

Skool Is Out COVID-19 Guidelines and Procedures for Parents/Carers (January 2022)



All guidelines and procedures are as outlined in the [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): Guidance for School Age Childcare Services](#) document.

Omicron Variant

The risks of increased transmission from the recently identified Omicron variant mean that enhanced mitigations remain in place across our childcare settings. Please ensure you are fully familiar with the most recent updates to self-isolation requirements and conditions, asymptomatic self-testing procedures and most up-to-date public health measures and expectations.

Collection Procedures

Footfall will continue to be minimised across the premises and parents/carers will be expected to continue to wait outside when collecting children. Parents/carers should maintain a minimum of 1 meter physical distance from others, use hand gels provided before pressing buzzers, and ensure face coverings are worn at all times.

Group Bubbles/Cohorts

While there are no explicit restrictions placed on group sizes when cohorting children, most recent guidance requires a reinforcement of actions to minimise contacts wherever possible. As part of our holistic approach and in the interests of child and staff wellbeing, we will continue to deploy a club-specific “group” across our childcare settings. This means that children from James Gillespie’s and Bruntsfield Primary Schools will continue to be based together within the halls, but with all other infection prevention and control mitigations remaining in place. This will be regularly reviewed in consultation with our staff team, senior staff and the Care Inspectorate, as necessary.

Outdoor Play

We will continue to maximise outdoor play opportunities for children in line with best-practice guidelines. During winter months there is an increased chance of inclement weather, so please ensure children are provided with appropriate outdoor clothing.

Infection Prevention and Control

Enhanced protocols will remain in place, including physical distancing between adults, wearing of face coverings for staff while based indoors, twice daily cleaning of touch surfaces and resources, vigilance to COVID-19 symptoms and adherence to the relevant isolation protocols, increased signage, and implementation of one way systems.

Self-Isolation

From 6th January 2022, identified close contacts for those aged under 18 will be released from the requirement to self-isolate, subject to daily negative lateral flow testing (for 7 days). This also applies to those over 18 who are identified as close or household contacts, provided they have received three doses of the Coronavirus Vaccine.

If you or your child/ren tests positive, you should arrange to self-isolate for a minimum of 7 days, and can return to the setting subject to negative lateral flow test results being recorded on days 6 and 7 of isolation. Please ensure you evidence this prior to returning to the setting.

Finally, should any individual test positive on a lateral flow device without symptoms, there is now no requirement to undertake a confirmatory PCR test; you should arrange to self-isolate as per the above guidelines. If you or your child/ren develop symptoms, you should arrange to take a PCR test as before.

Ventilation

Enhanced ventilation will be in place and windows and doors may be open during the session, even in the colder months and, as such, we request children have appropriate winter clothing. We have air vents in operation at our Barclay Viewforth (P1-3 venue) and both our club premises have large halls with high ceilings to improve air quality. As per government guidelines, we also utilise CO2 monitors across our play spaces to monitor air quality and ventilation and will maximise outdoor play for children wherever possible.

Staffing

There will be no restrictions on the use of agency or peripatetic staffing, however, we will continue to ensure consistency of staffing between venues to minimise risk as much as possible. The bulk of our staff will continue to take twice-weekly lateral flow tests.

School Collections

We will continue to collect children from defined collection points on-site at James Gillespie's and Bruntsfield Primaries, and our staff will adhere to all necessary protocols when on-site at either school. We will send across a register of all children attending the after school club to both schools on a weekly basis. It is imperative that parents/carers notify us in advance of any absences to avoid unnecessary worry or stress at collection time and to minimise time spent on-site at school premises.

Absence Notification

Please ensure we are notified in advance if your child/ren will be absent from the club for any reason. This is particularly important to minimise time spent on-site at school premises and reduce unnecessary stress and inconvenience for our staff team and other children.

Ad Hoc Sessions

We are happy to accommodate ad-hoc sessions, subject to staffing and availability. We require 24 hours' notice of any requests for one-off sessions and payment should be arranged in advance of childcare.

Outings, Workshops and Clubs Collections

Updated guidance has requested that services minimise outings, workshops and external visits wherever possible at this time. As such, we will not be proceeding with our usual program of Friday outings for the winter term. We hope to recommence outings and workshops from May 2022 onwards and will ensure all parents/carers receive further information in due course.

Owing to restrictions currently in place, as well as staffing shortages, we are regrettably unable to recommence collections from school-based clubs at this time. We will review this in due course and hope to be in a position to offer this service again in the 2022/23 school year.

Children's Personal Effects

At Protection Level 0 and beyond children can now bring in items from home, but we will still discourage this to minimise the risk of cross contamination. Any items from home are also brought into the club at children's own risk. Please note, we do not permit items such as mobile telephones or hand-held games consoles at the clubs.

Communication and Visits

The majority of our communications will continue to take place via email or over the phone, as opposed to in person. If you have any questions or concerns, or you wish to discuss please contact us via email, or contact the club directly at 07815798808 (P1-3 families) or 07713999069 (P4-7). We will send across regular newsletters and consultations via email to keep you abreast of what is happening at the after school clubs.

In-person visits from parents/carers are discouraged and are only permitted if it is essential as part of children's transition or wellbeing. Any visits should be arranged in advance and in consultation with the Childcare Manager.

Snacks

In order to minimise the risk of cross contamination snacks will continue to be served to children by our staff team until further notice. Snacks will be offered to all children upon arrival at the club and food items will be removed once all children have been offered a snack. All plates and crockery used will be cleaned in a dishwasher using a two-stage cleaning process, while all staff preparing and serving snack will have the appropriate food hygiene certificates and PPE.

We request that parents/carers do not supply personal snacks to children until further notice. If your child/ren has any specific dietary requirements please notify us in advance and we will ensure snack provision is amended accordingly for your child. Please note that Skool Is Out do not supply any snacks containing nuts.

Further Restrictions

Please note that due to the increased transmissibility of the Omicron variant, we anticipate an increase in staff and child absences as we return for the new term. Skool Is Out will do everything possible to minimise any adverse effects of staffing absence on our childcare provisions, but please note that this may be unavoidable. We have numerous mitigations in place to cope with staffing absences and we are optimistic that these processes, coupled with the protocols currently in operation, will ensure our services can remain open and fully operational throughout this difficult time. Any instances of significant staffing absence that may compromise the ability of the clubs to operate will be communicated to all parents/carers at the earliest possible opportunity and will only be after all other options have been exhausted.

Wellbeing and Support

We are conscious that the return to school and after school care in the current circumstances may be challenging and we understand there may be a period of adjustment and transition for both children and adults at the clubs.

Our staff are being provided with workplace support and training and will ensure they continue to offer your children the same high levels of support and understanding during this challenging time. Staff will be available to offer guidance, reassurance, and comfort to children as and when this is required, and we trust all children will be reassured by the measures implemented at our clubs to maximise their health and safety.

Please also feel free to access [Coronavirus: A Book for Children](#), illustrated by Axel Scheffler, which offers guidance and reassurance for primary-aged children.

[How to Stay Calm in a Global Pandemic](#) by Dr. Emma Hepburn is also available for any adults suffering from stress or anxiety relating to the current situation.