

# Social Distancing Policy

This policy was approved by Directors and the Operational Board

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## **Statement of intent**

This policy statement outlines the school's approach to social distancing measures in light of the current coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, and how we will adhere to the guidance published by the government and health organisations.

While we are looking forward to welcoming more of our pupils back, we understand the concerns of many of our stakeholders, e.g. parents and staff members. That is why we have created this policy – to outline the steps the school will take to mitigate the risk of infection spreading and, ultimately, ensure the safety of our school community.

We will be consulting parents and staff members to support our decision-making and will be updating this policy in light of updates to government guidance.

## 1. Legal framework

- 1.1. This policy has due regard to relevant legislation and guidance, including, but not limited to, the following:
  - Coronavirus Act 2020
  - DfE (2020) 'Coronavirus (COVID-19): implementing protective measures in education and childcare settings'
  - DfE (2020) 'Safe working in education, childcare and children's social care settings, including the use of personal protective equipment (PPE)'
- 1.2. This policy operates in accordance with the following school policies:
  - **Bereavement Policy**
  - **Staff Leave of Absence Policy**
  - **Infection Control Procedure**
  - **Behavioural Policy**
  - **Risk Assessment for Reopening**

## 2. Risk assessments

- 2.1. Before reopening the school to more pupils, a risk assessment will be carried out to ensure sensible measures are put in place to protect staff members and pupils, including appropriate social distancing measures. Risk assessments will be shared with staff and reviewed every two weeks or in response to new guidance.
- 2.2. The risk assessment will address the following areas:
  - Safety of the school premises
  - Cleaning measures
  - Infection control and the ability to implement protective measures, e.g. social distancing
  - Supporting staff and pupil wellbeing
  - Supporting pupils' learning
  - Safeguarding
  - Communication of plans and procedures

## 3. Social distancing measures

### Class sizes

- 3.1. The school will continue to offer on-site provision for children of keyworkers and vulnerable children.

- 3.2. [Primary schools] In addition to the above pupils, the school will only be offering on-site provision to pupils from Year 6.
- 3.3. [Secondary schools] In addition to the above pupils, the school will only offer face-to-face support opportunities for pupils in Year 10 and Year 12.
- 3.4. We will operate on a basic principle that all class sizes will be reduced– there will be no more than 10 pupils in each group/bubble unless using a large space.
- 3.5. Pupils will remain in these groups and will not mix with others during the school day or on subsequent days.
- 3.6. There will be no more than one teacher and one TA working with each class.
- 3.7. In the event there is a shortage of teachers, a TA can lead the class under the direction of a teacher.
- 3.8. Where possible, social distancing measures will be adhered to, including the two-metre rule (within secondary schools), and desks will be spaced as far apart as possible to help this.
- 3.9. Where social distancing is not achievable, e.g. because there are not enough classrooms, the headteacher will liaise with the Trust to come to another arrangement.
- 3.10. The headteacher will decide whether it is viable to hold lessons or classroom activities outdoors to help with adherence to social distancing measures.

### **The school day**

- 3.11. The headteacher and other key staff members will review the school timetable and make amendments to reduce movement around the school. Where necessary, some lessons may be cancelled and the timetable restricted.
- 3.12. Parents/carers will not be permitted on school sites, drop off/collection will be arranged for primary schools and parents informed of arrangements, strict social distancing will be adhered to. Meetings will need to be prearranged through school offices.

### **Travelling to and from school**

- 3.13. Pupil start and finish times will be staggered as to maintain social distancing and minimise mixing and communicated to parents.
- 3.14. Pick up and drop off points are communicated to parents in advance of the measures being put in place.
- 3.15. Parents are urged to avoid public transport where possible and to encourage their children to walk or cycle to school.

### **Assemblies**

- 3.16. Assemblies will not take be held in large groups. Classroom teachers will hold assemblies with the pupils in their group/bubble.

## **Break and lunchtimes**

- 3.17. Pupils will take their breaktimes and lunchtimes with the pupils in their set group/bubble to avoid mixing.
- 3.18. Different areas of the school will be allocated for pupils to take their break (at different times) and lunchtimes, so we can appropriately distance pupil groups.
- 3.19. To assist in distancing pupil groups during breaktimes and lunchtimes, they will be staggered. In primary only movement breaks will be permitted.

The playground will be open so pupils are able to go outside during their breaktimes and lunchtimes; however, they will be required to follow social distancing guidelines. If social distancing rules cannot be followed on the playground, it will be closed.

Pupils will eat their lunches in their classrooms to minimise mixing with other groups.

- 3.20. Pupils will wash their hands before eating.
- 3.21. All tables and relevant surfaces will be cleaned before and after pupils eat.

## **Staffroom**

- 3.22. The use of the staffroom is allowed but only for essential use. If the staffroom needs to be used, occupancy will be limited, to stop staff members mixing. The two-metre social distancing will be enforced in the staffroom. Staff room rules are displayed in the staff room and soft furnishing should not be used.

## **PE lessons**

- 3.23. Pupils will be required to follow social distancing guidelines in PE and sports activities. Class sizes will be limited to make adherence to the guidelines easier during team sports and activities.

## **Behaviour**

- 3.24. The school's Behavioural Policy has been amended to include an annex outlining how social distancing will work when implementing the measures in the policy.
- 3.25. If a staff member is unable to follow the principles, they should speak to their line manager.
- 3.26. If a pupil is unable to follow any social distancing measures, the headteacher and relevant staff members will discuss whether it would be more appropriate for the pupil to remain at home.
- 3.27. Pupils and parents will be required to agree to the new Home School Agreement before a return to school.

## **Transport**

- 3.28. The headteacher will liaise with the LA and the school's transport providers to ensure an appropriate plan is in place to protect pupils and staff members who use public transport to get to school.
- 3.29. Pupils and staff are encouraged to walk or cycle to school or be dropped off by a member of their household. If this is not possible, and pupils and staff need to use public transport, they are required to follow guidelines on social distancing.
- 3.30. Pupils and their families will be informed of the new arrangements before they are implemented.

### **Supporting pupils**

- 3.31. The SENCO will review EHC plans and risk assessments to determine whether it is safe for pupils with SEND to return to school, if they have not already been attending.
- 3.32. The SENCO will consider the capacity for the pupil to understand and follow social distancing measures that have been put in place as part of their decision to determine whether a pupil with SEND should return to school.
- 3.33. When planning for each stage of reintegration, the implications for the wellbeing of pupils, staff and families will always be considered. One of the school's key priorities in relation to wellbeing is ensuring that the school community feels safe as we reopen more widely.
- 3.34. The headteacher will liaise with the LA to discuss what wider support services are available and to secure additional support and early help, where possible.

## **4. Infection control measures**

- 4.1. We know that implementing social distancing measures in a school setting is extremely challenging. Therefore, we will also implement robust infection control measures to help ensure the safety of our school community.
- 4.2. Infection control measures are implemented in line with the Infection Control Procedure.
- 4.3. All staff members will be briefed on what they can do to mitigate the risk of infection, and they will be reminded of their responsibilities relating to control measures.
- 4.4. The school will communicate regularly with parents to outline the infection control measures in place and to explain parents' responsibilities in mitigating the risk of infection spreading. This is done to reassure parents and further mitigate the risk of infection spreading.
- 4.5. The following measures will be implemented across the school:
  - 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 the school for 7 or 14 days.

- Cleaning hands frequently – 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
  - Using hand sanitizers before entering school.
  - Ensuring good respiratory hygiene by promoting the ‘catch it, bin it, kill it’ approach
  - Cleaning frequently touched surfaces using sanitizing anti bac wipes.
  - Minimising contact and mixing of pupils and staff by altering, as much as possible, the environment (such as classroom layout) and timetables (such as staggered breaktimes)
  - Limiting the number of shared resources that are taken home by staff and pupils
  - Discouraging pupils from touching their faces or putting objects in their mouths
  - Teaching pupils (Primary settings) to wash their hands frequently, particularly after using large moveable toys and bikes
- 4.6. The school will review guidance from the government regularly, and update this policy and other documents, e.g. the Risk Assessment for Reopening where necessary.

## **5. Personal protective equipment (PPE)**

Whilst Government Guidelines stipulates that masks and other PPE equipment is not necessary in a school setting, as a trust we have sought out advice and guidance from many sources and therefore have ordered a supply of masks for staff to use. The Trust feels strongly that through the correct use of a face mask, it will reduce and ease the spread of coronavirus. Staff will be encouraged to wear a mask in school, in particular when they have to be in close proximity to adults and children alike. Parents will also be advised to provide a mask for their children, however, this will not be obligatory. Face masks should routinely be used when dealing with a suspected coronavirus case, first aid or intimate care needs.

It is important to stress; masks are only effective in reducing the spread of coronavirus when used correctly. As a Trust, we have compiled an Infection Control document which features support and guidance on how to ensure PPE is being used correctly. If you need further support or guidance, please do contact your Head Teacher or Health and Safety Officer.

**Where PPE is required, the following is a general checklist for PPE management:**

- Communicate suitable information to pupils, parents and carers on what to expect in relation to staff wearing additional PPE;



- Ensure training is provided to the relevant staff on how to correctly put on and wear items of PPE, when it should be replaced throughout the day and how it should be disposed of.
- Identify staff that have relevant pre-existing medical conditions which may restrict or prevent some workers wearing certain types of PPE and clarify how this will be managed. (E.g: asthma or skin allergies);
- Ensure a maintained stock of all identified items of PPE, including a contingency surplus, is available to ensure that the identified additional controls can be sustained throughout the phased return period and into full occupation of each school building until such a time that control measures can be reviewed and reduced accordingly.

5.1. When using face masks, staff will ensure the masks:

- Cover both the nose and mouth.
- Do not dangle around the neck.
- Are not touched once put on, except when carefully removed or to be washed.
- Are changed once they become moist or damaged.

5.2. When using PPE, staff members will follow [PHE's guidelines](#) on putting on and taking off equipment.

5.3. The safety of our staff is paramount, so additional risk assessments will be conducted to determine whether PPE is required for other tasks and activities, and we will do our utmost to ensure staff are provided with the PPE they need.

5.4. PPE that has been worn by, or near, someone with coronavirus symptoms will be disposed of by (Cotton masks can be washed and reused):

- Putting it in a plastic rubbish bag and tying it when full.
- Placing the rubbish bag in a second rubbish bag and tying it.
- Putting it in a suitable container and secure place marked for storage for 72 hours.

5.5. Waste will be stored safely and securely kept away from pupils. Waste will not be put in communal waste areas until it has been stored for at least 72 hours. This waste does not require a dedicated clinical waste collection.

## 6. Communication

6.1. All social distancing measures will be communicated to all relevant stakeholders, including pupils, parents, staff, visitors, suppliers and contractors.

- 6.2. Staff will be informed of all relevant plans, including safety measures, timetable changes and staggered arrival and departure times, and will have opportunities to discuss training on the new measures.
- 6.3. Staff will be engaged regularly to get their feedback on the arrangements that are in place.
- 6.4. Visual aids will be placed around the school to remind our community of the measures that we have put in place.
- 6.5. Home School Agreements will be communicated and signed by parents/pupils.

## **7. Monitoring and review**

- 7.1. This policy will be reviewed at least monthly and after the release of additional government guidance.
- 7.2. All updates made to this policy will be communicated to all staff members and parents by the headteacher.