

Yaxham CE VA Primary School

Addendum to Health and Safety policy in response to the Coronavirus (COVID-19) Pandemic May 2020

Based on current guidance from Norfolk County Council: COVID-19 Your health and your safety when working in educational settings G646c

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Introduction

The health, safety and well-being of all community is of upmost importance. We are keeping up to date with latest information from Government, Public Health England and Norfolk county Council and will continue to put strategies in place to ensure that the risk is effectively managed on their advice.

This guidance is simplified to help you to work safely Please be aware, in some cases, NCC guidance reflects a higher standard than is recommended by PHE.

Key messages

- **Do not come to work if you have any symptoms of COVID-19 no matter how mild.**
- **Go home quickly if you develop symptoms of COVID-19 while you are at work, no matter how mild**
- Communicate the importance of through and regular hand washing with all members of staff, children and visitors including on entering the building, before and after eating, before and after visiting the toilet as well at other regular intervals.
- Encourage handwashing where you have soap and water readily available, rather than using hand sanitiser
- Supervise handwashing where you work with children who need support to enable them to do this properly.

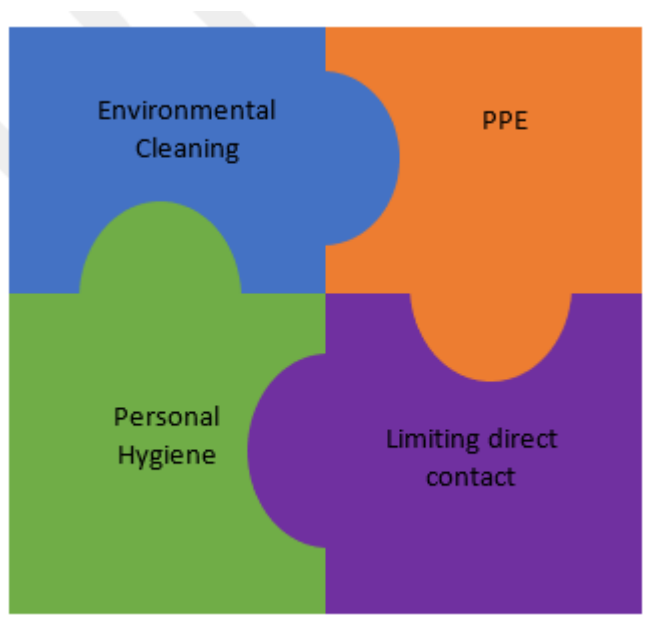
How COVID-19 spreads and what we can do to reduce the risk of spreading it

The transmission of COVID-19 is thought to mainly be through respiratory droplets generated by coughing and sneezing, and through contact with surfaces that have been contaminated with droplets either directly from a cough or sneeze or indirectly, from someone who has the virus on their hands touching it e.g. from coughing into your hands. Initial research has also identified the presence of COVID-19 virus in other bodily fluids of confirmed cases. All bodily fluids (except sweat), including diarrhoeal stools from people with known or possible COVID-19, should be regarded as potentially infectious.

In summary, there are two routes by which COVID-19 can be transmitted:

- infection can be spread to people through close contact with infected individuals and respiratory droplets generated during coughing and sneezing.
- direct contact with infected tissues, body fluids or indirect contact with contaminated surfaces such as door handles and then touching their own mouth, nose, or eyes.

Current evidence suggests that most people will not be infectious until the onset of symptoms. Whilst there have been case reports of infectivity prior to the onset of symptoms, further study is required to determine the importance of these in terms of transmission risk. An infectious case is therefore defined as anyone with symptoms and they remain an infectious case for a period of 7 days from the onset of symptoms. How infectious individuals are, depends on the severity of their symptoms and stage of their illness. Evidence suggests that the risk of transmission increases the more often and the longer someone has close contact with a symptomatic person (more than 15 minutes at one time when within 2m).



Therefore, to limit the spread of the virus we need to minimise the available transmission routes. This requires a combination of approaches as shown in the diagram above. The starting place is to limit direct contact with other people as much as possible. For educational settings it is recognised that this is more difficult to do. Therefore, a different approach to the risk is needed. Educational settings are required to cohort staff and pupils to reduce the number of people transmission can occur between; alongside implementing social distancing (keeping 2m distance) as much as is possible both within and between cohorted groups. Excellent universal hygiene measures must also be maintained but this is particularly important where interaction with other people cannot be avoided. This means, ensuring high standards of environmental cleaning, paying particular attention to regular contact points as well as maintaining excellent personal hygiene (both staff and children). Undertaking these measures will lower the risk of transmission and are particularly important to help maintain a low transmission rate as settings continue to open up to more children. The use of PPE is the last element of infection control. PPE must be used at the right time and in the right way to be effective.

The following personal universal hygiene measures that all staff and children should follow are part of the way in which we can all reduce the risk of transmission of COVID-19:

- Thoroughly wash hands with soap and water often following the [NHS guidance](#). Use alcohol-based hand sanitiser gel only if soap and water isn't available.
- Encourage children to also wash their hands regularly, supervise where increased supportive measures are needed
- Avoid touching the eyes, nose or mouth as much as possible at all times, but particularly if you haven't recently washed your hands.
- [Catch it, Bin it, Kill it](#) - Covering the mouth and nose with a tissue or sleeve when sneezing and put used tissues in the bin straight away (or put them in your pocket until you can dispose of them). Always wash your hands afterwards
- Minimise touching hand contact surfaces with your hands as far as is reasonable and safe to do so.
- **Do not come to school if you have any symptoms of COVID-19 no matter how mild.**
- **Go home quickly if you develop symptoms of COVID-19 while you are at work, no matter how mild**

The School will be ensuring the site is cleaned and disinfected regularly and thoroughly as a means of minimising surface transmission.

Your health when you are at work

The work you are doing is critical to supporting the Government Strategy for COVID-19. It is understandable that some members of staff will be concerned about their work. The governments requirement for everyone to stay at home as much as possible rules except for specific and outlined reasons (including the provision of education) are designed to protect the safety of both you and the children.

Understanding the symptoms

Ensure that you are aware of the following symptoms and act on them as soon as you are aware that you or a child have them:

- A high temperature (If you feel hot to touch on your chest.)
- A new continuous cough (this means a cough that you've not had before, or if you usually have a cough, it's got worse. Continuous: means coughing a lot for more than an hour, or 3 or more coughing episodes in 24 hours)
- A loss of, or change in, your normal sense of taste or smell (anosmia)

If you are **not in** any of the increased risk and extremely vulnerable groups, you can continue to work by following the safe working arrangements that are detailed in the relevant guidance that applies to your work:

Your health, your work and your household

As a keyworker your role is vital to the COVID-19 response. It is understandable that some employees will be concerned about coming to work in school.

Members of staff who are not in any of the increased risk and extremely vulnerable groups (as outlined below) can continue to work by following the safe working arrangements that are detailed in guidance.

Extremely vulnerable people who are shielding

If your health makes you [extremely clinically vulnerable](#), you will have already been advised not to leave home for 12 weeks and will have received a letter from the NHS about the risk. The school will require evidence of this.

If you live in a household with someone who is in the extremely vulnerable health group and are concerned that attending work will increase the risk to you and thereby to your household, you should discuss this with the headteacher.

If you have an underlying health condition which puts you in the clinically vulnerable group (not extremely clinically vulnerable and requiring shielding)

Members of staff should advise the headteacher if they have an underlying health condition, in order to establish safe working arrangements. These are:

- aged 70 or older (regardless of medical conditions)
- under 70 with an underlying health condition listed below (i.e. anyone instructed to get a flu jab as an adult each year on medical grounds):
 - chronic (long-term) respiratory diseases, such as [asthma](#), [chronic obstructive pulmonary disease \(COPD\)](#), emphysema or [bronchitis](#)
 - chronic heart disease, such as [heart failure](#)
 - [chronic kidney disease](#)
 - chronic liver disease, such as [hepatitis](#)

- chronic neurological conditions, such as [Parkinson's disease](#), [motor neurone disease](#), [multiple sclerosis \(MS\)](#), a learning disability or cerebral palsy
- [diabetes](#)
- problems with your spleen – for example, [sickle cell](#) disease or if you have had your spleen removed
- a weakened immune system as the result of conditions such as [HIV and AIDS](#), or medicines such as [steroid tablets](#) or [chemotherapy](#)
- being seriously overweight (a body mass index (BMI) of 40 or above)
- those who are pregnant

If you have are [clinically vulnerable \(also referred to as an underlying health condition\)](#) described above, which is not in the extremely vulnerable risk group; in many cases, if your condition is mild and well managed you will be at no greater risk than people without health conditions. If you are concerned, please speak to the headteacher so that you can make an assessment together, based on your personal circumstances and the work that you do. This will enable you to consider if there are supportive and distancing measures that may be implemented so you can continue to work. Examples include modifying duties such as:

- Working from home where this is possible
- Not meeting with parents or anyone in the school setting who is not part of their cohorted group
- Identifying where children cannot follow hand and respiratory hygiene measures fully and allocating the member of staff to a group who are fully able to follow these requirements.
- Identifying any specific activities and times where close contact may be more predictable, in order to allocate to the member of staff to other duties which are not supervisory.

PPE should only be considered where the school is not able to employ other infection control measures adequately such as modifying duties and ensuring good hygiene.

Pregnancy risk assessment

[New and expectant mothers compliance code P640](#) and [risk assessment guidance](#) which now details COVID-19 information

If you live in a household with someone who has an underlying health condition and are concerned that work will increase the risk to you and thereby to your household, you should discuss this with the headteacher. Strict adherence to the guidance provided for you work activities will help to minimise the risk. If you are concerned, please speak to the headteacher so that you can make an assessment together, based on your personal circumstances and the work that you do.

Reasonable adjustments

If you already have reasonable adjustments in place and as a result of the current situation this needs reviewing, or where you haven't previously needed any specific adjustments but this is now required please talk to the headteacher.

If you come into contact with a symptomatic person

In the event that you come into contact with a symptomatic person **inadvertently** at work, please notify the headteacher and monitor your health for signs of infection (a new persistent cough, a high temperature or a change in your ability to taste or smell). **While you are symptom free, you can continue to work as normal.**

Further concerns

If you are concerned about coming to work for other reasons, the headteacher will establish the circumstances and address this with you individually.

Personal Protective Equipment and Face Coverings

When should I be provided with a face mask?

Based on current evidence, there is very little scientific evidence of widespread benefit from wearing protective equipment including masks and in the main, Public Health England only recommend the use of such equipment in health and social care settings where staff are in prolonged close contact with individuals who are symptomatic or those particularly vulnerable to infection. Therefore, in most school settings the use of masks is not appropriate. Instead, practising good hand hygiene and social distancing is key to minimising the risk of infection as outlined above. **The only staff who are required to wear PPE are:**

- **Those providing care and supervision to pupils who fall ill whilst at school and are awaiting collection and**
- **Those providing first aid and cannot do this whilst maintaining physical distance**

It is recommended that first aiders are assigned the duty of supervising children that fall ill whilst at school as they will be ready and prepared to wear PPE.

What about the risk to staff working hands-on with children who cannot adhere to strict hygiene practices?

It is recognised that some children with special educational needs present behaviours that are challenging to manage in the current context, such as spitting uncontrollably.

It will be impossible to provide the care that some children need without close hands-on contact.

In these circumstances, staff need to increase their level of self-protection, such as having more frequent hand-washing and other hygiene measures, and regular cleaning of surfaces.

Public Health England do not recommend PPE in these circumstances.

However, we recognise that this may cause anxiety for some members of staff and therefore, if both the school and the member of staff agree this would be helpful PPE can be worn in these circumstances.

Safe working arrangements address the risks in relation to viral transmission (both associated with close contact and through touching surfaces). It is important to remember that the use of PPE is only effective when combined with stringently following the universal hygiene precautions as well and should only be worn in the circumstances identified in the PPE guidance for Educational Settings.

Face coverings

The government have recently issued advice about when it may be appropriate to wear face coverings as more people start to move around outside their home environment.

Face coverings can help contain any droplets you produce and therefore reduce the possibility of you transmitting COVID-19 to other people. A face covering is not PPE. The evidence suggests that wearing a face covering does not protect you, and the evidence of the benefit of using a face covering to protect others is also weak with the effect likely to be small.

Wearing a face covering is not recommended in Educational Settings. The most effective ways of limiting the spread of the virus are to limit contact with others, environmental cleaning and personal hygiene. Wearing a face covering is not required by law.

Any homemade non-disposable face coverings that staff and children are wearing when they arrive at their setting must be removed by the wearer and placed into a plastic bag that the wearer has brought with them in order to take it home. The wearer must then wash their hands. If you choose to wear one, it is important to use face coverings properly and hygienically:

- wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water for 20 seconds or use hand sanitiser before putting a face covering on, and after removing it
- when wearing a face covering, avoid touching your face or face covering, as you could contaminate them with germs from your hands
- when you take your face covering off, fold it in on itself and store safely in a bag between wears or before washing the covering
- change your face covering if it becomes damp or if you've touched it
- continue to wash your hands thoroughly and regularly
- change and wash your face covering daily
- if the material is washable, wash in line with manufacturer's instructions. If it's not washable, dispose of it carefully in your usual waste
- always practise social distancing wherever possible even when wearing a face covering

You can make face-coverings at home and can find [guidance on how to do this and use them safely on GOV.UK](#).

COVID-19 Test and Trace (including isolation)

The following [staff](#) have been prioritised for testing:

- support and teaching staff
- social workers
- specialist education professionals

All of the above staff (and children) are encouraged to be tested if they develop symptoms and the school will be able to complete your referral. Being tested means it can be established whether you (and members of their household) have the virus, and it will help to return to work if the tests are negative. This testing is particularly helpful if someone in a household has just developed a COVID-19 symptom, such as a new persistent cough, high temperature or a loss or change in their sense of smell.

Please note:

- The symptomatic person will isolate for 7 days and their household will follow the requirements to isolate for 14 days.
- If a member of staff or child tests positive, the rest of their class group will isolate for 14 days, the household members of that group do not need to self-isolate unless the person develops symptoms.
- Test results will need to be shared with the school in order for any required plans to be put in place

[COVID-19 testing privacy information](#) can be found here.

Health protection teams will conduct a rapid investigation as part of the national test and trace programme if more than one person at the setting has a positive test and advise on situations where staff may be asked to self-isolate in addition to the situation described above.

Supporting your general health and well-being

The COVID-19 pandemic has brought about significant and ongoing changes to people's personal and working lives. In addition to management support, you can also obtain support through:

- The [NHS - Mental wellbeing audio guides](#) (covering low mood, sadness and depression; anxiety control training; overcoming sleep problems; low confidence and assertiveness; unhelpful thinking) and [NHS - Breathing exercise for stress](#)
- Use Employee Assistance Programmes that are provided by the school such as – [Norfolk Support Line](#)
- The musculoskeletal rehabilitation service, for support and guidance relating to your musculoskeletal health. Click on [my IPRS Health](#).
- NCC's [Well-Being Service](#)

Further information

- Assessments have been carried out to support the needs of pupils with an Education Health and Care Plan which includes pupils who are classed as an extremely vulnerable person and for those who are at an increased risk.
- Ensure that you only access information from reputable sources such as the NHS or Public Health England.
- Please talk to the headteacher if you have any concerns and we will keep you updated with information if anything changes.