



St Michael's School

Annex to Health and Safety Policy – COVID-19

SCOPE: This Annex applies to the whole school including the Early Years Foundation Stage

Response to COVID-19

COVID-19 is a serious infectious illness caused by a new strain of coronavirus which emerged in China at the end of 2019. The first cases of infection appeared in the UK in January 2020. A pandemic was declared by the World Health Organisation in March around the time of the first UK deaths caused by the virus.

The virus is transmitted by close contact, mainly through droplets which are spread when an infected person coughs or breathes.

The main symptoms of COVID-19 infection are fever, tiredness and dry cough. Most people recover without needing special treatment. However, a small percentage can become seriously ill and develop difficulty breathing. This is particularly dangerous for people with weakened immune systems, for older people and for those with long-term conditions, such as diabetes, cancer and chronic lung disease.

During the pandemic people who are infected are required to self-isolate themselves in their homes for a set period of time. Other methods to prevent the virus from spreading include “social distancing”, which requires people to keep their distance from others not in their immediate household and non-essential workers being asked to stay at home.

Introduction

The Government have announced that from week commencing 1st June 2020 more children from early years, school and other education settings may be returned to education. This will only take place provided the 5 key tests* set by the government justifies these changes. Although education and childcare is still open to priority groups preparation must now take place for more children returning to education.

The Government's 5 key tests* are:

- A. Ensuring the NHS can cope
- B. A sustained and consistent fall in the daily death rate
- C. Rate of infection decreasing
- D. Testing & PPE meets demand
- E. Any adjustments would not risk a second peak

Who will be returning?

From week commencing 1st June at the earliest providing the Governments five tests justifies the changes, then the following children will be expected to return to education:

- Children in Nursery
- Children in Reception years
- Children in Years 1 & 6

Shielding and Clinically Vulnerable Children and Young People

For the majority of children and young people coronavirus is a mild illness. However, for children and young people who have been classed as **clinically extremely vulnerable** due to pre-existing medical condition have been advised to shield. Those children are not expected to be attending school but will need extra support to continue their education at home as much as is possible.

Clinically vulnerable (but not clinically extremely vulnerable) people are those considered to be at a higher risk of severe illness from coronavirus. A small minority of children will fall into this category, and parents should follow medical advice if their child is in this category.

Shielding and Clinically Vulnerable Adults

The Government are strongly advising those **clinically extremely vulnerable** individuals not to work outside of the home and to follow the shielded measures put in place. Staff in this position are advised not to attend work. Those classed as **clinically vulnerable** have been advised to take extra care in observing social distancing and should work from home where possible. For example asking staff to support remote education, carry out lesson planning and carry out other roles at home.

If this is not possible then those individuals should be offered the safest available roles on-site.

Living with a Shielded or Clinically Vulnerable Person

If a child, or a member of staff lives with someone who is **clinically vulnerable** including those who are pregnant, they can attend school. If a child or staff member lives in a household with someone who is **extremely clinically vulnerable**, it is advised they only attend school if stringent social distancing can be adhered to and, in the case of children, they are able to understand and follow those instructions.

If stringent social distancing cannot be adhered to, those individuals should not attend. They should be supported to learn or work at home.

Class or Group Sizes

Unlike older children and adults, early years and Preparatory aged children cannot be expected to remain 2 meters apart from each other and staff. In deciding to bring more children back to early

years and schools, the government are taking this into account. Schools should therefore work through the hierarchy of measures set out:

- avoiding contact with anyone with symptoms
- frequent hand cleaning and good respiratory hygiene practices
- regular cleaning of settings
- minimising contact and mixing

It is still important to reduce contact between people as much as possible, this can be achieved as well as reducing transmission risk by ensuring children and staff where possible, only mix in a small, consistent group and that small group stays away from other people and groups.

Public Health England (PHE) is clear that if early years settings, schools and colleges do this, and crucially if they are also applying regular hand cleaning, hygiene and cleaning measures and handling potential cases of the virus as per the advice, then the risk of transmission will be lowered.

Where the school can keep children in those small groups 2 meters away from each other, they should do so. While in general groups should be kept apart, brief, transitory contact, such as passing in a corridor, is low risk.

For our pre-school children, the staff to child ratios within Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) continue to apply.

For Pre-Prep and Prep, classes should normally be split in half, with no more than 15 pupils per small group and one teacher. If there are any shortages of teachers, then teaching assistants can be allocated to lead a group, working under the direction of a teacher.

Vulnerable children and children of critical workers in other year groups should also be split into small groups of no more than 15. Desks should be spaced as far apart as possible.

If necessary, the school has the flexibility to focus first on continuing to provide places for priority groups as follows:

- EYFS - 3-5 year olds
- Year 1
- Year 6

Planning & Organising

- A whole school Risk Assessment for COVID-19 has been carried out to ensure all health and safety compliance checks have been undertaken prior to 1st June.
- Parents have been contacted to confirm if they are sending their children back. Based on the information provided pupils have been organised into small groups based on the known numbers.
- Parents will not be able to send their children to school on 1st June if not already booked in but may do so following further guidance from the Government in their follow up review if the relaxation procedures allow.

- Classroom Risk Assessments have been undertaken. Teaching areas have been organised to maintain as much space as possible between seats and desks. Soft furnishings have been removed together with resources that cannot be cleaned easily have been removed.
- Drop Off and Collection Times have been staggered to minimise adult to adult contact as well as contact between groups of pupils.
- Packed lunches are to be brought to school in disposable bags. Water bottles are to be taken home daily.
- The timetable will reflect the online learning provided to those pupils who remain at home.
- Where possible, lessons/activities will take place outdoors.
- Staggered break and lunch times to reduce the number of children moving around the school at once.
- Pupils and staff are always in the same small groups each day, and different groups are not mixed during the day, or on subsequent days.
- Staff are assigned to each group and, as far as possible, these stay the same during the day and on subsequent days.
- Pupils and staff use the same classroom or area throughout the day. The areas will be disinfected throughout the day and a thorough cleaning of the rooms at the end of the day. Where possible, pupils should use the same desk. This will not be possible for EYFS children.
- One-way circulation around the school to keep the bubbles apart.
- Limiting the number of children who use the toilet at one time.

Use of Outside Space

- For lunch and break times
- For outdoor lessons where possible, as this can limit transmission and more easily allow for distance between children and staff.
- Although outdoor equipment should not be used unless staff are able to ensure that it is appropriately cleaned between groups of children using it.

Shared Rooms

- Stagger the use of staff rooms and offices to limit occupancy

Reduce the use of Shared Resources

- Limit the amount of shared resources that are taken home and limit exchange of take-home resources.
- Stationery and other equipment should not be shared.
- Practical lessons can go ahead if equipment can be cleaned thoroughly.

Cleaning and Hygiene

- Handwashing and Alcohol gels/foams are readily available in each room and learning environment.
- Clean surfaces that children are touching such as toys, books, desks, chairs, doors, sinks, toilets, light switches, bannisters, more regularly than normal

- Staff should be available to help pupils who have trouble cleaning their hands independently.
- Peddle bins have been provided for tissues that will be double bagged and disposed of daily.
- Where possible, all classrooms should be well ventilated using natural ventilation. Air conditioning units should be avoided due to the re-circulation of air.
- Prop doors open, where safe to do so (bearing in mind safety and safeguarding) to limit use of door handles and ventilation.

Staff and Pupil Hygiene

It is important that staff and pupils keep high levels of personal hygiene to minimise the risk of COVID-19 spreading. The two main forms of Hygiene in this are:

- **Respiratory Hygiene:** Ensuring all sneezes, coughs or blows of nose are caught in tissues that are disposed of immediately and hands washed after. Follow the Governments Catch It, Bin It Kill It initiative. Staff are to display posters as part of their classroom displays.
- **Hand Hygiene:** Wet hands with water; apply enough soap to cover all hand surfaces; rub soap in liberally to form a thick lather (bubbles) all over the hand, including between fingers and thumbs, wrists and nails; this should be done for a least 20 seconds; hands should then be rinsed with water and dried using the hand dryer and disposable paper towels. **Hands should not be left wet as wet hands can spread bacteria 1,000 times more than dry hands.**

Communicating our Plans

- Risk Assessments are shared with staff
- The whole School Risk Assessment is published on our Website.
- Parents have been informed that their children will be denied entry to the school if they are displaying symptoms of COVID-19 or are generally unwell. This is done to protect the school staff as we have limited teachers available for cover.
- Parents will be denied access to the school buildings unless in an emergency.
- Parents have been informed that their children should arrive in freshly laundered clothes daily.
- Parents have been informed of their allocated drop off and collection times and the process for doing so, including protocols for minimising adult to adult contact.
- Parents have been told not to gather at entrance gates or doors.
- Staff have been informed of the timetable arrangements together with the updates to the relevant Policies which have needed to be amended due to the current crisis.

Annex Approval

This Annex has been agreed by the SMT and Chair of Governors but has not been formally ratified by the governing body and should be treated as a working document.

Diana Howers

Bursar

May 2020