopefully, we will not need to switch to remote learning this academic year. We will continue to provide a learning pack for pupils who are self isolating, because they have symptoms isolating, or have tested positive for COVID-19

### Attendance

From September 2021 all children are expected to be back in school full time, and to arrive on time. It is important that your child attends school, as any days missed impact on their learning.

If your child is unable to attend school, please call school before 9.30am and leave a message on the absence line to let us know why your child is unable to attend.

If the absence is likely to continue for more than 3 days, we ask that on the third day, parents provide medical evidence, such as emailing a photograph of any prescribed medication, clearly showing the label. Please note that in cases of vomiting or diarrhoea, children are not permitted to return to school until 48 hours after the last episode, in order to prevent infection.

Should you need any support with attendance, please contact the school and our Parent Workers will be happy to help. Further assistance is also available from local authority Attendance & Welfare Advisor.

## Wrap Around Care

We will be offering a limited number of spaces in the breakfast club for parents who require childcare to attend work, education or to access medical treatment. The cost per session is £2.

We will also be offering a general after school club which runs until 5pm. The cost per session is £2. Please contact the school office if you wish to reserve a place at the Breakfast or After School club.

If parents are making use of external childcare providers or out of school extra-curricular activities for their children, it is important that they limit the amount of providers/setting they are using, ideally limiting this to just one, to help minimize the number of people their child is coming into contact with. Parents should also check that the provider has in place their own protective measures in line with government guidance. Please see this link to [guidance for parents](#)

## Educational Visits & Swimming

Trips will resume this term and are an important part of the children's learning.

A risk assessment is completed as part of the trip planning process. This includes assessing the risks related to COVID-19 and identifying how these can be minimized.

Weekly swimming lessons will also resume. These will take place on a Monday morning. Year 5 pupils will go swimming this term. Year 4 will go swimming in the Spring & Summer terms.

## School office

The school office will remain closed to visitors. Parents should do all they can to ensure that children have all that they need for the day (e.g. water bottles) at the start of the day and if there is an instance where their child needs to be collected at a different time, they should telephone the school to make arrangements. A member of staff will then arrange to meet the parent with their child at the main gate.

All communication should be either by calling the school office on 0208 980 3020 or by emailing [admin@oldpalace.towerhamlets.sch.uk](mailto:admin@oldpalace.towerhamlets.sch.uk).

The office will be able to make appointments for parents to meet with staff onsite. Parents will not be able to enter the school building without an appointment.



## Support for Parents

The school remains committed to supporting parents through workshops, coffee morning and individual support from the school's Parent Workers. In order to minimize contacts, initially these will continue to be delivered virtually using Zoom.

Tower Hamlets also provides a wide range of support for families. Details of the support available can be found [here](#). This includes a webinar on **Wednesday 8 September, 12.30pm to 1.30pm** where they will give parents the chance to learn more about the safety measures in use in schools from September, and to ask questions and hear from local decision-makers and public health expert.

## Managing infections in the school

If your child has attended school and tests positive for COVID-19, please contact the school to let us know.

Although schools no longer have a role in Track & Trace, should a positive case be confirmed for a member of staff or a pupil attending the school, we will write to the parents of children who may have been in close contact with them, to inform them of the situation and to advise that they may wish to arrange a PCR tests for their child to check they have not been infected. In the meantime, children should attend school as normal, unless they develop symptoms



Children with symptoms of COVID 19 must self- isolate at home. A PCR test should be arranged to confirm whether or not they have been infected with COVID-19

Other children in the household and adults who have been double vaccinated. No longer need to self-isolate. Those who are not fully vaccinated, will be required to self-isolate as before.

If a child develops symptoms during the school day, they will be taken to the isolation area and parents will be contacted to come and collect them. Only the child with symptoms needs to go home, their siblings can remain in school.

As parents are required to collect their child immediately, should they begin to show symptoms, we ask that parents ensure that we have the correct contact details for them, remain contactable throughout the school day and have arrangement in place for a member of their household to come and collect the child at short notice, should this be required.

If the result of the PCR test is negative, please send a copy of the child's result to the school. Once we receive this confirmation they will be able to return to school.

If the test result is positive, please inform the school immediately. The child will need to self-isolate from the day of onset of their symptoms and at least the following 10 full days. If they did not have symptoms, they must isolate for 10 full days from the date the test was taken.

Children and double vaccinated adults in the household no longer need to self-isolate even if someone in their household has tested positive, unless they develop symptoms or are told to self-isolate by the NHS Track and Trace. Any adults in the household who are not fully vaccinated must self -isolate for 10 days, as before

**(PCR) Tests can be booked by calling NHS 119 or be visiting [Get a NHS test for coronavirus](#)**

## Weekly Testing

Staff working at the school will continue to be asked to test twice weekly at home using a lateral flow test to help prevent COVID-19 entering the school

Children under 12 should not complete lateral flow tests, but we request that the adults in each family also complete a lateral flow test at home twice a week. Home testing kits are available free of charge from most pharmacies.

**Twice weekly home testing by parents is an important measure to help keep the children and staff safe.**

# PARENTS FAQ

## **What are the Covid-19 symptoms?**

Anyone with a new continuous cough, fever or a change or loss in their sense of taste or smell should get tested right away. Visit <https://nhs.uk/coronavirus> for more information

## **What should I do if I develop Covid-19 symptoms?**

Stay at home and book a PCR test by calling 119 or visiting [Get a NHS test for coronavirus](#)

## **What should I do if one of my children develops Covid-19 symptoms?**

Keep the child at home and book a PCR test for them by calling 119 or visiting [Get a NHS test for coronavirus](#). Any adult members of the household who are not fully vaccinated must also self-isolate. Children and double vaccinated adults no longer need to isolate.

## **What happens if my child gets Covid-19?**

They must isolate for 10 days from when they started to display symptoms or from the day of the test if they have no symptoms.

Any adult members of the household who are not fully vaccinated must also self-isolate for 10 days. Children and double vaccinated adults no longer need to isolate.

## **How is the risk of Covid-19 infection managed?**

At Old Palace we have put in place several measures to support social distancing, good hygiene and prevent the spread of the virus. This includes but is not limited to:

- Working to ensure that children and staff do not attend school, or get sent home, if they have Covid-19 symptoms - and get tested.
- Regular handwashing
- 'Respiratory hygiene' such as covering your mouth when coughing or sneezing and employing the 'Catch it. Bin it. Kill it.' tissue method, followed by handwashing
- Frequent cleaning
- Measure to reduced contacts, such as phase assemblies & staggered KS2 playtimes

## **What is the risk to my child/ren from Covid-19?**

For the vast majority of children, the benefits of being in school far outweigh the very low risk from Covid-19. Children appear to have a milder course of infection than adults. Most children have mild symptoms or no symptoms at all. Deaths in children due to Covid-19 are extremely rare.

## **Do I have to send my child to school?**

Yes, attendance is mandatory and children are no longer required to self isolate unless advised to do so by NHS Track & Trace.

## **Does my child need to wear a face covering in school?**

No. Children arriving at school wearing a face covering will be asked to remove it. It can be safely stored and reapplied at the end of the school day if parents so wish.

## **How should we travel to school each day?**

Where possible, you should avoid public transport and walk, cycle or scoot to and from school.

If you must use a private vehicle, please do not park in St Leonard's Street as this will cause congestion and make distancing more difficult.

**Will temperatures be checked as a precaution?**

We will no longer be checking the children's temperatures as they enter the school site.

**What happens if we are late to school?**

When children arrive at school there is a routine in place. Children arriving late would disrupt this routine and make them and their classmates less prepared to start their learning. It is therefore essential that your child arrives on time.

**What happens if someone at the school gets Covid-19?**

The school will inform the parents of children who may have come into close contact with another pupil or member of staff who has tested positive. They will be advised to arrange a PCR test to check whether or not their child has been infected. In the meantime, their child should continue to attend school as normal

In the case of a high number of positive cases, public health will advise the school whether or not a temporary return to restrictions, such as bubbles or a switch to remote learning is required.

**How will the school minimize contacts?**

Although we will no longer be using year group bubbles, we do not wish the children to mix more than they need to, as this increases the chance of transmission. Wherever possible, children will not mix with children from different phases. The use of phase assemblies, staggered KS2 playtimes and phase servings in the dining hall will support this

**Do staff and children still need to social distance?**

Although the government has removed the requirement to socially distance, staff and children will be encouraged to distance and avoid physical contact whenever possible. Activities which produce more aerosol, such as singing and PE will only take place in large spaces, such as the school halls. The arrangement of tables in classrooms will avoid pupils sitting face to face.

**What are the arrangements for first aid?**

Where possible first aid will be administered at the scene of the accident or in the child's classroom. As we wish to limit contacts, children will only be treated in the Medical Room in exceptional circumstances. Each class has a first aid kit.

If your child requires medication in school, please ensure that you have sent this in, checked it is still in date and have completed an administering medication consent form.

**Will the staff at Old Palace be tested?**

All staff working on site have been invited to take part in twice weekly testing. This is done at home using a lateral flow test and gives a result within 30 minutes. If a member of staff gets a positive result, they arrange a PCR test and self-isolate until they receive the result.

**Why does the school need our address and at least 2 emergency contact numbers?**

It is essential for the school to have your most up to date address and contact numbers in order for us to support NHS track and trace. Also, if your child is displaying symptoms we need to be able to get in contact with you quickly so the child can be collected as soon as possible.