



## **Westminster Tutors Covid Policy**

**September 2021**

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#### **1. Introduction**

This policy has been rewritten for the reopening of schools in September 2021. It is based on the current Department for Education Schools coronavirus operation guidance, updated 27<sup>th</sup> September 2021:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/actions-for-schools-during-the-coronavirus-outbreak/schools-covid-19-operational-guidance>

This policy supersedes the college Covid Policy of March 2021, in line with Step 4 of the Government Covid strategy. While many of the college policies are similar, there is a fundamental relaxation of rules, for instance regarding the wearing of face coverings. Some of the changes that have been made are:

- *Face coverings will no longer be required.*

- *While social distancing will remain, the distancing tape has been removed from many of the teaching rooms and the maximum capacity rules have been relaxed.*
- *Lateral Flow testing will remain; vaccination status for students will be recorded.*
- *Group separation will continue, with separate toilets and common rooms for staff and students; extra-curricular activities such as sports, outings and lectures have been reintroduced with guidance on maximum numbers.*
- *The rules for teachers regarding teaching rooms, staggering arrivals, tutor breaks, allowed absence have been amended; the staff protocol has been removed.*

As ever, based on our ethos, the college aims to adopt an inclusive and individualised approach to Covid safety and adaptations will be made according to specific circumstances.

All the policies listed below are subject to amendment depending on contextual factors, such as Covid rates, and changes to government guidance.

## **2. Risk Assessment**

This policy is based on the Westminster Tutors College Covid Risk Assessment. Both this policy and the risk assessment will be sent to all stakeholders: staff, students and parents. The risk assessment is a living document, and in line with the college ethos, we will aim to tailor provision to individual students and staff members. Any stakeholder who has any concerns or questions regarding this policy should contact the Principal.

Individual risk assessments will be carried out on any vulnerable students, e.g. those with health issues or SEND conditions.

## **3. Mixing & ‘Bubbles’**

‘Bubbles’ no longer need to be kept in schools, although they may need to be introduced by the college in the event of an outbreak.

While the college is small, and bubbles are technically not necessary, we will keep in place a number of the previous provisions regarding the separation of groups and social distancing.

Staff and students will largely be kept separate as groups. Each group will have their own common room and toilets. Only administrative and cleaning staff will be able to use the student common room, and then only when necessary e.g. to collect printing or cleaning equipment. In addition to the staff kitchen, room 12 will continue to be a staff seating area.

Social distancing policies will remain, with staff, students and administrators keeping a 2m distance between groups and 1m+ within the same group. In reality, as the college is small, these distances will be challenging to maintain in e.g. corridors and a common sense approach will be adopted. However, in teaching rooms these distances will be maintained as much as possible and the no contact rule will be strictly enforced.

The number of individuals congregating at any one time will also be limited. Student groups as a policy will be limited to a maximum of six students in a room at any one time, although this is intended as a guide and may be increased e.g. on school outings or activities which are predominantly outside. The school sports sessions, where students are able to exercise individually or in small groups, will be limited to 10 students. Voluntary staff/student sports matches will also involve higher numbers.

As with both the college ethos, and the contingencies below, a certain amount of flexibility will be required with the restrictions on group sizes and congregations. All stakeholders should notify the college management if they have any concerns about being involved in group activities, and as ever the college will focus on inclusion and adapting to individual needs.

#### **4. Tracing close contacts and isolation**

Close contacts in school are now identified by NHS Test and Trace and education settings are no longer expected to undertake contact tracing.

The full guidance on isolating is available as part of the Government guidance linked in the introduction. Broadly, people who have been in close contact with someone with Covid, such as in the same household, do not need to isolate if they have been fully vaccinated or are under 18, which applies to the majority of individuals in the college.

#### **5. Face Coverings**

Face coverings are no longer advised for pupils, staff and visitors either in classrooms or in communal areas. Therefore, they will not be required on site.

However, if a student, teacher or visitor requests that face coverings are worn, then they will be done so, on request, in either lessons or meetings. Therefore, a student may request that a teacher wears a face covering in class. All requests should be placed with the Principal. This policy does not apply to sports, PSHCE or the common or study rooms, only for teaching or small meetings such as inductions, parent meetings or visits.

This policy is subject to amendment, for instance if there is an outbreak in the college.

As with all the policies in this document, stakeholders should contact the Principal if they have any concerns over face coverings, and individual risk assessments will be completed if there are any specific health concerns.

## **6. Stepping Measures Up and Down**

Should there be an outbreak of Covid in the college, or should the college be advised that measures need to be increased, then the following contingency plans will be adopted:

At first instance, all communal in person activities will be stopped i.e. PSHCE, sports and meetings. This may or may not involve the limiting of numbers in the staff and student common and study rooms, and could include those rooms being closed. Lessons will continue on site, but all other activities will be carried out online.

At second instance, face coverings will become mandatory and strict social distancing rules will be applied, i.e. 2m between all individuals. The cleaning regime will also be increased so that a cleaner is on site during college opening hours.

At final instance, the college will cease all on site learning and lessons will become online only. All students, teachers and administrators will work from home.

## **7. Control Measures:**

### **a. Hygiene**

All staff and students should engage in frequent and thorough hand cleaning as regular practice. All individuals must sanitise their hands on entry to the college, and sanitiser is readily available throughout the building. Likewise, sanitary wipes are also available.

The 'catch it, bin it, kill it' approach continues to be important regarding respiratory hygiene.

The college is maintaining its broad policy regarding equipment: students should bring in their own laptops and other equipment, and may only use college equipment in emergencies.

### **b. Cleaning**

The college will maintain a strong policy towards cleaning. However, in assessing risk to individuals, it was felt that the risk to the cleaner being on site all day, and potentially transmitting the virus to multiple individuals, was higher than the benefits from continuous cleaning. Therefore, cleaning will take place in the evenings, from 5.30-

8.30pm, to minimise transmission risk. The cleaner will ensure that high standards are maintained.

Equipment that is shared between staff e.g. laptops, will be cleaned after every use.

### **c. Ventilation**

While the danger of transmission of Covid from surfaces is real, Covid is now regarded as a predominantly airborne disease, and the majority of transmissions are through close contact over a period of time with other individuals in unventilated spaces. Therefore, ventilation is essential. The college will maintain many of the strict policies from last year.

Windows will remain open in all rooms being used throughout the year. In addition, emergency doors and access doors will also remain open, the majority on fire-release magnetic door holders.

Classroom doors may be closed by teachers and students if both agree. This policy change reflects the reduced risk of transmission due to the high vaccination status of the majority of our students and teachers (see below) and reflects an assessment of risk/reward regarding the disruption to teaching due to open doors (sound and other disturbance).

While the college policy is that windows should remain open throughout the year, temperature will be monitored closely, with thermometers placed throughout the college. There is heating in all the teaching rooms. However, should the temperature in a room drop below 18 degrees Celsius, and if both student and teacher agree, windows may be closed. Again, this is to balance the risk/reward of reducing the transmission of Covid versus creating a suitable environment to learn.

### **d. Testing, self-isolation & managing confirmed cases**

#### When an individual develops symptoms or has a positive test

Pupils, staff and other adults should follow public health advice on when to self-isolate and what to do if they test positive for Covid. They should not come into college if they have tested positive or have symptoms.

If anyone in college develops Covid symptoms they should inform reception or a senior leader. If they are well enough, they can immediately leave the college and return home – they should avoid public transport if possible. If they are very unwell, or if they need support going home e.g. arranging to be picked up by parents or family members, then room 1 is available as an isolation room. The room will be kept ventilated and anyone coming into close contact with them should use appropriate PPE. The college

will subsequently arrange for cleaning of areas used by the individual after they have left.

There is no requirement for individuals to self-isolate if they have been in contact with someone with Covid symptoms unless they themselves develop symptoms, they are a member of the household, or they are contacted by NHS Test & Trace.

#### Asymptomatic testing

Staff and students should continue testing at home, twice a week, using lateral flow devices issued by the college. Compliance will be monitored and recorded by administrators. Room 1 remains as a small asymptomatic testing site (ATS).

#### Confirmatory PCR Tests

Staff and students with a positive LFD test should self-isolate and arrange for a free PCR test. While waiting for the PCR result, they should remain in self-isolation. If the PCR test is taken within 2 days of the positive LFD test and is negative, it overrides the self-test LFD and the individual can return to college, so long as they no longer have symptoms.

#### Clinically Extremely Vulnerable

No children or young people under the age of 18 will now be considered clinically extremely vulnerable, as the risk from serious illness is low. However, if a medical specialist advised a young person to self-isolate due to increased risks, then the college will likely carry out all lessons online, following an individual risk assessment.

#### Vaccination Status

All individuals aged over 12 are now eligible for Covid vaccination. The college will keep a voluntary register of those who have been vaccinated in order to help calculate risk and adjust policy.

### **8. Attendance and remote education**

The college reserves a right to refuse attendance to individuals who have symptoms of Covid, even if they choose to attend.

The college adopts an inclusive approach towards on site and remote learning, adapting to the needs of the individual depending on specific circumstances and contextual factors. The broad college policy is that all learning should be on site, as the benefits from face to face teaching outweigh the risks due to Covid transmission. However, both blended and remote learning are available to students, and can be requested on a case by case basis with the Principal.

Attendance at the college is recorded by lesson, and non-attendance due to Covid will be recorded as such.

The previous college policy regarding an allowed two days of absence per year for teachers has now been removed. The college reverts to its original policy, that teachers will need to make up any lessons missed due to sickness, whether for Covid or other reasons.

## **9. Travel & quarantine**

Many students travel to the college using public transport, and the college does not have a car park or bicycle storage facilities.

Individuals who are concerned about the risks of using public transport should discuss their concerns with the Principal. While the college is happy to help with arrangements for the storage of bicycles, bicycles can no longer be stored on site. Individuals will be responsible for the storage of their bicycles outside the college premises.

## **10. School workforce**

As above, the college now requires all teachers and staff to attend on site and deliver lessons face to face. However, if any member of staff has been advised by a specialist that they should take specific precautions then the Principal will carry out an individual risk assessment, either introducing mitigating measures to reduce the risk of transmission, or arranging for work to be carried out remotely.

## **11. Inspection**

Ofsted has resumed its routine inspections and aims to complete the current cycle of standard inspections in 2022. Westminster Tutors is expecting a routine inspection as part of that cycle.

## **12. Safeguarding**

The college takes safeguarding extremely seriously, and will continue to fulfil its obligations following the guidance in *Keeping Children Safe in Education 2021* and other relevant guidance.

## Appendix A:

# Student Covid Behaviour Policy

### Basic Rules & Guidance

This guidance is intended as a summary of the policies outlined in the full college Covid Policy. As per the college ethos, the rules below are intended to be followed in a spirit of inclusion – respecting each other’s preferences, and being aware of difference. Students should contact the Principal if they have any concerns about Covid policy or safety.

### Social Distancing

- The general guidance for distancing in the college is that students should aim to keep **2 metres** between themselves and everyone else, but that **1m+** between themselves and other students is acceptable, for instance in the study room or kitchen.
- Students **must** not cross the yellow tape demarking separate spaces in the college. This especially applies to reception.
- The maximum number of students in a room at any one time is 6 students (plus a member of staff), although this is intended for guidance purposes.

### Physical Contact

- Students should not make physical contact with another person in the college. This includes fellow students.

### Equipment: Computers, Pens and Books

- Students **must** use their own equipment e.g. laptops, pens and books, and **must not** take any from reception or any other room.

### The Entrance

- All students **must** sanitise their hands every time they enter the building.

### Reception

- There is one seating space available at each sofa. Students should not sit down at a sofa already occupied.
- Students should not congregate in reception.

### Downstairs Kitchen

- This is a student only area, with the exception of administrative staff who need to use the printer/photocopier.
- The maximum number of students able to use the room at one time is 6 (as above).
- Students should bring in their own food and drink and not prepare either of these in the common areas.
- Students **must** clean any surfaces after use.

### Teaching Rooms

- Rooms should be ventilated – the window must be open and doors should be open (students and tutors may agree to close the door e.g. if they are being disturbed by other classes.)
- Students who have concerns over the behaviour of their tutors should contact the Principal.
- Students should also contact the Principal if they have concerns over their teaching room and its compliance with the Covid Policy.



### Study Room

- Students must adhere to the social distancing and non-contact policy in the study room.
- Students should not consume food or drink in the study room.
- Students must wipe clean their station before and after use.
- Students should use sanitiser on entering and leaving the room.

### Toilets

- Students must only use the student toilets (labelled as such).
- Students must wash their hands or use sanitiser after using the toilet.
- Students should report any issues with the toilets, e.g. cleanliness, to either reception or a senior leader.

### Sickness

- Students must not attend the college in person if they are feeling ill with any Covid related symptoms (including temperature, loss or change of sensations such as taste or smell, shortness of breath, sickness or nausea, muscle aches, new skin conditions).
- Students should not attend college with any other new illness until they have spoken directly to the Principal or Director of Studies or their mentor or personal tutor. The NHS advises that students may attend college with a cold, but please do speak to a member of staff before travelling in.
- If students feel ill in college with any Covid symptoms, they should remain where they are and call college reception on 020 7584 1288. If they do not have the college phone number, they should immediately inform the nearest available teacher or administrator. The college protocols for addressing illness are set out in the full Covid Policy.

### Face Coverings

- Students are not required to wear masks in the college, unless there has been a specific request from one of their tutors. Students are able to request with the Principal if they would like their tutors to wear masks in class.

### Outside the College

- If students are engaged in college activities e.g. social outings or sports, they must adhere to the policies as described above and in the full Covid Policy.

### Disciplinary Process and Penalties for Breach

Student behaviour at Westminster Tutors is on the whole excellent, and the following disciplinary process has been written in the expectation that all students will adhere to the guidance in the spirit in which it was written. Mistakes may be made, and there is no desire to revert to a draconian disciplinary regime. The disciplinary process will only occur for either intentional, malicious or repeated breaches, and students will always be given the benefit of the doubt regarding context.

All initial breaches will be referred to the Principal for a disciplinary meeting. At this meeting the student will be given a chance to explain how or why they broke the rules. Only very serious breaches will incur an immediate penalty. At the end of the meeting the Principal will set out clear guidance for the student about further behaviour, and will notify them of the potential penalties.

If the student is reported for a second breach, of either the same or a different rule/policy, then the Principal will use his discretion regarding the penalty, using the following list as a guide. The list is not intended to be comprehensive, and the circumstances may dictate lesser or stronger penalties.

At the second disciplinary meeting the student will again be given the chance to set out the circumstances of the breach and if necessary, evidence will be taken from other students, teachers and other staff before the Principal reaches his decision on necessary further action. All details will be recorded, and for very serious breaches a secondary staff member will take minutes of the proceedings.

#### Penalties For Repeated or Serious Breaches

- 1) Repeated infraction of a 'must or must not' rule despite clear guidance at the first disciplinary meeting may result in an *instant one-week suspension from the college. Parents will be informed.* Lessons will instead be carried out online.
- 2) Repeated infraction of 'should or should not' rules, despite clear guidance at the first disciplinary meeting may result in a *suspended one-week suspension and parents informed of the breach.* A suspended penalty means that at further breach the student will immediately incur a one-week suspension without any further disciplinary meeting necessary. Lessons will instead be carried out online.
- 3) If on return to college after a suspension, a further breach occurs, either of a 'should' or a 'must' rule, then the Principal reserves the right to move the student to online only lessons for the remainder of their course.
- 4) If at any point there is a very serious breach of the policies, or if the student's behaviour is considered to have endangered the safety of another member of the college, then the Principal reserves the right to immediately suspend or expel the student from the college, as per the college Behaviour Policy.