

Our approach to welcoming and supporting more pupils and learners to return to our schools and college in September 2020

Updated 8 July 2020 following the Government's announcement for all children and young people to return to education in September 2020.

Ambitious about Autism, and our Schools Trust, run TreeHouse School, The Rise School and Ambitious College serving around 300 children and young people across London and the Home Counties.

During this challenging and rapidly changing time we are guided by our values, mission and by information, advice and guidance for education providers issued by the Government, Public Health England (PHE), Health and Safety Executive and other key bodies. When taking account of this guidance, our first consideration is the safety and well-being of our pupils, learners and staff.

On 2nd July the Government published [guidance](#) to support the return of children and young people back into full time education from September. The guidance was aimed at both mainstream and specialist settings, with additional [SEND specific guidance](#) published at the same time.

What has changed in relation to the new guidance?

The latest guidance to school and college leaders sets out the plans to safely return all children and young people to education in September 2020. There is a focus on 5 key areas:

- Public health advice to minimise the coronavirus risks
- School and College operations
- Curriculum, behaviour and pastoral support
- Assessment and accountability
- Contingency planning for local lockdowns

We are planning around these key areas to ensure a safe return to learning at school or college for all our pupils and learners. We will do so in a transparent manner, giving timely information to our pupils/learners, their families, our key partners and our staff.

Our key principles

Since the end of March our schools' and college's decision making has been guided by a set of principles. We have adapted these principles¹ as the situation and Government guidance has changed. This update is based on the latest Government guidance to prepare for all children and young people returning to education in September. Our key principles are:

- We will continue to put the safety of our pupils, learners and staff at the forefront of all we do;
- We will continue to follow Government guidance and keep our position under review;
- We will continue to ensure that each pupil/learner has an individualised, updated, Covid-19 Risk Assessment;
- Pupils and learners will learn in 'bubbles' with the same staff assigned to these bubbles, where possible;
- Pupils/learners and staff will not always be able to social distance within bubbles because of the support needs of our pupils and learners;
- Staff with peripatetic roles (e.g. Speech and Language Therapist, Occupational Therapist) will need to work in a number of bubbles. We will ensure we minimise the number of contacts these staff have;
- When outside of these bubbles, staff will practise social distancing;

¹ Version 2 was published on 12 May

- We will work in partnership with placing Local Authorities and parents and carers on an ongoing basis;
- We will work hard to have a 'settled September' to support transition back to the settings for pupils, learners and staff. To achieve this, we will have phased returns for all our pupils and learners.

Running a 'Covid Secure' school or college

The Government's guidance is clear that:

"While coronavirus (COVID-19) remains in the community, this means making judgements at a setting level about how to balance and minimise any risks from coronavirus (COVID-19) with providing a full educational experience for children and young people."

It is critical that our schools and college are 'Covid Secure' which includes:

- Having risk assessments in place for pupil/learners, staff and settings;
- Having the correct levels of trained staff in place to meet pupils/learners' needs safely;
- Ensuring pupils, learners and staff who have Coronavirus symptoms (or someone in their household that does) stay at home and follow Government guidance;
- Having robust hand-washing and respiratory hygiene in place;
- Enhanced cleaning arrangements;
- Engagement with the NHS track and trace system. This means that if a person has tested positive for Coronavirus within a 'bubble', pupils, learners and staff in that 'bubble' may be asked to self-isolate.
- Practicing social distancing when possible;
- Having the correct personal protective equipment (PPE) in place as needed.

The pupils and learners who attend our settings need specialist support tailored to their needs. They thrive in settings with a positive and supportive culture that prioritises their needs, safety and wellbeing, where the environment has been adapted and staff are trained and skilled in meeting their needs. They need personalised support to enable them to adapt to changes in routines or environment.

Our staff also benefit from a positive and supportive culture, experienced and competent leadership, a safe and secure environment and opportunities to learn and develop.

This is our priority as we welcome and support more pupils, learners and staff back to their school and college. Things will be different, as we continue to manage the risks posed by Covid-19, but our values and aims remain the same.

Advice for parents and carers

Alongside the guidance published for schools and colleges, the Government also published advice for [parents and carers](#).

We ask all parents and carers to work with us to balance the risks of managing Covid-19 alongside returning all pupils and learners back to education in September.

- If your child is unwell with Coronavirus symptoms (or someone else in the household has Coronavirus symptoms) or has been directed to self-isolate (e.g. through NHS track and trace), they must not come into school or college;
- If your child develops Coronavirus symptoms or is unwell at school or college, you must collect them as soon as possible;
- Pupils and learners who are of compulsory education age (aged 5 to 18 years) must attend their education settings during term-time and it's the legal duty of parents and carers to ensure they attend;

- Where pupils/learners are not able to attend their setting, due to clinical and/or public health advice, the school or college will support their parents/carers to provide learning and support virtually;
- Families may want to travel abroad over the summer period. Parents/carers should plan their holidays within school and college holidays and avoid absences during term time. In planning holidays, parents/carers are asked to note the [Government's travel guidance](#) on potential quarantine requirements for entering other countries and returning to the UK. Your child or young person will not be able to attend school or college during a quarantine period.

We recognise that this pandemic has turned the world upside down for many of our pupils/learners and families and routines and arrangements have been disrupted significantly which will have caused anxiety and distress. The planned transition back to full-time education may be causing further anxiety. Our schools and college will listen to concerns and work in partnership with pupils/learners and their families to put in place strategies to support a successful return to education.