

Safe Return to BOVTS for Staff and Students

Information and guidance for the whole School surrounding COVID-19

SUMMER TERM 2021



**Bristol Old Vic
Theatre School**

1. Introduction from the Principal

Hello to the whole Theatre School community - our staff, students and visiting professionals. It has been wonderful to have had activity in the School since 8th March, and also over the Easter holidays. Thank-you to all staff and students who have contributed to School life over the past few weeks. I look forward to seeing all our students back in the School's buildings for the Summer Term.

Everything feels more positive at the moment, with infection rates falling and the vaccination rollout. The regular testing at the University of Bristol has also given a lot of reassurance for everyone, and this, along with home testing kits, will continue to play a key part in the School operating safely.

There have been some updates to this document since last term, and Bristol Public Health have endorsed our guidance. The School will continue to be cautious and will keep reviewing our procedures alongside Government guidance. We have been able to relax some of the stipulations around wearing face masks – which is detailed in the document.

Our visiting directors and tutors will be fully briefed on the guidelines and they, and all staff and students, will always be able to contact Beshlie and Alice with any queries or concerns. I would continue to ask everyone in the School community to respect and listen to Beshlie and Alice – they are doing a very valuable and valued job for us all.

Thank-you, as ever, for your continued help and support with keeping our School open and our School community safe.

Fiona Francombe
Principal

2. General Measures

Course and module leaders will be discussing the protocols with students before and during the first week back commencing the 26th April 2021.

All references to School include all three BOVTS sites (Christchurch, Downside Road and Sheene Road) as well as any additional spaces or venues that have been hired for use by the Bristol Old Vic Theatre School.

- The timetable has been arranged in a way that allows as few people to be on-site at any one time, and to reduce the risk of corridor congestion forming. Many classes have been timetabled off-site to ensure we are using larger spaces to accommodate lessons that require good social- distancing, i.e. voice classes. You must apply the same adherence to the guidance as you would at any BOVTS site. You must also familiarise yourself with the policies of the site you will be working/ rehearsing in.

Testing

The Government has now made it possible for everyone within England to have access to regular LFD tests, which are currently free of charge and available at many local pharmacies and Community Asymptomatic Testing Sites.

You can get regular rapid tests if you do **not** have symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19).

About 1 in 3 people with coronavirus do not have symptoms but can still infect others. Getting tested regularly is the only way to know if you might have the virus. If people test positive and self-isolate, it helps stop the virus spreading.

Everyone is encouraged to have regular testing twice weekly. There are four main ways to get a test:

- You can book an LFD test via the covidsafety@oldvic.ac.uk to have a test at The Anson Rooms with The University of Bristol. This is the same process that has been used since the start of the Spring Term, and staff and students are welcome to book in with Alice and Beshlie as needed.
- You can go to a Community Asymptomatic Testing Site and have an LFD test there, you will need to book an appointment in order to have a test done. Please see [here](#) to search for local testing sites in your area.
- You can collect a testing kit from a local pharmacy; there are several on Whiteladies Road that are currently offering this service. You can collect up to 2 packs of 7 tests from a local pharmacy or test site, find a local pharmacy near you [here](#) and find a local testing site to collect tests from [here](#).
- You can also order a pack of 7 tests to be sent to your home, see [here](#).

Students returning to School after the Easter break, and those choosing to move to home testing should undertake three supervised LFD tests at a registered test site (such as University of Bristol) before moving onto home testing. If you have any

questions about this, please contact Beshlie or Alice, COVID Supervisors at covidsafety@oldvic.ac.uk

Please see the end of this guidance for a list of locations within Bristol where you can collect home test kits.

Wearing Masks

Our mask policy has changed slightly. Although you must continue to wear a mask at all times when inside any BOVTS building, (unless exempt for a medical reason) there are now some instances when you are able to take your mask off. Below we have listed when it may be possible for students to take their masks off, but this is always at the Tutor's/ Director's discretion and is relative to each individual class. We ask that students respect each tutor's decision and the School will support each individual tutor's position.

- If a student or students are up in a space performing, being observed for educational purposes by their Tutor and other classmates, and are able to maintain a 2m distance from those watching and from each other, they can take their mask off.
- During rehearsals, where there is 'active work' i.e. blocking, running a scene, working 1-2-1 with a Director or Tutor, students can take their masks off. Students and Staff must continue to wear masks for a read through and any research and development in the early stages of a production. Masks should only be taken off for those who are up working in the space, as long as they are socially distanced from their scene partner and those watching.
- If students are working with someone from their household, they do not need to wear a mask, as long as they can maintain social distancing of 2m from others who are not in their household. Where possible students should try and work with people from their house
- If you are working on your own in a room, you do not need to wear a mask. If a group is working without supervision, (for example in a breakout room, or after school) again if you are able to work socially distanced, then you do not need to wear a mask.
- If you are exempt from wearing a mask for medical reasons, you will have made your course leader (if applicable) and Julia Heeley (Student Support Manager) aware of this and alternative arrangements will have been made.
- Please refer to signage found around school to aid in this safe practice. Rooms have been measured and we have determined the safe maximum capacity for each. Please refer to each room's door for this information.
- If you require a visor please ask Joe Watt, Alice Dillon or Beshlie Thorp for these. Please be reminded that a visor is not as protective as a mask, for yourself or others, and should be worn with caution.
- You will have your temperature taken each day when you arrive at *any* School site, including the additional spaces the School has hired. You will need to declare you are not experiencing any symptoms of COVID-19 and that you haven't been asked to self-isolate by

National Track and Trace. Temperatures will be taken by a member of staff or an assigned student.

- If you have a raised temperature (37.8C or greater), a persistent cough or other symptoms of COVID-19 you will be asked to self-isolate and take a PCR COVID-19 test to confirm your result.
- Students must leave time before they are required in class to allow for the signing in process. To sign in you will be required to scan a QR code and fill in an online form, you must also use the same process to sign out. Please make sure your mobile device has the ability to process these codes, if there are any issues with this then there will be a physical sign in/out sheet, but please make sure you bring your own pen.
- Once you have signed in please head straight to your classroom/office, do not hang around in corridors or kitchen areas. Please remember that COVID-19 is transmitted via aerosols, keeping your voice at a low volume will help to reduce any possible spread of the virus.
- You must provide your own mask to wear on any school site, make sure you have a spare to hand and follow this guidance on safe mask wearing.
- For additional safety, we will be keeping to the 2 metre social distancing model where possible and there are floor markings and signage to remind everyone.
- Please try to walk on the left as much as possible when you are moving around the School buildings.
- Between classes, if you are vacating a room, there will be time provided for you to clean the area with the cleaning supplies found in each room. You will be required to wipe down your chair and any other high contact surfaces that have been touched, for example, tables, door handles and equipment. Please place all disposable items in the C- 19 specific bin for safe disposal.
- Please remember to wash or sanitise your hands regularly. There are extra sanitising facilities being put in place around the buildings to help you to do this.
- The Staff Common Room will remain open and staff must adhere to safe distancing at all times. Visiting tutors have priority over sitting in this space, regular staff are advised to use the facilities and retire back to their office or to the garden, weather permitting.
- The Student Common Room kitchen will be open between 1pm-2pm and will operate a one-in-one-out system, so that food can be heated up in microwaves, or to give access to cold and hot water. Please wipe down everything you touch once finished, such as door handles, taps, light switches etc, with the cleaning products provided. Students will need to bring their own cutlery and crockery.
- There will be a heightened cleaning regime in place; please be patient if some areas are temporarily unavailable due to additional cleaning.

- Cleaning products will be available in each room, please use the designated COVID bins to dispose of any rubbish. Stock will be checked every morning but should supplies run low then emergency products will be available from reception.
- To avoid unnecessary travel and external exposure, we would prefer you to use the outside areas, whilst always following social distancing guidelines. To avoid additional external exposure, we ask that no food is ordered to be delivered to School. Please keep your working area clean.
- COVID Supervisors, **Beshlie Thorp 07955076932** and **Alice Dillon 07792664317** covidssafety@oldvic.ac.uk have been appointed; Beshlie and Alice will regularly be reviewing activity and solely focused on COVID-19 compliance and safety. We would ask that you respect the advice and instruction that Beshlie and Alice give.
- If you begin to feel unwell while at school you should return home and contact:

Staff: your line manager / C-19 Supervisor (see above for contact details.)

Students: Julia Heeley (Student Support Manager) on **0117 9809247** or **julia.heeley@oldvic.ac.uk** or **your course leader**.

If you have symptoms of COVID-19 you should arrange to have a free NHS test.

3. The practicalities of coming to BOVTS in the Summer Term 2021

Attendance in person at the School:

- It is expected that students will come into the School's buildings for timetabled classes and then leave immediately afterwards in order to reduce exposure to others and put pressure on the capacity in each of the School's buildings.
- Staff are also asked to only be in the buildings when necessary.
- Students, please ensure you have left enough time to have your temperature checked and to scan the QR code before your class is due to start.

If you are scheduled to attend the school premises in person:

- Please only attend if you are well and do not have any symptoms of COVID-19 or any other illness. If you do have any COVID symptoms or other illness please contact:
- **Staff:** your line manager / C-19 Supervisor (see above for contact details.)
- **Students: Julia Heeley** (Student Support Manager) on **0117 9809247** or **julia.heeley@oldvic.ac.uk** or **your course leader**.

Things to prepare for before leaving for School:

- There will be limited access to food preparation facilities, so we advise all bring their own packed lunches, snacks and flasks and cutlery.
- There will be no access to changing areas, showers, lockers in changing rooms, and limited access to toilet facilities (see doors for details) so all must arrive dressed in their appropriate clothing for the day's work.
- Due to the limitation of the Library space, we are planning for the Library to be closed. Should any student need to refer to a specific text/book, please let Reception know. They will organize for the text/book to be available for collection from Reception the following day. Access to the PCs in the Library will also be restricted to one person at a time. Online resources (such as Dramaonline) will be available.
- Students should bring only one bag into School, which will always be kept with you and must be stored under your chair, or out of the way from activities and other people's belongings.
- It is an expectation that everyone wears a 3-layer face mask or covering around School, unless you have been told otherwise, or if you are exempt. Please refer to our new Guidance regarding situations where it is acceptable to remove your mask (see above).
- Ensure you have at least one spare and that they are kept clean. Follow [this guidance](#) for mask wearing if unsure. When using a visor, make sure you have your name marked clearly on it and that you wipe it with disinfecting wipes after use.

Even if you have been told it is safe to remove your mask, you are not obliged to, and you are also encouraged to ask others to wear a mask if you so wish. Your decision will be respected as everyone must be made to feel comfortable whilst at School.

External entrances/exits

- All students are to use the main Reception door at Downside Road, while all staff are to use the entrance at number 3. Sheene Road's main door is to be used by Production Arts and visitors, whilst the side door is access for Scenic Art. Christchurch only has the usual use of the main front door. You will be advised over the local procedures for entering / exiting additional hired spaces and venues.
- Always be mindful of maintaining 2 metre social distancing as you enter any building, and follow the markings on the floor where these exist. The entrance to Downside will be up the stairs/ramp on the left and down the stairs on the right, please follow the arrows.

- There are hand sanitiser stations at all entrances to all School buildings and additional spaces and venues. Please sanitise your hands before entering, and on exiting, all School buildings. Help us maintain a culture of regular hand-washing as this is proven to be the most effective way to control the spread of the C-19 virus.
- There is guidance in place for any external buildings being used, please read any information you are provided with thoroughly.

Procedures to follow when entering School buildings:

- A BOVTS staff member, or assigned student, will carry out temperature checks on all students and visitors entering School buildings. Staff will take their own temperature and wipe down the thermometer after use with the wipes provided. Any persons showing an unusually high temperature may be asked whether they have any other C-19 symptoms and will be asked to return to their homes. The standard C-19 procedures should then apply. These can be found in the outbreak plan in **Appendix 2**.

Please note that when signing-in you are declaring that you do not have any of the COVID-19 symptoms. If you continue to access any School building when you knowingly have symptoms you will be putting the whole School community at risk.

Foyer and reception area:

- Please do not socialise or meet in any foyer or corridors in any buildings. This is unfair on staff and students who may wish to move through these areas to access their study/workspaces.
- Please keep noise to a minimum as we will be keeping as many doors open as safe to do so to allow good air flow throughout the building and studios.
- Everyone must sanitise and/or wash their hands before entering work rooms and studios.
- Printers are available for use so long as you wash/sanitise your hands first and wipe down everything you touched upon finishing.

Room Capacity:

- All rooms have been allocated a maximum capacity with clear signage on all entrance doors. Please strictly adhere to these allocations. Seating arrangements will be made appropriate to the discipline and the space.

Ventilation:

- Good ventilation can help reduce the risk of spreading coronavirus. For instance, by keeping doors and windows open (weather allowing).
- Please leave windows and doors open at the end of your session in your room / studio if safe to do so in order to air it before it is next used. For those using rooms at the end of the day, please make sure that all windows are locked and made safe before you leave.

Cleaning, Sanitising and Hygiene:

Staff and students are asked that they take responsibility for cleaning surfaces, equipment, and high touch areas after use.

Areas include:

- handles on doors, windows, rails, and taps
- control panels for equipment, control pads and switches
- computer keyboards, printers, touch screens, monitors, and phones
- work surfaces in studios, along with tools and machinery
- Toilets - please follow guidance in the next section on toilets

The School premises will continue to be cleaned as usual, with C-19 preventative measures taken by the School's external cleaning contractors. Due to the higher volume of users (academic & support staff and students) at Downside Road, an extra clean of toilets at Downside Road will take place over the lunch period by our external cleaning contractors.

Everyone is reminded that it is an expectation that our cleaning guidance is followed whenever accessing any building. This is not just to protect individuals but everyone else who uses the space. **Please be mindful of the effects of your actions on others.**

Toilets

- Toilets have been assigned to courses or staff to reduce the traffic in these areas and to avoid cross-contamination.
- Please take responsibility for making sure the facilities are always left clean, and follow the guidance displayed within – this includes using the sanitising spray provided after use.
- Please sanitise hands before entering and upon exiting toilets.
- If there is a queue, please make sure you adhere to the socially distanced floor markings.

- Toilet allocation is below, alternatively, the information can be found on the toilet doors.

Christchurch Toilets:

- Easy Access – Students
- Gents 1st Floor – Unisex Staff
- Ladies 2nd Floor – Unisex Film Students

Downside Road Toilets

- Reception – Disabled and Staff
- Building 2 stairway – Prod Arts and Costume
- Building 3 stairway – Prod Arts and Costume
- Ladies Changing room – Actors and Prod Arts
- Gents Changing room – Actors and Prod Arts
- Easy Access Basement – Disabled and Staff
- Basement Building 3 – MA courses
- Attic Building 3 – Staff

Sheene Road Toilets

- Ladies Toilet – Production Arts Students
- Gents Toilet – Scenic Art Students
- Staff Toilet – Staff and Visitors

External spaces & venues

Guidance will be given to those using external spaces & venues, according to local provision.

Singing

Currently the School has no singing on site, and all classes and one-to-ones are happening on Zoom. This will continue for the foreseeable until we have more information on the safety of singing. This measure will be under constant review, and we will update students and staff when we know more.

Any singing required for shows and text projects should be prerecorded wherever possible. Otherwise all other singing must be signed off by a COVID Supervisor.

Socialising Outside of School

Everyone is reminded to follow the government guidance on socialising, both inside and outside of their homes. We must all take responsibility for keeping everyone safe during this time and everyone is asked to act responsibly for the whole School community to remain safe and well.

What is a Support Bubble and who can make one?

A support bubble is when ONE household allows another person who is from a single person household (who lives on their own) to join their household and effectively become one household. This means that you can have close contact with the people within your support bubble as if you were living within one house.

One household + 1 single person household = Support Bubble

Once you have created a support bubble you cannot swap and change into other households/support bubbles. You should continue to socially distance with people outside of your household/support bubble. Further guidance on how and who can form a support bubble can be found here.

Fixed Teams were used in exceptional circumstances in the Autumn term, however considering the ongoing situation with the emergence of new and concerning variants of COVID-19 we will not be using fixed teams until further notice. The ever-changing global situation with COVID-19 means that we must constantly review our guidance and amend accordingly. Staff and students should continue to only work closely with people within their household or support bubble whilst respecting those around them. If you need any further guidance please contact Beshlie or Alice.

What are Lateral Flow Tests (LFD s) and how effective are they?

It is advised that students have one of these tests before they are due to come back to school, and then one 3-4 days later. It is then advised that students undertake these tests weekly throughout the term. If students choose not to have an LFD test, they should as an alternative self-isolate for 10 days prior to requiring access to the School buildings.

Lateral Flow Tests also known as LFD s and will be referred as LFD s throughout this guidance, are designed to detect the virus in people who show no symptoms and are therefore asymptomatic. If you are displaying symptoms of COVID-19 you are NOT to attend an LFD Testing site, and instead should book online to visit an NHS Testing site and have a PCR test or order one to be delivered through the post.

LFD tests are an effective tool in the fight against COVID as they can detect high levels of the virus in people who might not be displaying any symptoms, and so are carrying on with their lives unaware that they are spreading the virus to other people. They may not however pick up cases where you are in the early stages of COVID infection.

The process is very simple, you will be directed to a booth where you will be required to administer the test yourself. Much like a PCR test used by the NHS, you will need to use the swab to take a sample from the back of your throat on your tonsils, and then use that same swab to take a sample from inside one nostril. You will then need to wait approx. 30 -45 mins to receive your result. The entire process should take no more than an hour in total.

If you receive a negative result

- If the first LFD test result is negative, students should limit their social contact and interaction with other students until they receive a second negative LFD test result. This is to limit the risk of transmission.
- Students that test negative as part of the twice weekly testing programme should continue to follow any national or regional tier restrictions.

If you receive a positive result

- Upon notification of a positive test result (LFD or PCR), students are legally required to self-isolate for ten days and contact tracing will be initiated. You need to book an NHS PCR test to confirm your result. You must self- isolate until you receive your result. Once you have received confirmation of a positive result, you must then continue to self-isolate for the next 10 days.
- Before students get tested, you should make sure you have arrangements in place to travel home safely in the event you test positive. You should walk, cycle or drive wherever possible.
- You should not use public transport or a taxi or private hire vehicle to return home.

Please note however that these tests are in no way a substitute for any of the other processes in place, and the message is clear, **hands, face, space and fresh air** are key to tackling this virus. Due to the nature of the tests and their ability to detect high and therefore infectious levels of the virus within people, there is still the possibility that you will get a negative test while still having COVID albeit with lower levels of the virus, and so continued vigilance is key. Further guidance on LFDS can be found [here](#).

If a student has recently (within 90 days) tested positive for COVID-19, they are likely to have developed some immunity. If a student has had a positive coronavirus (COVID-19) test in the last 90 days through NHS Test and Trace and been recorded as a positive case on the national system, they do not need to be tested again within that time period if they are asymptomatic.

These tests can be booked with Beshlie or Alice via the email address:
covidsafety@oldvic.ac.uk

Classes Outside

With the weather improving over the next few months and into the summer, staff and students are encouraged to take as many classes and activities outside as is possible and practicable. The rate of transmission is reduced by being outside, however this is in no way a substitute for not following social distancing guidelines with people not from within your own support bubble. Staff and tutors are encouraged to discuss this further with the COVID Supervisor in order to plan their lessons accordingly.

What will happen if there is a fourth, or a local, lockdown?

Should this be necessary, the COVID Committee will decide on a course of action of how the school proceeds. The Outbreak Management Plan document is added at the end of this Guidance under Appendix 2.

What happens if someone in the building displays symptoms?

Please follow the outbreak procedure (appendix 2) and alert Beshlie Thorp and Alice Dillon (COVID Supervisors) immediately.

4. Access to Support at the School

Staff have been working on strategies that are thoughtful and responsive during this unprecedented time. These include building information, communication and practices related to how we can support students and staff who may be disproportionately affected by the pandemic.

We recognise that students and staff may not have access to the technology and equipment needed for successful online learning including: a laptop, access to high speed internet and private space within the home for learning. Speak with your course leader or line manager to see how the school can help you.

We understand that Covid-19 can create levels of increased anxiety for both staff and students.

Staff: please talk to your line manager and/or the Principal.

Students: The Student Support Manager, Julia Heeley, can guide you to resources, services and organisations that can help with your emotional wellbeing.

Please speak to Julia Heeley, Student Support Manager 0117 980 9247, julia.heeley@oldvic.ac.uk for advice and support.

Please also see the following for advice on emotional wellbeing:

- **VitaMinds** – NHS psychological therapies (self-referral)
- **Every Mind Matters: 10 tips to help if you are worried about coronavirus**
- **GOV.UK: guidance on wellbeing and covid-19 s**
- **Bristol Mind - Bristol MindLine** is a confidential freephone helpline, call 0808 808 0330
- **The Samaritans** has a 24 hour telephone and email support, call 116 123

- **AWP (Avon and Wiltshire Mental Health Partnership NHS Trust)** has set up a 24/7 phone support line for service users requiring support or advice during this time, 0300 303 1320
- **Directories of Bristol services** - Independent Mental Health Network, CASS and Well Aware

5. Further Guidance and Resources

Below are various links to information which we advise all should read. The information is constantly being updated so we ask everyone to take responsibility for staying up to date.

Information regarding the COVID-19 Virus

[UK Government Guidance](#)

[Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#)

[NHS Test Information](#)

[Performing Arts Guidance](#)

[Bristol Outbreak Management Plan](#)

[Coronavirus Support App](#)

Appendix 1

At-a-glance BOVTS COVID-19 Protocol Document

General Guidance

All must follow the 2 metre distancing model where possible.

Masks must be worn at all times unless told otherwise by a tutor, or students are rehearsing or performing, please bring your own.

Once a group has finished in a room, they are responsible for wiping down any chairs and surfaces that have been touched. Cleaning supplies and bins will be available in every room.

Entry and Exit

Please queue outside the building if necessary, following the floor markings where in place and keeping a distance of 2 meters.

Please use the sanitiser dispenser outside of building before entering.
Hand sanitiser dispensers are situated throughout the building for your use.

Please sign in using the QR code. Temperatures will be taken for you to declare when signing-in.

Please leave enough time when leaving for school to allow for waiting to sign-in if necessary.

By signing in you are confirming that you have not within the last 10 days;

- Tested positive or am presumptively positive with the Coronavirus or been identified as a potential carrier.
- Experienced any symptoms commonly associated with the Coronavirus.
- Been in any location designated as a risk by the Government or Public Health England. See <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/travel-advice-novel-coronavirus> for more information.
- Been in direct contact with or in the immediate vicinity of any person being identified as a carrier or potential carrier of the Coronavirus.
- Been told to self-isolate by National Track and Trace

If possible, you should remain onsite once you have entered to avoid using local shops and reduce movements on/off site.

Please head straight to your room once you have signed in, leave coats and bags under your chair.

Changing facilities and the lockers within are not in use.

Corridors and stairways

Please walk on the left when travelling through the building.

Staff and students must each take responsibility for their actions, adhering to walking on the left at all times.

Please be aware of persons who are on a stairway and give way, do not cross on the stairs.

Toilets and changing rooms

Hand sanitisers are provided outside the toilet facilities. Please use before entering.

Please leave the facility in the condition you found it.

Please adhere to notices on how to clean the facilities after usage. If there is a toilet seat provided, please close it before flushing.

You will find information on the doors in regards to who the toilet is intended for. Please stick to floor markings if queuing for the toilet.

Showers are not available for use.

Limbers/warmups should be done before coming to School.

Staff Common rooms

The Staff Common Rooms will remain open and staff must adhere to safe distancing at all times. Visiting tutors have been allocated Studio 5 at Downside Road as a restroom; please

check with your contact at the School what arrangements can be offered at our other buildings and hired venues.

Student Common Room

The Student Common Room kitchen will be open between 1pm-2pm and will operate a one-in-one-out system, so that food can be heated up in microwaves, or to give access to cold and hot water. Please wipe down everything you touch once finished.

Please bring your own drinks and snacks, cutlery, and crockery.

Classes are scheduled to avoid students being in the building at lunch time, if you do require to eat lunch at school, please bring your own and eat it outside or in your designated room.

Post and Deliveries

To reduce volume of post and deliveries, please refrain from ordering personal goods (Amazon etc) to be delivered to BOVTS.

Emergency Evacuation

In the event of an emergency, staff and students should exit the buildings via their nearest fire escape route following social distancing as much as practicably possible. Staff and students should observe the 2m distancing rule when they reach their designated muster point having reported to their departmental fire marshal as normal.

Further information and more in-depth guidance can be found in the school guidance document, please make sure you have read both documents thoroughly.

Appendix 2

BOVTS COVID-19 OUTBREAK MANAGEMENT PLAN

This document aims to provide the information and plans necessary to support the staff and students during the opening of the Bristol Old Vic Theatre School during the COVID-19 pandemic. The information applies to people at all main sites and any external buildings in use.

The Theatre School has established a Covid-19 Committee which meets weekly to assess and monitor activity across the School community. This Committee is led by the Principal, Fiona Francombe. Anyone is welcome to join the Committee at any stage: please let the Covid-19 Supervisor Beshlie Thorp(covidsafety@oldvic.ac.uk)know if you would like to join. The Committee will be quickly convened in the case of any concern or if any positive cases should arise.

There will be a constant open dialogue with the whole School community to allow issues to be raised and changes to be made to ensure everyone is kept, and feels, safe and supported.

Prevention and COVID Secure Plans

Currently, masks must be worn at all times in communal spaces, and in class unless told otherwise by your tutor or dangerous to do so.

Capacity of the school buildings have been reduced, implementing online learning where physical presence is not necessary.

Social distancing signage and markers are in place to remind people to give space when in the building, as well as any other space relevant guidance. For example, one-in-one-out for toilet facilities.

Hand sanitiser stations have been installed throughout the building, and everyone is required to use it upon entering and exiting any room.

A culture of regular lateral flow testing will be encouraged and implemented in partnership with The University of Bristol. Students will be encouraged to have two LFD tests during the first week of their return to face-to-face teaching, and then weekly LFD tests thereafter until advised by Government that it is no longer required. Students choosing not to have LFD tests can as an alternative choose to self-isolate for 10 days before arriving onsite.

Temperatures are to be checked on arrival and recorded. All entering the building are required to sign a declaration stating they are not experiencing any symptoms, nor have been in contact with anyone who is ill. This information will be stored securely for 21 days and then destroyed.

Anyone who is feeling unwell is asked to stay at home, and anyone experiencing symptoms are asked to get a test as soon as possible and isolate until results are out. They must make the COVID Supervisor aware of this.

Extra cleaning is in place and performed by an external cleaning company, as well as having cleaning supplies in every workspace for the users to disinfect when leaving.

Any high-risk or vulnerable people will be identified before the start of term. Depending on their situation, they will either be required to attend school remotely where possible or they will be carefully

monitored when in the building, ensuring that people around them are adhering strictly to all measures that are in place.

Certain activities, such as dance, and stage combat will be closely monitored in order to make sure all guidelines are being followed and are safe for practice.

Spot checks will be a regular occurrence throughout the school and its activities to ensure all Government Guidelines are being met. These checks will be conducted by the Schools COVID Supervisors, and staff and students are reminded to assist the COVID Supervisors wherever possible during these checks.

Identifying Positive Cases

Should a member of the School (student or staff) present with symptoms of COVID -19 then they must immediately seek to be tested. They must inform the COVID Supervisor; their details are held by the Theatre Schools Reception on **0117 973 3535**.

They should also inform their course leader/line manager of the situation. Until the results of the test are confirmed, anyone in that household must isolate. Isolation of the wider School community who have been in close contact will be dynamically assessed and acted upon accordingly.

If the person is on school premises when presenting symptoms then please follow this [Department of Education guidance](#) on what to.

What is considered as close contact?

Examples of close contact include:

- close face to face contact (under 1 metre) for any length of time – including talking to them or coughing on them, with or without a mask.
- being within 1 to 2 metres of each other for more than 15 minutes, with or without a mask – including travelling in a small vehicle
- spending lots of time in your home, such as cleaning it, with or without a mask
If you have had close contact with someone who has tested positive, you must self-isolate if you are told to by the NHS Test and Trace service or the NHS App, you should take extra care to follow [social distancing advice](#), including washing their hands often.

If you get any coronavirus symptoms, you must self-isolate and get a test as soon as possible.

It is a legal requirement to self-isolate if you test positive for COVID-19 or if you are identified as a contact and told to self-isolate by Test and Trace. Failure to self-isolate for the full time-period can result in a fine, starting from £1,000. More information can be found [here](#).

Government Self-Isolation Guidance:

- If the test results come back negative, then everyone associated who are isolating may return to the School.

If the results are positive, the following needs to happen

- the case needs to self- isolate (SI) for 10 days from the day symptoms started.
- household contacts of the case also need to SI for 10 days
- If anyone develops symptoms within the 10 days isolation, they must get tested and isolate for another 10 days. Those in the household who do not develop symptoms can end their SI at the end of the original 10 day period.
- For non-household close contacts to the positive case they need to SI for 10 whole days from the last day they had contact with the case.
- Their household members can continue with normal activities at this point if the close contact (who was SI for 10 days) develops symptoms they need to seek a test and at this point their household members need to also SI until the test result is returned.

- If the test result is negative the close contact needs to complete the 10 days SI but household members can come out of SI - if the test result is positive then the close contact and their household need to begin 10 days SI again
- Please see a step-by-step guide to Self-Isolation [here](#).

If a student or staff member has taken a test, they will be required to disclose the results with the COVID Supervisor, whether positive or negative. The Supervisor will then take this information to the COVID Committee who will discuss the next course of action.

Anyone asked to isolate will have the full support of the School, they will be able to request that essential supplies are gathered for them and will be encouraged to contact the School's Student Support Manager with any and all queries or worries. Guidance will be shared with them to aid with any mental health implications isolation causes.

If necessary, all will be encouraged to utilise the contact tracing service provided when they take a test, and it will be stressed how important this is in order for the School to continue to remain open. The sign-in sheets at each building will serve to support contact tracing should there be an outbreak.

Identifying Emerging Outbreaks

As higher education settings have a greater risk of outbreak due to the movement of young people from across the country, we will be extra vigilant in our enforcement of rules around the Theatre School buildings.

If there are 5 or more confirmed cases whether linked or not, then this will class as an outbreak.

If there are 5 or more cases the Covid-19 Supervisor, or Student Support Manager in their absence, will immediately notify:

- South West PHE Health Protection Team – 03003038162 or swhpt@phe.gov.uk
- Bristol Public Health England Duty Team – ph.healthprotection@bristol.gov.uk
In this event BOVTS will work with Public Health England to consider who the affected persons are and act accordingly, which may mean having to close the School in order to ensure the situation is managed and contained. Teaching will resume online for those who cannot attend.
- If the cases are confirmed at only one building of the three main Theatre School sites, then the other two may be allowed to continue attendance, depending on the extent of contact the confirmed case has had with students and staff at the other sites. This will be discussed with the dedicated PHE representatives whose details are held by the Covid-19 Supervisor and Covid-19 Committee.

Managing an Outbreak

If the School has five or more confirmed cases within 10 days, or an overall rise in sickness absence where Covid-19 is suspected, then we may have an outbreak and we will continue to

work with PHE. In some cases, PHE may recommend that a larger number of other students self-isolate at home as a precautionary measure—perhaps a whole student group or year group. If the School is implementing controls and reducing transmission risks, whole School closure based on cases within the School may not be necessary and will only be considered following advice from PHE.

It is understood that, working with Bristol's Director of Health, where an outbreak at the School is confirmed, a mobile testing unit may be dispatched to test others who may have been in contact with the person who has tested positive.

Testing will be undertaken according to Bristol's routine public health outbreak control practice. The whole School community will be regularly and clearly updated on the outbreak control and support and guidance for all staff and students will be available.

Information on further control measures that will enable the School to re-open will be sent to the whole School community and any concerns listened to and addressed.

Core staff members for the Outbreak Management Response

- Beshlie Thorp - COVID Supervisor - 07955076932, covidssafety@oldvic.ac.uk
- Alice Dillon -COVID Supervisor – 07792664317, covidssafety@oldvic.ac.uk
- Fiona Francombe – Principal – 0117 980 9249, fiona.francombe@oldvic.ac.uk
- Julia Heeley – Student Support Manager – 0117 980 9247, julia.heeley@oldvic.ac.uk

Community Asymptomatic Testing Sites within Bristol that you can collect home testing kits from:

- The Bristol Rapid Testing Centre, 17-18 Wellington Road, BS2 9DA, 9am to 8pm Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm Saturday and Sunday
- Hengrove Leisure Park, BS14 0HR, 2.30pm to 8pm, Monday to Sunday
- Netham Park, BS5 9RU, 2.30pm to 8pm, Monday to Sunday
- Victoria Rooms Car Park, BS8 1EG, 2.30pm to 8pm, Monday to Sunday
- Portway Park and Ride, 9am to 3pm, Monday to Sunday