



FAQ – Opening Arrangements (March 2021)

1.0 Government Covid-19 Recovery Strategy

1.1. What changes came into effect from Wednesday 13th May as part of the Government's 'roadmap' out of the coronavirus pandemic?

On 11th May, the Government published '[What You Can and Can't Do](#)' guidance which provides an overview of the changes.

This guidance should be read alongside other updated guidance [Staying Safe Outside Your Home](#) and [Staying Alert and Safe Social Distancing](#).

1.2 Although schools were formally closed to most pupils after 20th March, which pupils were still eligible to attend?

Those that were eligible were 'vulnerable' pupils and pupils with parents that qualified as 'key workers'.

1.3 What is the Government's plan to reopen schools to more children?

On 11th May, the Government published a [Covid-19 Recovery Strategy](#) which included a brief section in respect to reopening schools.

On 27th May, the Government published [Secondary Planning](#) guidance which, from 15th June, allowed schools to offer 'face-face' contact with pupils in Year 10.

On 2nd July, the Government published [Full Reopening of Schools](#) guidance. This guidance outlines how schools can prepare for **all pupils** to return to full time education in September.

On 31st December 2020 the government announced that schools in Essex were to remain closed due to high infection rates except for vulnerable children and children of critical workers & children with EHCP's. This was followed by schools across England moving to remote learning on 5th January 2021 again with the above exception.

2.0 Reopening

2.1 Which pupils will be returning to school in 8th March?

The Academy will be open to all pupils from **8th March 2021**. All pupil's are expected to attend.

2.2 Are all pupils expected to return to school in 8th March 2021?

Yes. The government school's guidance states that all pupils should attend from **8th March 2021**.

2.3 How will pupils be organised to reduce transmission of Covid-19?

In line with the Government's [Full Reopening of Schools](#) guidance, pupils will be assigned to '**bubbles**'. Each year group bubble will be geographically separated by assigning them to a specific zone on the Academy site.

Bubble	Outdoor Zone	*Indoor Zone	Wet Weather Zones
Bubble 1	Primary play space	Bubble 1	Classrooms
Bubble 2	TAG playground	Bubble 2	Classrooms
Bubble 3	Ks3/Ks4	Bubble 3	Hall & Common Area

*Refer to **Appendix 1**.

2.4 What are the arrangements for pupils' arrival and departure?

Pupils must arrive and depart the Academy site at staggered times from designated area (see below).

Bubble	Arrival Area	Departure Area
Bubble 1	Main Entrance & Back of VPA Entrance	Main Entrance & Back of VPA Entrance (For bus)
Bubble 2	VPA Middle Entrance	VPA Entrance
Bubble 3	VPA Pupils Entrance	VPA Entrance

Pupils, parents or any visitors are forbidden to enter the Academy if they are displaying any symptoms of coronavirus – [Covid-19: Guidance for households with possible coronavirus infection](#).

Parents should not accompany their child into school and not congregate at the school gates or in the car park. **If possible, pupils should walk or cycle to school.**

Where parents decide that their child can use public transport, they should, where possible, avoid peak times. Please read [Covid-19: Safer Travel Guidance for Passengers](#) for further information.

When pupils arrive, they must head straight to their Tutor room (refer to table below).

Group/Bubble	Tutor room	Entrance
All primary pupils (Bubble 1)	Primary classrooms	Middle entrance
Year 7/8 (Bubble 3)	Food Tech	VPA side entrance
Year 9 (Bubble 3)	Sports Science	VPA side entrance
Y10A and Y10B (Bubble 3)	Child development/English	VPA side entrance
Y11A and Y11B (Bubble 3)	Science/Princes Trust room	VPA side entrance
KS3 TAG (Bubble 2)	TAG room 1	Middle entrance

2.4 What are the arrangements at break and lunch?

Year groups will be geographically separated according to their allocated zones (refer to 2.3).

Each zone will have food provision and additional toilet facilities.

The Academy uses an external catering service (Pabulum) which will comply with the [Food Businesses on Coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#) guidance.

2.5 Will pupils be following the ‘normal’ curriculum?

Yes. Pupils will follow the broad and balanced curriculum as per previous years.

The Government’s [Full Reopening of Schools](#) guidance states the following in respect to teaching and learning support staff:

‘All teachers and other staff can operate across different classes and year groups in order to facilitate the delivery of the school timetable. This will be particularly important for secondary schools. Where staff need to move between classes and year groups, they should try and keep their distance from pupils and other staff as much as they can, ideally 2m from other adults’.

2.6 I am concerned that my child may be behind and need to ‘catch-up’. What arrangements are in place to help pupils catch-up?

If you have a concern please contact the Academy directly.

2.7 Due to ‘lost learning’ during the school closure period, will the GCSEs for Year 11 pupils be changed in any way?

To ensure exams and assessments next summer are as fair as possible, and take into account any public health requirements and the well-being of pupils.

2.8 Will pupils be able to do P.E and extra-curricular activities?

Yes. The Government’s [Full Reopening of Schools](#) guidance states the following in respect to P.E and extra-curricular activities:

‘Schools have the flexibility to decide how physical education, sport and physical activity will be provided whilst following the measures in their system of controls. Pupils should be kept in consistent groups, sports equipment thoroughly cleaned between each use by different individual groups, and contact sports avoided. Outdoor sports should be prioritised where possible, and large indoor spaces used where it is not, maximising distancing between pupils and paying scrupulous attention to cleaning and hygiene. This is particularly important in a sports setting because of the way in which people breathe during exercise. External facilities can also be used in line with government guidance for the use of, and travel to and from, those facilities.

We recognise that this will be logistically challenging for schools, particularly for clubs that would normally offer support across year groups. Schools should carefully consider how they can make such provision work alongside their wider protective measures, including keeping children within their year groups or bubbles where possible. If it is not possible to maintain bubbles being used during the school day then schools should use small, consistent groups’.

2.9 What measures in the classroom will be implemented to reduce transmission of Covid-19?

In line with the Government’s [Full Reopening of Schools](#) guidance, the following will be implemented:

- Pupils will be seated side by side and facing forwards.
 - Pupils will be reminded to not touch their peers.
 - Where possible, teachers should maintain a 2m distance from pupils. In particular, they should avoid close face to face contact and minimise time spent within 1m of anyone.
 - Shared classroom resources will be disinfected before use.
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- Although teachers are permitted to take class books home to mark, they should endeavour to mark them on the Academy site. Further, when marking books, teachers must wash their hands regularly and avoid touching their face, nose and eyes.

2.10 Will assemblies take place?

Yes, but in 'bubbles' only. Virtual assemblies for all school

2.11 Will pupils in different year groups come in contact with one another whilst moving around the Academy site?

Yes, however, pupils will be encouraged to use outdoor routes to access their classroom, since transmission is low in outdoor environments.

The Government's [Full Reopening of Schools](#) guidance also states the following in respect to pupil movement: *'While passing briefly in the corridor or playground (transmission) is low'*.

2.12 What hygiene measures will be in place to reduce transmission?

- Additional cleaning will take place throughout the school day.
- Desks, door handles, outdoor spaces and other critical areas will be cleaned at least twice a day with disinfectant.
- A deep clean of the Academy site will be undertaken at least once a week.
- Pupils will routinely be shown a hygiene presentation to reinforce effective hygiene measures.
- The Academy has hand washing facilities around the school site.
- Pupils should arrive with their hands thoroughly washed and must use hand sanitizers that are placed at entrances and in classrooms.
- Pupils should wash their hands when they arrive at school.
- Pupils should wash their hands before and after eating, and after sneezing or coughing.
- Pupils will be encouraged not to touch their mouth, eyes and nose.
- Pupils will be reminded to use a tissue or elbow to cough or sneeze and use bins for tissue waste - *'Catch it, Bin it, Kill it'*.
- Staff will be reminded to ensure doors and windows are open and rooms are well-ventilated.
- Additional toilet facilities will be installed in year group zones.
- As pupils move around the Academy site, they will be reminded about the need, **where possible**, to follow [Safe Social Distancing](#) guidance.

2.13 Has the Academy undertaken a risk assessment?

Yes. A risk assessment was initially undertaken on 18th May using a service provided by Southend Borough Council. This was updated on 6th July and will be reviewed on a weekly basis.

2.14 What arrangements are in place if the Academy closes due to a Covid-19 outbreak or local lockdown?

The Academy will revert to an online timetable and live/recorded google classroom lessons

2.15. What support is available to keep pupils safe online?

Parents should access [Further Information on Keeping Children Safe Online](#) guidance.

- [Thinkuknow](#) provides advice from the National Crime Agency (NCA) to stay safe online.
- To help families manage during this time, the NCA has launched [Thinkuknow: home activity packs](#), a

set of fun, engaging activities based on Thinkuknow cartoons, films, games, and advice articles

- A new activity sheet for each age group will be published on the [Thinkuknow](#) website every 2 weeks.
- [Parent Info](#) is a collaboration between Parentzone and the NCA providing support and guidance for parents from leading experts and organisations.
- [Childnet](#) provides a tool kit to support parents and carers of children of any age to start discussions about their online life, to set boundaries around online behaviour and technology use, and to find out where to get more help and support.
- [Internet Matters](#) provides age-specific online safety checklists, guides on how to set parental controls on a range of devices and a host of practical tips to help children get the most out of their digital world
- [LGfL](#) provides support for parents and carers to keep their children safe online, including 6 top tips to keep primary aged children safe online.
- [Net Aware](#) provides support for parents and carers from the NSPCC, providing a guide to social networks, apps and games.
- [Let's Talk About It](#) provides support for parents and carers to keep children safe from online radicalisation.
- [UK Safer Internet Centre](#) provides tips, advice, guides and resources to help keep children safe online, including parental controls offered by home internet providers and safety tools on social networks and other online services.
- [Staying safe online](#) provides Government guidance offering advice on parental controls, fact-checking information, communicating with family and friends while social distancing is in place and taking regular breaks.

3.0 Pupils

3.1 I am anxious about returning to school. Who can I speak to?

Before returning to school, parents can e-mail the Academy to gain reassurance. Where appropriate, the member of staff will telephone the parent (and pupil) to discuss the issues in more detail and arrange a 'preparatory/reconnection' visit.

3.2 What support is available when I return to school?

Pupils may be experiencing a variety of emotions in response to the Covid-19 outbreak, such as anxiety, stress or low mood. Once on site, pupils can speak to their teacher, Head of House, safeguarding staff, member of support staff and/or counsellor.

The Academy has also increased the capacity of the Safeguarding Team to include three additional Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads.

Safeguarding Status	Member of Staff
Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)	Katie Blight
Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL)	Mark Aspel
Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL)	Siobhan Taylor
Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL)	Englantín Muca
Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL)	Simon Quigley
Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL)	John Williams

The Government has also produced [Mental Health and Wellbeing](#) guidance to support pupils.

3.3 Do I need to wear my uniform?

Pupils should attend in their normal school uniform. Infractions will be addressed in line with the Academy's Behaviour and Discipline Policy.

3.3 What equipment do I need to bring into school?

Pupils should bring in their normal equipment but will not be permitted to share it with other pupils.

3.4 What happens if I develop symptoms of Covid-19 whilst at home?

The symptoms of Covid-19 are covered in [NHS Covid-19 Symptoms](#).

The pupil should remain at home and follow the [Stay at Home](#) guidance.

The parent should [Ask for Test](#) and provide confirmation of the outcome. Government guidance states that tests are most effective if carried out within **3 days** of developing symptoms.

Whilst waiting for the outcome, the pupil is required to self-isolate **for at least 7 days**.

If the test is **negative**, the pupil is expected to return to school.

If the test is **positive**, the pupil must self-isolate for **7 days from the date of the test confirmation**. After 7 days, if they **do not have any symptoms (other than a cough or loss of sense of smell/taste)** they are expected to return to school. The pupil does not need to self-isolate if they only have a cough or loss of sense of smell/taste after 7 days, as these symptoms can last for several weeks after the infection has gone.

If the test is **positive**, [NHS Test and Trace](#) will contact the pupil via phone, text or e-mail and will require them to share information about their recent interactions. This could include household members, people with whom they have been in direct contact, or within 2m for more than 15 minutes. **People identified as having been in close contact with someone who has a positive test must stay at home for 14 days, even if they do not have symptoms, to stop unknowingly spreading the virus.**

On 28th May, Public Health England published guidance that explains what an individual should do if the [NHS Test and Trace](#) service notifies them that they are a 'contact' of a person who has **tested positive** for Covid-19 and they do not live with that person - [PHE Contact Guidance](#) . There is also separate guidance for the implications for [Households with Possible or Confirmed Cases of Covid-19](#)

3.5 What happens if I develop symptoms of Covid-19 whilst at school?

The symptoms of Covid-19 are covered in [NHS Covid-19 Symptoms](#)

The guidance [Implementing Protective Measures in Education](#) states the following:

'If anyone becomes unwell with a new, continuous cough or a high temperature in an education or childcare setting, they must be sent home.'

If a child is awaiting collection, they should be moved, if possible, to a room where they can be isolated behind a closed door, depending on the age of the child and with appropriate adult supervision if required. Ideally, a window should be opened for ventilation. If it is not possible to isolate them, move them to an area which is at least 2m away from other people.

If they need to go to the bathroom while waiting to be collected, they should use a separate bathroom if possible. The bathroom should be cleaned and disinfected using standard cleaning products before being used by anyone else.

PPE should be worn by staff caring for the child while they await collection if a distance of 2m cannot be maintained (such as for a very young child or a child with complex needs).

In an emergency, call 999 if they are seriously ill or injured or their life is at risk. Do not visit the GP, pharmacy, urgent care centre or a hospital.

If a member of staff has helped someone who was unwell with a new, continuous cough or a high temperature, they do not need to go home unless they develop symptoms themselves (and in which case, a test is available) or the child subsequently tests positive. They should wash their hands thoroughly for 20 seconds after any contact with someone who is unwell. Cleaning the affected area with normal household disinfectant after someone with symptoms has left will reduce the risk of passing the infection on to other people.

3.6 What happens if a pupil or member of staff test positive for Covid-19?

The guidance [Implementing Protective Measures in Education](#) states the following:

‘Where the child, young person or staff member tests positive, the rest of their class or group within their childcare or education setting should be sent home and advised to self-isolate for 14 days.

The [Full Reopening of Schools](#) guidance provides additional information in the ‘Prevention’ section, paragraph 8 and 9.

3.11. What do I do if a household member I live with has developed symptoms of Covid-19?

The symptoms of Covid-19 are covered in [NHS Covid-19 Symptoms](#).

The household member who is showing symptoms should [Apply for a Test](#) and provide confirmation of the outcome. Government guidance states that tests are most effective if carried out within **3 days** of developing symptoms. Anyone else in the household should self-isolate for 14 days from when the household member started showing symptoms.

If the test is **positive for the household member**, they must self-isolate for **7 days from the date of the test confirmation**. After 7 days, if they **do not have any symptoms (other than a cough or loss of sense of smell/taste)** they no longer need to self-isolate.

If the test is **positive**, [NHS Test and Trace](#) will contact the household member via phone, text or e-mail and will require them to share information about their recent interactions. This could include household members, people with whom they have been in direct contact, or within 2m for more than 15 minutes. **People identified as having been in close contact with someone who has a positive test must stay at home for 14 days, even if they do not have symptoms, to stop unknowingly spreading the virus.**

On 28th May, Public Health England published guidance that explains what an individual should do if the [NHS Test and Trace](#) service notifies them that they are a ‘contact’ of a person who has **tested positive** for Covid-19 and they do not live with that person - [PHE Contact Guidance](#) . There is also separate guidance for the implications for [Households with Possible or Confirmed Cases of Covid-19](#)

If the test is **negative for the household member**, they, along with other household members (including the pupil) no longer need to self-isolate - [Test and Trace Overview](#)

3.12. Asymptomatic testing

Rapidly identifying and containing any asymptomatic cases, which comprises up to a third of all coronavirus cases, will help individuals who carry the infection unknowingly spreading it.

As a school we will seek parental consent for all students attending on site to be tested at regular intervals throughout the week usually twice a week. Staff will also be tested on a regular basis.

4.0 Hygiene and Safety

4.1 Where can I get access to information regarding how to reduce the risk of transmitting Covid-19?

The DfE coronavirus helpline is available to answer questions about Covid-19 relating to education and children's social care. Staff, parents and young people can contact this helpline using the information below:

Phone: 0800 046 8687
8am to 6pm – Monday to Friday
10am to 4pm – Saturday and Sunday

4.2 Where can I get access to information regarding effective handwashing?

It is essential that everyone washes their hands more often, using soap and water for at least 20 seconds. [Handwashing](#) with soap employs mechanical action that loosens bacteria and viruses from the skin, rinsing them into the drain. Drying hands afterwards makes the skin less hospitable to the virus.

Hand sanitiser can be effective if soap is not available or the situation makes using soap less feasible (i.e. when outside) but using hand sanitiser provides none of the virus-destroying friction that rubbing your hands together and rinsing with water provides.

4.3 What is the 'Catch it, Bin it, Kill it' campaign?

'[Catch it, Bin it, Kill it](#)' is a slogan used in several public health campaigns to promote good respiratory and hand hygiene by recommending carrying tissues, using them to catch a cough or sneeze, disposing of them in a waste bin and then killing any remaining germs by washing hands.

4.4 Is it safe to open schools to more children?

On 15th May, the DfE published an [Overview of the Scientific Advice and Information on Coronavirus](#).

Specifically, the information covers the following in respect to infectivity and transmission in children:

'The exact rates of infectivity and transmission of children is not fully known yet; this is a novel virus and the scientific understanding is developing all the time. However, the current understanding is that:

- *There is a high degree of confidence that the severity of disease in children is lower than in adults.*
- *There is a moderate to high degree of confidence that the susceptibility to clinical disease of younger children (up to age 11 to 13) is lower than for adults. For older children there is not enough evidence yet to determine whether susceptibility to disease is different to adults.*
- *The susceptibility to infection of younger children (up to age 11 to 13) might be lower than for adults, but the degree of confidence in this is low. For older children there is not enough evidence yet to determine whether susceptibility to infection is different to adults.*
- *There is no evidence to suggest that children transmit the virus any more than adults. Some studies suggest younger children may transmit less, but this evidence is mixed and provides a low degree of confidence at best'.*

On 26th May, the Government published a [SAGE Modelling Paper](#) to explain and justify the decision-making process with regards to the role of children in transmission of Covid-19.

4.5 What measures does the Government advise to reduce the risk of transmission in schools?

The guidance [Implementing Protective Measures in Education](#) states the following:

'In all education, childcare and social care settings, preventing the spread of coronavirus involves dealing with direct transmission (for instance, when in close contact with those sneezing and coughing) and indirect transmission (via touching contaminated surfaces). A range of approaches and actions should be employed to do this. These can be seen as a hierarchy of controls that, when implemented, creates an inherently safer system, where the risk of transmission of infection is substantially reduced. These include:

- *Minimising contact with individuals who are unwell by ensuring that those who have coronavirus symptoms, or who have someone in their household who does, do not attend childcare settings, schools or colleges.*
- *Cleaning hands more often than usual - wash hands thoroughly for 20 seconds with running water and soap and dry them thoroughly or use alcohol hand rub or sanitiser ensuring that all parts of the hands are covered.*
- *Ensuring good respiratory hygiene - promote the 'catch it, bin it, kill it' approach.*
- *Cleaning frequently touched surfaces often using standard products, such as detergents and bleach*
- *Minimising contact and mixing by altering, as much as possible, the environment (such as classroom layout) and timetables.*

4.6 Will staff and/or pupils require Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)?

On 11th May, the Government published [Implementing Protective Measures in Education](#) and [Safe Working in Education, including the Use of PPE](#) guidance.

Specifically, the guidance states the following in respect to PPE:

'The majority of staff in education settings will not require PPE beyond what they would normally need for their work, even if they are not always able to maintain a distance of 2m from others. PPE is only needed in a very small number of cases including:

- *Children, young people and students whose care routinely already involves the use of PPE due to their intimate care needs should continue to receive their care in the same way.*
- *If a child, young person or other learner becomes unwell with symptoms of coronavirus while in their setting and needs direct personal care until they can return home. A face mask should be worn by the supervising adult if a distance of 2m cannot be maintained. If contact with the child or young person is necessary, then gloves, an apron and a face mask should be worn by the supervising adult. If a risk assessment determines that there is a risk of splashing to the eyes, for example from coughing, spitting, or vomiting, then eye protection should also be worn'.*

*'Wearing a face covering or face mask in schools or other education settings is **not recommended**. Face coverings may be beneficial for short periods indoors where there is a risk of close social contact with people you do not usually meet and where social distancing and other measures cannot be maintained, for example on public transport or in some shops. This **does not apply to schools** or other education settings. **Schools and other education or childcare settings should therefore not require staff, children and learners to wear face coverings**. Changing habits, cleaning and hygiene are effective measures in controlling the spread of the virus'.*

The Government's [Full Reopening of Schools](#) guidance also states the following in respect to PPE:

*'Public Health England **does not** (based on current evidence) **recommend the use of face coverings in schools.** This evidence will be kept under review. **They are not required in schools as pupils and staff are mixing in consistent groups, and because misuse may inadvertently increase the risk of transmission. There may also be negative effects on communication and thus education.***

*Schools should also have a process for removing face coverings when pupils and staff who use them **arrive at school and communicate it clearly to them.** Pupils must be instructed **not to touch the front of their face covering during use or when removing them.** They must **wash their hands immediately on arrival (as is the case for all pupils), dispose of temporary face coverings in a covered bin or place reusable face coverings in a plastic bag they can take home with them, and then wash their hands again before heading to their classroom'**.*

4.7 What happens if there is a confirmed case of Covid-19 in school?

The guidance [Implementing Protective Measures in Education](#) states the following:

'When a child, young person or staff member develops symptoms compatible with coronavirus, they should be sent home and advised to self-isolate for 7 days. Their fellow household members should self-isolate for 14 days. All staff and students who are attending an education or childcare setting will have access to a test if they display symptoms of coronavirus and are encouraged to get tested in this scenario.

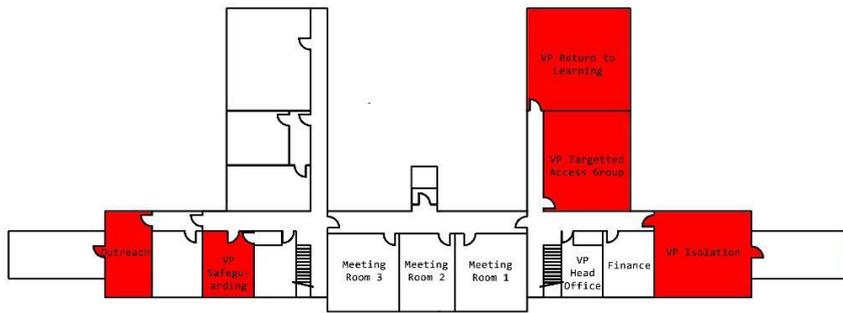
Where the child, young person or staff member tests negative, they can return to their setting and the fellow household members can end their self-isolation.

Where the child, young person or staff member tests positive, the rest of their class or group within their childcare or education setting should be sent home and advised to self-isolate for 14 days.

As part of the national test and trace programme, if other cases are detected within the cohort or in the wider setting, Public Health England's local health protection teams will conduct a rapid investigation and will advise schools and other settings on the most appropriate action to take. In some cases, a larger number of other children, young people may be asked to self-isolate at home as a precautionary measure – perhaps the whole class, site or year group. Where settings are observing guidance on infection prevention and control, which will reduce risk of transmission, closure of the whole setting will not generally be necessary'.

The [Full Reopening of Schools](#) guidance provides additional information in the 'Prevention' section, paragraph 8 and 9, and a summary is provided in **Appendix 2**.

Appendix 1 – Bubble Zones



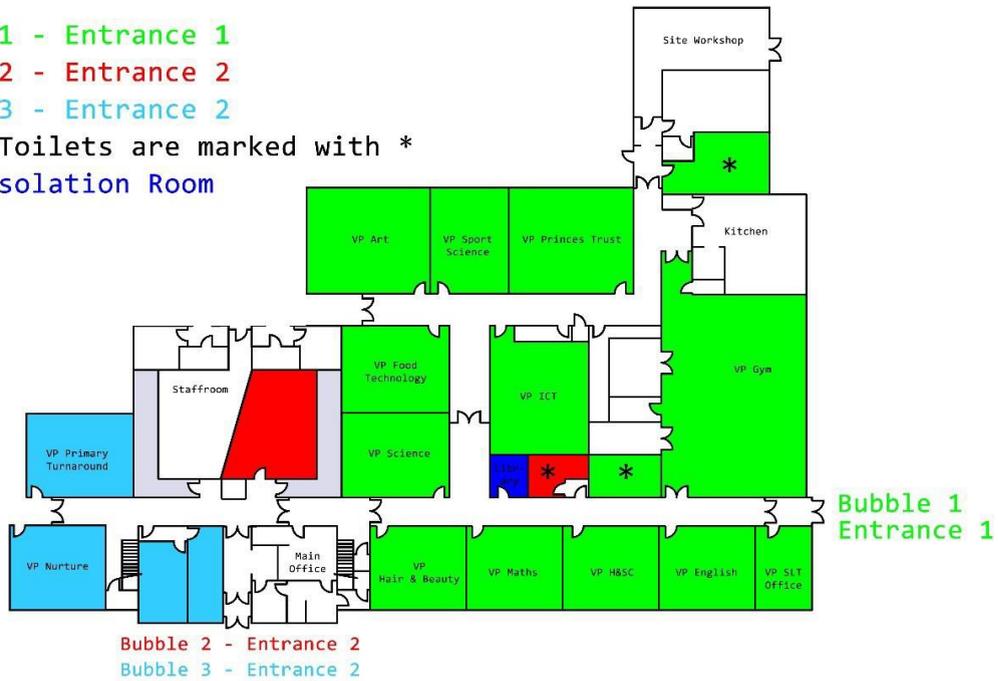
Bubble 1 - Entrance 1

Bubble 2 - Entrance 2

Bubble 3 - Entrance 2

Bubble Toilets are marked with *

Covid Isolation Room



Appendix 2 – NHS Test and Trace Process for Schools

