

The Skylark Partnership

Procedures for keeping staff safe on school sites - January 2021

Staff providing teaching at TSP sites need to know what procedures are being put in place to keep them safe once the scientific advice indicates that it is safe to reopen schools. *This should be read alongside individual school risk assessments and other associated policies.* The main risk assessment, which is regularly reviewed, can be found [here](#).

There are important actions that children and young people, their parents and those who work with them can take during the coronavirus outbreak, to help prevent the spread of the virus.

Preventing the spread of coronavirus involves dealing with direct transmission (for instance, when in close contact with those sneezing and coughing) and indirect transmission (via touching contaminated surfaces). A range of approaches and actions will be employed to do this. These can be seen as a hierarchy of controls that, when implemented, creates an inherently safer system, where the risk of transmission of infection is substantially reduced. These include:

- minimising contact with individuals who are unwell by ensuring that those who have coronavirus symptoms, or who have someone in their household who does, do not attend childcare settings, schools or colleges
- cleaning hands more often than usual - wash hands thoroughly for 20 seconds with running water and soap and dry them thoroughly with a paper towel or use alcohol hand rub or sanitiser ensuring that all parts of the hands are covered
- ensuring good respiratory hygiene by promoting the 'catch it, bin it, kill it' approach
- wearing a mask or visor whilst in the centres (if able to)
- cleaning frequently touched surfaces often using standard products, such as detergents and bleach
- minimising contact and mixing by altering the environment – reviewing classroom layout, and staggered start, finish and break times.

Staff wellbeing

TSP recognise that their staff may be experiencing heightened anxiety at this time which will be impacting on their wellbeing. All staff have access to a staff benefit scheme called 'Perkbox' (<https://www.perkbox.com/uk>) which includes access to confidential counselling, wellbeing activities e.g. exercise classes, and through Perkbox medical, access to GP advice and support.

The Department of Health also is providing some additional support which can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/extra-mental-health-support-for-pupils-and-teachers> .

The Education Support Partnership provides a free helpline for staff and targeted support for mental health and wellbeing <http://educationsupport.org.uk>

Staff have been informed about their 'bubble' and procedures to teach at other sites are in place. All staff have been consulted about the risk management measures and have had an opportunity to contribute.

If staff require a 'break' or are struggling, there is peer support, leadership support and external agency support in place.

Personal protective equipment (PPE) including face coverings and face masks

Wearing a face covering or visor is now recommended in schools, and TSP staff are required to wear them. Face coverings particularly may be beneficial reducing aerosol transmission and this is particularly the case for the new strain of Coronavirus. Pupils will also be required to wear face masks unless their parents request that they do not. Changing habits, cleaning and hygiene are effective measures in controlling the spread of the virus, and need to be continued. Clear instructions have been provided for the use and disposal of face masks in order to prevent the increase in the risk of transmission. All pupils and staff have been provided with a fabric face mask or a visor that they can use on site. *(For more information on use of PPE, please see risk assessment [here](#))*

Pupils and staff using public transport and taxis will be required to wear face masks in line with government guidance. There is clear guidance on what pupils and staff must do with their masks on entry to the sites and they will be reminded to wash their hands after removing them.

Staff in TSP settings will generally 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 metres from others. PPE is only needed in a very small number of cases including:

- in the hospital settings, including the CAMHS inpatients, staff MUST wear it in line with the NHFT risk management measures.
- if a child, young person or other learner becomes unwell with symptoms of coronavirus while in their setting and needs direct personal care until they can return home. A fluid-resistant surgical face mask should be worn by the supervising adult if a distance of 2 metres cannot be maintained. If contact with the child or young person is necessary, then disposable gloves, a disposable apron and a fluid-resistant surgical face mask should be worn by the supervising adult. If a risk assessment determines that there is a risk of splashing to the eyes, for example from coughing, spitting, or vomiting, then eye protection should also be worn
- For administering the lateral flow tests

PPE necessary to carry out these tasks will be provided by TSP for the centres and by the health trust in the hospitals.

Further guidance can be found in [safe working in education, childcare and children's social care](#) which contains more information about preventing and controlling infection, including the use of PPE.

Shielded and clinically vulnerable adults

Clinically vulnerable individuals are now allowed to come to work. TSP staff, who were identified as being clinically vulnerable will have a review of their individual risk assessments and are advised to take extra care in observing social distancing procedures. (Further information at: [COVID-19: guidance on shielding and protecting people defined on medical grounds as extremely vulnerable](#))

Living with a shielded or clinically vulnerable person

If a member of staff lives with someone who is clinically extremely vulnerable including those who are pregnant, they can attend school, and additional risk assessments will be carried out to ensure that all of the risk management measures are in place..

Group sizes

Group sizes will be determined according to the space available to maintain the 2m social distancing. Schools will also work through the hierarchy of measures

- avoiding contact with anyone with symptoms
- frequent hand cleaning and good respiratory hygiene practices
- regular cleaning of settings
- minimising contact and mixing

Reducing contact between people as much as possible in order to reduce transmission risk will be achieved by young people and staff only mix in their identified bubbles. Pupils and staff will have staggered breaks in order to keep to a minimum number of individuals in an area at any one time. Brief, transitory contact, such as passing in a corridor, is low risk: staff and pupils will be advised to turn their heads away. .

Public Health England (PHE) is clear that if we do this, and crucially if we are also applying regular hand cleaning, hygiene and cleaning measures and handling potential cases of the virus as per the advice, then the risk of transmission will be lowered.

Classrooms will preferentially be arranged with all desks facing forward positioned 2 metres apart. If the numbers increase, we will consider moving to 1 metre distance, depending on the risk assessment at that time. Different arrangements can be made and these will be risk assessed.

Timetable

Normal timetable and lessons will be delivered. This is important as pupils like the routine and 'normality' and this will support them to feel safe.

Break and lunch times will be staggered

Settings will be open full time. Staggered start and finish times will be considered if we cannot maintain 2m social distance at these times with our current pupil numbers. This will be reviewed over time in line with updated guidance and scientific advice.

Parents/carers are not normally permitted onto the premises to deliver or collect their child. When they arrive in the car park, they should ring a designated person to let them know they are there. Their child will then be accompanied outside to meet them. Staff will not be permitted to go out to cars, or to sit in the car in order to encourage pupils to come in. Where parents are required to come on site, additional risk management measures are in place.

All unnecessary items and soft furnishings have been removed from classrooms and other learning environments where there is space to store it elsewhere

Communicating our plans

- Pupils, parents, carers or any visitors, such as suppliers, will be instructed not to enter the setting if they are displaying any symptoms of coronavirus (following the [COVID-19: guidance for households with possible coronavirus infection](#))
- Parents, carers and pupils will be provided with training on how to keep themselves safe whilst on sites and procedures they must follow. Home-school agreements will be agreed and signed.

- Parents and pupils will be informed of their allocated drop off and collection times and the process for doing so, including protocols for minimising adult to adult contact (for example, which entrance to use) if necessary.
 - Make clear to parents that they cannot gather anywhere, or enter the site (unless they have a pre-arranged appointment, which should be conducted safely)
 - Ensure parents and pupils are aware of recommendations on transport to and from education or childcare setting (including avoiding peak times). Read the [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): safer travel guidance for passengers](#)
 - Talk to staff about the plans. Training will be provided in safety measures, timetable changes and staggered arrival and departure times etc. Risk assessments will be shared and discussed. These will also be shared with health and safety advisors and the unions
 - Communicate early with contractors and suppliers that will need to prepare to support our plans e.g. cleaning, catering, food supplies, hygiene suppliers
- discuss with cleaning contractors or staff the additional cleaning requirements and agree additional hours to allow for this if necessary.

When open

Keep cohorts together where possible and:

- ensure that children and young people are in the same bubbles at all times each day, and different bubbles are not mixed during the day, or on subsequent days
- Staff can move between classes but are advised to clean the area that they were working in and to maintain the 2 m social distancing.
- Pupils will use the same desks in each classroom throughout the day, with a thorough wipe down of surfaces at the end of the morning and afternoon, as well as a thorough clean.

For cleaning and hygiene:

- ensure that sufficient handwashing facilities are available. Where a sink is not nearby, individual hand sanitiser will be provided in classrooms
- clean surfaces that children and young people are touching, e.g. desks, chairs, doors, sinks, toilets, light switches more regularly than normal
- ensure that all adults and children:
 - frequently wash their hands with soap and water for 20 seconds and dry thoroughly. Review the [guidance on hand cleaning](#)
 - clean their hands on arrival at the setting, before and after eating, after any breaks and after sneezing or coughing
 - are encouraged not to touch their mouth, eyes and nose
 - use a tissue or elbow to cough or sneeze and use lidded pedal bins for tissue waste ('catch it, bin it, kill it')
- ensure that bins for tissues are emptied at lunchtime and at the end of the day
- where possible, all spaces should be well ventilated using natural ventilation (opening windows) or ventilation units
- prop doors open, where safe to do so (bearing in mind fire safety and safeguarding), to limit use of door handles and aid ventilation

Reduce mixing within education or childcare setting by:

- using a one-way circulation, or place a divider down the middle of the corridor to keep pupil apart as they move through the setting where spaces are accessed by corridors
- staggering breaks to ensure that any corridors or circulation routes used have a limited number of pupils using them at any time
- ensuring that toilets do not become crowded by only allowing one person to use the toilet facilities at one time

Use outside space:

- for exercise and breaks
- for outdoor education, where possible, as this can limit transmission and more easily allow for distance between children and staff
- do not use outdoor equipment unless it can be appropriately cleaned between groups of children and young people using it, and that multiple groups do not use it simultaneously. Read [COVID-19: cleaning of non-healthcare settings](#)

For shared rooms:

- stagger the use of staff rooms and offices to limit occupancy

Reduce the use of shared resources:

- No shared resources to be taken home and no exchange of take-home resources between pupils and staff
- No sharing of stationery and other equipment. Shared surfaces should be cleaned and disinfected more frequently
- Practical lessons can go ahead if equipment can be cleaned thoroughly and the classroom or other learning environment is occupied by the same children or young people in one day, or properly cleaned between cohorts

Adjust transport arrangements where necessary including:

- encouraging parents and children and young people to walk or cycle to their education setting where possible
- making sure schools, parents and young people follow the [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): safer travel guidance for passengers](#) when planning their travel
- ensuring that transport arrangements cater for any changes to start and finish times
- making sure transport providers do not work if they or a member of their household are displaying any symptoms of coronavirus
- making sure transport providers, as far as possible, follow hygiene rules and try to keep distance from their passengers (see individual transport provider risk assessments)

See also TSP policy relating to shared equipment and enhanced cleaning arrangements which should be read alongside this policy, along with the full risk assessment with associated risk measures which can be found [here](#)