
drb Ignite Multi Academy Trust

Outbreak Management Plan

Autumn and Winter Plan

2021-2022

Purpose of Outbreak Management Plan

The government has made it a national priority that education and childcare settings should continue to operate as normally as possible as the pandemic continues over the Autumn and Winter 2021-22.

The DfE ***Covid Contingency Framework*** states that all schools should have an *outbreak management plan*. The purpose of the plan being to outline how they would operate if an outbreak should occur in school or any of the measures described in the framework were recommended for their setting or local area.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-local-restrictions-in-education-and-childcare-settings/contingency-framework-education-and-childcare-settings>

The *Contingency Framework* goes on to describe the principles of managing local outbreaks of covid-19 (including responding to variants of concern) in schools. It includes:

- the types of measures that schools should be prepared for
- who can recommend these measures and where
- when measures should be lifted
- how decisions are made.

Measures affecting education may be necessary in some circumstances, for example:

- to help manage a covid-19 outbreak within a school
- if there is extremely high prevalence of covid-19 in the community and other measures have failed to reduce transmission
- as part of a package of measures responding to a Variant of Concern (VoC)

In such cases, the guidance also states that local councils, directors of public health and Public Health England health protection teams can recommend certain measures for individual schools or clusters of settings.

Government guidance

This *Outbreak Management Plan* should be read alongside the latest government guidance for education settings operating during the pandemic. This is outlined below.

For note:

The following is not an exhaustive list and documents change frequently so the reader should check they have the most up to date version of any guidance.

- Actions for early years and childcare providers during covid-19 outbreak
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-early-years-and-childcareclosures>
- Actions for schools during the covid-19 outbreak
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/actions-for-schools-during-the-coronavirusoutbreak>
- Protective measures for holiday and after-school clubs, and other out-of-school settings during the covid-19 pandemic
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/protective-measures-forholiday-or-after-school-clubs-and-other-out-of-school-settings-for-children-during-the-coronaviruscovid-19-outbreak>
- Summer schools programme guidance
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/summerschools-programme>

Trust outbreak management plan principles

In response to the requirement for an *Outbreak Management Plan* the Trust has established three common principles to underpin any outbreak planning in a Trust school.

1. Prioritising education

The impacts of having missed education during the pandemic are severe for our pupils. In all cases, any benefits in managing transmission will be weighed against any educational drawbacks.

We will endeavour to keep any measures in our schools to the minimum to ensure covid safe practices and implement them for the shortest amount of time possible.

All measures will be kept under regular review and lifted as soon as the evidence supports doing so safely.

Any measures affecting education and childcare settings across an area will not be considered in isolation, but as part of a broader package of measures.

Attendance restrictions will only be considered as a last resort.

The Trust will work closely with its schools to give as much notice as possible to school teams and individual staff members of any changes to the way they should operate.

2. Collaboration

The Trust and its schools recognise the critical importance of multi-agency collaboration and communication in ensuring consistency of approach across local areas wherever issues occur, so that no group of children, pupils or students is unfairly disadvantaged.

The Trust and its schools will maintain close collaborative working with the local authorities of Birmingham and Dudley, directors of public health (DsPH) and DfE's regional school commissioners as appropriate.

Where decisions about measures in schools are made at a national level we will follow all guidance.

For note:

DfE will work with the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC), JBC, NHS Test and Trace, the Chief Medical Officer, PHE and other government departments, as well as relevant local authorities and directors of public health. The government will take into account all available evidence and the judgement of public health professionals before imposing any measures.

3. Clarity around roles and responsibilities

Local authorities, directors of public health (DsPH) and PHE health protection teams (HPTs) are responsible for managing localised outbreaks. The Trust recognises that they play an important role in providing support and advice to the Trust and its schools and will always listen and respond to their guidance

The Trust will continue to hold weekly *Covid-19 Briefing Sessions* for the executive leadership team and school headteachers. Headteachers are required update and/or implement any changes to the Trust's *Autumn and Winter Plan* and associated risk assessment.

Outbreak response priorities

The Trust's *Outbreak Management Plan* is organised around nine priority areas. These are not arranged in any priority order and many are interconnected.

They are followed in the *Appendix* by a number of scenarios to support school planning and effective decision making in the event of an outbreak affecting any Trust school or local area.

Should an outbreak be identified by a school the following steps will be undertaken immediately:

- the school will liaise with Public Health passing on all relevant information
- the school will follow the Trust and any LA guidance for notification
- In collaboration with Public Health and the Trust Executive Leadership Team a decision will be made as to whether the school can remain open
- DfE will be informed if the school is to close
- LA will be informed if the school is to close
- *Remote Learning Plan* will be implemented immediately
- External visits to the school will stop until deemed safe
- School *Risk Assessment* will be evaluated in light of any learning from new cases

| Priority Area | Outbreak Management Plan Focus |
|---------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1. | Child protection and safeguarding |
| 2. | Plans for limits on attendance + prioritising certain year groups |
| 3. | High quality remote education |
| 4. | Increased use of face coverings |
| 5. | Staff safety and re-introduction of shielding |
| 6. | Re-introduction of <i>bubble</i> groupings |
| 7. | Limits on trips and performances |
| 8. | Reduction of visitors to school |
| 9. | Provision of meals |

Priority 1 Child protection and safeguarding

If attendance restrictions are needed in any school, the Trust will remain vigilant and responsive to all safeguarding threats with the aim of keeping vulnerable pupils safe, particularly as more will be learning remotely.

All schools will continue to have regard to all statutory KCSiE 2021 safeguarding guidance:

- [Keeping children safe in education](#)

- [Working together to safeguard children](#)
- [Early Years Foundation Stage \(EYFS\) framework](#)

The Trust will keep all child protection and safeguarding policies and procedures under constant review so that they reflect any local restrictions and remain effective.

The Trust expects all schools to have a trained DSL (or deputy) available on site. If there is an operational challenge to achieving this, the following options will be considered:

- a trained DSL (or deputy) from the school to be available to be contacted via phone or online video, for example working from home
- sharing trained DSLs (or deputies) with other Trust schools (who should be available to be contacted via phone or online video)

Where a trained DSL (or deputy) is not on site, in addition to one of the above options, a senior leader should take responsibility for co-ordinating safeguarding on site.

Vulnerable pupils

Where vulnerable pupils are absent, schools will:

- follow up with the parent or carer, working with the Trust, local authority and social worker (where applicable), to explore the reason for absence and discuss concerns
- encourage the child to attend school, working with the Trust, local authority and social worker (where applicable), particularly where the social worker and the Virtual School Head (where applicable) agrees that the child's attendance would be appropriate
- focus all discussions on the welfare of the child, ensuring that the child is able to access appropriate education and support while they are at home
- have in place procedures to maintain contact, ensuring the child is able to access remote education support, as required, and regularly check if they are doing so

For note:

If any school has to temporarily stop onsite provision on public health advice, the headteacher should discuss alternative arrangements for vulnerable children with the Trust.

For note:

Where a pupil has a EHCP and cannot attend school a risk assessment will be undertaken to assess if they are safer at home or in school.

Priority 2 Plans for limits on attendance

Attendance restrictions will only ever be considered as a last resort e.g. the school is advised to limit attendance by PHE.

If attendance restrictions are advised across an area, the Trust and its schools will follow the operational guidance published by government.

High-quality remote education will continue to be provided for all pupils not attending school.

In all circumstances, priority will continue to be given to vulnerable children and children of critical workers to attend to their normal timetables.

Prioritising year groups

The decision making statements outlined below will be used to guide decisions about restricting attendance, as well as prioritising groups to return to face-to-face education:

- We will prioritise early years and all primary year groups to continue to operate as normal noting that the DfE may further advise groups that must be prioritised.
- If attendance restrictions are needed, vulnerable children and children of critical workers will be allowed to attend.
- If some attendance restrictions are needed, all vulnerable children, children of critical workers, children in reception, year 1 and year 2 will be allowed to attend
- If, by exception, attendance is restricted further, vulnerable children and children of critical workers will still be allowed to attend.
- If restrictions on pupil attendance are needed, headteachers will be best placed to determine the workforce required onsite and if it is appropriate for some staff to work remotely.

For note:

The Trust and its schools will make every possible adjustment for pupils with disabilities to support them to continue to access education successfully. The types of possible adjustments will be discussed and agreed fully with parents/carers.

Priority 3 High quality remote education

The Trust and its schools will continue to develop remote education provision in line with government expectations.

As part of the Trust's remote education provision, details will be reviewed of the pupils who require a device to be provided to secure safe IT access. These will be made available to be collected from school or, if there is prior warning, they will be distributed prior to class/school closures.

For note:

Full detail on remote education expectations and the support available to schools can be found here [Get help with remote education](#).

Priority 4 Increased use of face coverings

The Trust's plan covers the possibility that face coverings may be required to be re-introduced and mandated temporarily if an outbreak occurs

This may include face coverings required for visitors and in communal and congested areas e.g. at the start and end of the school day.

For note:

The Trust and its schools will continue to encourage parents to wear face coverings at the start and end of the school day when bringing pupils to school and collecting them.

Any requirement imposed by the Trust will allow for reasonable exemptions for their use.

In all cases any educational drawbacks in the recommended use of face coverings will be balanced with the benefits of managing transmission.

Priority 5 Staff safety and re-introduction of shielding

Shielding is currently paused. In the event of a major outbreak or VoC that poses a significant risk to individuals on the shielded patient list (SPL), the Trust recognises that government may reintroduce shielding alongside other measures.

The Trust will plan to ensure that the health and wellbeing of CEV, CV and pregnant staff is given the highest priority and individual risk assessments will be maintained.

The Trust and its schools will continue to implement the *system of controls* set out in the government's coronavirus operational guidance.

The Trust and its schools will continue to brief staff on the measures in place to reduce risks to staff, including how these protective measures are reviewed as part of an updated workplace risk assessments and staff feedback welcomed.

For note:

The Trust will always follow the guidance on [clinically extremely vulnerable people](#).

For note:

Shielding requirements can only be reintroduced by national government.

Priority 6 Reintroduction of *bubble* groupings

Current government guidance states that schools are no longer required to keep pupils in consistent *bubbles*. However, the Trust and its schools recognise that planning must cover the possibility that in some local areas it may become necessary to reintroduce *bubbles* for a temporary period to reduce mixing across and between particular groups if an outbreak occurs or transmission is deemed to be out of control.

Priority 7 Limits on trips and performances

The Trust and its schools recognise that should an outbreak occur, there is a very real possibility that schools are advised to limit:

- residential educational visits
- open days
- transition or taster days
- parental attendance in settings
- performances in settings

In such circumstances schools will plan accordingly and recognise that events may need to be cancelled with minimum notice. Therefore, all parental contact details will be checked regularly to ensure they are current.

Priority 8 Reduction of visitors to school

The Trust and its schools recognise that an outbreak in a school or local area may require the school to restrict visitors and entry to the school site in response to PHE advice and a review of safe-access risk assessments.

Priority 9 Provision of meals

The Trust recognises the need for pupils to continue to receive high quality, nutritious food at lunch time and will work closely with its provider, Chartwells, to ensure this continues if restrictions are required. Meals will continue to be provided for those on site, those in receipt of free school meals who are not on site will either be provided with vouchers or food for the period the pupil is isolating, or the school is restricting attendance.

Maintenance of safe covid-19 working practices

Within all Trust schools the following preventative measures will remain in place as a sustained standard of covid-safe practice. They will continue to be reviewed regularly:

- A risk assessment for each school that reflects Trust covid-safe expectations and current government guidance
- Appropriate levels of PPE as required
- Hand sanitiser freely available and hand washing prioritised
- The Trust's *Autumn Winter Plan* fully implemented by all schools
- LFT testing continued for staff twice weekly and visitors (as appropriate)
- Enhanced cleaning regimes maintained
- Ventilation of classrooms and learning spaces

Monitoring and review

The CEO and Trustees will review the *Outbreak Management Plan* at every meeting during the pandemic to ensure it reflects the Trust's current situation and that any new or changed government/local guidance is fully adhered to by all schools.

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|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Monitoring and review | CEO Trust Board |
| Links | Autumn Winter Plan + Risk Assessment Staff Code of Conduct Policy Risk Management Policy Health and Safety Policy Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and Procedures – Covid-19 Addendum Behaviour Policy Addendum Infection Control Policy |
| Staff responsible | CEO, Executive Director of School Improvement, School Leaders |
| Committee responsible | Audit and Risk Sub-Committee Trust Board |
| Date approved | July 2021 |
| Review date | Ongoing throughout covid-19 pandemic |
| Sign off by Chair of Trust |  Date: September 2021 |

Change Management

| Issue No. | Change date | Change description |
|-----------|-------------|---------------------------|
| 1.0 | July 21 | Initial release |
| 2.0 | Sept 21 | Autumn/Winter Plan update |

Appendix

Scenario planning guidance

Scenario 1

Single confirmed covid-19 case

If there is one case identified in a Trust school the following steps will be taken in line with the latest guidance:

- School will liaise with Public Health passing on the relevant information
- School will follow Local Authority reporting guidance
- Those in close contact will be asked to isolate
- Consideration will be given to transport and visitor contacts
- Remote learning plan will be implemented for those isolating
- School Covid Risk Assessment will be evaluated in light of any learning from new case

Scenario 2

Outbreak within school

The Trust uses the following definition for an outbreak:

Two or more test-confirmed cases of covid-19 among individuals associated with the school with illness onset dates within 14 days, and one of the following:

- identified direct exposure between at least 2 of the test-confirmed cases in that school (for example under one metre face to face, or spending more than 15 minutes within 2 metres) during the infectious period of one of the cases***
- when there is no sustained local community transmission - absence of an alternative source of infection outside the setting for the initially identified cases***

An outbreak is deemed to last 28 days from the last positive diagnosis.

Scenario 3

Local/national measures imposed

The covid situation is ever changing as are the directed responses. Schools will work with the Trust to ensure that they implement any Local or National restrictions and guidance. Schools will work in collaboration with professionals and stakeholders to limit the impact on educational delivery. This will include working with the following:

- Parents/carers
- Pupils
- Public Health
- Local Authority
- Social Care
- DfE