



**Highfield Academies**



# **Staff Operational Guidance**

*May 2020*

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# 1. Next phase of remaining open - increasing pupil roll

We are following the Government requirements to expand the opening of schools currently from 1st June 2020. Special schools are able to draw up their own rationale in managing their pupils returning to school. We have risk assessed children to gauge who to offer priority places to, as well as asked for parental feedback so we can take into account their wishes. The pupils that will attend from 1st June fit into two categories:

- **Children of people who can't work otherwise.** This includes the previous 'Critical Worker' category, but we have expanded this group to allow parents to return to work where they can't work at home, as per the latest Gov expectations
- **Children for whom there are safety concerns if they don't access.** This includes those deemed 'most vulnerable', where they cannot be at home safely, but we have expanded this group to include other pupils for whom there are safety concerns from school and home.

We will be keeping numbers cautiously low at each school in this next stage of increasing our pupil roll in school so that we can maintain social distancing as we can with our young people, therefore reducing the risk of any chance of infection. Currently we have safeguards in place such as temperature checks and hand gel upon arrival, handwashing regularly, distancing throughout the day where the child can and understands this, and no sharing of resources.

We will rota staff to work with pupils over the coming weeks, as they are able to work. This number and the amount of time each pupil spends at school may change according to the changing needs of their parents. We will gradually increase the school role where it is safe to do so, however some students still may not return to school until September 2020 or later. Staff in other roles, office, cleaning and site can work more flexibly according to the needs of the school.

Highfield Academies will follow advice and guidance from the Government contained in:

- *Coronavirus (COVID-19): implementing protective measures in education and childcare settings (12 May 2020)*
- *Actions for education and childcare settings to prepare for wider opening from June 2020 (12 May 2020)*
- *Opening schools to more children and young people: initial planning framework for schools in England (12 May 2020)*

## **Children and young people with medical needs**

Pupils who have been classed as *clinically extremely vulnerable* due to pre-existing medical conditions should be advised to shield. We do not expect these pupils to be attending school and they should continue to be supported at home by the NHS for their medical conditions, following home learning as appropriate and needed. A small number of pupils may be classed as *clinically vulnerable* using medical

guidelines. Parents should inform school and follow medical advice provided. A risk assessment will be conducted to ascertain if pupils can reintegrate back into school.

According to government guidance, if a pupil lives with someone who is *clinically vulnerable* (but not *clinically extremely vulnerable*), they can attend the school. If a pupil lives with someone who is *clinically extremely vulnerable* they should follow the advice in the *COVID-19: guidance on shielding and protecting extremely vulnerable persons from Covid-19*. They should only attend if stringent social distancing can be adhered to and we would generally not expect these individuals to attend the school.

## 2. Safer working practice and minimising risk

To safeguard all, we will **minimise contact** and **reduce the contamination risk** in our daily practice.

### Minimising contact

At Highfield Academies, we are adopting the 'bubble' approach, where groups operate in their own 'bubble', i.e. not mixing with other groups, not sharing spaces directly, and where shared spaces are used, staggering the timings of this. This is in recognition that our pupils won't be able to socially distance in the strictest sense. The DfE states *We know that, unlike older children and adults, early years and primary age children cannot be expected to remain 2m apart from each other and staff. In deciding to bring more children back to early years and schools, we are taking this into account.*

We will minimise contact 'pupil to pupil', staff to pupil', 'staff to staff' and 'staff/pupil to own family' - using the following control measures. However, we recognise that a significant number of our pupils, physical contact is needed for many parts of their education and care. The table below is for guidance, and staff should bear the principles in mind and apply them where they can be and it isn't to the detriment of the young person.

Entry and exit to school	Class groups and activities	Using physical spaces
Ensure that those who have coronavirus symptoms, or who have someone in their household who does, do not attend school	Creating small, consistent groupings (bubbles) which stay the same each day (numbers per classroom and staffing ratios to be based on risk assessment)	Staggering break and lunch times to prevent overlap with other groups
Temperature checks for pupils and hand gel for everybody upon arrival	Staff will work with the same group throughout the day and use the same rooms	Reducing transitions and movements within the building
Stay in bus until collected	Consider activities and where possible avoid games/activities that involve close contact	Plan activities that use the outside spaces we have where possible. Being outside reduces the risk of contamination
Pupils enter the building through designated	Equipment should not be shared between	Specified toilets for each class group.

entry points one at a time	groups, and where possible, not between individuals	Communal toilet blocks – 1 pupil to use at a time.
Staggered times for parent drop off	Avoid the use of soft toys if possible	Specified staff rooms for each staff group

The DfE state *Class sizes will be smaller, creating more space for children and teachers, and children will only mix with their small group. Schools will implement protective measures designed to reduce the risk of transmission, including increasing cleaning and reducing ‘pinch points’ in the school day such as breaktimes, pick-up and drop-off.’*

If a pupil has behaviours or care needs which increase the probability of an infection risk significantly in the school setting, and if a risk assessment ascertains that mitigations cannot be put in place to provide a place in school safely, then in these rare circumstances children may need to stay at home. For children in this category with a social worker, the school will take an approach of ‘best endeavours’ to provide a placement unless the risk assessment concludes they will be safer at home.

### **Reducing the contamination risk**

#### **Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)**

Wearing a face covering or face mask in schools is not recommended as government guidance and staff, children and learners will not be required to wear face coverings in school. Advice states that face coverings worn by those who may not be able to handle them as directed may inadvertently increase the risk of transmission. Instead government guidance recommends changing habits, minimising contact and mixing, in addition to cleaning and hygiene are effective measures in controlling the spread of the virus.

The majority of staff will not require PPE beyond what they would normally need for their work even if they are not always able to maintain a distance of 2 meters from others. PPE is only needed where:

- Pupils’ care routinely involves the use of PPE (gloves and aprons) due to their intimate care needs. This should continue in the same way, following protocols for best practise.
- In a few cases risk assessment for medical tasks may mean additional PPE will be required following medical care plan and risk assessment (for example suctioning)
- A pupil becomes unwell with the symptoms of coronavirus while in their setting and needs care until they can return home. Staff member should wear a face mask, gloves and apron

The LA has a model risk assessment that outlines the above in more detail.

**Rubbish should be stored in a room with a sticky label with the date on it, kept in the room for 72 hours then disposed of.**

cleaning hands thoroughly and more often than usually, following guidance from Public Health England and 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 bleach and 'fogging' classrooms regularly. Regular cleaning down of surfaces and equipment will take place and everybody will have to take responsibility for cleaning in their own area.

Handwashing facilities will be allocated and access to hand sanitiser in classrooms and other school environments.

All areas will be well ventilated including toilets.

Pupils will eat their lunch in their own classrooms to avoid larger group contact. If lunches are provided these are to be plated up and transported to classes on a staggered basis

Equipment should be cleaned that is used, and that should include laptops, ipads and other physical resources as necessary.

Laptops and ipads should be cleaned **before** and **after** use with a **damp**, disinfectant soaked cloth

Weekly use in rotation of the 'fogger' in classrooms to disinfect all surfaces and objects in the room

Where safeguarding allows please pin doors open (unless they are fire doors) to minimise use of handles and contact transmission

When calling taxi's students are to remain in their designated classes and called to taxi's via walkie talkie from their classrooms to avoid congregation of staff and students in a large area

Try not to touch hard surfaces unnecessarily - use your elbow or cuff over your hand

Advice is that staff shower when you get home. Wash your clothes and wear clean clothes each day.

**Staff member or pupil becomes unwell at school**

Staff will continue to be vigilant about the health and well-being of staff and pupils in general, and not solely in relation to COVID 19 symptoms. In a medical emergency 999 should be called.

However, if anyone becomes unwell with a new, continuous cough or a high temperature they must be sent home and advised to follow the *COVID-19: guidance for households with possible coronavirus infection*.

If a pupil is awaiting collection they will be isolated in a safe and secure place, away from other pupils and staff. The staff member is to wear PPE and when the pupil has left, surfaces should be cleaned that they have been in contact with.

If a member of staff has helped someone who is unwell with a new, continuous cough or a high temperature, they do not need to go home unless they develop symptoms (in which case a coronavirus test is available). They should wash their hands thoroughly for 20 seconds. The affected area should be cleaned as soon as possible afterwards.

### **Testing - National Test and Trace programme**

To access testing parents will be able to use the 111 online coronavirus service if their child is aged 5 or over, and for children aged under 5 parents are advised to call the 111 service and follow guidance.

When a pupil or staff member develops symptoms compatible with coronavirus they should be sent home and advised to self-isolate in accordance with *COVID-19: guidance for households with possible coronavirus infection* and seek to be tested. Staff, children and young people in all settings will be eligible for testing if they begin to display coronavirus symptoms, as will symptomatic members of their households. Staff can either self refer or ask the school to refer them. In either case, they need to talk this over with their Head of School, in order that we can put in place any relevant actions and safeguards.

A negative test will enable children to get back to childcare or education, and their parents to get back to work. Staff who have tested negative can also go back to work.

Where the pupil or staff member tests positive the rest of their school group should be sent home and advised to self-isolate for 14 days and seek advice about a test. The other household members of that wider group do not need to self-isolate unless the pupil or staff member they live with subsequently develops symptoms. Where a setting has a positive case, the rest of their class or group within their childcare or education setting should be sent home and advised to self-isolate for 14 days. As part of the national test and trace programme, if other cases are detected Public Health England will work with settings and advise on the appropriate course of action.

This could include a larger number of other children and young people may be asked to self-isolate at home as a precautionary measure – perhaps the whole class, site or year group. Where settings are observing guidance on infection prevention and control, which will reduce risk of transmission, closure of the whole setting will not generally be necessary.

Current advice states that Public Health England local Health Protection teams may conduct a rapid investigation and advise the

school if cases are diagnosed in the school. Because the school will be observing guidance on infection prevention and control to reduce risk of transmission. Closure of the whole school will not be necessary, unless in extreme cases and directed by the DfE.



### 3. Staff continued working expectations

We have applied the Government guidance and divided the staff group into 4 categories:

1. Staff who are able to return to work with no allowances needed
2. Staff who are in the *clinically vulnerable* group. These staff members will have pre-existing conditions as per list in, should follow advice to take extra care in observing social distancing and work from home where possible. If they cannot work from home school will provide safe on-site occupational roles related to the aims of the school, following social distancing guidance.
3. Staff who are living with somebody who is vulnerable. According to government guidance, if a member of staff lives with someone who is *clinically vulnerable* (but not *clinically extremely vulnerable*), they can attend the school. If a member of staff lives with someone who is *clinically extremely vulnerable* they should follow the advice in the *COVID-19: guidance on shielding and protecting extremely vulnerable persons from Covid-19*. They should only attend if stringent social distancing can be adhered to and we would generally not expect these individuals to attend the school.
4. Staff who have been classed as *clinically extremely vulnerable* due to pre-existing medical conditions have been advised by GP or medical practitioner to shield. We do not expect these staff to be in school, they should work from home.

#### **Home and school based learning**

##### **Teacher and Level 4s**

Staff responsible for working face to face (F2F) with students will be responsible for planning and delivering lesson content. Staff who are not working directly with students will be responsible for organisation of home learning for students not yet accessing school provision. Staff in the latter can work at home, but if they are able to, should come into school with the ability to work separately, and socially distance as far as is possible in the school setting.

##### **Face to face team (F2F)**

- Teachers/Level 4s will plan activities for the days that they are rota'd and classes they are based with.
- Teachers/Level 4s should still enter evidence on E4L where they can

##### **Home Learning Team**

- Teachers/Level 4s will liaise with teachers/Level 4s in the F2F team on what is being covered in their classes, topics, etc and provide

home learning for those pupils not at school for a minimum offer of 2 hours per day. It is up to parents if they take this up, though we would encourage this.

- Teachers/Level 4s in the home learning team will enter into E4L as appropriate and work with parents on doing the same

The relevant class teacher is responsible for their pupils' safe and well checks unless there are reasons why this is delegated. This can be completed from home if you ensure online safeguarding advice is adhered to. Complete safe and well checks at least once weekly for each one of your pupils not in school. Complete the proforma and return to your Dept Lead. Flag any issues that can't be dealt with and log any safeguarding concerns immediately using My Concern.

### **Teaching assistants**

People may be asked to do jobs that they do not normally do and within the government guidance TA's are able to lead a group of students in another room under the guidance of a teacher. Preparation of resources may be required for students both in and out of school.

### **Working with parents:**

Remember that many of our parents will be working in extremely challenging environments, their home situation included - this may mean that they are rude or emotional - DON'T take it personally.

If anybody needs an answer to something you are not sure about, refer them to a member of LT.

Parents may turn up late - this may well be due to demands at work, or at home - DON'T be judgemental.

Parents who collect their children are to adhere to 2m social distancing guidelines where possible in collection of pupils.

### **Staff Absence**

Must be flagged to Adam or Yvonne for either school as you have been doing already.

### **Numbers of Children:**

Numbers will fluctuate and also are anticipated to steadily grow over time due to Key workers being asked to do more shifts. Parents non-school childcare arrangements may change, and families may need to isolate.

Our vulnerable families may struggle and decide they want their children in school after all, or we may recommend that their child comes to school for a couple of days rather than a full 5 days per week. The provision is flexible and according to the need.

Our staff are also parents and their needs and capacity to work will change over time according to their child's school setting and whether

they are able to offer a palace, etc.

Yvonne, Adam and Simon will make decisions on who can / cannot come to school based upon risk assessment and knowledge of the child and family circumstances and needs.. We have already said to some parents that they can call us if their circumstances change or an emergency occurs - we will be flexible and supportive, whilst still maintaining our stance that home is the safest place for everybody.

## 4. Additional information and resources

*Insert collated questions from staff?*

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-implementing-protective-measures-in-education-and-childcare-settings/coronavirus-covid-19-implementing-protective-measures-in-education-and-childcare-settings>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/actions-for-educational-and-childcare-settings-to-prepare-for-wider-opening-from-1-june-2020/actions-for-education-and-childcare-settings-to-prepare-for-wider-opening-from-1-june-2020>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/actions-for-educational-and-childcare-settings-to-prepare-for-wider-opening-from-1-june-2020/opening-schools-for-more-children-and-young-people-initial-planning-framework-for-schools-in-england>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-on-shielding-and-protecting-extremely-vulnerable-persons-from-covid-19>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance/stay-at-home-guidance-for-households-with-possible-coronavirus-covid-19-infection>