

Policy purpose

This Policy defines the Trust's over-arching commitment to the provision of safe school environments where best practice in the prevention and control of infection is achieved and identifies that all Trust staff play a vital part in helping minimise the risk of cross-infection. It aims to protect pupils, staff, parents and visitors to Trust schools from acquiring any virus or illness e.g. coronavirus through the promotion of routine safe care and safeguarding practices.

For note:

Coronavirus response

For the purposes of coronavirus, this Policy should be read alongside the Trust's *Covid-19 Outbreak Management Plan*, *Autumn Winter Plan*, *Risk Assessment* and *Covid Safeguarding Addendum*.

The Trust's *Autumn Winter Plan* has carefully reviewed risks associated with the government's *August 2021* announcements and put into place continuing measures for the autumn and winter period. By maintaining effective infection protection and controls measures, best practice in safety and safeguarding will be sustained and the continuing risk of infection minimised allowing Trust schools to remain operational.

Over Autumn/Winter 2021-22 the following measures will be promoted and encouraged across the Trust and its schools to maintain the PHE **System of Controls**:

- Safe management of personal hygiene e.g. *catch it – bin it - kill it*
- Staff to continue with twice weekly LFD testing until further notice
- Achieving optimum hand hygiene
- Maintaining physical distancing measures when it makes sense to do so
- Provision and use of personal protective equipment (PPE) in certain circumstances
- Safe handling, storage and disposal of cleaning materials
- Safe handling and disposal of waste
- Effective cleaning of equipment and resources and maintaining a clean environment
- Managing and recording accidents, incidents and events
- Effective communication of prevention measures to pupils, staff and parents
- Completion of any infection control work programmes as part of the Trust's *Outbreak Management Plan*
- Completion of an infection control annual report for presentation to Trust Board

It is expected that all staff abide by this Policy. All staff must understand the importance of continued vigilance and caution around virus prevention and control procedures as the pandemic continues. This includes the value of hand hygiene, personal hygiene, sensible physical distancing, face coverings encouraged in crowded places and the correct use of PPE in identified situations e.g. first aid situations.

As far as reasonably practicable, all staff must continue to work together to ensure that, pupils, colleagues, families and the local community are safe and protected.

Policy Scope

This Policy applies to:

- All staff working within the Trust and its schools
- Agency workers, contractors, consultants and any other visitors to schools

- Pupils, parents and families

Autumn Term 2021

As the autumn/winter progresses, the importance of effective infection control remains paramount. The virus problem continues to be multi-faceted with the potential for new variants. Whilst recognising that not all infection can be prevented the Trust can still play a significant part in managing the virus and keeping local communities as safe as possible.

By continuing to follow good practice and with good infection control many risks can be avoided. As the virus continues every member of staff must remain vigilant. This will ensure that infection control continues to be addressed seriously and each individual staff member has personal responsibility for continuing to apply the agreed Infection Prevention and Control (IPC) measures set out in the Trust's *Autumn Winter Plan*.

Training and professional development

At the start of the Autumn Term 2021, all staff have been briefed on the infection control practices set out in the Trust's *Autumn Winter Plan* and associated *Risk Assessment*. In addition, IPC practices will be reinforced through regular risk assessment monitoring e.g. hand hygiene audits, team meetings and staff meetings.

Further training and support may also be sought, where appropriate, from external agencies such as the Local Public Health Team and school nurses. This will be significant in the management of any potential outbreak at a Trust school.

Trust responsibilities

The Trust will ensure that:

- schools continue to follow all available national and local guidance and advice.
- there is a designated health and safety lead in place in all Trust schools.
- counter measures are in place in all Trust schools for keeping any identified risks of infection to a minimum.
- sufficient resources enable continuing and effective prevention and control measures to be implemented.

Staff responsibilities

It is important for all staff to be clear about their ongoing responsibilities. Failure to follow this Policy may put the staff member, their colleagues, children and families at increased risk. All staff, including through their professional associations and trade unions, are encouraged to contribute to decisions about the way the Policy expectations are implemented and interpreted at different levels – whole school, team, classroom, individual etc. All staff feedback will be listened to and acted on.

Staff have day-to-day responsibility for ensuring that agreed IPC measures are maintained to the best of their ability. These include:

- Achieving optimum hand hygiene.
- Twice weekly LFD Testing for staff until further notice

- Using personal protective equipment as required.
- Promoting personal hygiene.
- Maintaining physical distancing when it makes sense to do so.
- Maintaining respiratory hygiene.
- Ventilating areas.
- Safe handling and disposal of waste.
- Continuing with high quality cleaning regimes.
- Supporting pupils to achieve high standards of hygiene.
- Achieving and maintaining a clean, clutter free environment.
- Reporting all IPC issues to the headteacher or health and safety lead
- Participation in training and education.

Headteacher responsibilities

Headteachers are the identified lead for covid-19 risk mitigation and are uniquely placed to monitor the quality of infection prevention and control in individual Trust schools. Their remit is to provide a positive role model to the rest of the staff team and they will continue to drive forward the implementation of all IPC practices. In this, they will be fully supported by their senior leadership team and the Trust executive leadership team.

Leaders will ensure that the Trust's *Autumn Winter Plan* IPC measures become routine safe practice from the beginning of the Autumn Term 2021. Where skills or knowledge are found to be lacking, staff are to be referred to guidance and/or for further training.

Leaders must ensure that copies of this *Infection Prevention & Control Policy* are readily accessible to staff and published on the school website under the *Covid-19 Tab*.

Headteachers will ensure that IPC is placed as a standing agenda item at team meetings and will include the following in line with the Trust's *Outbreak Management Plan*:

- Immediate analysis and referral of any outbreak of infection
- Action taken following an outbreak and *lessons learned*.
- Risk assessment reviews undertaken for prevention and control of infections.
- Safety audits undertaken.
- Recommendations implemented from any IPC audit.
- Training received / required by staff.
- Any changes to relevant government, PHE, H+S guidance implemented and monitored

Health and Safety lead responsibilities

The School Health and Safety lead will:

- support surveillance and monitoring of infection control measures across the school.
- promote evidence-based standards, knowledge and skills re: infection control.
- provide advice and support to senior leaders and staff.
- advise on the control and management of any infectious outbreaks in line with the Trust's *Outbreak Management Plan*.
- support with all infection control risk assessments and implementation of mitigation measures.
- provide senior leaders/trustees with updates on any significant incidents.
- liaise with senior leaders over training needs.

- liaise with senior leaders and the Trust's Director of Estates over environmental issues.

Site Manager responsibilities

Site managers will work with the Trust's Director of Estates and school senior leadership team to maintain a clean and hygienic environment and will have a clear role and responsibilities in supporting the continuing covid-19 risk mitigation measures. Schedules of cleaning will be available, reviewed and maintained regularly. Problems must be reported immediately to the school senior leadership team to ensure prompt remedial action is taken.

Visitors to school

As part of the *Autumn Winter Plan*, visitors to school will continue to be kept under review. Visitors will be expected to follow the Trust's *Autumn Winter Plan*, *PHE System of Controls* and Trust's agreed *IPC standards*. In some circumstances the continued wearing of face coverings may be required e.g. crowded places in school.

Virus transmission

- **DIRECT TRANSMISSION:** in close contact through, for example, sneezing and coughing
- **INDIRECT TRANSMISSION:** through, for example, touching contaminated surfaces

The Trust is aware that it can never ensure zero risk of virus transmission but this Policy and its resulting practices should support risk mitigation so that any transmission of infection is substantially reduced. This risk mitigation includes the following key transmission measures in line with the ***PHE System of Controls (the MUSTS)***.

- Ensuring that anyone who has covid-19 symptoms does not attend the school or workplace and secures an appropriate test
- Cleaning hands more often than usual – washing hands for 20 seconds with soap and running water and drying them thoroughly or using alcohol hand rub or sanitiser, ensuring all parts of the hands are covered.
- Ensuring good respiratory hygiene by promoting the *catch it, bin it, kill it* approach
- Cleaning frequently touched surfaces often using standard products such as detergents and other approved cleaning products.
- Continuing to demonstrate caution around human mixing and contact as much as possible
- Maintaining good ventilation.
- Encouraging the wearing face coverings in crowded spaces in school e.g. at the school gates.

Infection control arrangements

A continuing risk assessment review cycle has been developed that will enable effective IPC measures to be maintained, reviewed and improved as necessary and in line with the *Autumn Winter Plan* and risk assessment.

This includes:

a. Provision of hand wash facilities and hand sanitiser

- The provision of designated wash hand basins / sanitiser stations at appropriate locations for use by pupils and staff.
- Ensuring that designated wash hand basins are equipped with:
 - Liquid soap in a dispenser – wall mounted
 - Paper hand towels in a dispenser – wall mounted
 - Hand wash posters where this is appropriate.
- Access to hand sanitiser for all staff in suitable locations.

b. Pupil grouping arrangements

Although there is no requirement for pupils to remain in a class bubble from the Autumn Term 2021, staff will remain vigilant about mitigation measures when groups begin to mix more frequently. As guided by the DfE, PHE and H+S Executive, each school will continue to apply the following hierarchy of measures in relation to the grouping of pupils:

- Avoiding contact with anyone who has symptoms of Covid-19
- More regular and specifically targeted cleaning of classrooms
- Minimising contact and mixing in very large groups
- Maintaining effective ventilation
- Using outdoor spaces as much as possible
- Encouraging the wearing of face coverings by staff and parents in crowded places like the school gates at the beginning and end of the school day in communal areas

c. Maintaining a healthy classroom environment

In order to minimise the possible transmission of the virus:

- All unnecessary items will be tidied away and class areas kept as clutter free as possible.
- Staff will continue to take home all unrequired personal belongings.
- All work surfaces in offices, classrooms and corridors will be kept free of clutter so that they can be easily cleaned.
- Posters and signs relating to infection control and covid-19 will be laminated as far as possible so that they can be easily cleaned.
- The *Director of Estates* will work with schools to ensure that protocols are established for cleaning, catering, food supplies or contractors on site, to check the contractor's own risk assessments for working on site and to monitor the quality of

their work.

- All spaces will be well ventilated with open windows and doors as appropriate.
- Doors should be propped open if they are not fire doors but only after full consideration of health and safety and safeguarding requirements.
- Where possible, the access of adults and pupils to all parts of the school should continue to be limited so that full use is made of all entrances and exits.
- Where possible, as much outside space should be used for parts of the day e.g. for breaks, outdoor learning and physical exercise.
- Outdoor equipment will be cleaned regularly

d. Cleaning and hygiene

All cleaning arrangements and capacity will be kept under review by headteachers with the support and guidance of the *Director of Estates*. Cleaning routines will follow latest government guidance with regard to non-healthcare settings: (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-decontamination-in-non-healthcare-settings>)

Infection control work programme

The following measures will be included in regular infection control reviews for all schools in the Trust:

Measure	Responsibility
IPC policy to be reviewed regularly	Trustees, executive leaders
IPC risk assessment to be reviewed regularly	Director of Estates, headteachers
Regular hand hygiene audits	Headteacher, H & S Lead
Environmental audit of each site	Director of Estates, headteachers
Improvement plan for each site as informed by the environmental audits	Director of Estates, headteachers
Prioritisation and delivery of improvement plans	School SLTs
Provision and maintenance of suitable and sufficient hand wash / sanitiser facilities	Director of Estates, headteachers
Programmes of planned maintenance	Director of Estates
Health and Safety audits	Director of Estates, headteachers
Kitchen evaluations of hygiene facilities and practices	Catering contractors
Incident and Accident reporting	Headteachers
Significant incidents to be considered for inclusion on Risk Register	Director of Estates, headteachers
IPC on agenda of staff / team meetings	Headteachers
Delivery of on-going IPC training as required	Trust and headteachers
Maintenance of clean environment following agreed cleaning schedules	Headteachers, Site Managers
Isolation rooms – provision of appropriate PPE and instructions as required	Headteachers, H&S Leads
Infection Control Reports to Trustees	CEO, Director of Estates

Reporting to Trust Board

The Trust CEO and Director of Estates will ensure status reports are provided to the Board at each of its meeting. Reporting will cover the following areas:

- Number and extent of IPC related audits
- Trust response to Government guidance, Public Health and H+S information
- Number and extent of infectious outbreaks, along with any specific remedial work required
- Any significant impact of infectious outbreaks e.g. further site closure or other requirement from a regulatory body
- Trust training plan and numbers of staff trained
- Recommended changes to IPC Policy and associated guidance
- Environmental improvements implemented
- Environmental improvements proposed and recommendations
- Significant incidents and Trust response

The Trust will continue to comply fully with the **Public Health England (PHE) System of Controls (THE MUSTS)** in terms of recording and reporting.

Managing infections and infectious outbreaks

The Trust will comply fully with the **Public Health England (PHE) System of Controls (THE MUSTS)** for managing any pupils / staff with symptoms or any further local outbreaks. As part of its *Autumn Winter Plan*, the Trust will also have regard to any changes in national and local government restrictions.

The responsibility for the management of infections and infectious outbreaks at school level, lies with the headteacher. All Trust headteachers must ensure that in their absence they have a designated and competent person who is authorised to implement the infection response protocols and to allocate appropriate resources to effectively manage the situation.

Trust Outbreak Management Plan

If a local outbreak / situation escalates significantly, a decision may have to be taken by the Trust Board and senior leaders in partnership with the local Public Health Team that the school site needs to close. This will follow the Trust's *Outbreak Management Plan*. Site closure may be influenced by a number of variable factors including the:

- availability of staff
- numbers of staff and pupils who are symptomatic
- nature of the outbreak and the spread and distribution of infected persons.

For note: A school site must not be closed without first notifying the Trust CEO.

Provision of food and catering services

It is not the purpose of this Policy to address the issues of hygiene either within the main kitchen, or as part of food preparation elsewhere, this is covered within the Trust's Catering Contract arrangements.

Monitoring and Review

Responsible	Trust Board CEO Director of Estates
Links	Staff Code of Conduct Covid-19 Policy Covid-19 Safeguarding Addendum Autumn Winter Plan + Risk Assessment
Staff responsible	Headteachers and Executive Leaders
Committee responsible	Audit and Risk
Date approved	September 2021
Next review	March 2022
Sign off by Chair of Trust	

*Please note that should there be any changes/further national guidance issued relevant to this Policy and associated procedure, it will be updated accordingly prior to the review date shown above and referred to the next Trust Board meeting.

Change Management

Issue No.	Change date	Change description
1.0	July 20	Initial release
2.0	Nov 20	Review in line with Phase 3 Sustain Strategy
3.0	Jan 21	Review in line with Phase 4 National Lockdown Strategy
4.0	Mar 21	Review in line with Phase 5 School Opening Strategy
5.0	July 21	Review in line with Phase 6 Response Strategy
6.0	Sept 21	Review in line with Autumn Winter Plan 2021-22