

Infection Prevention and Control Policy (IPC)

Safe Environment - Safe Children - Safe Workforce

**Phase Five School Opening Review
March 2021**



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 and any essential visitors to Trust schools from acquiring the covid-19 virus, as far as this is reasonably possible, through the promotion of routine safe care and safeguarding practices. It should be read alongside the Trust's Covid-19 Pandemic Policy and Phase 5 School Opening Strategy and Risk Assessment.

The Trust's **Phase 5 School Opening Strategy and Risk Assessment** has carefully reviewed risks associated with the opening of schools to all pupils from 8 March 2021 and put into place a range of counter measures. By applying agreed effective infection protection and controls measures, best practice in safety and safeguarding will be sustained and the risk of infection minimised.

From 8 March 2021 when school is open to all pupils the following measures will be promoted and encouraged in full compliance with the strengthened PHE **System of Controls**:

- Safe management of personal hygiene e.g. *catch it – bin it - kill it*
- Effective school entry screening systems
- Achieving optimum hand hygiene
- Maintaining physical distancing measures
- Provision and use of personal protective equipment (PPE)
- Safe handling, storage and disposal of cleaning materials
- Safe handling and disposal of waste
- Cleaning and decontaminating of equipment and resources (indoor and outdoor)
- Achieving and maintaining a clean environment
- Managing and recording accidents, incidents and events
- Effective communication of prevention measures to pupils, staff and parents
- Staff training and education
- Completion of the infection control work programmes
- Completion of the infection control annual report for presentation to Trust Board

It is expected that all staff abide by this Policy and the PHE System of Controls. All staff must understand the importance of continued vigilance around virus prevention and control procedures as the pandemic continues, particularly the value of hand hygiene, personal hygiene, physical distancing and the correct use of PPE.

This Policy describes the roles and responsibilities that are allocated to different staff groups. It also details the processes that have been put in place to provide senior leaders and the Trust Board with assurances that infection control performance is:

- in full compliance with specific statutory health and safety obligations, current government guidance and PHE System of Controls
- constantly monitored and reviewed to ensure best practice and immediate improvement as/if required

As far as reasonably practicable, all staff will 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 essential visitors to schools
- Pupils, parents and families

Opening schools

As schools open again the importance of effective infection control remains paramount. The covid-19 virus problem continues to be multi-faceted with the arrival of variants and not all infection can be prevented. There are many sources of the virus and its variants, the most common being caused through the contaminated hands of both adults and children, contaminated environments and a breakdown in compliance with agreed good practice protocols. However, by following good practice and with good personal hygiene many risks can be avoided. As the virus continues every member of staff must remain highly vigilant. This will ensure that infection control continues to be addressed seriously and each individual staff member has personal responsibility for applying the Trust's agreed Infection Prevention and Control (IPC) measures set out in the Phase Five Risk Assessment.

Training and professional development

All staff will be reminded of infection control practices for the Trust's Phase 5 School Opening Strategy and as part of the Trust's ongoing response to managing the pandemic. In addition, IPC practices will be reinforced through 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.

Trust responsibilities

The Trust will ensure that:

- schools follow all available national and local guidance and advice.
- there is a designated health and safety lead in place in all Trust schools.
- risk counter measures exist in all Trust schools for keeping the identified risks of infection to a minimum.
- sufficient resources are provided to ensure the effective prevention and control measures can 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.
- Using personal protective equipment as required.
- Promoting personal hygiene.
- Achieving physical distancing at all times.
- Achieving respiratory hygiene.
- Ventilating areas.
- Safe handling and disposal of waste.
- Supporting high quality cleaning regimes.
- Supporting pupils to achieve high standards of hygiene.
- Cleaning and de-contaminating equipment.
- Achieving and maintaining a clean environment.
- Reporting all IPC issues to the headteacher or health and safety lead.
- Good communication – with other staff, pupils and families.
- Participation in training and education.

Headteacher responsibilities

Headteachers are the identified lead for covid-19 risk mitigation and they 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 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 IPC measures become routine safe practice for all staff and such measures will become core to all staff supervision and appraisal during the period of the pandemic. 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:

- Analysis of any outbreak of infection or self-isolating requirements.
- Action taken following an outbreak and *lessons learned*.
- Risk assessment reviews undertaken for prevention and control of infections.
- Safety audits under-taken and any further audits required.
- Recommendations from any IPC audit.
- Training received / required by staff.
- Any changes to relevant government, PHE, H+S guidance.

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.
- 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 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 schools open visitors to school will be kept under close review. Only essential visitors e.g. supply teachers, peripatetic teachers and contractors, will be permitted and full approval of the school headteacher must be sought prior to any visit. Any permitted visitors will be expected to follow the PHE System of Controls and Trust's IPC standards.

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 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 (or has someone in their household with those symptoms) does not attend the school or workplace.
- 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.
- Minimising human mixing and contact by altering, as much as possible, the environment (such as classroom layout) and timetables (such as staggered break times) and maintaining physical distancing.
- Maintaining good ventilation.
- Wearing face coverings when moving around school and 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 Phase Five School Opening 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

The Trust and its schools recognise the challenges of physical distancing with primary aged children. When all pupils return to school physical distancing will remain critically important. 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
- Maintaining distinct groupings e.g. class bubbles
- More regular and specifically targeted cleaning of classrooms
- Minimising contact and mixing between pupils/adults, adult/adult
- Avoiding large gatherings e.g. assembly, breaktimes, lunchtimes, start/end of day
- Staggering the daily timetable and start / finish times
- Wearing of face coverings by staff in communal areas

c. Maintaining a healthy classroom environment

In order to minimise the possible transmission of the virus:

- All unnecessary items should be removed from classrooms including soft toys and furnishings and any toys that are hard to clean.
- Staff should take home all unrequired personal belongings.
- All work surfaces in offices, classrooms and corridors must be kept free of clutter so that they can be easily cleaned.
- Displays, labels and posters should be removed if they collect dust, cannot be wiped clean or can be easily touched.
- Posters and signs relating to infection control and covid-19 should 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 should be well ventilated with open windows and doors.
- 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 be limited so that full use is made of all entrances and exits.
- Occupancy of all rooms including halls, dining rooms and offices should be limited.
- One-way circulation systems should remain in place as appropriate.
- Start and finish times and breaks should be staggered as far as is reasonably practicable.
- Access to toilets should be supervised and carefully monitored.
- Where possible, as much outside space should be used for as much of the day as possible – for breaks, outdoor learning and physical exercise.
- Outdoor equipment should only be used if it can be cleaned between groups of pupils.

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 pandemic 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 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 Phase 5 School Opening Strategy, 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.

Further school closure

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. 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 Phase 5 School Opening Risk Assessment
Staff responsible	Headteachers and Executive Leaders
Committee responsible	Trust Board
Date approved	March 2021
Next review	July 2021
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