

Covid-19 Framework for Return to School: Lent Term 2021

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Our approach

We are very much looking forward to welcoming back our staff and pupils for a full reopening of School on 8th March.

The principles that guided us when reopening in September remain central to the decisions we have made and will continue to make, namely to balance our responsibility for the health and welfare of the whole community with our wish to provide as full a School experience for our pupils as possible. We have to follow the stages of release from lockdown nationally and the restrictions that are in place for each stage, but we will do all we can to enable pupils and staff to look ahead optimistically to the start of the Summer Term and beyond.

Up-to-date operational guidance from the Government has been carefully scrutinised. Please see this link: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/966866/210224_Schools_guidance.pdf. The Covid-19 Addendum to the Safeguarding Policy, as well as to the School Rules can be found as separate pdfs on the Covid-19 website page. We will review these principles and their application in advance of the start of the Summer Term.

We have also confirmed our response to any adult or child showing symptoms of Covid-19. Any adult showing symptoms will be sent home to self-isolate while awaiting test results and to stay at home until free of infection if this returns positive. National test and trace mechanisms will be observed. Isolation will be available in Houses for pupils showing symptoms until any test result returns. Pupils testing positive

will be sent home until free of infection. For any who contract the virus and are unable to return home or go to family or guardians, we will care for them in the isolation facilities in School already identified and under preparation, separate from the Health Centre.

In order for us to be able to support each child and take all steps to keep the community safe from infection, parents are being asked to complete a health and welfare form in advance of their child's return to School.

Testing arrangements

The major change upon return is the introduction of testing for staff and pupils, which was ready to go in late December but put on pause when schools were closed. While 8th March is the date for schools to reopen, no pupil may go into their boarding House or class until they have had a negative asymptomatic lateral flow test. In order to start lessons for all on Monday, 8th March, we have put together a testing schedule from Friday 5th March onwards with boarders returning across Saturday and Sunday. You will have been sent details of this schedule from Susie Raby.

In line with Government guidance, all pupils will have two further supervised tests in school, 3-5 days apart, following which they will be issued with home tests to use themselves twice a week either at home or in their boarding House. School staff will be provided with home testing kits.

In addition, we retain use of the Samba II machine for rapid testing of symptomatic pupils, as throughout much of the Michaelmas Term.

Pupils living overseas

We fully understand that there are additional considerations for those parents living abroad and would want to give all the reassurance and practical help that we can.

For those of you whose children are now back in Oundle, we understand that may worry about what will happen if your child shows symptoms or indeed contracts the virus and is not able to go home or be looked after by family or guardians. We have identified isolation facilities within School to look after any children affected in this way.

It is important to recognise that this may be an unsettling time for children particularly if there is uncertainty about travel to and from School. Hsms and the pastoral team will work closely with the pupils to ensure that they have all the support that they need. Parents should always feel that they can raise concerns about their child with their child's Hsm or tutor at any time and we will also work closely with guardians where appropriate.

For those of you who have made the difficult decision to keep your child at home until the start of next term, please rest assured that we take very seriously our responsibility to ensure that your son our daughter has access to teaching and learning, pastoral care and co-curricular activity remotely.

We are largely retaining the Oundle Online timetable of 35 minute lessons with 10 minute breaks between. All lessons will be available live, with recorded versions available. Four lessons in the week have been moved back into Saturday mornings, and in their place we have designated Academic Surgeries time for pupils accessing remotely so that they can have one-to-one contact with their teachers. Details are within the Teaching and Learning section of the Reopening Framework.

As you know, quarantine is available in School from 6th April. Mrs Susie Raby remains your contact for these arrangements (lets@oundleschool.org.uk) and we are looking to facilitate Test to Release via the Health Centre.

Those of you who live in countries currently on the Government's so-called 'red list' will be relieved to know – as are we – that the Department for Education has now confirmed that children returning to boarding schools from these countries will after all be able to quarantine in their schools. There are strict protocols to observe, and we will make sure your son or daughter has the necessary documentation to keep with their passport when they travel. Please contact Mrs Susie Raby if you would like your child to be collected from the airport and to quarantine at Oundle at any stage between 6th April and the start of the Summer Term on the evening of 19th April; she will then ensure you have all the necessary information.

Term dates

We have made no further changes to term dates as scheduled, with a reminder that the end of the Lent Term 1pm on Friday 26th March.

School Life

The testing regime will give confidence that we are keeping the community free of infection, and with the continued reduction in cases of Covid-19 in England we very much hope that as we start the Summer Term we will be in a position to lift some restrictions. For now, however, we must remain cautious so that these three weeks can be as uninterrupted and calm as possible.

We nonetheless take very seriously our pupils' need to interact socially with their peers, and aim to continue House swaps for the Upper Sixth and year-group social time for all other year groups, as piloted at the end of the Michaelmas Term.

We will do all we can to ensure that the School environment feels welcoming and familiar, and to support all members of the community as they make the transition back to School. In the interests of the health and wellbeing of all in the School and Oundle town community, access to the town will remain limited to only that which is strictly necessary. Shops will remain out of bounds.

Risk assessed arrangements remain in place for all academic, pastoral and co-curricular activities, and pupils will be expected to adhere to the School's Covid-19 Addendum to the School Rules [hyperlink to be inserted] which gives clear instructions with regard to hygiene, distancing, and pupil whereabouts. Pupils will remain in pastoral 'households' and year group 'bubbles' and will be expected to be in Houses, in lessons or activities, or moving between the two according to carefully prescribed routes. When moving between classrooms and all locations, whether on or off school premises, they will be expected to wear masks, which they will always be required to have with them. Pupils will also be required to wear masks in lessons and non-sporting activities. They will remain in their year group location at break time, with Catering providing access to snacks and drinks. They must not return to Houses at break. Other free time will necessarily be House-based.

The School will continue to use the online Teams platform alongside the return to face-to-face academic, pastoral and co-curricular provision, to keep the community connected and to replace the need for larger or unnecessary gatherings. There will be no visitors, except to the Admissions Department, where visits will take place only when it is legitimate to do so within the stages of release from national lockdown.

Teaching and Learning

We are all excited to be welcoming pupils back into the classrooms after the last seven weeks of online lessons. However, we recognise that during the last twelve months, most pupils have only experienced thirteen weeks of in-person schooling. The switch back into a full School routine is therefore a daunting prospect, with feelings intensified for many who look forward to a Summer Term when assessments will be

significantly defining. These three weeks offer us a crucial transition period, where we can enjoy each other's company in a stimulating academic environment, with a lively pace and opportunities across the whole curriculum, with a welcome safety net to help us all reacclimatise.

For the remainder of this term, we shall retain the basic model of our Lent Term 2021 online day. Lessons will be taught face-to-face by set teachers in classrooms and will continue to be 35 minutes long in the main, with 15-minute extensions in some subjects. Teachers will continue to vary the format of learning and the nature of tasks expected of pupils during lessons. Ten-minute breaks between lessons will enable pupils and staff alike to move from lesson to lesson in good time and will facilitate concentration for each full lesson – thereby re-establishing and retraining the skills necessary for a return to 50-minute lessons in the Summer Term.

The return to School will see Saturday lessons and the full prep timetable reinstated, with a greater expectation that pupils will find appropriate time outside of lessons to work independently on work they have been set. Pupils will be afforded time in the mornings and afternoons for this, with some work expected in the evenings too. However, the timetable will see a slightly shorter School day overall, so there will continue to be plenty of opportunity for all to be involved in the wide co-curriculum of activities.

For pupils who do not return to School immediately, lessons will be live streamed via Teams. Pupils who are unable to join lessons at the scheduled times will be able to access the recorded class at a more suitable time. We shall also be offering dedicated online Academic Surgeries at suitable times on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays, for which pupils in distant time-zones will have priority. All pupils will continue to be able to access 1:1 help from their teachers and/or other members of staff by using the Chat function. We shall continue to use OneNote and the rest of the Microsoft suite of programs for our core delivery, including the use of the Assignments function as a means to track work that is set.

The reinstatement of Saturday lessons means that the order of lessons during the week has again changed slightly, although the broad pattern is the same as at the start of Term. The School day will start at 08:30.

Indicative daily timetable

<i>Morning lessons</i>	<i>Monday-Saturday</i>			
	start	end		
<i>House</i>	08:30	08:50		Online Academic Surgeries
Period 1	08:50	09:25 on M/W/F		08:30–09:20 T/Th (priority to GMT +3 or more)
Period 2	09:35	10:10		
Period 3	10:20	10:55		
<i>Break</i>	10:55	11:25		
Period 4	11:25	12:00		
Period 5	12:10	12:45	Online Academic Surgeries	
		13:00	12:15–13:00 W (priority to GMT –3 or more)	
		for L6 (T) Fifth & Fourth (M to F) Third (M/F) Second & First (T)		
<i>Afternoon lessons</i>	<i>This varies by year group</i>			
	Sixth Form	Fifth & Fourth Form	Third Form	Second & First Form
Period 6	14:30–15:05 M/F	14:30–15:20 M/F	14:30–15:20 M/W/F	14:30–15:20 T/Th 14:30–15:05 F
Period 7	15:15–15:50 M/F	—	15:30–16:20 W	15:30–16:20 T/Th 15:15–15:50 F

Lessons will restart at 14:30 on teaching afternoons, to allow time for different households to have lunch, and will finish at various times according to year group.

Non-returning pupils are expected to attend all scheduled lessons where reasonably possible. Where time-zone differences make attendance impractical or impossible, teachers will record their lessons for playback later. Pupils are reminded that they are not permitted to make their own private recordings of lessons.

Pupils are expected to be properly equipped for their lessons: teachers will expect them to have what they might normally need for a lesson, including writing equipment. We are not able to share equipment or resources: pupils should notify their teachers immediately if they find they do not have or cannot find what they need.

All pupils are requested to bring a laptop computer with them to School, to help them to continue to access their online resource libraries. We would ask that pupils also return to School with a set of headphones, to use for private study in public spaces.

We remain confident of our ability to deliver our broad and flexible curriculum during the period of these arrangements. We have been pleased by the progress that we have made with our revised schemes of work. Inevitably, the lock-down period has meant the loss of some learning opportunities, but our experience from the Summer Term 2020 is that we shall be able to regain these quickly. Pupils will continue to study all their subject options and teachers will again be quick to identify any need for targeted catch-up work or revision of topics. Assessment for Learning is a cornerstone of our planning and delivery and allows us to respond swiftly to any academic needs that arise.

Public examinations

The last week has seen several announcements about pupil assessment this Summer. All public examinations have been cancelled in the UK, and an initial brief has been issued by Ofqual. We now await further detailed information from the relevant examination boards, which is promised to guide us towards the formulation of Teacher Assessed Grades (TAGs) next term. We undertake to give an update on proposed procedures as soon as we have further details from the boards between now and the end of term.

It is clear that we shall be required to provide evidence that shows the standard of pupils' work at the time of submission of grades. Upper Sixth and Fifth Form pupils should therefore anticipate periods of formal assessment next term, with more recent performance more heavily weighted in the overall scheme. We are committed to giving pupils the opportunity to practise and test their examination technique, and are equally pleased that we shall have the choice over the content of assessment. We shall be therefore be giving all examination-year pupils and their parents full and detailed guidance about study topics and our approach to assessment in advance of the Easter holidays.

Assessments this term

The first seven weeks of the Lent Term have seen an intense period of distance learning for all pupils. Even under normal circumstances, summative assessment is a natural part of our schemes of work: we wish to do the same once pupils have returned to School, as a check-up on what they have learnt, and as a guide both to them and to teachers on the areas that need focus and practice in advance of further assessment in the Summer Term.

Pupils in the Upper Sixth and Fifth Forms should therefore anticipate some low-key assessment during lessons nearer the end of term. They will be given full details of content, and should be reassured that these tests will not carry any more significant weighting in the formulation of TAGs than other Block Tests or timed assessments that they have taken over the preceding eighteen months.

Pastoral Care

We recognise that whilst most children are looking forward to returning to School, there will be challenges for them after an extended time away. Each pupil will have had different experiences and spent considerable time away from friends and from Oundle. Pupils will continue to meet with their Tutors regularly and there will also be regular contact between the Tutor and parents. This will be the case for children who are returning physically to School as well as for those who will continue to access remote learning.

Communication between pupils, home and School will be central to each pupil's successful reintegration into School life. We ask parents and pupils to communicate any worries or concerns with us so that we can work with them to find a solution and to enable a smooth return to School.

We are asking you all to fill in a welfare form before your child returns to School, and also for those who are staying at home overseas. It may be that they found lockdown very difficult, or there were challenging circumstances to deal with, or they have particularly anxieties about coming back to School or about not being able to do so. It is important that we are aware so that we can support them. Information will be passed on to your child's Hsm so that they can take the lead in the pastoral care of your child, working closely with your child's Tutor.

There is a range of support networks for the pupils beyond the House as well. Central to this is the support offered by the Emotional Wellbeing Team under Natalie Jarvis and the Health Centre under Sylvia Meadows. There will be strong support as usual from the Chaplaincy, and services in Chapel will resume with choral singing but, sadly, with congregational singing not yet allowed.

Co-curriculum

We aim to offer as much as we safely can whilst working within government guidelines.

Up until Easter, the programme will be broadly in line with that of the Michaelmas Term, with year group bubbles remaining in operation. Our working assumption is that, after Easter, activities can start to take place with pupils from different bubbles and, across the term, we will be making a phased return to sports fixtures and cultural performances.

Charities

Each Friday afternoon there will continue to be a drop-in session on Teams for those wishing to undertake a fundraising initiative to be given guidance and support. A design competition in aid of the 2020 Big Give winner, Ace Projects, will be launched across the school. Entries will all be online. There will also be weekly face-to-face meetings for the pupils proposing Oundle Charity Ventures.

CCF

CCF training will pick up where it left off at the end of the Michaelmas Term. Year groups will remain separate, and the training will predominantly take place outdoors. We are seeking permission from the MOD to reopen the small and full bore ranges for the Army Section.

For those accessing learning online, there will be Wednesday Afternoon Challenges, covering a range of life skills from cookery to crosswords, with pupils' attendance encouraged.

Community Action

Community Action will run eighteen different activities, all aimed at providing service for the wider community. For pupils with us in Oundle, Community Action will return to live face-to face sessions. Pupils not in Oundle will be encouraged to join us through Microsoft Teams.

Drama

Over the next three weeks, the Stahl's weekly 'Playgroups' will continue online. Guests include the Production Manager for the opening and closing ceremonies at the 2022 Commonwealth Games, a Playwright and an Olivier Award-Winning sound designer. Alongside this, the Stahl team will begin preparations for an ambitious whole School production loosely based on The Canterbury Tales. Rehearsed in discrete year group bubbles, we hope to rehearse and perform the piece as a whole as restrictions are lifted after Easter. After more than a year of no School productions we want to re-launch theatre at Oundle with a bang!

Duke of Edinburgh

We will be continuing with all three awards: Bronze, Silver and Gold. Live face-to-face preparatory sessions will restart, and these will also be available remotely.

While we are still awaiting confirmation from the Duke of Edinburgh scheme, our intention is to run two practice expeditions during the Easter holidays.

The Silver Award expedition is programmed for the start of the Easter holidays, using School grounds as our overnight base. For those who are unable to attend due to Covid-19 restrictions, our intention is to provide an alternative time to complete the expedition in the final week of the summer term.

The Gold Award expedition is programmed for the end of the Easter holidays. Meanwhile, Bronze Award expeditions are programmed for during the Summer Term.

Music

Individual music lessons will restart in person for those in Oundle and will be live online for those elsewhere.

Ensembles will also come together in person once more. For the rest of this term, pupils will physically gather within year group bubbles only. However, we also aim to work across year groups by using blended teaching; pupils will be able to join ensembles online as well as in person.

The Hepburn Music Festival is already underway, with entries being accepted and a series of masterclasses scheduled. We are also working towards a 'Bach to School' music project, with online recordings of Schola Cantorum, Strings and Oundle Consort being made available in time for Easter.

Sport

We are delighted to be welcoming pupils back for sport and we will offer as full a Lent Term sports programme as Covid-19 and National Governing Body regulations allow.

Until Easter, sport will run in year group bubbles and there will be internal competitions, rather than external ones. Both in our sports sessions and curriculum PE, there will be a focus on easing pupils back into their chosen sports, highlighting the importance of fitness, skill development and the camaraderie of being together. We will again deliver extension and development sessions for those on our Dedicated Athlete Programme and, where possible, look to offer pre-season training opportunities in a number of our summer sports.

The Oundle School Sports Centre will also be open to pupils for sports sessions and designated free time slots, both as year group bubbles and individual House activities. This will include the fitness suite, sports hall and swimming pool.

For those pupils online, we will continue to offer a mix of live fitness classes alongside recorded online sports sessions for those in different time zones, offering up skills, drills and lots of training opportunities. House Strava running groups will continue, as will the School Strava running group for those wishing to join our cross-country club for weekly sessions, aimed at all levels and abilities.

Boarding

Each senior Boarding House will, for the next three weeks, remain divided into two households as during the Michaelmas Term. We hope very much to be able to rejoin the two into one household for the start of the Summer Term.

In the event of a child showing symptoms, he or she will be moved to an isolation room in House and tested for Covid-19. The other children in their household will need to isolate in House until the results of the test are known. If necessary they will also then be tested. If a child tests positive within a household, current guidance is that the other pupils within that household will have to isolate within the household for 10 days. Any child who tests positive for Covid-19 may be collected from School and go home or to their guardian's house for the duration of their isolation period. However, we recognise that this may not be possible for all and any pupil unable to go home will be moved to a central isolation space where they will be cared for by staff.

We will be providing hand sanitiser throughout the School but we would recommend that children bring their own hand sanitiser as well. Pupils will not be required to wear face coverings in House but will be allowed to do so if they wish. We recommend that they bring 7 washable masks and a box of disposable masks.

Health Centre

In line with the organisation of hospitals, we will maintain our Health Centre as a Covid-free environment. The medical care of all boarding pupils will nonetheless remain the responsibility of our Lead Nurse, Sylvia Meadows, supported by the Nurses and Matrons, as well as the Lakeside medical practice in Oundle. We will be following NHS guidance regarding medical appointments with the nurses and the doctors. This will mean that more appointments will be conducted online but, if deemed medically necessary, pupils will have a face to face appointment.

We have prepared an isolation area in each House and any child who is symptomatic will stay there whilst we have them tested. If the test is positive the pupil's parents will be asked to collect the child and take them home wherever possible, and if not possible the child will be moved to our central isolation space, separate from the Health Centre.

The Emotional Wellbeing Team has supported staff and pupils wonderfully over the past year and will continue to do so. Pupils may book an appointment with any member of the team via the School's intranet.

Contingency in case of outbreak

Our operational model is one whereby each pupil is a member of a 'household'. For day pupils, the household is their family and for boarders, it is a defined division of their House. Pupils will be encouraged to observe social distancing wherever possible.

Each pupil is also a member of a year group 'bubble', in which social distancing is observed, direct contact is minimised, and the number of different contacts strictly limited.

Should there be a confirmed case of Covid-19 in a 'household', pupils will be restricted to that household for 10 days. Day pupils will stay at home and boarders will remain within the boarding House and grounds and work from their studies. Meals, social interaction and all other care will be available as normal.

Should there be a confirmed case within a 'bubble', we will take advice from the local health protection team as to which members of that bubble should be sent back to their household to self-isolate. It is our hope that the measures put in place to ensure social distancing within teaching bubbles, and to reduce the number of different contacts, will mean that very few pupils will have to return to their household in this situation.

Where individuals or groups of pupils need to self-isolate, or there is a lockdown requiring pupils to remain in their household, we will be in a position immediately to provide remote teaching and learning.

Teams will also provide the platform for meetings with Tutors and co-curricular activity for those pupils who are accessing their education remotely because of lock-down or necessary self-isolation.

Fees

Thank you again for paying this term's fees in full and for your patience whilst we determine our fees for the Summer Term. The School met with a number of the Governors on Wednesday of this week to review the situation, in advance of final decisions being reached at the full Governing Body meeting on 17th March.

The position remains as it was in our message of 8th January within the Oundle Online 2021 framework. There remains uncertainty about the length of time the School will be operating its remote learning model and of the savings we can make over the Lent Term, but our intention remains to balance the savings we will have been able to make with the value of the offer.

In addition:

- Savings made during the Michaelmas Term will be added to those from the Lent Term when determining the total funds available for disbursement to parents through a discount to the Summer Term's fees.
- In reaching a final decision, the Governors' approach will be to look carefully at the value of the offering across each section of the School's pupil body.
- The effects of the pandemic are likely to endure for some time. In considering fees for the Summer Term, and beyond, the Governors will balance fairness to parents now against the need to ensure we can continue to offer the highest quality of education into the future.
- The Chairman will write to you on or about 19th March with final details of the discount to be applied to the fees for the Summer Term, as well the approach taken.
- Details of the fees for the start of the academic year 2021/22 will be sent to you in June.

Working assumptions for the Summer Term

In order to help all of our School community to look ahead optimistically, below are some of the initial working assumptions for the Summer Term. It is important to note that all assumptions remain subject to change. Other key aspects, such as parental visits, external speakers and audiences for performances, remain uppermost in our planning.

For the Government's roadmap out of the current lockdown for England, please see this link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-response-spring-2021>

From the start of Term:

- One household per boarding House, with our approach for day Houses being guided by national school guidelines.
- Teaching will remain in bubbles, with this being kept under review.
- Co-curricular activities between bubbles will be permissible, including Sport, Drama and music, with appropriate measures in place.
- Social activities will remain within bubbles.
- Limited external sports fixtures will be run on a trial basis.

From 17 May:

- An increased number of fixtures, dependent on the success of the trial
- A fervent hope that we may be able to welcome parents to certain events and just possibly sooner than this date.

End of Term:

- Tentative preparations are being made for Speech Day and Leavers' Ball.

Oundle School Leadership Team
March 2021