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Covid-19 Pledge of Care and Support

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WHG are committed to caring for our students and helping to manage their arrival/departure and ongoing care while studying in the UK. To do this effectively, working with schools and following government guidelines and advice from Public Health England (PHE) is essential.

We pledge to do our utmost to support you and to do this, we have put together this comprehensive guide of what to expect from your arrival in the UK. Guidelines are changing as we manage life through the pandemic so if there are any changes to this guide, we will notify you.

Life in the UK

For those students returning to the UK, you will notice some differences to how we live, work and study but they should not be too similar to the changes you have been living with in your own country. Social distancing and good personal hygiene are two of the key factors in controlling the spread of Coronavirus.

The UK Government has released guidelines on how to manage this in a residential setting such as a boarding school and schools have put together their own ways of managing the safe return of students having already re-opened in June 2020 to a limited number of year groups.

Travel to and from the UK

Flights to and from the UK have increased and we hope that you are able to book your arrivals and departures with good availability. Once you arrive, as usual, we are able to organise your airport transfers, if this is not done by your boarding school. For students on our State School Programme, your transfers are included as usual.

We have been in contact with all our partner private hire drivers who have confirmed that they are operating and following strict guidelines to keep passengers safe. This includes wearing face masks and vehicles being completely sanitized before each journey.

Testing

WHG have successfully assisted a large number of students with COVID testing. Most of our students are depart from Heathrow airport and the testing facility organised by Collinson at Terminal 2 & 5 has been efficient, low-cost and successful.



Please be mindful of the type of test that is needed by the government of the country you are travelling to. For example, travelers to Hong Kong must get a test from a laboratory that has an ISO15189 accreditation and the paperwork to support this.

There are a lot of private clinics offering 'Fit to Fly' certificates across the UK, but there are a noticeable number who may not have this accreditation or use a third party which might not be accepted and delay your travel plans.

Please contact us for more details on testing.

Quarantine

We still have a 14-day quarantine for arrivals from certain countries. However, travel corridors have been set up for some countries who now do not need to quarantine.

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-travel-corridors>

This list is constantly under review and we hope that more countries will be added and not removed, saving the need for students to quarantine on arrival in the UK.

From the 15th of December 2020, the UK Government will be introducing the option to pay for a private test after 5 days in to reduce the number of days anyone must spend in quarantine, if they return a negative result. The cost of these test will be between 60 GBP and 120 GBP.

WHG have a limited number of host families across the UK who have agreed to host students for quarantine, provided they arrange for a COVID test (with a negative result) within 72 hours of arriving in the country and travelling to their host family.

Alternatively, we have a residence in Newbury who are not asking for a negative COVID test, if this is not possible.

Please contact us if you need support in arranging quarantine.

Your Local Guardian

Your Local Guardian may not be able to visit you when you first arrive in the UK but rest assured, we will make contact with you when you arrive and when possible, we will visit you.

Social distancing might change the way we can visit students in schools but our support can remain the same. You can and will be able to rely on your Local Guardian to make arrangements for you such as airport transfers, buying sim cards or sports equipment. So please do let us know if you need assistance with anything before arriving or while you are here in the UK as most things can be arranged remotely.

Host Families

During the rise of the pandemic and spread in the UK, WHG was not able to offer host family accommodation if a student was in boarding and showed symptoms of Coronavirus.

UK Government guidelines were that a boarding house was classed as a household and if someone showed symptoms such as a high temperature or new and persistent cough, the whole boarding house would have to isolate for 14-days.

For students who lived long-term with one of our host families, the same rules applied. If someone in the house showed symptoms, the whole household would have to isolate for 14 days.

We are still working through the pandemic, the advice from the UK Government has not changed. For this reason, our host families are unable to take students in who show symptoms of Coronavirus but if they are already hosting a student, the host family must commit to hosting them and isolating with them which has happened successfully on two occasions so far during the October Half-Term.

We have a duty to protect our students and our host families, so any family over the age of 70 or if anyone has underlying health conditions considered sensitive to Covid-19, they would be unable to host.

Be Coronavirus Aware

We would like to share this link on Social Distancing in the UK and stopping the spread of Coronavirus. Although simple, these are the most effective ways to make sure that you and protecting yourself as well as others.

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/social-distancing/what-you-need-to-do/>

FAQ

When will my Local Guardian visit me?

It is unlikely schools will allow guardians to visit students in the first half of the term. Our guardianship includes a visit within the first few weeks of arriving followed by a report. The visit will have to be virtual by phone or messaging by email / WhatsApp and we will send a brief report to you once we have made contact.

What will WHG do if my child becomes unwell?

It is important first to find out their symptoms as not all illness is related and in need of the same reaction as Coronavirus.

If your child is displaying one or more of the symptoms linked to Coronavirus according to Public Health England, (<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/symptoms/>) then we would react as follows:

1. If your child is in boarding school, we will liaise with the school to support them and your child according to the school's policy. This would likely mean if possible, a period of isolation until a test for Covid-19 was undertaken.
2. If your child is in a homestay, we will liaise with the host family and as above, the family would have to isolate until a test has been carried out.

How long does NHS testing take if I show symptoms?

A test must be taken within 5 days of showing symptoms so it is imperative we know as soon as you are feeling unwell. The UK Governments aim is to have a result from a test within 72 hours.

How long does private testing take?

It depends on the clinic and laboratory. Most test are advertised from 24-72 hours to deliver results but these may change depending on demand and unforeseen delays by third parties.

What do I do when in quarantine?

At both our Newbury residence and in host families, quarantine must be strict and follow the government guidelines as there are fines in place if the rules are broken. Meals will be delivered to rooms and there will be regular sanitising. It will be arranged for students to spend time outside but on the grounds of the property.

Here is a link to the UK Government Guidance on 'how to self-isolate when you travel to the UK'

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-how-to-self-isolate-when-you-travel-to-the-uk/coronavirus-covid-19-how-to-self-isolate-when-you-travel-to-the-uk>

What happens if my Local Guardian becomes unwell?

Each Local Guardian has a deputy so that if they fall unwell, a second person is ready to take over until they are able to return to work.

Can I wear a face mask?

Face masks are now mandatory on public transport, in shops & in educational settings for certain age groups. You will be guided by your school on this.

How would WHG react to a rise in infection?

In March & November 2020, there has been national lockdowns but looking forward, it is more likely that there would be local lockdowns if infection rates rise in certain areas. In this case, we will adhere to advice from the UK Government and following this while keeping parents informed of updates.

What happens if my school has a confirmed case of Coronavirus?

Each school will have measures in place to deal with this but will be guided by Public Health England. WHG will be there to support you and the school as much as possible while adhering to advice given by Public Health England.

Are your host families kept up to date with advice?

Yes. Along with this document, we are sending advice to our host families on caring for our students under current conditions. These includes Public Health Advice on social distancing and how to stop the spread of infection

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/social-distancing/what-you-need-to-do/>