



TAUNTON
SCHOOL

Ensuring the Safe Return to School for our International Boarders

Our Covid-Safe Strategy
Autumn Term 2020



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From The Headmaster

I would like to begin by extending my thanks to our current families for the support and positive feedback that you have provided for us at this unprecedented time.

I am sure that our current and prospective families have many questions about how Taunton School is preparing for a safe school environment for the Autumn Term, so I wanted to put all the key information into one document.

In drawing up our plans, we hope we have managed to anticipate and address potential concerns parents and pupils may have. Nevertheless, we will continue to communicate with all existing families as well as new starters between now and September, and we will be only too pleased to respond to any remaining questions or concerns you might have. We will ensure that your child has access to the exceptional educational opportunities, activities, facilities, and space of Taunton School without concern.

It is important to explain that the measures being taken across the UK by lockdown and the closure of businesses and schools are resulting in significant and hopefully lasting reductions in the infection rate of the virus. It is noteworthy that, in the UK, Somerset has one of the lowest infection rates of COVID-19 in the country and that Taunton School has no recorded cases. Although we look ahead to a positive future, we need to proceed with caution and put safety first.

At Taunton School we pride ourselves on having a truly global outlook. We are proud to be part of an environment which positively promotes respect, tolerance and understanding of all cultures. Please do contact me directly if you would like to discuss the contents of this brochure. In the meantime, I send you and your family my very best wishes, and I look forward to seeing your children progress on their Taunton School journey.



A handwritten signature in white ink, which appears to read 'Lee Glaser'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name 'Lee' and last name 'Glaser' clearly distinguishable.

Lee Glaser
Headmaster

Continuity Of Provision

Over the last few months of closure, Taunton School has shown that it can deliver online teaching and learning to an exceedingly high standard. Our model has allowed valuable interaction between students and teachers, and co-curricular activities have been successful.

The following information outlines some potential scenarios and steps Taunton School will take to ensure that all new and returning boarders are able to continue with their studies from the start of the Autumn term.

Scenario A Return to school as normal

We are confident that the school will reopen fully in September and that there will be no need for international students to go into quarantine. In this scenario the first day of term will be Tuesday 8th September with boarders returning on Monday 7th September. Full details of term dates can be found on our [website](#). The Boarding Schools Association is investigating the possibility of dedicated flights to the UK in the Autumn term for international boarders and we will publish more information on this as it becomes available.

Scenario B 14-day quarantine required for international arrivals

If a 14-day quarantine is still required by the UK Home Office in September we advise those students to attend our two-week Pre-Sessional Programme from Monday 24 August (arrivals from Friday 21 August). This will enable students to carry out their 14-day quarantine whilst receiving 25 hours of academic tuition per week before the term starts.

Students who are unable to attend this programme should arrive at the school between 5 – 7 September and spend 14 days in quarantine within a specially designated boarding house in school, with lessons being delivered remotely.

We will run a flexible academic programme to accommodate any international students who are unable to join us at the start of the academic year, due to travel restrictions or concerns. To bridge the gap, online learning will be available alongside physical schooling and critical pastoral relationships will be established. Students will also have access to our broad wellbeing and co-curricular programme.

We hope our flexible model will allow any international students, who cannot join at the start of the academic year, to benefit from a Taunton School education until they are able to safely travel to the School.

Scenario C The school is not able to open until November or January

In the unlikely event that there is further significant government lockdown and the school is unable to reopen in September, lessons will be delivered online until October half term or until the end of the Autumn term. Students will then join the school for face-to-face teaching and learning from 02 November, or from 05 January.

We will update our strategy in response to the latest developments both nationally and internationally.

Our Covid-Safe Strategy

The wellbeing of our pupils is at the heart of everything we do, and all decisions must be of direct benefit to them. As an IB World School, we are innovative, forward-thinking, and global in outlook. We are focused on ensuring that our international students integrate back into the UK, school life and lessons in a Covid-safe way.

We are following the Boarding School Association Covid-Safe Charter to comply with government rules and guidance, alongside a comprehensive and robust control strategy. Our Covid-safe strategy will allow us to continue offering excellence in all that we do.

We are confident we can test, track and trace pupils who have been infected with Covid-19.

We are investing in the appropriate provision of medical equipment for our community, as well as enhancing our robust hygiene practices.

Staff are being trained in infection control procedures and the site has been fully risk assessed.

We are implementing the appropriate physical distancing measures and enforcing them throughout the school.

We are providing a dedicated care centre facility to create comfortable, well supported areas for those requiring quarantine, those showing symptoms of Covid-19 or those who have tested positive.

We will identify and support all vulnerable members of the community.



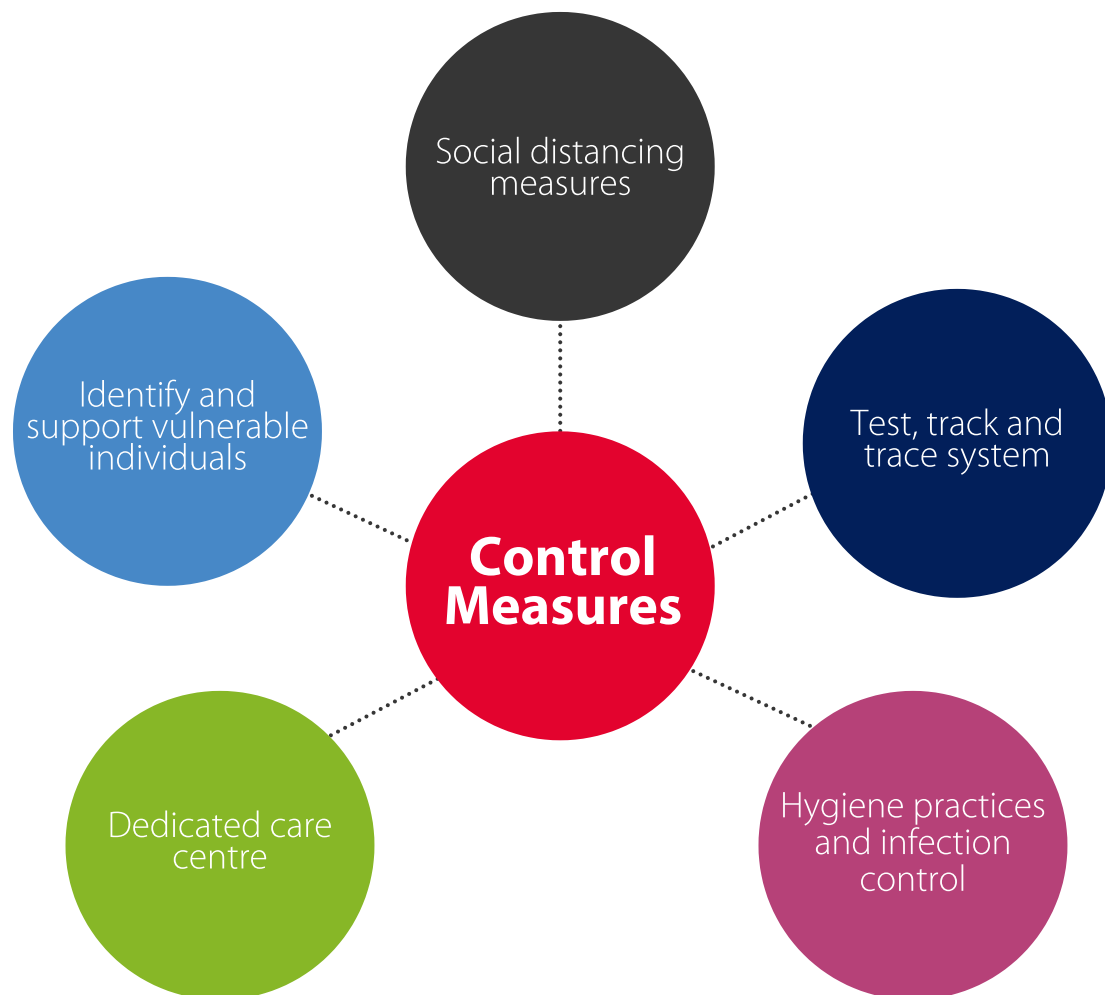
Our priority is always to ensure the continuing health, wellbeing and happiness of our pupils and staff. Dealing with the unprecedented impact of Covid-19 is one of the greatest challenges we have faced in our long history.

At Taunton School we pride ourselves on having a truly global outlook. We are innovative and forward thinking in our approach and have been able to draw on these strengths in tackling the current crisis. ”

Adrian Hallworth, Principal of International

Our Criteria For Reopening – Controls In Five Key Areas

We have a clear and detailed strategy for managing a safe return to school, focusing on control measures in five key areas. We are committed to providing an environment that significantly reduces any risk of infection.



Test, Track And Trace System

We will have a full test, track, and trace system in place for the start of the Autumn term. We aim to be able to test all members of the community who are showing symptoms or have recently arrived at school and obtain results quickly.

Our highly trained medical team, along with first aid trained house staff, will continually monitor the health and wellbeing of our students.

At night, each boarding house has members of staff who live on site and are trained to deliver first aid and manage medical emergencies.

We are in discussion with occupational health providers regarding the provision of testing kits being put in place at the school.

Thermometers will be readily available throughout the school and boarding houses.

If a member of staff displays any symptoms of Covid-19, they will be required to leave the school immediately and seek medical attention. Where necessary, the member of staff will be tested and if positive, they will be required to self-isolate at home for a period of 14 days before returning to work in line with government guidance.

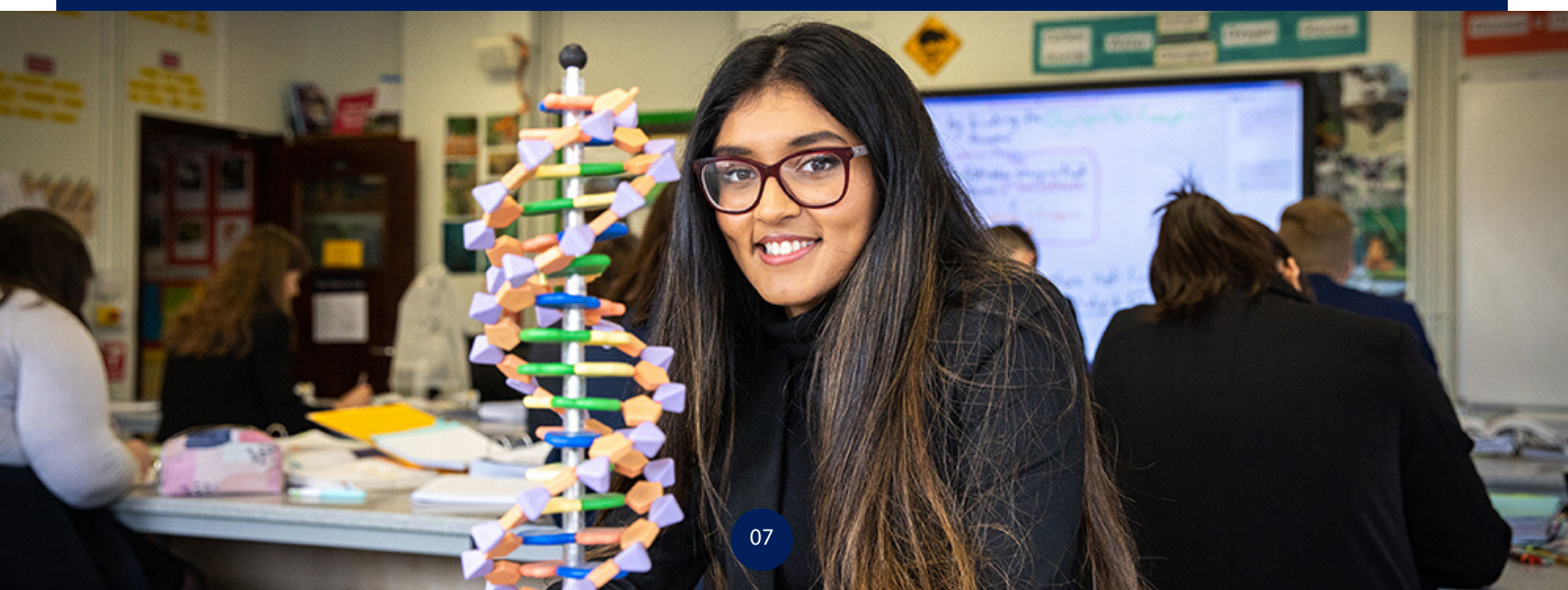
All visitors will have their temperature checked, and sign to provide assurance that they do not have symptoms of Covid-19.

All students and staff will have their temperature checked daily.

If a student shows symptom of Covid-19, they will first be assessed by one of our on-site nurses in our Health Centre.

Should testing be required, the student will be carefully and sensitively looked after by our medical team until the results of the test are known. If the test is negative, the student will return to lessons. If the test is positive, the student will be cared for by our medical team for the requisite period of quarantine. If the student is well enough to continue with lessons, these will be delivered remotely. Before returning to lessons, the student will be assessed by a doctor or our nurses to make sure it is safe for him/her to do so.

Students who require more specialist medical care, will be escorted by a member of staff to the local hospital which is only 5 minutes away. Parents will be fully communicated with at every stage.



Hygiene Practices and Infection Control

We have invested in appropriate medical equipment for our community, enhanced our robust hygiene practices, invested in market leading Covid-safe products, and trained staff in infection control procedures.

We will implement the highest standards of health and hygiene measures to safeguard the whole Taunton School community.

Using hand sanitiser will be compulsory on entering dining rooms and will be readily available in every classroom and boarding house.

Staff and students will be continually reminded to wash hands frequently and thoroughly. All visitors will be asked to use hand sanitiser upon arrival.

Robust cleaning and disinfectant protocol are in place; the frequency and thoroughness of cleaning regimes will be increased.

Ozonated water will be used to clean surfaces in all public areas regularly each day. Further, an innovative and Covid-safe product will be integrated into our already efficient cleaning system, the new product will shield key touchpoints from the virus for up to 30 days upon each application.

We have expanded training in infection control to domestic staff including matrons and housekeeping.



Dedicated Care Centre

We will provide a dedicated Care Centre and provide comfortable, well supported areas for those requiring quarantine, are showing symptoms of Covid-19 or who have tested positive.

We are investing in a dedicated Care Centre supported by our highly trained health team. The centre comprises of bright, well ventilated, and spacious rooms.

The on-site school Health Centre is open 24 hours a day 7 days a week and is well-appointed with essential medical equipment.

It is unlikely that the 14-day quarantine rule will still be in effect in August/September, but if it is, we recommended that students join the two-week Pre-Sessional Programme which begins on Monday 24 August.

If students are unable to attend this course, they are required to join the school between 5 – 7 September, when they will then start a two-week period of quarantine whilst studying remotely.

The school will remain open during half terms, at least until the requirement for quarantine is lifted.

Any boarder with Covid-19 symptoms who is unable to return home will be cared for by the school.



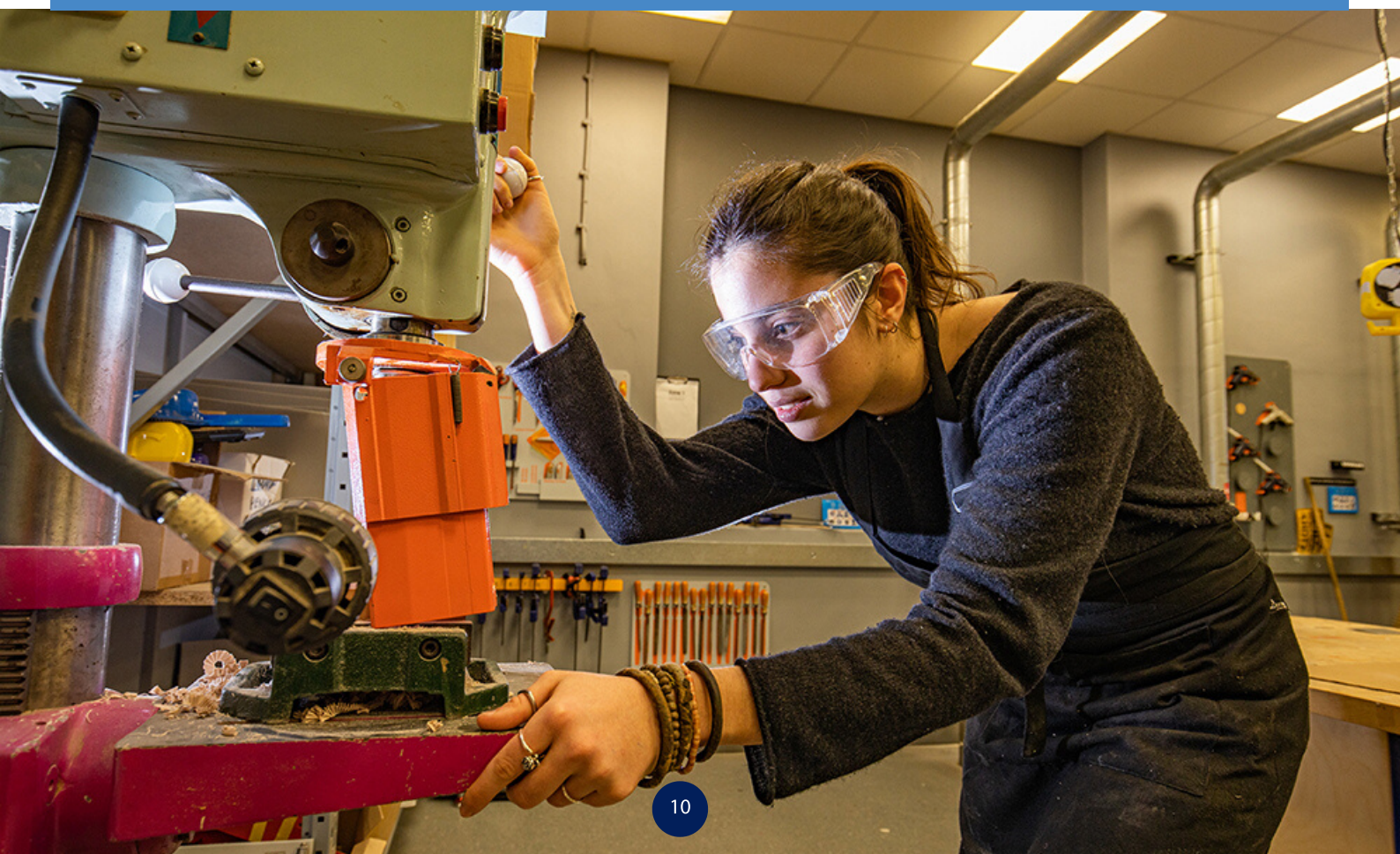
Identify and Support Vulnerable Individuals

We will identify all vulnerable members of the community prior to the start of the Autumn term and the necessary interventions will be implemented.

Where appropriate and practicable, vulnerable workers will work from home and be provided with the appropriate resources to do so.

We will increase our capacity to support with student wellbeing and mental health issues.

Bullying is not tolerated at Taunton School and any incident will be dealt with swiftly and firmly. The school's policies have all been reviewed and take full account of any situation that may arise as a direct or indirect result of Covid-19.



Social Distancing Measures

We will ensure the appropriate social distancing measures are in place and enforced throughout the school. Social distancing is a proven effective measure which reduces the spread of infection. The school benefits from being on a 56-acre site with many outdoor spaces and facilities.

Boarding houses and classrooms will be assessed for maximum capacity and appropriate social distancing implemented.

Given the nature of the school, keeping boarders and day pupils apart will not be possible, but efforts will be made to reduce mixing.

There will be no large gatherings in communal areas of the school.

Our brand-new large dining hall will make it easier for us to support social distancing and give students the space to enjoy their meals safely.

If required, we will introduce staggered starts of school day and lunch periods.

If required, one-way pedestrian routes will be put in place around the school.

Class sizes will be reduced. Classroom layouts are being altered to maximise the distance between all teachers and students.

The number of 'bubble groups' to which a student belongs will be minimised.

We will reduce the number of visitors to school. Updated protocols on visitors to the school site are in place.

If students are unable to join school in September, they will be able to access our comprehensive online teaching and learning provision.



Co-Curricular Provision

To keep the entire Taunton School community as safe as possible, we will do everything possible to reduce contact between people, and avoid large groups congregating together.

All activities in school will be thoroughly risk assessed.

PE/Sport/Games provision will be conducted in such a way as to remove points of contact as much as possible. This will be continually reviewed and amended in accordance with the appropriate sporting body guidelines.

All students will be able to access individual fitness-based activities within our 56-acre campus.

School clubs and activities will be limited to those which can be carried out following social distancing protocols.

Any performances and large group events will be avoided until they are permitted.

We will continue to offer online music lessons, concerts, drama and debating if these are not able to be conducted face-to-face.

Weekend trips will be limited and only take place if it is safe to do so.

Current government guidelines advise against all residential and international trips, so these will not take place until we have further information.

Those which have already been planned are likely to be postponed until later in the academic year.



Frequently Asked Questions

Will students be able to join school in September?

The school is fully committed to reopening for the start of the Autumn term and welcoming back all British and international boarders and day students.

Can my child wear a face covering?

Yes, any student or member of staff may wear a face covering if they wish to do so and we anticipate that many members of the school community will. Students should have their own personal supply. At the time of writing, this is not a UK government requirement, and the school will not therefore be providing them.

How will you ensure students follow social distancing guidelines?

Social distancing rules will be explained prior to arrival and again upon arrival at the school. We have put in place numerous interventions which will allow students to follow social distancing rules easily.

What if my child must go into quarantine for 14 days upon arrival?

If the 14-day quarantine rule is still in force in August/September, the school will take full responsibility for the 14-day quarantine period.

Does my child need to spend the quarantine period at school?

No, according to current guidance, they will be able to spend the quarantine in the home of a guardian or UK based family member, or at school.

When do I need to decide whether my child will do the quarantine at school?

We will be in touch with you soon to find out whether you would like for your child to complete the quarantine period at school.

Is there a maximum number of students who can be accommodated during this quarantine period?

No. We anticipate that we will be able to accommodate all those who wish to do this.

Where is the nearest hospital?

Musgrove Hospital is 5 minutes from Taunton School by car.

What if my child is unable to travel home over the October half term?

We expect the school to remain open through the Autumn term or we will support boarders staying with their UK guardian.

Will there be a charge for accommodation for the period of quarantine if my child stays in school?

Yes, there will be a charge for accommodation during the 2-week quarantine period, but this will be provided at cost – the school will make every effort to ensure that this is kept as low as possible.

How will my child get to school from the airport?

We understand that travel to school from overseas may present some difficulties and we will endeavor to facilitate this as much as possible. At the start of term, we will provide school minibuses to collect students from Bristol, Gatwick and Heathrow airports wherever possible, so there is no need for your child to travel by taxi or public transport. We anticipate there will be 4 - 5 shuttle bus services on our arrival's day.

When will you contact us regarding visas?

For those international students who require a visa, we will be issuing CASs in July, which means that if a student is not able to join the school in September, their CAS will still be valid for a January start at the latest. For returning students, it is possible to arrive in the UK with your existing visa if it remains valid (from last year) and either renew it whilst in the UK or renew it at half term in your country of residence.

Will my child's UK visa still be valid if they do not or cannot arrive at Taunton School for the start of term?

Yes, to allow for this, the school will apply for international students' CAS later than is normally the case, to ensure that the validity covers the remainder of the calendar year – this means that your child could use the same CAS to apply for their visa to join Taunton School as late as January if necessary.

Will there be a charge for Covid-19 testing if it is needed?

If it is required, Covid-19 testing will be undertaken through the NHS, which is free of charge. Other testing options are becoming available and the school will assess these and keep parents fully aware of these options.

What happens if my child is feeling unwell with Covid-19 symptoms?

Students will be assessed by our nurses in the Health Centre and if testing is required, students will be cared for away from other students until test results are known. If a test is positive, students will be cared for by our medical team until the requisite period of quarantine has been completed.

Who can my child talk to if they are worried?

We recognise that good mental health is essential for pupils to thrive in school. In addition to their Tutors and House Parents, we have highly trained staff in the Health Centre in School who can be contacted at any time convenient for your child should they wish to speak to someone.

What if my child feels unwell during the day or night?

If your child is unwell whilst they are in school, they will be able to visit the on-site Health Centre straight away and will be able to make any additional appointments with a doctor or hospital if needed. Staff would accompany your child to the hospital should a visit be necessary. The Health Centre is staffed 24/7 and can deal with any emergencies.



Please do not hesitate to get in touch if you would like to discuss the contents of this document.

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Taunton School has made a commitment to the Boarding Schools Association Safe Schools UK Initiative.

[To view the BSA Covid-Safe Charter click here](#)

