****

**COVID-19**

**POLICY (V9)**

**(September 2021 – July 2022)**

**Introduction**

In light of experience and best practice, the effectiveness of this policy will be monitored during the period Sept 2020 – July 2022. This mechanism recognises that changes in legislation may prompt a review of the policy.

We are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people, and expect all staff, partners and volunteers to share this commitment.

This policy applies to all activities undertaken by the Academies in pursuing its purpose as an educational institution whilst serving its students, community and wider stakeholder interests.

All policies are subject to Equality Impact Assessments. Equality Impact Assessments are carried out to see whether the policy has, or is likely to have, a different impact on grounds of race, gender, disability, age, religion or sexual orientation.

If you require this document in an alternative format and/or language, please contact our Executive Support Officer, Mrs Christine Connolly.

We are always keen to hear suggestions regarding Academy policies.

To make suggestions or to see further information please contact:

**Executive Support Officer**

Telephone: 01207 507001

Email: dpo@ncdat.org.uk

**Footnote**

In an effort to keep costs to a minimum, a conscious decision has been made not to print out this document and it would be appreciated that you refer to the copy and relevant Appendices available on the Website/VLE.**Contents**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Section** | **Item** | **Page** |
|  |  |  |
| 1. | Statement of Intent | 4 |
|  |  |  |
| 2. | Risk Assessments | 5 |
|  |  |  |
| 3.  | System of Control | 5 |
|  |  |  |
| 4. | Testing | 7 |
|  |  |  |
| 5. | Attendance/admitting students into school | 7 |
|  |  |  |
| 6. | Engagement with staff and Trade Unions | 7 |
|  |  |  |
| 7. | Staffing | 8 |
|  |  |  |
| 8. | Staff with vulnerabilities | 8 |
|  |  |  |
| 9. | Self-isolation/Childcare arrangements | 9 |
|  |  |  |
| 10. | Workplace control measures | 9 |
|  |  |  |
| 11. | Tracing, close contacts and isolation | 11 |
|  |  |  |
| 12. | Outbreak management plan | 11 |
|  |  |  |
| 13. | Transport | 14 |
|  |  |  |
| 14. | Remote Education | 15 |
|  |  |  |
| 15. | Future Actions | 17 |
|  |  |  |
| 16. | History of Reviews | 17 |

##### **Introduction**

This policy has been produced to articulate the Academy Trust Board’s

policy position in response to the full re-opening of the Academies following

the COVID-19 outbreak.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the Trust’s Health and Safety

Policy. The Academy Trust aims to provide a safe, secure

environment for all students, staff, governors and all visitors. The Academy

Trust , as an employer, takes responsibility for the health & safety of all

our students, members of staff, governors and others who visit our premises

and even more during periods when coronavirus (Covid-19) is prevalent

within the community.

1. **Statement of Intent**

The Academy Trust recognise their responsibility as employers under the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 to provide a safe and healthy environment for the teaching and all support staff, the students and other people who come onto the premises. The Academy Trust Board will continue take all reasonably practicable steps within their power to fulfil this responsibility.

In additional to the Health and Safety responsibilities The Academy Trust

recognises the requirement to comply with Covid-19 Response: Living with

Covid-19 which was published by the Government on the 21st February

2022.

The Academy Trust will ensure compliance with on-going revision to guidance issued by the Government. The Academy Trust will put in place reasonable measures which ensures that all our students, members of staff, governors and visitors’ access Covid19 secure premises.

1. **Risk Assessments**

The Academy Trust as an employer, recognises that it must protect

people from harm. This includes taking reasonable steps to protect,

students, employees, governors and visitors from the coronavirus (Covid19).

There is an expectation that risk assessments will be completed and

updated on a regular basis for staff, governors/visitors, and students

together with an overarching risk assessment. In addition, individual risk

assessments will be undertaken as the need requires. For example, mass

testing and changing room risk assessments. The risk assessments will:

* Identify what work activity or situations might cause transmission of the virus;
* Think about who could be at risk;
* Decide how likely it is that someone could be exposed;
* Act to remover the activity or situation, or if this is not possible control the risk.

There is also an expectation that a COVID-19 over-arching risk register

will be maintained. The Academy Trust via the Audit and Risk

Committee will receive the Trust’s COVID-19 Risk Register on a termly basis,

to provide assurance or otherwise to the Academy Trust that risks in

relation to coronavirus (COVID-19) are being appropriately mitigated and

managed.

1. **Systems of controls.**

The Academy Trust expects the Academies to ensure the following controls are in place:-

* Ensure good hygiene for everyone
	+ Frequent and thorough hand cleaning should be regular practice, students should continue to clean their hands regularly, this can be done with soap and water or hand sanitiser;
	+ The catch it, bin it, kill it approach continues to be very important and will be followed;
	+ Most staff will not require personal protective equipment.
* Maintain appropriate cleaning regimes
	+ Regular cleaning of areas and equipment, with a particular focus on frequently touched surfaces.
* Keep occupied spaces well ventilated
	+ Ensure that premises are well ventilated and that a comfortable teaching environment is maintained;
	+ Any poorly ventilated spaces, where possible, steps will be taken to improve the flow of fresh air. CO2 monitors have been deployed throughout the Academy Trust estate to enable identification where ventilation needs to be improved;
	+ The Academies have mechanical ventilation systems which uses fans the o draw fresh air. Where possible, the ventilation rate will be increased, and maintained in line with the manufacturers’ recommendations;
	+ Opening external windows will improve natural ventilation. Opening internal doors and external doors can assist with creating a throughput of air, Fire and safeguarding regulations will take precedent and a balance will made in relation to increased ventilation and maintaining a comfortable temperature.
* Follow advice from the United Kingdom Health Security Agency on testing, self-isolation and managing confirmed cases of Covid-19.
	+ When an individual tests positive they will be advised to stay at home and avoid contact with other people for at least 5 full days. They should continue to follow this guidance until they have received 2 negative test results on consecutive days.
	+ Contacts are not required to self-isolate nor are they advised to take daily tests. Staff and students whom are a contact should attend the Academies as usual.

If a member of staff tests positive and commences a 5-day period of self-isolation they must discuss with their line manager working practices and arrangements should be approved by a member of the Senior Leadership Team. Should an employee be required to self-isolate (but are fit and well themselves) there is an expectation that they will continue to work from home. Employees will receive full pay whilst they are working from home. Should an employee not be fit and well whilst self-isolating they should follow the sickness policy.

1. **Testing**

Staff and students are no-longer required to undertake twice-weekly asymptomatic testing

1. **Attendance/admitting students into school**

School attendance is mandatory for all students and it is a priority to ensure that as many students as possible regularly attend. Where a student is unable to attend because they have a confirmed case of Covid-19 they should be recorded as code I (illness).

1. **Engagement with staff and Trade Unions**

The risk assessments/register documents continue to be live working documents. All risk assessments will continue to be communicated to staff, recognised Trade Unions and other stakeholders in the most appropriate and timely manner. By engaging staff and recognised Trade Unions in the steps which are being implemented to manage the risk of coronavirus we aim to: -

* Explain the changes which are planned to enable safe working;
* Make sure the changes will work and obtain staff ideas;
* Allow the safe operation of the Academies.
1. **Staffing**

Most school-based roles are not ideally suited to home working and the

Academy Trust expect all staff to work predominately from the Academy

Trust premises. Social distancing measures have now ended in the

workplace and it is no longer necessary for staff to work from home. The HR

team will continue to engage with staff with vulnerabilities to ensure the

measures/safety controls are working. They will also discuss any concerns

individuals may have around their particular circumstances and reassure

staff about the protective measures in place.

All staff should follow the measures set out in the system of controls section

of this guidance to minimise the risks of transmission. This includes continuing

to observe good hand and respiratory hygiene. We anticipate adherence

to the measures in this guidance will provide the necessary reassurance for

staff to attend school.

The Academy Trust strongly advises that all staff should be fully

vaccinated to help control the spread of the virus.

1. **Staff with Vulnerabilities**

The Government no longer differentiates in its guidance to staff who may

be more vulnerable to Covid-19. However, there is still a legal responsibility

to protect employees and others from risks to their health and safety.

The Academy Trust will comply with the most up to date guidance.

In relation to Pregnant women the Academy Trust expects that individual workplace risk assessments should be completed for any new and expectant mothers, which will include consideration of Covid-19. When notification is received that an employee is pregnant, breastfeeding or has given birth the Academy Trust will check the workplace risk assessment to identify if any new risks which have arisen and complete an individual risk assessment in line with the parental leave policy. The Academies will take appropriate sensible action to reduce, remove or control the risks. As part of the risk assessment the Academy Trust will consider whether adapting duties are appropriate to mitigate risks.

1. **Self-isolation/Childcare Arrangements**

Individuals are not required to self-isolate if they live in the same household as someone with Covid-19 or are identified as a close contact. The Academy Trust recognises that some staff will continue to self-isolate due to positive cases.

At times dependants may self-isolate which will result in caring responsibilities. In line with the Trust’s Leave of Absence Policy all employees have a statutory right to take a reasonable period of unpaid time off work to deal with an emergency involving a dependant. All time off is subject to the discretion of the Principal.

1. **Workplace control measures**

This policy aims to articulate the control measures implemented by the Academy Trust. The Trust has developed risk assessments and detailed operational plans in relation to staff, governors and visitors entering, moving around and leaving the site. The over-arching aims are as follows:-

* Students will benefit from a flexible curriculum accessing all areas of the school.
* Where possible a steady flow of movement throughout the buildings will be encouraged. Corridors will operate a walk on the left-hand side to assist with the flow of movement;
* The maximum building capacity is identified as the number of individuals within the Fire Risk Assessment to ensure safe evacuation of the building;
* Staff or students who are unwell with symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19) will be advised not to travel to or attend the workplace;
* Any member of staff or student who develops [symptoms](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-to-employers-and-businesses-about-covid-19/guidance-for-employers-and-businesses-on-coronavirus-covid-19#symptoms) of coronavirus (COVID-19) will be sent home and should follow the latest government guidance;
* In conjunction with the cleaning contractor regular and frequent cleaning will take place including disinfect objects and surfaces that are touched regularly;
* Staff, Governors and visitors arriving at the buildings will be controlled and only enter via the main entrance, using the inventory system. The inventory system may be used to assist with track and trace;
* All students, staff, Governors and visitors (included contracted staff) are advised to wash their hands/sanitise on a regular basis
* A risk assessment will be undertaken for events including performances, parental evenings or other large gathering within the Academies. All stakeholders will be informed of any decision to defer/cancel at the earliest opportunity.
* A risk assessment will be undertaken as to whether Governor/Board meetings should be held on-site/remotely depending on the prevailing guidance.
* Should an outbreak occur within one of the Academies the Academy Trust would follow the advice from the Local Authority’s Director of Public Health, or United Kingdom Heath Security Agency Health Protection Teams. This is further detailed within the outbreak management plan detailed at paragraph 12. No student will be denied education on the grounds of whether they are or are not wearing a face covering;
* In relation to Governors/trustees visiting the building, meetings should take place on-site. Governors/trustees will be expected to sign in at reception, using the inventory system. At all times governors/trustees are expected to wear their lanyard.
* Visitors are able to have face to face meetings. Visitors will be expected to sign in at reception, using the inventory system.
* Supply staff will continue to be used to cover for staff absence. Supply staff as part of their induction will be briefed on, the Trust’s policy position in relation to Covid-19, the measures which have been implemented and our expectations of them.

Full details are included within the Staff, Governors and Visitors COVID-19

Risk assessment.

1. **Tracing, close contacts and isolation**

There is no longer any requirement for routine contact tracing.

1. **Outbreak Management Plan**

The Government has made it a national priority that education and childcare settings should continue to operate as normally as possible. The DfE’s published contingency framework states that schools should have an “outbreak management plan” outlining how they would operate if any of the measures described in the guidance were recommended for their setting or area.

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

* To help manage a covid-19 outbreak within a setting;
* If there is an extremely high prevalence of Covid-19 in the community and other measurers have failed to reduce transmission;
* As part of a package of measures responding to a variant of concern.

In these cases, the guidance also states that Local Authority’s Directors of Public Health and United Kingdom Health Security Agency Health Protection Teams can recommend certain measurers for individual schools or clusters of settings. If there is a need to address more widespread issues across an area, ministers will take decisions on an area-by area basis.

The Academy Trust will therefore continue to have a role in working with Health Protection Teams in the case of a local outbreak in a setting, or local area. A Director of Public Health might advise the Academy Trust to temporarily re-introduce some control measures.

The DfE confirmed threshold for implementing the outbreak management plan is, whichever of these thresholds is reached first:

* 5 children, pupils, students or staff, who are likely to have mixed closely, test positive for COVID-19 within a 10-day period
* 10% of children, pupils, students or staff who are likely to have mixed closely test positive for COVID-19 within a 10-day period.

However should this threshold be breached the Academy Trust will call the dedicated service (DfE helpline 0800 0468687) who will escalate the issue to the local Health Protection Team where necessary and advise if any additional action is required, such as implementing elements of the outbreak management plan as detailed below:-

* Consider re-introducing asymptomatic Testing - The Academy Trust would work with the Local Authority’s, Director of Public Health and Health Protection Teams regarding the re-introduction of asymptomatic testing sites (on site testing for all students, staff, twice per week). The Director of Public Health would keep the DfE, regional partnership teams and regional schools’ commissioners informed if on-site asymptomatic test sites are reintroduced. The Academy Trust would review and amend the curriculum/timetable and school day to ensure that the introduction of full asymptomatic on-site testing does not negatively impact on the provision of education;
* Consider re-introducing of zones/year group bubbles. The current guidance recommends that bubbles are not used in schools. However the re-introduction of bubbles for a temporary period of time, should be included as an option within the outbreak management plan.
* Consider re-introducing shielding – In the event of a major outbreak or variant of concern that poses a significant risk to individuals on the shielded patient list, shielding could be considered. Following advice if shielding is proposed to be re-introduced the Academy Trust would work with all staff and students affected and support them with their transition to shielding (working/studying from home):
* Other measures – the Local Authority’s Directors of Public Health and Health Protection Teams may also recommend that restrictions are made to the following activities:-
	+ Educational visits
	+ Transition days
	+ Parental events
	+ Performances

Attendance Restrictions – Attendance restrictions would only be considered as a last resort. Attendance restrictions may be recommended depending on the scientific and public health advice. If attendance restrictions are advised across an area the government will publish detailed operational guidance. The Local Authority’s Director of Public Health and Health Protection Teams may advise individual settings or clusters to limit attendance. The Academy Trust will follow the advice provided by the Government, the Local Authority’s Directors of Public Health and Health Protection Teams. High-quality remote education would then be provided for students not attending. Should attendance restrictions be introduced the Academy Trust consider the following priority order of groups:-

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Priority 1 | Vulnerable children and children of critical workers |
| Priority 2 | Year 11 and Year 13 |
| Priority 3 | Year 7, Year 10 and Year 12 |
| Priority 4  | Year 8 and Year 9 |

* Meals – The Academy Trust will provide meal options for all students who are in the Academies. The Academy Trust will continue to provide free school meals in form of meals, lunch parcels or vouchers for students who are eligible for benefits related free school meals and who are not attending school because they have had symptoms or a positive test result themselves.
* High-quality remote education would then be provided for students not attending. Please see paragraph 14 relating to remote learning expectations.

It is assumed that staff and students will follow the details of this policy. Should the outbreak management plan be activated, the Chief Executive Officer will be responsible for informing the Chair of the Academy Trust Board. The Principal of the Academy, will be responsible for informing the Chair of the Local Governing Body.

1. **Transport**

The Trust continues to liaise with the Local Authority to ensure appropriate transport where required is provided in a manner which complies with the latest guidance, whilst recognising that this statutory duty rests with the Local Authority.

1. **Remote Education**

The Academy Trust expects the Academies to provide high quality remote education for students whose attendance would be contrary to government guidance or legislation around Covid-19. Where needed remote education provided should be equivalent in length to the core teaching students would receive in school and should include recorded or live direct teaching time as well as time for students to complete tasks and assignments independently.

The Academy Trust expects remote education to:

* Teach a planned and well-sequenced curriculum so that knowledge and skills are built incrementally;
* Have a good level of clarity about what is intended to be taught and practised in each subject so that students can progress through the school’s curriculum;
* Overcome barriers to digital access for students by:-
	+ Distributing school-owned laptops;
	+ Securing appropriate internet connectivity solutions;
	+ Providing printed resources, such as textbooks and workbooks to structure learning, supplemented with other forms of communication to keep students on track.
* Have systems for checking daily, whether students are engaged with their work and work with families to rapidly identify effective solutions where engagement is a concern:
* Recognise that younger students and some students with SEND may not be able to access remote education without adult support and so the academies will work with families to deliver a broad and ambitious curriculum:
* Each Academy has identified a named member of staff with overarching responsibility for the quality and delivery of remote education.

When teaching students remotely, we expect the Academies to:

* Set meaningful and ambitious work each day in an appropriate range of subjects:
* providing frequent, clear explanations of new content, delivered by a teacher or through high-quality curriculum resources:
* providing opportunities for interactivity, including questioning, eliciting and reflective discussion:
* providing scaffolded practice and opportunities to apply new knowledge:
* enabling students to receive timely and frequent feedback on how to progress, using digitally-facilitated or whole-class feedback where appropriate:
* using assessment to ensure teaching is responsive to students’ needs and addresses any critical gaps in students’ knowledge;
* avoiding an over-reliance on long-term projects or internet research activities;
* consider expectations in relation to the students’ age, stage of development or special educational needs, for example where this would place significant demands on parents’ help or support;
* Teachers will check and provide appropriate feedback on student’s remote work in line with the Academy’s Marking Policy.
* Should the timetabled teacher be unable to undertake this role, the Head of Department will be responsible for arranging cover for the remotely delivered lesson:
* The Academy’s pastoral team will offer daily student support to secure access to learning.

During the period of isolation of groups, regular communication will be provided to all Academy Trust Trustees, members of the Local Governing Body, and all staff. Re-integration plans will also be shared with stakeholders.

1. **Future Actions**

It is now expected that there will be no further iterations to this policy as Covid-19 moves to being classified as endemic.

1. **History of Policy Reviews**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Implementation Date** | **May 2020 (Approved by ATB on 9th June 2020)**  |
| **1st Review Date** | **27th August 2020** |
| **2nd Review Date** | **16th September 2020** |
| **3rd Review Date** | **15th October 2020** |
| **4th Review Date** | **10th December 2020** |
| **5th Review Date** | **25th March 2021** |
| **6th Review** | **August 2021** |
| **7th Review** | **14th October 2021** |
| **8th Review** | **9th December 2021** |
| **9th Review** | **10th March 2022** |

 **Associated Documentation**

* <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-for-schools-and-other-educational-settings>
* <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/public-health-england>
* DfE Guidance for Employers and Businesses on coronavirus (Covid-19)
* Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974
* <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/actions-for-schools-during-the-coronavirus-outbreak/guidance-for-full-opening-schools#section-5-contingency-planning-for-outbreaks>
* <https://www.hse.gov.uk/coronavirus/working-safely/index.htm>
* [Statutory obligations and expectations - Get Help with Remote Education - GOV.UK](https://get-help-with-remote-education.education.gov.uk/statutory-obligations.html)
* [Contingency framework: education and childcare settings - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-local-restrictions-in-education-and-childcare-settings/contingency-framework-education-and-childcare-settings)
* [Schools COVID-19 operational guidance - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/actions-for-schools-during-the-coronavirus-outbreak/schools-covid-19-operational-guidance)
* [Stay at home: guidance for households with possible or confirmed coronavirus (COVID-19) infection - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance/stay-at-home-guidance-for-households-with-possible-coronavirus-covid-19-infection#exempt)
* [COVID-19 Response - Living with COVID-19.docx (publishing.service.gov.uk)](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1056229/COVID-19_Response_-_Living_with_COVID-19.pdf)