

# Hartlepool Aspire Trust

(Catcote Academy & Catcote Futures)

## COVID-19 (Coronavirus) Policy

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<b>Issue</b>	<b>AMENDMENT</b>	<b>IMPACT LEVEL</b>	<b>DATE</b>
1	First Issue	High	13.03.2020
2	Amendments made in light of new Government guidelines on 16.03.20	High	16.03.2020
3	Major Revision to address phased return of students to school / college	High	04.06.2020
4	Major revision to address full opening of all sites	High	20.07.20
5	Major revision to address new guidance for the full return of all students in September 20	High	24.08.20



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## 1 Executive Summary

The UK entered a 'lockdown' in response to the COVID-19 epidemic on around 20 March with schools being closed to students except for those of key workers or where a risk assessment showed them to be safer at school rather than home.

The initial peak of the epidemic has now passed, and government guidance issued on the 2<sup>nd</sup> July has been updated to recommend all educational settings open fully from September 2020

[1]. The guidance states that:

- The prevalence of COVID-19 has decreased and the NHS Test and Trace system is up and running and the Government are clear about the measures needed to be in place to create safer environments
- The risk to CYP of becoming severely ill is very low. Education settings are a vital point of contact for public health and safeguarding services that are critical to wellbeing of CYP and families
- In relation to educational settings the Office of National Statistics analysis suggests that staff in schools tend not to be at any greater risk from the disease than many other occupations and there is no evidence that children transmit the disease any more than adult

The PHE endorsed 'system of controls' when implemented in line with revised settings based risk assessments create an inherently safer environment for students and staff where the risk of transmission is substantially reduced

**•Given the improved position the balance of risk is now overwhelmingly in favour of CYP returning to school/college**

The objective of this policy is to manage the risk to students and staff while allowing the safe return of almost all learners, as recommended by the current Government Guidance

The Trust policy in response to the COVID-19 epidemic is summarised below, with details in the rest of this document:

The return of students to school / college will see students returning into class bubbles. The risk assessments will be kept under review based on the rate of covid-19 cases in the community, and any changes to government guidance.

Protective measures will be put in place for staff and students **as far as possible** to ensure the risk of transmission is **reduced** through direct (coughing, sneezing) and indirect (touching surfaces) transmission.

### **Minimise contact:**

- Trust buildings will operate using class bubbles to minimise contact across its settings
- Where possible the maximum number of entrances and exits will be used.
- Students will have access to an identified toilet and hand washing facilities within their zone (school and college has been split into zones/different areas with number of classes ranging from 2-5 classrooms) and where possible their

own outdoor space. For access to larger outdoor spaces there will be staggered times for use.

- Students and staff will eat in their own class with lunches being delivered to their class bubble.
- Students will have access to their own resources. Any shared resources will be cleaned before someone else uses them or left for 48 hours (72 hours for plastics).
- No visitors including parents will be allowed into the building without prior approval from the Head Teacher/Senior Leadership Team. A record of all visitors will be logged for track and trace purposes and kept for a minimum of 21 days.

### **Social distancing:**

- Where possible social distancing measures will be put in place and classrooms will be adjusted to enable this, however we know that for the vast majority of our students this will be very difficult.

### **Cleaning**

- There will be increased cleaning including regular washing down of surfaces including tables, chairs, handles, light switches etc. Cleaning hours will be extended to allow for midday cleaning.

### **Hand and respiratory hygiene**

- All students will be asked to clean hands frequently throughout the day including entry to the school/college, before and after eating and before leaving the school/college.
- Students who find hand washing difficult will be engaged in activities that involve soapy water play.
- Students will be taught to use tissues when coughing and sneezing and to place these in a lidded bin.

### **Clinically Vulnerable Staff**

- Arrangements will be put in place to manage the risk to staff who are in the 'clinically vulnerable' or 'extremely clinically vulnerable' categories. Shielding paused from the August 1<sup>st</sup> and the advice for the extremely clinically vulnerable is now aligned with the advice for the clinically vulnerable.

### **Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)**

Most staff will not need to wear PPE, even if they cannot maintain 2m separation to others at all times.

Staff members will be required to wear PPE in some circumstances to limit the risk to themselves and to lower the risk of spreading infection to other students. These are:

- When carrying out intimate care activities that used PPE previously
- When attending to a symptomatic child
- When carrying out Aerosol Generating procedures (AGPs)
- Where staff choose to especially for those that are in the 'at risk' groups

- When working with students where advice has come from specialist health professionals to wear PPE. An additional care plan will be written and this will be shared with parents/carers before the student is allowed in school/college.
- HCA when administering medication
- Parents/carers who may need to enter the classroom to attend to their child.

Please note other staff entering the class bubbles eg cleaners and IT personnel will do so at a time when the room is not occupied or will maintain a distance of 2 metres.

### **Student Travel**

- Effective liaison with transport has been established as a basis for planning to transport students in consistent groups.
- Students will mix with other students from other classes whilst on the transport however these will be consistent groups and will be with students from the same zone/area of school/college.
- In accordance with advice from public health England the government are now recommending that from September children and young people over the age of 11 should wear a face covering on dedicated school transport. Students who would be exempt would include students who cannot put on, wear or remove the face covering due to physical or mental illness or impairment or disability or if the wearing of one would cause severe stress. Parents have been asked if they feel their child or young person is able to wear one and understands how to handle their face covering properly then they can should wear a reusable or single use face covering. If reusable face coverings are used students are required to bring in a plastic bag to keep their face covering in when in school/college. We have included a link on the school/college website on how to wear a covering (COVID-Guidance).

With the above precautions implemented in school / college, the risk from Covid-19 to staff and students will be managed appropriately to limit the risk while providing the benefit of attendance at school/college to as many students as possible.

## 2 Introduction

The UK entered a 'lockdown' in response to the COVID-19 epidemic on around 20 March with schools being closed to students except for those of key workers or where a risk assessment showed them to be safer a school rather than home.

The initial peak of the epidemic has now passed, and government guidance issued on the 2<sup>nd</sup> July has been updated to recommend all educational settings open fully from September 2020

[1]. The guidance states that:

- The prevalence of COVID-19 has decreased and the NHS Test and Trace system is up and running and the Government are clear about the measures needed to be in place to create safer environments
- The risk to CYP of becoming severely ill is very low. Education settings are a vital point of contact for public health and safeguarding services that are critical to wellbeing of CYP and families
- In relation to educational settings the Office of National Statistics analysis suggests that staff in schools tend not to be at any greater risk from the disease than many other occupations and there is no evidence that children transmit the disease any more than adult

The PHE endorsed 'system of controls' when implemented in line with revised settings based risk assessments create an inherently safer environment for students and staff where the risk of transmission is substantially reduced

**•Given the improved position the balance of risk is now overwhelmingly in favour of CYP returning to school/college**

The objective of this policy is to manage the risk to students and staff while allowing the safe return of almost all learners, as recommended by the current Government Guidance

It should be noted that if the guidance changes to limit contact further to control the spread of covid-19, that will take precedence over the actions in this policy.

## 3 Responsibilities

The following people have responsibilities under this policy.

### 3.1 **CEO**

Assign a member of the senior leadership team to maintain up to date knowledge of the development of the epidemic and the current advice from the Government, Local Authority and NHS (COVID-19 Lead).

### 3.2 **Senior Leadership Team (SLT)**

- Authorise transition between different versions of the wider Risk Assessment outlined in this policy, based on the state of preparedness and risk assessments associated with the students concerned.

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### **3.3 COVID-19 Lead**

- Maintain up to date knowledge of the development of the epidemic and the current advice from the Government by subscribing to the relevant information feeds including advice to care homes (as this is advice to another vulnerable group) and monitoring them on at least a daily basis.
- Bring any changes in the recommended actions in response to the epidemic to the attention of the senior leadership team immediately.
- Communicate the requirements for 'self-isolation' to trust staff.

### **3.4 Trust Staff**

- Follow the government guidance as advised by the COVID-19 lead if they show symptoms that would require self-isolation to report it to their line manager immediately and go home.
- Report any concerns over a student displaying relevant symptoms to the COVID-19 lead or a member of the SLT team immediately.
- Follow the all measures in response to Covid-19 detailed in this policy and wider RA.
- Report concerns of any shortcomings in arrangements or where systems are not functioning as they should be to the SLT.

## **4 Policy**

### **4.1 Policy Objectives**

- The objective of this policy is to manage the risk to students and staff while allowing the safe return of almost all learners, as recommended by the current Government Guidance [1].
- It recognises that some of the students of the Trust are among the more vulnerable members of society and so may need additional precautions.
- It also recognises that for many of the students, the routine and structure of school / college is extremely important for their wellbeing, so aims to maintain normal routine as much as possible.

With precautions specified in this policy implemented in school / college, the risk from Covid-19 to staff and students will be managed appropriately to limit the risk while providing the benefit of attendance at school/college to as many students as possible.

### **4.2 Overall Approach**

This policy sets out the overall approach to support the school/college in a 'full opening' of the Trust. The Senior Leadership Team (SLT) will develop a detailed plan and associated risk assessment that will ensure that its requirements are implemented appropriately.

The wider operational risk assessment will cover:

Minimising risk

- Minimising contact with individuals who are unwell
- Ensuring good hand hygiene
- Ensuring good respiratory hygiene
- Introducing enhanced cleaning
- Minimising contact between individuals and maintaining social distancing where possible
- Where necessary using PPE

Response:

- Engaging with the NHS Test and Trace
- Managing confirmed cases amongst the settings and community
- Contain any outbreak by following health protection team advice

School Operations:

- Transport
- Attendance
- Visits
- Staffing

Curriculum, behaviour and pastoral support

Contingency Plans

## **4.3 Limit Risk**

### **4.3.1 Minimise Contact**

A class bubble approach will be adopted within the Trust, which will help 'minimise contact' between staff and students. Where another member of staff needs to enter the bubble e.g. staff covering PPA this will be kept as consistent as possible and these staff will be reminded to maintain distance where possible. Records will be kept of any close contact for track and trace purposes.

Each bubble will have access to an identified toilet, hand washing facilities and outdoor space and where possible its own entrance and exit.

Each class and office will have their own cleaning caddy in order that staff can frequently clean surfaces throughout the day and also each student will have their own wallet of stationary/resources were appropriate.

### **4.3.2 Social Distancing**

Where possible social distancing measures will be put in place and classrooms will be adjusted to enable this, however we know that for the vast majority of our students this will be very difficult. The class bubble approach described above is therefore a significant contributor to avoiding transmission within the school/college. There has been clear communication with families for any students that remain under specialist health professionals that they should contact their named health professional to discuss the care of their child before they return and alert the trust of

any additional measures above what is in the wider operational RA that may be needed. Additional care plans will be created in response to this information.

### **4.3.3 Cleaning**

Increased cleaning will be implemented, to include regular washing down of surfaces including tables, chairs, handles, light switches etc. This is important given that transmission of the virus can occur from surfaces.

### **4.3.4 Hand and Respiratory Hygiene**

- All students will be encouraged to clean hands frequently throughout the day including entry to the school/college, before and after eating and before leaving the school/college.
- Students who find hand washing difficult will be engaged in activities that involve soapy water play.
- Students will be taught to use tissues when coughing and sneezing and to place these in a lidded bin.
- Hand sanitiser and tissues will be deployed around Trust premises including all classrooms.
- Signs and posters will be used to remind staff and students to use them.

### **4.3.5 Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)**

Most staff will not need to wear PPE, even if they cannot maintain 2m separation to others at all times.

Staff members will be required to wear PPE in some circumstances to limit the risk to themselves and to lower the risk of spreading infection to other students. These are:

- When carrying out intimate care activities that used PPE previously
- When attending to a symptomatic child
- When carrying out Aerosol Generating procedures (AGPs)
- Where staff choose to especially for those that are in the 'at risk' groups
- When working with students where advice has come from specialist health professionals to wear PPE. An additional care plan will be written and this will be shared with parents/carers before the student is allowed in school/college.  
HCA when administering medication
- Parents/carers who may need to enter the classroom to attend to their child.

Please note other staff entering the class bubbles eg cleaners and IT personnel will do so at a time when the room is not occupied or will maintain a distance of 2 metres.

Guidance states:

If non symptomatic children present behaviours that increase the risk of droplet transmission (e.g. biting, licking, spitting or kissing) or require care that cannot be provided without close contact they should receive the care in the same way including any existing routine use of PPE.

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#### **4.3.6 Student Travel**

- In weeks one and two there will be no educational trips outside of school. Following a review of guidance and the trust measures risk assessments will be used to support any external activities eg walks to local outdoor spaces. Any resumption of a programme of educational visits will be supported by the EV coordinator and assurances given that the venues are COVID secure.
- Effective liaison with transport has been established as a basis for planning to transport students in consistent groups.
- Students will mix with other students from other classes whilst on the transport however these will be consistent groups and will be with students from the same zone/area of school/college.
- In accordance with advice from public health England the government are now recommending that from September children and young people over the age of 11 should wear a face covering on dedicated school transport. Students who would be exempt would include students who cannot put on, wear or remove the face covering due to physical or mental illness or impairment or disability or if the wearing of one would cause severe stress. Parents have been asked if they feel their child or young person is able to wear one and understands how to handle their face covering properly then they can should wear a reusable or single use face covering. If reusable face coverings are used students are required to bring in a plastic bag to keep their face covering in when in school/college. We have included a link on the school/college website on how to wear a covering (COVID-Guidance).

#### **4.3.7 Staff Travel**

- Staff should not attend external events such as conferences and training without SLT approval.

#### **4.3.8 Visitors to School / College**

- Visitors will only be allowed if approved by SLT and will be encouraged to visit at the beginning or end of the school/college day. Also please refer to Visitor Risk Assessment. Visitors to school/college can be admitted provided:
  - The visit is essential for the education, health or wellbeing of a student.
  - The visit is to carry out essential urgent maintenance on trust property – non-urgent maintenance should be carried out when students are not present in school / college.
  - The visitor is not showing any symptoms that would require ‘self-isolation’ under the current government guidance.
  - The visitor follows the hand washing / sanitisation requirements.
  - If a distance of 2 metres cant be maintained face covering will be required.

#### **4.3.9 Parental Choice**

- The Trust recognises that some parents / carers may judge that the risk to a student will be minimised if they do not attend school / college. This is most likely to be the case for those students at highest risk from COVID-19. Staff will work in close partnerships with families, social and health professionals to support the return of students.
- Where this is the case the Trust will authorise the absence and support home learning.

#### **4.4 Illness of Member of Staff or Student**

##### **4.4.1 Sending Home Staff or Students who become ill**

- If a member of staff or student becomes ill, the symptoms will be assessed against the current Government advice [7].
- If the symptoms are consistent with a requirement to 'self-isolate' the member of staff or student will be sent home and they will be referred for a test.
- It is recognised that the judgement about whether the symptoms are consistent with the need to self-isolate may be difficult for mild symptoms. Where it is uncertain, the Trust will err on the side of caution and assume that self-isolation is appropriate, unless medical advice is obtained that this is not required.
- The Trust recognises that this is likely to result in a significant increase in staff and student absence from school / college, but this is appropriate to limit the risk to all members of school / college and their families.
- If the test comes back positive the child/member of staff will isolate for 10 days and all students and staff that have been in the bubble or close contact will self-isolate for 14 days in line with Government guidance for the 'Test and Trace' programme.

##### **4.4.2 Sick Pay**

- Sick pay will be paid to staff who are self-isolating in line with the Government advice and this policy.

##### **4.4.3 Staff with Pre-Existing Medical Conditions**

- From the 1<sup>st</sup> August advice to shield ceased and advice for extremely clinically vulnerable was aligned with that advice for the clinically vulnerable. Both groups can now return to work
- RA (please also refer to Appendix C – Vulnerable Person Risk Assessment) will continue to be used with this group of staff.

#### **4.5 School / College Closure**

- The CEO (or nominated Deputy or Assistant Head) has the discretion to close one or more of the Trust sites if in her judgement:
  - The overall staffing absence level is so high that the safety of students cannot be guaranteed.

- The rate of staff or student absence is such that the virus appears to be being transmitted in the school, despite the additional precautions specified in this policy.

#### **4.5.1 Staffing Levels**

- The safety of our students while in school / college is our overriding priority.
- The varying needs of our students means that it is not possible to specify a simple number of staff that are needed to ensure the safety of our students.
- The ability of us to ensure the safety of all our students will be assessed on a 'per class' basis daily, considering the following:
  - Numbers of students expected to attend that day.
  - The numbers of the normal teaching and support staff for that class who are expected to be at work.
  - The potential to re-deploy suitably qualified and experienced staff from other classes to support those classes with a shortage of staff.
  - The ability to keep student's safe and provide school meals etc.
- If in the judgement of the CEO (or nominated deputy or Assistant Head), there are insufficient staff to ensure the safety of all students, one or more classes will be closed for a period and the students sent home.
  - The choice of which class(es) to close will be based on the relative staffing shortfall and the risk to COVID-19 of the affected students.
  - Classes with students at highest risk from COVID-19 will be closed preferentially.

#### **4.5.2 Administrative Staff**

- It is necessary to maintain many of the administrative, health and safety, maintenance and IT functions of the Trust, even if the school / college is closed completely (for example finance / payroll / health and safety to ensure that staff and suppliers continue to be paid)
- If there is significant staff absence in the administrative functions, precautions to reduce the risk of not meeting the essential requirements will be implemented such as:
  - Separating key personnel into different offices
  - Some staff working from home.

### **5 Review Period**

This policy shall be reviewed every month and revised if necessary. The document will be approved by the CEO.

### **6 Definitions / Abbreviations**

<b>Term</b>	<b>Meaning</b>

## 7 Records

The following records are produced as a result of implementation of this Policy:

Description	Form Number	Retention Period	Storage Location

## 8 References/Guidance

[Full opening of special schools and other specialist settings from the start of the autumn term](#)

[Guidance for full opening: schools](#)

[Actions for early years and childcare providers during the COVID-19 outbreak](#)

[What further education colleges and providers will need to do from the start of the 2020 autumn term](#)

[Guidance for further education and skills providers](#)

[What parents and carers need to know about early years providers, schools and colleges in the autumn term](#)