

1. POLICY PURPOSE

This Policy defines the Trust's over-arching commitment to provide 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 other visitors to Trust schools from acquiring the Covid-19 virus, as far as this is reasonably possible, through the promotion of routine safe care practices. It should be read alongside the Trust's Covid-19 Pandemic Policy.

The Trust's Re-Opening Strategy and School Risk Assessments have carefully assessed risk and put into place a range of counter measures. By applying agreed effective infection protection and controls measures, best practice will be achieved and the risk of infection minimised. Measures include:

- Safe management of personal hygiene
- 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
- Achieving and maintaining a clean environment
- Managing and recording accidents, incidents and events
- Effective communication of prevention measures to pupils and staff
- Staff training and education
- Completion of the infection control work programmes
- Completion of the infection control annual report that is available to Trust Board

It is expected that all staff abide by this Policy. All staff must understand the importance of virus prevention and control procedures, 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
- Constantly monitored and reviewed to ensure it reflects current government guidance and best practice

As far as reasonably practicable, all staff will ensure that, pupils, staff and any other persons who may be at risk of acquiring Covid-19 are protected against identifiable risks by reference to all relevant guidance.

2. 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

3. COVID-19

The Covid-19 virus problem is multi-faceted and not all infection can be prevented. There are many sources of the virus, the most common being caused through the contaminated hands of both adults and children, contaminated environments and, in schools, a breakdown in full compliance with agreed good practice protocols. However, by following good practice and with good personal hygiene many risks can be avoided. Every member of staff must ensure that infection control is addressed seriously and each individual staff member has personal responsibility for applying the Trust's agreed Infection Prevention and Control (IPC) measures.

4. TRAINING AND EDUCATION

All staff will be given an overview of infection control practices as part of the Trust's response to managing the Covid-19 pandemic. In addition, IPC practices will be reinforced through risk assessment monitoring e.g. hand hygiene audits, team meetings and staff meetings.

Training and support may also be sought where appropriate from external agencies such as the Local Public Health Team and local infection control nurses as appropriate.

5. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

It is important for all staff to be clear about their responsibilities. Failure to follow the Policy may put the staff member, their colleagues, children and families at 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.

The Trust

The Trust will ensure that:

- There is a designated Health and Safety lead in place in all Trust schools
- Risk counter measures exist in all Trust schools for keeping to a minimum the risks of infection
- Sufficient resources are provided to ensure the effective prevention and control of infection

Headteacher

School headteachers are the identified lead for Covid-19 risk mitigation and they are uniquely placed to monitor the quality of infection prevention and control. 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 supported by their senior leadership team.

IPC measures must become routine safe practice for all staff for which leaders have day-to-day responsibility and such measures must become core to all staff supervision and appraisal. Where skills or knowledge are found to be lacking, staff are to be referred for further training.

Leaders must ensure that copies of the Infection Prevention & Control Policy is readily accessible to staff and published on the school website in the Covid-19 Section.

The headteacher will ensure that IPC is placed as a standing agenda item at team meetings and will include the following:

- Any outbreak of infection
- Action taken following an outbreak and “lessons learned”
- Risk assessments undertaken for prevention and control of infections
- Audits undertaken and any further audits required
- Recommendations from an IPC audit
- Training received / required by staff
- Any changes to relevant guidance

Health and Safety Lead

The 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
- Advise on the control and management of any infectious outbreaks
- Support with all infection control risk assessments
- Provide senior leaders with updates on any significant incidents
- Liaise with senior leaders over training needs
- Liaise with senior leaders over environmental issues

All Staff

All 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 respiratory hygiene
- Safe handling and disposal of waste
- Safe management of blood and bodily fluids
- Supporting high quality cleaning regimes

- Supporting pupils to achieve high standards of hygiene
- Cleaning and decontaminating 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 visitors
- Participation in training and education

Site Manager - Additional Responsibilities

Site managers will work with the Trust’s Director of Estates and the senior leadership team to maintain a clean and hygienic environment and will have clear roles and responsibilities in supporting Covid-19 risk mitigation measures. Schedules of cleaning will be available, reviewed and maintained. Problems must be reported immediately to the school senior leadership team to ensure prompt remedy.

Visitors to School

All visitors will be expected to follow the Trust’s IPC standards e.g. hand washing and physical distancing

Contractors

Contractors will be instructed on specific IPC practices that they will be required to follow, such as regular hand washing whilst on site.

6. TRANSMISSION OF INFECTION

- 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 mitigate that risk so that any transmission of infection is substantially reduced. This includes:

- 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)

7. INFECTION CONTROL ARRANGEMENTS

A Trust risk assessment process has been developed that will enable effective IPC measures to be maintained and improved if necessary.

Provision of Hand Wash Facilities / 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

Pupil grouping arrangements

The Trust and its schools recognise the challenges of physical distancing with primary aged children. As guided by the DfE, each school will apply the following hierarchy of measures:

- Avoiding contact with anyone who has symptoms of Covid-19
- Frequent hand cleaning and good respiratory hygiene practices
- More regular and specifically targeted cleaning
- Minimising contact and mixing between pupils and adults
- Maintaining distinct groups
- Avoiding large gatherings e.g. assembly, breaktimes, lunchtimes
- Staggering the daily timetable and start / finish times

A healthy 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 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 or ventilation units.
- 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.

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 government guidance with regard to non-healthcare settings: (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-decontamination-in-non-healthcare-settings>)

8. 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
IPC risk assessment to be reviewed regularly	Headteachers
Regular hand hygiene audits	Headteacher, H & S Lead
Environmental audit of each site	Director of Estates
Improvement plan for each site as informed by the environmental audits	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

9. INFECTION CONTROL REPORTS TO TRUST BOARD

The Trust CEO will ensure this is provided to the Board termly. This report will cover the following areas:

- Number and extent of IPC related audits
- Trust response to Government guidance and Public Health information
- Number and extent of infectious outbreaks, along with any specific remedial work required
- Any significant impact of infectious outbreaks e.g. 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 within the last term
- Environmental improvements for the next term
- Significant incidents and Trust response

10. MANAGING INFECTIONS AND INFECTIOUS OUTBREAKS

The Trust will comply fully with the **Public Health England (PHE) Endorsed Systems of Control (THE MUSTS)** for managing any pupils / staff with symptoms or any local outbreaks.

The responsibility for the management of infections and infectious outbreaks lies with the headteacher. In addition, they 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.

11. SCHOOL CLOSURE

If an outbreak / situation escalates significantly, a decision may have to be taken by the Trust Board and senior leaders in partnership with the local authority and local Public Health Team that the school site closes. Site closure will be influenced by a number of variable factors including the numbers of staff and pupils who are symptomatic, the nature of the outbreak and the spread and distribution of infected persons. A site must not be closed without notifying the Trust CEO.

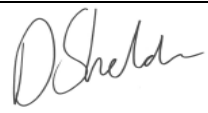
12. RECORDING & REPORTING

The Trust will comply fully with the **Public Health England (PHE) Endorsed Systems of Control (THE MUSTS)** in terms of recording and reporting.

13. CATERING

Other than where mentioned in section 8, 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.

Review

Monitoring and review	Trust Board Executive Director Governance
Links	Staff Code of Conduct Covid-19 Policy
Staff responsible	Headteachers and Executive Leaders
Committee responsible	Trust Board
Date approved	July 2020
Next review	June 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