



# TPS RETURN TO SCHOOL

March 2021



This handbook has been prepared in response to the updated Government guidelines for the reopening of schools in March 2021. This handbook outlines reopening procedures and practices for staff, pupils and parents of TPS. It sits alongside the existing Parents' Handbook <https://www.tauntonschool.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/TPS-Parents-Handbook-2020.pdf>

The school has identified five groups of students all of whom need focused advice and guidance.

- 1) Day pupils
- 2) Boarders who live in the UK and overseas boarders who are currently domiciled in the UK
- 3) Overseas boarders who do not live in a 'red' listed country
- 4) Overseas boarders who live in a 'red' listed country but are UK passport holders
- 5) Overseas boarders who live in a 'red' listed country and are not UK passport holders

We hope that the information below will address the majority of questions parents may have. However, if you have any queries, please contact your son or daughter's Form Tutor (Mrs Wells in respect of boarding) for specific advice.

### **Government Guidance**

The Government guidance for the reopening of schools published on 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2020 (updated 22<sup>nd</sup> February) can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/actions-for-schools-during-the-coronavirus-outbreak/guidance-for-full-opening-schools>

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## Bubbles

Once again, we will operate a ‘Year Group Bubble’ system. In Years 3 to 6, each year group will be allocated specific classrooms for all their lessons. Pupils will generally be taught in their form rooms but may move to the other classrooms within that year group, when taught in sets.

Pupils in Years 7 & 8 will be able to operate largely as normal.

In all year groups, certain subjects will be taught in specialist classrooms. This will include lessons such as Art, Music, DT, Science, Computer Studies etc. In the Science, Art & Technology (SAT) block, we will operate a one-way system to minimise the contact between pupils in the corridors. Each classroom will be cleaned between different bubbles. Cleaning will be undertaken by the teacher and, in some instances, pupils will be asked to help.

### Year Group Bubble Expectations

- Pupils will mix with pupils from other year groups during break-times but must maintain social distancing rules.
- Where rooms and resources are used by pupils in different year group bubbles, cleaning will take place in-between sessions.
- Seating plans will be used by teachers to assist with track and trace procedures (should they become necessary). Seating plans will be designed based on the needs of individual children and the class as a whole and amended as necessary.
- Clubs and activities may take place with pupils from different ‘bubbles’. Additional protective measures will be in place and numbers may be restricted initially.
- Children must have their own set of resources in their pencil case. Further information in this regard can be found below.
- Staff will have a 2m designated space at the front of the classroom to enable them to teach on a socially distanced basis. Pupils and other adults must not enter this space.
- If staff need to work in close proximity with a child in order to support their learning, the member of staff is likely to wear a face covering. They may also use a transparent protective screen and/or visor.
- If a child shows symptoms of Covid-19, they will be taken to our Health Centre where parents will be contacted. In the event of a day pupil displaying symptoms, the child must be collected immediately, and a test requested via the NHS.

## Boarding @ThoneHouse:

Our Boarding House forms its own unique bubble from 5.15pm. At the current time, boarding is only available to current full-time boarders and regular weekly boarders. We have traditionally offered flexi boarding, and we will look to reinstate as soon as the guidance allows. For the time being, adhoc flexi boarding is not available.

Parents of boarders should continue to liaise with Mrs Wells if they have any specific questions in relation to returning to school. Please contact your child's Form Tutor with any questions in respect to the school day.

## School Uniform

We are aware that some of our pupils may have outgrown elements of their school uniform in the past few months. Where pupils have a sport session on their timetable (including after school clubs and activities), they may continue to attend school in their school sports kit. On days when there is no sport, we ask that pupils wear either winter uniform, summer uniform (please ensure they will be warm enough) or school sports kit. We would like to be as flexible as possible regarding uniform and it is possible that this approach continues after the Easter holidays, depending on updates to guidance on the use of changing rooms. Please see our Parents Handbook for summer uniform guidance.

## The School Day

### Drop off

We would encourage all our parents who drive their children to school to use the drop and go zone at the front of Weirfield (the main TPS teaching block). In order for the drop and go zone to work effectively, parents must not park and leave their vehicles. If a longer stop is required, please use the car park on Fairwater Green and walk their entrance point. Please see the short video on how the system operates – [Click Here](#)

### TPS Entrance Points for Pupils only

Year 3 & 4



Year 5 & 6



Years 7 & 8



### Entering the prep school site.

There are three entrance points into the Prep School and we ask that pupils enter through the correct one based on their year group:

- Year 3 & 4 pupils should enter through the gate next to the Chessboard.
- Year 5 & 6 pupils should enter through the middle doors into Weirfield.
- Year 7 & 8 pupils should enter via the double doors opposite the Centenary Hall.

Pupils should also be collected from these locations at the end of the day. We ask that parents do not enter the school buildings.

## Timings

The school day will run largely as normal.

Pupils who arrive between 7.45am (no pupils must arrive before this time) and 8.00am should go onto the playground with all their belongings (where they will be supervised by a member of staff). Pupils who arrive after 8.00am should go to their form rooms.

## Break time

Years 3 to 6 will occupy the main area of the school playground along with part of Greenham field. Our Year 7 & 8 pupils will use the new pedestrianised area and part of the Greenham field. Pupils will receive a snack at break time. Pupils will need to bring their own (clearly labelled) water bottle into school.

## Lunchtime

Once again, we will be able to use our new dining room facilities. Please note that all pupils must wear a face covering until seated. Pupils will enter the dining room in year groups and sit with their form group. Tables will be wiped down and cleaned in-between use.

## End of the School Day

There are three pick up times at the end of the school day:

- 3.50pm - End of lessons.
- 5.15pm - End of prep & clubs.
- 5.45pm - End of second prep. There is no provision after 5:45pm.

We cannot release children in between those times except in exceptional circumstances (which have been pre-arranged with the School Office). In this situation, your child should go to the School Office and parents should collect their children from outside reception. The School Office is accessed via the entrance off Staplegrove Road, opposite the hairdressers.

We ask that parents do not form crowds in pick up areas and maintain social distancing. Please note the government has highlighted this rule in its recent guidance. All parents should wear a face covering when collecting their child if they are required to leave their vehicle.

- Year 3 & 4 pupils can be collected from outside the fence between the Pre-Prep & the Prep School.
- Year 5 & 6 pupils can be collected from outside the middle doors of the Weirfield teaching block.

- Year 7 & 8 pupils can be collected from outside the double doors opposite the Centenary Hall. Pupils in Years 7 & 8 may also be collected from the drop zone located in the Fairwater Car Park. Pupils should not walk across the car park. They should be collected from the drop zone by their parents and escorted back to the vehicle.

Parents of children in more than one age group should collect their youngest child first, followed by older children.

## Curriculum & Academic

The return to school is both welcome, exciting and daunting and all staff and students will have a range of emotions about it. In making decisions about the return to the school we have to balance a myriad of needs and we hope that all parents and students understand this as we move forward. Children will continue to be taught a broad and balanced curriculum. Certain subjects will need adaptations in order to work within the guidance. The school timetable will revert from the remote timetable to the in-school timetable from 9<sup>th</sup> March.

## Turnaround Day, Monday 8<sup>th</sup> March

As previously highlighted, we need a day to prepare for school re-opening and ensure that classrooms are prepared for hybrid learning. We also need to have time to carry out the huge logistical task of testing upwards of 600 students. Unfortunately, a number of boarders will not be able to join us for face-to-face teaching. Therefore, our IT technicians need to ensure that all classrooms are re-fitted with the appropriate technology. Relevant work will be set for pupils on Firefly, SeeSaw or Microsoft Teams and we will commence 'live' teaching face to face (and remotely for those students still at home) from Tuesday morning (9<sup>th</sup> March).

## The First Week Back

The last time many of our pupils were in school was December. The well-being and happiness of our pupils is key to all we do at Taunton School. We will therefore devote additional time to these key elements over the first week and if necessary, provide additional time longer term. We will also continue our focus on Digital Citizenship to enable our children to maintain and progress their digital skills. We know that for some children the prospect of returning to school is a big step, and some may be anxious. We also have new children joining us and again they may feel nervous about their first few days. TPS is a warm and friendly school, and all our staff are here to ensure that we have the best possible start. We will assess the situation during the first week and will make necessary changes, if appropriate.

### **Kit bags:**

Kit bags for pupils in Year 3 – 8 should be taken to their form rooms on the first day back.

### **Going Home:**

For our older children, if you wish them to walk home or go unaccompanied to another activity (for example, hockey practice at Taunton Vale), please inform the School Office so that we can maintain an accurate list.

### Mobile phones/smart watches:

Mobile phones are not permitted at TPS. Traditionally, where a pupil needs to use a phone as part of their pick-up arrangements, they should hand it into the School Office before registration and collect it at the end of the school day. We ask that pupils bring a small (labelled) bag (food/freezer or similar) into school to enable them to place their phone in before handing into the School Office.

### Labelling kit:

Please ensure your child's name is on every item of clothing (at least once), including those often overlooked such as school shoes, trainers and boots! Please also ensure that any additional items (e.g., your child's digital device) is clearly named.

## Remote Learning

In the event of a bubble closure or local lockdown, we will transition immediately to our remote learning provision. In order to ensure this transition takes place smoothly, we will continue to educate the pupils in the correct use of the learning platforms. This will involve using SeeSaw (Years 3-4), Firefly and Microsoft Teams on their personal digital devices. New pupils will be given appropriate training.

Those pupils who are unable to return to school will still be able to access the remote learning platforms but please note the timetable will revert to the normal in school timetable from Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> March.

## Safeguarding Reporting

All safeguarding concerns should be reported to the DSL (Joanna Hall-Tomkin) or any member of staff at the earliest opportunity.

## Contacting School

In the event of needing to contact the school, please telephone the School Office on: 01823 703307. It is also possible to contact your child's Form Tutor directly via email. However, please understand that our teacher's priority is delivering their lessons and you may not receive a response in the first 24hrs.

## Meeting your Child's Form Tutor

If you need to talk to your child's Form Tutor, then please arrange a mutually convenient time to either call on the phone or meet over Microsoft Teams. We hope that face to face meetings will be able to resume in the not too distant future. Please do not let something worry you, come and talk to us. If we do not know about your concerns, we cannot help.

## Things to bring to School.

In order for us to run some of our subjects and activities in the same way as we did pre Covid-19, we need your child to come equipped with certain items that we would ordinarily provide. These items are important to the children's learning but also carry a higher risk of transmission of



infection if shared amongst other pupils. These items will need to be taken home after use and in the case of anything fabric, will need washing.

Please ensure your child has an apron for Art and Design Technology. Aprons will need to be taken home and washed ready for their next use. Mr Ashmore (Head of DT) has recommended the following (or something similar) which is sold by Amazon – [Click Here](#).

Your child's pencil case should contain the following:

- several pencils
- Ink pen and cartridges (not for Year 3)
- Ink eraser
- Long ruler
- Rubber
- Sharpener
- Coloured Pencils
- Highlighters - at least 2 colours
- Glue Stick
- Scissors

Other items that are important to bring:

- Reading Book - It is essential that your child has their reading book with them in their school bag
- Water Bottle - Please ensure your child comes to school with a labelled water bottle. There will be opportunity to top these up during the day.
- Face Covering – See below.
- Small bottle of sanitizer (all pupils will be required to always have this with them).

Pupils are not permitted to share common equipment so it will be vital for all pupils to improve their personal organisation. Some pupils find this a challenge and we will work with you to help them in this respect. However, pupils will need to take more personal responsibility and accept that at times, failure to remember kit could mean they miss out on activities.

## Face Coverings

There has been a recent change in the government guidance in respect face coverings in schools. All school staff and pupils from Years 7 upwards will be required to wear face coverings when transiting inside our school buildings and when in classrooms. We will also require all pupils in Years 3 to 6 to have a named face covering available to use. Years 5 & 6 will also use them for transiting inside our school buildings, entering our dining room and at other times, when required. For example, where a member of staff and a pupil are working in close proximity, it may be necessary for both to wear a face covering.

There is no requirement for face coverings to be worn outside of the buildings. Replacement face coverings will be available from the School Office, but these will be charged to parents. We

are very keen to minimise the use of disposable face coverings due to the environmental impact. We ask that all parents send their child in with a fresh clean face covering (and spare) each day. Face visors or shields should not be worn as an alternative to face coverings.

We would be grateful if you can discuss the following with your child(ren) to ensure they are clear on the expectations of using a face covering when in school.

### Safe wearing and removal of face coverings

Safe wearing of face coverings requires the:

- cleaning of hands before and after touching – including to remove or put them on
- safe storage of them in individual, sealable plastic bags between use

Where a face covering becomes damp, it should not be worn, and the face covering should be replaced carefully. Parents should consider sending in a spare face covering to school.

Pupils must:

- not touch the front of their face covering during use or when removing it
- dispose of temporary face coverings in a 'black bag' waste bin (not recycling bin)
- place reusable face coverings in a plastic bag they can take home with them
- wash their hands again before heading to their classroom

### Sanitization

All our building entrances have been equipped with sanitizers. On entering a building, all pupils and staff must sanitize their hands. Each classroom is also equipped with bottles of sanitizer for use upon entry and exit and tissues for the 'catch it, kill it, bin it'. This is also the case in all the toilets around the school. Our staff are also equipped with sanitizer spray to wipe down desks and chairs. We have adopted the following 5 Golden Rules across the whole site.



## School Sports Fixtures

Mr Winsor and Mrs Foad have been looking at opportunities in relation to fixtures and will provide an update when further guidance is released. In the early stages of the term, it is our intention to get the pupils back to enjoying sport and then assess how competitive opportunities with other schools can take place. Unfortunately, there remain many restrictions in relation to sport.

## Music Lessons

Mrs Hornsby and her team have been assessing the viability of individual music lessons and ensembles taking place. Mrs Hornsby will update pupils and parents as and when guidance changes. The measures that were put in place prior to lockdown will continue.

*\*\*On Monday 8<sup>th</sup> March individual Music lessons will be online. However, on Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> March they will return to face to face. Please remind your child to bring their music and instrument into school for the Ensembles and individual lessons with effect from Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> March.*

## School Transport

Our transport department will contact parents of those pupils who use school buses to confirm arrangements.

## Break-time activities

If pupils wish to use the table tennis tables at break, then they must bring their own table tennis bats and balls. Pupils must not share these with other pupils. It is also important that pupils use their own sanitizer before and after playing.

Playground cricket, netball, football etc. - All require pupils to bring their own (named) equipment, and children must sanitize regularly whilst playing. They may only use the equipment with children in their own year group bubble.

## Birthday cakes

We love to celebrate birthdays at TPS but the sharing of cake is something we cannot currently facilitate. If your child has their birthday coming up, please speak with your child's Form Tutor to discuss ways in which the rest of the class can celebrate.

## Cycling and Walking to School

It is great that so many pupils and their parents are able to walk and cycle to school. We are encouraging pupils and parents to do this where the route permits. Our cycle park is located on the path next to Greenham field which needs to be accessed via College Road, or through the main school entrance.

Pupils who walk to school may use the entrance off College Road as well as the main entrance off Staplegrove Road. If entering via College Road, please walk your child along the path next to

Greenham field, around the Clark Centre and towards your child's respective entry point to TPS or TPPS.

## Testing of pupils in Years 7 & 8 along with staff.

The government continues to roll out their lateral flow testing regime. The school have been using this very successfully since the start of January to test a small number of staff and pupils who have been attending school as part of the 'vulnerable children' and 'children of key workers' scheme.

The government intends to scale this up in the following way:

- All pupils will have three lateral flow tests in school and in quick succession from Monday 8<sup>th</sup> March
- All pupils will then carry on being tested (using very similar kits) with home testing kits. (we will support boarders with this in their 'homes' at school)
- All staff will be tested twice a week using home testing kits.

All students who are coming back to school will need to come into school for their first lateral flow test. This will require using our booking system and only being on site for the duration of the test.

A separate letter will follow which refers to groups 1 and 2 on how to achieve this. If you are in groups 3 and 4 and are coming back to school from March 8<sup>th</sup>, a separate letter will be sent to you and Mrs Wells will also be in contact.

The second and third tests will take place in school (as per the guidance) and we will endeavour to ensure that lessons are not disrupted.

## Co-curricular and Community

Over the next three weeks, we will be able to run a very similar co-curricular and community programme as the Autumn Term. There are two important differences:

- We will aim to design these to remain as inclusive as possible for our overseas boarders
- The guidance does not allow for any competitive sports matches against other schools.

Clubs and activities will commence on Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> March.

We hope you have found this booklet helpful. Please do not hesitate to get in touch with your child's Form tutor if you have any further questions.