

BRAES HIGH SCHOOL
August 2021 – General Information for Parents/Carers

1. INTRODUCTION

The Scottish Government published revised “Guidance on reducing the risks from COVID-19 in schools” in August 2021. It emphasised that schools should continue to apply the vast majority of mitigations already in place at the end of last session, with the exception of some modifications. This approach of retaining mitigations is expected to remain in place for a period up to 6 weeks. This document seeks to provide guidance on our school’s set-up for the first 6 weeks of session 2021/22.

Our approach to planning for the return of all Braes pupils to school in August 2021 is governed by the same 3 key priorities we have adhered to over session 2020/21 :

- Ensuring our school environment is as physically safe as possible
- Focusing on the emotional wellbeing of all in our school community
- Learning and teaching

This will be a working document, and subject to changes and developments as we progress.

2. FLOW OF THE PUPIL DAY

How will the revised pupil day be structured?

As the session progresses, if the situation allows, we will move to a more ‘normal’ pupil day. However at the start of the session the flow of the pupil day will be as follows :

Timing	Activity
9.00am – 9.50am (soft start from 8.50am)	Period 1
9.50am – 10.55am	Period 2 S1-3 pupils will take their morning interval between 10.20am and 10.35am. At 10.35am, S1-3 pupils will return to their period 2 class to complete the lesson which concludes at 10.55am. Thereafter S1-3 pupils would move onto their period 3 lesson. S4-6 pupils will take their morning interval between 10.40am and 10.55am. At 10.55am S4-6 pupils move onto their period 3 lesson.
10.55am – 11.45am	Period 3
11.45am – 1.10pm	Period 4 At 11.45am S1-3 pupils will take their lunch break which will conclude at 12.20pm. At 12.20pm S1-3 pupils should then return to their period 4 class to complete their period 4 lesson, which concludes at 1.10pm.

	S4-6 pupils will take their lunch between 12.35pm and 1.10pm. At 1.10pm S4-6 pupils move onto their period 5 lesson.
1.10pm – 2.00pm	Period 5
2.00pm – 2.50pm	Period 6
2.50pm – 3.40pm (Tue & Thu only)	Period 7

What should happen when pupils arrive at school?

Pupils will continue to arrive in school using a variety of transport methods. We would strongly encourage pupils when at all possible to either walk, wheel or cycle to school. The school has a cycle storage area which pupils can use. However we understand that some parents/carers will wish to transport their young people to school by car and the normal drop-off area should be used for this. Parents/carers should generally remain in their vehicles when dropping pupils off. Although it does not normally happen, parents/carers accompanying their young people on foot should not enter the school grounds. These procedures should also be followed at the end of the pupil day.

The default position for almost all pupils on arrival at school is that they will remain outside the building in the school grounds. On arrival in the grounds, pupils will make their way to the outside areas as designated below :

- S1/2 – back of the school
- S3/4 – side of the school next to the bus bay
- S5/6 – front of the school

Although the first lesson of the day will not begin until 9.00am, the initial bell to signal the 'soft start' to the day and managed pupil access to the building will sound at 8.50am. It is recognised that some pupils may not arrive in school until after this time. However it is anticipated that these small numbers of pupils can be fed into the flow of pupils in corridors on their arrival.

How will pupils enter the building?

The staff supervising the outside areas will co-ordinate the entry of pupils into the building. Pupils will be instructed to use doors near their designated outdoor space, as noted above, observing physical distancing when making their way into the building. Once in school, pupils will flow into the one way system.

What are the arrangements for morning interval and lunchtime?

Morning Interval

It is important that we avoid too many pupils accessing the Hub canteen at one time. Therefore we will have two staggered morning intervals. These would take place as follows :

- S1-3 classes and their teachers take interval between 10.20am and 10.35am
- S4-6 classes and their teachers take interval between 10.40am and 10.55am

There will be bells to signal the beginning and end of the S1-3 interval. Pupils would only enter the Hub to access the canteen facilities. Apart from accessing toilets, the default position for pupils would be that they remain outside during morning interval in the outside spaces designated below :

- S1 – back of the school
- S2 – side of the school next to the bus bay

- S3 - front of the school
- S4 – back of the school
- S5 – side of the school next to the bus bay
- S6 – front of the school

Lunch

Recognising that we are to minimise interactions, both in school and in the community, and that we need to manage pupil access to the Hub Canteen, at the beginning of the session, we will continue to have two staggered lunch breaks :

- S1-3 classes take their lunch between 11.45am and 12.20pm.
- S4-6 classes take their lunch between 12.35pm and 1.10pm.

A bell will ring at 12.20pm to signal S1-3 pupils to make their way to their period 4 class. It will ring again at 12.35pm to signal S4-6 pupils to begin their lunch break. Pupils would only enter the Hub to access the canteen facilities. Apart from accessing toilets, the default position for pupils would be that they remain outside during lunch in the outside spaces designated below :

- S1 – back of the school
- S2 – side of the school next to the bus bay
- S3 - front of the school
- S4 – back of the school
- S5 – side of the school next to the bus bay
- S6 – front of the school

The lunch card machine can still be accessed by pupils. However we strongly encourage families to take advantage of the online payments system when adding funds to lunch cards. Therefore use of the card machine should only be used as a last resort.

Pupils who do not wish to access the Hub canteen facilities should immediately make their way to the designated outside area. Pupils who do wish to access the Hub canteen should make their way to the Hub and begin to queue around the edge of the hall as pupils would normally do, observing physical distancing. There will be markings on the floor and staff to help pupils with this. There will be 2 separate serving stations to help pupils get served as quickly as possible. Pupils can also bring a packed lunch.

Pupils are discouraged from going off-site for lunch. If pupils do go offsite for lunch, they should follow the rules in place for wider society and set by the businesses they visit. On returning to school pupils will require to follow hygiene advice and ensure their hands are cleaned/sanitised on entering the building.

How will pupils depart from school?

Teachers will conclude lessons at different times for each year group, to allow pupils to access the one-way system in a managed manner. To support the maintenance of physical distancing, staff will supervise corridors around their classroom.

Will the bell always ring?

Bells will ring only at the following times :

- 8.50am – ‘soft start’ managed access to building
- 9.50am – period changeover
- 10.20am – beginning of S1-3 interval
- 10.35am – end of S1-3 interval
- 10.40am – beginning of S4-6 interval
- 10.55am – end of S4-6 interval/period changeover
- 11.45am – period changeover/beginning of S1-3 lunch
- 12.20pm – end of S1-3 lunch
- 12.35pm – beginning of S4-6 lunch
- 1.10pm – end of S4-6 lunch/period changeover
- 2.00pm – period changeover
- 2.50pm – period changeover Tue & Thu/departure Mon-Wed
- 3.40pm - departure (Tue & Thu only)

How will pupils move from one lesson to the next?

Teachers will conclude lessons at different times for each year group, to allow pupils to access the one-way system in a managed manner. To support the maintenance of physical distancing, staff will supervise corridors around their classroom.

How will pupil registration operate?

Registration will take place twice a day, in the morning and in the afternoon as usual.

Pupils who arrive late

Pupils who arrive late should enter the school at reception and follow the instructions of the staff present.

Toilet access

It is important that we manage pupil access to toilets. Therefore, the following arrangement will be in place prior to the pupil day, lunchtimes and morning intervals :

- Campsie and Lomond pupils will use the toilets outside the Hub
- Ochil and Pentland pupils will use the Senior toilets

In these communal toilets, no more than 4 pupils will be able to gain access at one time.

Inclement weather

In the case of inclement weather before the school day, a decision will be taken to bring pupils into the building, where they can congregate observing physical distancing in the areas designated below.

Year group	Area
S1/2/3	Games Hall
S4	Hub
S5/6	Senior social space

During morning interval and lunchtime, the senior social space and Hub will be the main indoor areas.

What will the one-way system be like?

Some changes will require to be made to our system of how pupils make their way through corridors and stairwells. Our goal is for pupils to keep to a one-way system as far as possible.

On the ground floor, the one way flow goes from the Pupil Support corridor, through the Senior Social Space, along past reception, towards Stair 3. Pupils leaving Drama to move to their next class would move along to the area outside the Hub and then join the one way system, moving along past the senior social space and so on.

The first floor corridor will become one way, with pupils moving from the English end to the Technical end.

The second floor corridor will remain one way as it now, with pupils flowing from Modern Languages towards Science.

The third floor corridor will remain one way as it is now, with pupils flowing from the Humanities end to the Mathematics end.

Stair 1 (next to Technical) will be for upwards travel only.

Stair 2 (next to Music) will be for downward travel only.

Stair 3 (next to SMT) is for upwards travel only

Stair 4 (next to English) will be for downward travel only.

At the beginning of the day, all stairs will be used for upward travel, and at the end of the day, for downward travel.

3. LEARNING AND TEACHING

What will learning and teaching be like for pupils?

Pupils will attend all timetabled classes. Hand sanitising, wiping down surfaces and equipment after use, and avoiding crowding together will all be part of the classroom experience. Pupils will carry out practical activities in line with relevant national subject-specific guidance. Guidance will be issued from the Physical Education department as to what kit is required and what types of activity will be possible.

Pupils should bring to school what they normally would be ready to learn, eg. pen, pencil. Pupils will be able to take jotters and books home if directed to do so by their teacher.

Consortia Arrangements

Pupils studying as part of consortia arrangements will be informed of arrangements directly.

College Arrangements

Pupils studying College course will be informed of arrangements directly.

4. PASTORAL CARE

How will pastoral care continue?

Staff across our community in Braes High School are our most valuable resource in supporting the health and wellbeing of our young people and this remains a priority. The Pastoral and Pupil Support Teams will continue to provide support and guidance to young people and their families on our return to school, as they have been throughout school closures. We would encourage parents and carers to continue using email wherever possible to contact our support teams, through the school email braeshighschool@falkirk.gov.uk or using the following Falkirk Council email addresses with effect from August :

Campsie - Ms Jones linda.jones@falkirk.gov.uk / Mr Deane kevin.deane@falkirk.gov.uk

Lomond - Mr Burns michael.burns@falkirk.gov.uk / Mr Yeates darren.yeates@falkirk.gov.uk / Mr Holt tom.holt@falkirk.gov.uk

Ochil - Mr Burnett george.burnett@falkirk.gov.uk / Mrs McIntyre diane.mcintyre@falkirk.gov.uk

Pentland - Mrs Eckles laura.eckles@falkirk.gov.uk / Miss King lynsey.king@falkirk.gov.uk

How will pupils be supported to observe physical distancing and maintain hygiene?

Promoting Physical Distancing

There is no requirement for strict physical distancing between pupils. We do however encourage distancing. To promote physical distancing pupils will be encouraged to :

- maintain distance where possible
- avoid social physical contact, eg, hand greetings/hugs

- use all available space in classrooms to promote distancing where possible
- Sit side by side in class, rather than face to face
- Avoid situations that require pupils to sit or stand in direct physical contact with one another
- Restrict any movement around classroom to minimise any congregation

Meetings with parents/carers and others

The default position is that all meetings should take place remotely until further notice.

Promoting good hygiene

All in our school community have a responsibility to ensure and promote good hygiene. This includes:

- frequent washing/sanitising of hands for 20 seconds and drying thoroughly, particularly when entering/leaving the building and before/after eating
- encouraging pupils/staff to avoid touching their faces including mouth, eyes and nose
- using a tissue or elbow to cough or sneeze and use bins, that are emptied regularly for tissue waste

Signage will be in place to promote personal hygiene standards. There will also be hand sanitiser at key areas. The opening of doors and windows will be encouraged to increase natural ventilation and also to reduce contact with door handles. There will also be enhanced cleaning arrangements in schools.

5. GENERAL ARRANGEMENTS

Support for Minority Ethnic pupils

The Scottish Government has noted that there is some wider evidence that children, young people and adults from a Minority Ethnic background who are infected with COVID-19 seem to be at higher risk of severe disease. Consequently, the concerns within Minority Ethnic communities must be recognised and individual requests for additional protections should be supported wherever possible. Our Pastoral Team will be alert to such situations with our pupils and will deal with any such situations and requests in the first instance.

COVID-19 symptoms, testing and isolation

Any pupil who has COVID-19 symptoms should not attend school. Neither should pupils attend school if anyone in their household has COVID-19 symptoms. Contact should be made by the family with the school to advise of this. Pupils in this position should self-isolate (along with their household), the symptomatic person(s) should book a test, and the household should follow the medical advice noted on the NHS Inform website and from Test and Protect.

<https://www.nhsinform.scot/campaigns/test-and-protect>

The most common symptoms are:

- new continuous cough
- fever/high temperature
- loss of, or change in, sense of smell or taste (anosmia).

It is essential that people do not attend school if symptomatic. Everyone who develops symptoms of COVID-19 – a new, continuous cough; fever or loss of, or change in, sense of smell or taste - should self-isolate straight away, stay at home and arrange a test via the appropriate method (see below). People who live in the same household as a person with symptoms must also self-isolate straight away and stay at home. If the test result for the symptomatic person is negative, and they are not already isolating as a 'close contact' of a confirmed case, they can end isolation and return to work or school when they are well enough and have not had a fever for 48 hours assuming also that they are not quarantining for foreign travel reasons. The rest of their household can end isolation straight away.

What happens if a pupil in school presents with symptoms consistent with coronavirus?

The Scottish Government has advised that there should be a zero tolerance of coronavirus-like symptoms and that the whole school community should be vigilant for the symptoms of COVID-19. Scottish Government guidance notes that the most common symptoms are :

- new Continuous cough
- fever/high temperature
- loss of, or change in, sense of smell or taste (anosmia)

Further guidance on symptoms can be found on the NHS Inform website.

Any young person who has symptoms consistent with coronavirus should not attend school, and neither should anyone from their household. If it seems a young person has symptoms consistent with coronavirus, the following process will take place :

- The pupil concerned will be directed and supported to get to the medical area with all their belongings.
- The pupil will be based within a specific space in the medical area, contact will be made with the pupil's family and arrangements made for the young person to leave school to be with their family and follow NHS advice.
- The Scottish Government advise that the pupil is collected from school by an adult member of the household and not a grandparent. They will not be able to use public or school transport to make their way home.
- Until the pupil has been tested and told if it is safe to leave home, they should not come into school, and neither should anyone else from their household. If there is a positive test, the school should be informed as soon as possible.
- The class of pupils the young person was in will move to another learning space.
- The learning space the young person has been in will be cleaned accordingly.

In following this process it will be important to take care to not cause undue alarm for the young person concerned, or the other pupils in the class. Care for all concerned will be paramount.

Will pupils be able to use the lift?

Only one person will be able to access the lift at one time and queuing for its use will require to observe physical distancing. The lift will only be for use by those who absolutely need it.

Will there be signage and markings to support pupils?

Pupils will follow the school's one way system which will be marked out with signage. Floor markings will also be in place to promote physical distancing.

Is there advice for people who are at the highest clinical risk (shielding) and are clinically vulnerable?

Anyone who is at the highest clinical risk from coronavirus (known as the shielding category) will have received a letter from the Chief Medical Officer. The CMO has also written to everyone on this list in relation to the move to level 0, advising that people at highest risk can following the same advice as the rest of the population. It is also advised that children and young people in this position can attend school. Similarly, it is advised that children and young people who live with someone in the highest clinical risk group can attend school. The CMO also advises that all those over 12 years of age in households of those at the highest clinical risk to use the offer of LFD testing.

If families feel there is an issue for their young person in attending school, please contact your young person's Pastoral Head to discuss the matter. Pastoral Heads are of course not medical experts and will not be able to advise specifically on individual health cases. However they will be able to direct parents/carers to further guidance, and to discuss the young person's general educational provision. If your young person has an underlying health condition please ensure the school is aware of this if not already communicated.

Should face coverings be worn?

The most recent Scottish Government guidance states that staff and young people should wear face covering at all times throughout the day when in the school building and on school transport. This includes S1-3 pupils.

What are the arrangements for school transport?

Pupils who travel to school on school buses are not required to social distance. Pupils should wear a face covering. It is advised that young people adhere to personal hand and respiratory hygiene. Children, young people and adults must not board dedicated school or public transport if they, or a member of their household, have symptoms of COVID-19. Any siblings travelling on school transport should travel on the same bus and sit together.

Will fire evacuation arrangements be different?

Fire Evacuation arrangements will be slightly different as we will require more space in which pupils can assemble to promote physical distancing. During their initial experiences in school pupils will be taken through these revised arrangements.

Will there be extra-curricular activities?

Yes. These will take place in accordance with the restrictions currently in place.

Will there be any larger-scale events?

Until further notice, there will be no in-person assemblies, events, concerts, shows etc. As soon as we are able to resume more normal arrangements for such event we will do so.

Will there be excursions?

We would hope to introduce single day excursions as the session progresses.

Water dispensers

Water dispensers can be used. Pupils should avoid touching the dispenser and crowding around it.

School reception

Parents/carers should not normally be coming into school and instead should make contact with the school via email or telephone. The school's email address is braeshighschool@falkirk.gov.uk and the telephone number is 01324 719551. If it deemed absolutely necessary by a parent/carer to attend the school in person you should enter only by the school main entrance and follow the direction of the person at reception, observing hygiene and physical distancing protocols. The default position until further notice is that any meetings with school staff will take place remotely.

School Ethos

Our school values and ethos remain as strong as ever. We are committed towards celebrating your young person's successes both in and out of school. The link between home and school has never been more vital. Positive referrals will continue to be sent home, along with progress reports and updates. Extra-curricular activities and interhouse events will continue.

Free Meal Entitlement

For young people who have Free Meal Entitlement, they will be able to access this as normal during lunch breaks.

School Uniform

Given the strong support for school uniform, normal expectations will continue. We are keen for pupils to experience as normal a school experience as possible, to reinforce their identity as Braes pupils, and to benefit from the security and positive ethos school uniform supports. Blazers are an important part of the school uniform. However we do understand that some families may have had difficulty in purchasing uniform and as previously communicated we will adopt a common sense approach when dealing with young people in this regard.

Lateral Flow Testing

Families have been issued with documentation outlining arrangements for Lateral Flow Device COVID-19 testing. Participation in this programme is voluntary, although strongly encouraged, to keep our school community as safe as possible. Information is available on the school website or by contacting the school directly. Pupils are encouraged to record the results of LFD testing using the link below :

<https://www.gov.uk/report-covid19-result>

Self-isolation

From 9th August 2021 the self-isolation policy changes. To be clear, anyone who develops symptoms of COVID-19 or who tests positive using a PCR or LFD test will have to self-isolate immediately in line with NHS guidance. However there are changes for the situation when someone is deemed a close contact of someone who has tested positive for COVID-19. These are detailed below :

For adults (18+) identified as close contacts :

- Self-isolate immediately and book a POCR test. Continue to self-isolate while awaiting your results.
- If the test is positive, continue to self-isolate in line with NHS guidance.
- If the test is negative, and you do not have symptoms, end your self-isolation and resume your daily life, even if you have ongoing contact with the index case (eg. a household member)

This process should also be followed by people aged between 18 years and 18 years and 4 months, and who are not yet vaccinated or have only had a single dose of the vaccine (potentially applicable to our S6 pupils as the session progresses).

If you are identified as a close contact, and you have had a positive PCR test in the preceding 90 days, you are exempt from self-isolation, provided you are fully vaccinated and have no symptoms.

For under-18s identified as close contacts :

- Self-isolate immediately and book a PCR test. Continue to self-isolate while awaiting your results.
- If the test is positive, continue to self-isolate in line with NHS guidance.
- If the test is negative, and you do not have symptoms, end your self-isolation and resume your daily life (come back to school), even if you have ongoing contact with the index case (eg. a household member)

If an under-18 is identified as a close contact, and they have had a positive PCR test in the last 90 days, they do not need to do another PCR test as long as they remain asymptomatic.

Contact tracing

Adjustments are being made to contact tracing of under-18s. The Scottish Government advice states that only those deemed to be at the highest risk of being exposed to infection will be asked to isolate by Test and Protect. There will be a focus on clear, prolonged close contacts. It is envisaged schools will no longer be as extensively involved in contact tracing and that when a positive case is identified, a 'warn and inform' letter will be issued to those people deemed to be potential lower-risk contacts in school. This letter makes clear there is no requirement to self-isolate and encourages vigilance for symptoms. We will monitor how this operates in practice.