



Coronavirus (COVID-19) Policy

Author:	Executive Principal and Senior Leadership Team
Date adopted by Governors/Academy:	May 2020
Date of last review/amendment:	January 2021
Date of next review:	Ongoing to remain in line with Government guidance

‘Love your neighbour as yourself.’ There is no commandment greater than this. *Mark 12: Verse 31*

This policy has been written to cover the operational procedures necessary for this Academy to protect its pupils, visitors and staff from the risks presented by Coronavirus (COVID-19) infection. Today, children and young people are global citizens, powerful agents of change and the next generation of caregivers, scientists, and doctors. Any crisis presents the opportunity to help them learn, cultivate compassion and increase resilience while building a safer and more caring community. Having information and facts about COVID-19 will help diminish pupils’ fears and anxieties around the disease and support their ability to cope with any secondary impacts in their lives.

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Information about COVID-19

The World Health Organisation defines coronaviruses as a family of viruses that cause infectious illness ranging from very mild to very severe diseases such as Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS-CoV) and Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS-CoV). COVID-19 is a new strain which originated in China at the end of 2019. It has since spread to other countries initiating a global public health emergency. ‘CO’ stands for corona, ‘VI’ for virus, and ‘D’ for disease. Formerly, this disease was referred to as ‘2019 novel coronavirus’ or ‘2019-nCoV.’ In December 2020, the government announced that a new variant of the virus had been discovered. This new variant transmits more easily, but there is currently no evidence that the variant is more likely to cause severe disease or mortality.

The World Health Organisation (WHO) is working hard with countries worldwide to control the outbreak and has labelled it a pandemic. The outbreak of coronavirus disease (COVID-19) has been declared a Public Health Emergency of International Concern (PHEIC) and the virus has now spread to many countries and territories. This means that the disease has become established in countries around the world, including the UK, and is spreading from person-to-person.

How is Coronavirus Spread?

People can catch COVID-19 from others who have the virus.

It is understood that the virus is highly infectious and moves from person to person in droplets from the nose or mouth which are spread when a person with COVID-19 coughs or exhales. In addition, the virus can survive for up to 72 hours out of the body on surfaces.

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People can catch COVID-19 if they breathe in the droplets or touch infected surfaces and then touch their eyes, nose or mouth.

People who are without symptoms are able to carry the virus and can be infectious to others.

What Are the Symptoms?

The most common symptoms are high temperature, new/continuous cough, loss or change to your sense of taste or smell. Symptoms begin gradually and are usually mild.

Most people recover from the disease without needing special treatment. A small percentage can become seriously ill and develop difficulty breathing. This is particularly dangerous for people with weakened immune systems, for older people, and for those with long-term conditions such as diabetes, cancer and chronic lung disease.

What is the treatment for COVID-19?

There is now a vaccine available for COVID-19 and the government has put a plan in place to administer the vaccine. However, many of the symptoms can be treated and getting early care from a healthcare provider can make the disease less dangerous.

What the Academy Will Put in Place

The Academy will keep up to date with the latest public health and government information about the risk of coronavirus in the UK. The Senior Leadership Team and Executive Principal will maintain close links with local health protection teams and will be responsible for circulating essential information to staff, pupils and parents. The Academy will do its best to ensure that parents are kept informed about its measures to keep pupils and staff safe.

In response to the pandemic and in an effort to help suppress the transmission of the virus, the government has put guidance in place which is regularly updated.

This Academy complies fully with all guidance issued by the government. Where the government issues a closure order for schools, we liaise with parents to ensure that our pupils who fall into the vulnerable/key worker categories are provided with a safe and secure learning environment in line with the latest guidance.

Training, Policies and Communications

Relevant changes have been made to usual safety procedures and risk assessments and communicated to all staff e.g. evacuation procedures, named people within policies. One single coronavirus policy has been collated and authorised by the governing body.

There is coronavirus training on Smartlog and the Site Manager will send out coronavirus training links to all staff as and when training needs to be updated. The risk assessment for being on site at the Academy has been checked by the Governing Body. Plans and protocols have been discussed with staff and any training needs identified. There will be absolute clarity of protocols for staff supervising students.

Parents/carers are aware of the best way to communicate with the Academy. Texts and/or emails will be sent to parents/carers when needed. This policy will be placed on the website.

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Pupils and staff who are clinically extremely vulnerable must follow the current guidance from the government and where a member of staff is required to shield, the Academy will make provision for them to work from home.

During school closures, the Executive Principal will put strategies in place to ensure the well-being and safety of staff and students. These strategies will give parity to the expectations of all staff as well as parity for parents/carers requesting vulnerable/key worker places on site.

The Academy will adhere to the following guidance:

[Actions for schools during the coronavirus outbreak - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/actions-for-schools-during-the-coronavirus-outbreak)

[What parents and carers need to know about early years providers, schools and colleges - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/what-parents-and-carers-need-to-know-about-early-years-providers-schools-and-colleges)

Staying Home and Social Distancing

You must stay at home. You should follow this guidance - it is the law.

Leaving home

You must not leave, or be outside of your home except where necessary. You may leave the home to:

- shop for basic necessities, for you or a vulnerable person
- go to work, or provide voluntary or charitable services, if you cannot reasonably do so from home
- exercise with your household (or support bubble) or one other person, this should be limited to once per day, and you should not travel outside your local area.
- meet your support bubble or childcare bubble where necessary, but only if you are legally permitted to form one
- seek medical assistance or avoid injury, illness or risk of harm (including domestic abuse)
- attend education or childcare - for those eligible

If you do leave home for a permitted reason, you should always stay local - unless it is necessary to go further, for example to go to work. Stay local means stay in the village, town, or part of the city where you live.

If you are clinically extremely vulnerable you should only go out for medical appointments, exercise or if it is essential. You should not attend work

Meeting others

You cannot leave your home to meet socially with anyone you do not live with or are not in a support bubble with (if you are legally permitted to form one).

You may exercise on your own, with one other person, or with your household or support bubble. This should be limited to once per day, and you should not travel outside your local area.

You cannot meet other people you do not live with, or have not formed a support bubble with, unless for a permitted reason.

Stay 2 metres apart from anyone not in your household.

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Academy staff should be aware of their responsibilities as role models to support these rules wherever possible in any dealings they have with pupils and parents, such as online when supporting home learning.

Key workers are still free to travel to and from work. This includes healthcare and social care workers, ambulance and fire personnel, the police and those involved in food production and distribution. It also includes Academy staff involved in keeping essential schooling running for the limited number of pupils who require it.

People staying home should not have visitors inside their home, not even from friends or family. While out they must observe “social distancing” rules. This involves keeping a safe distance of at least 2 metres (about 3 steps) from others. Public venues such as pubs, theatres, restaurants, cafes and non-essential shops have been closed. Some public spaces such as playgrounds and leisure facilities remain closed.

Suspected Cases of Infection

Whether the Academy is open fully or partially closed and running in a reduced capacity, staff and pupils should be instructed to stay at home if they are unwell. This is essential to avoid spreading infection to others. Parents will be clearly informed that this is the Academy policy.

Any suspected cases of COVID-19 infection which occur in the Academy should be managed according to Department for Education guidance.

Staff or pupils who become unwell while on the Academy site with a new continuous cough, a high temperature or a loss or change in their sense of taste or smell should be sent home. An unwell pupil should be isolated in the Bungalow while waiting to be picked up. They should be advised not to visit the GP, pharmacy, urgent care centre or a hospital.

If clinical advice is required, they (or their teacher, parent or carer) should go online to NHS 111 (or call 111 if they do not have internet access). In an emergency, 999 should be called if they are seriously ill or injured or their life is at risk.

If there is a confirmed case of COVID-19 within the Academy, either student or staff, we will follow the advice provided by Public Health England in respect of which students and/or staff should be sent home to self-isolate. In the case of students being sent home a procedure has been put in place that ensures

- parents/carers are notified immediately if their child is to be sent home
- parental permission is received before a child is allowed to leave the Academy site
- students are sent home with creative curriculum booklets
- parents/carers are fully aware of the guidance for self-isolation and the date their child is expected to return to the Academy

Parents will not be permitted to enter the Academy setting or to send their child into the setting, if they or a member of their household is displaying Coronavirus symptoms.

Infection Control and Prevention Procedures

This Academy believes that general adherence to high standards of infection prevention and control is the best way to prevent the person-to-person spread of pathogens such as coronavirus and maximise the safety of staff, pupils and visitors using the Academy.

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To achieve this, the Academy's infection control/hygiene policies and procedures will be implemented in full, whether the Academy is fully open or operating in a partially open capacity. Staff should be especially compliant with those policies related to effective hand hygiene, sanitisation and environmental cleaning.

During normal school opening

Entry and exit arrangements have been communicated/marked out and will be supervised when pupils arrive. Year groups bubbles have been created and they have an allocated area of the Academy with specific entry/exit doors and routes around the building. Every student's temperature is taken each morning before they are allowed to enter the Academy building. Any students whose temperature is above 38 degrees will be sent to the Bungalow to await further assessment. The student will either be sent home or allowed to enter the building depending on the outcome of this further assessment.

The canteen has been divided so that year group bubbles do not sit together. Students wishing to purchase food enter the Academy on a year group rota basis to maintain social distancing.

During periods of partial school closure when only vulnerable/key worker students are in attendance

The Academy will look at the number of students in attendance and create new bubbles that ensure students are able to maintain a 2m distance; this may be one bubble or multiples bubbles and bubbles may contain students from more than one year group. Entry/exit routes, allocated rooms and staffing will be determined by the number and size of bubbles created to accommodate students.

Every student's temperature will be taken each morning before they are allowed to enter the Academy building. Any students whose temperature is above 38 degrees will be sent to the Bungalow to await further assessment. The student will either be sent home or allowed to enter the building depending on the outcome of this further assessment.

During both normal opening and partial closure

Public health messages state that people should:

- cover their mouth and nose with a tissue or their sleeve (not their hands) when they cough or sneeze
- put used tissues in the bin immediately
- wash their hands with soap and water regularly for 20 seconds and use hand sanitiser gel (at least 60% alcohol) if soap and water are not available
- try to avoid close contact with people who are unwell
- avoid touching their eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands
- clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces

Staff should comply fully with hand sanitisation policies and procedures. The Academy Services Manager and Site Manager will ensure that policies are supported by the provision of appropriate resources such as hand sanitiser gels, cleaning products and masks. Upon entering or exiting a classroom, pupils and staff should use hand-sanitiser.

Pupils will be educated in cleaning hands, 'catch-it, bin-it', and safe distancing.

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Teaching staff should take all reasonable measures to ensure that pupils comply. Staff will encourage frequent and thorough washing (at least 20 seconds). Pupils of secondary age should fully understand the rules on hygiene and social distancing but if they refuse to follow them, the Academy's Behaviour and Attitudes Policy will be followed.

Environmental cleaning will be increased while the pandemic continues and risk of transmission persists. The Academy will prepare and maintain handwashing stations with soap and water and alcohol-based hand rub (hand sanitizer) has been placed at the entrance to each classroom and other key points.

Staff working in the Academy should comply fully with government recommendations for social distancing. They will implement social distancing practices that may include:

- Staggering the beginning and end of the Academy day for some or all year groups
- Cancelling or making alternative arrangements for assemblies, sports games and other events that create crowded conditions
- Create space for children's desks to be at least one metre apart

This involves keeping at least 2 meters apart wherever possible and reducing the need for face-to-face contact wherever possible, e.g. meetings.

Masks

Students must wear a mask at all times, apart from when sat at their desk in a classroom or when eating/drinking.

Staff must wear a mask at all times when moving around the building, when in areas where students/staff are present, when in meetings. The only exception to this is when teachers are at the front of a classroom delivering a lesson but if they need to move into the body of the classroom to support students, a mask must then be worn. Staff may wear a face shield but if supporting or interacting with students, a face mask must also be worn.

The Academy will provide disposable masks if needed, but staff and students are encouraged to provide their own which can be either disposable or reusable. In the case of reusable masks, guidance with regards to washing must be adhered to.

Lateral Flow Testing

The Academy will follow the requirements and guidance provided by the government in regard to administering mass lateral flow testing to students and staff.

Remote Learning

The Academy is fortunate that all students and staff have iPads and are used to iPad learning. Whilst working at home staff will use an array of online/e-learning strategies. These will include:

- Assigning reading and exercises for home study
- Radio, podcast or television broadcasts of academic content
- Assigning teachers and student support workers to conduct remote daily or weekly follow up with students

Addressing Mental Health and Wellbeing

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Staff will

- Encourage children to discuss their questions and concerns.
- Explain it is normal that they may experience different reactions and encourage them to talk to teachers if they have any questions or concerns.
- Provide information in an honest, age-appropriate manner.
- Guide pupils on how to support their peers and prevent exclusion and bullying.
- Ensure teachers are aware of local resources for their own well-being and ensure the Academy counsellor and Chaplain advertise time slots for supporting colleagues and pupils
- Work with Academy health workers/social workers to identify and support pupils and staff who exhibit signs of distress.

Travel Advice

Developments in the coronavirus pandemic remain uncertain around the world. No travel is risk-free, and many countries have closed their borders to UK travellers due to the new variant of the virus.

If you are in England, you should not travel abroad. You can only travel internationally if you have a legally permitted reason to leave home.

You should check the guidance for your personal circumstances before deciding whether you can travel internationally.

[Travel advice: coronavirus \(COVID-19\) - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/travel-advice/coronavirus)

Business Continuity Procedures and Pandemic Recovery Planning

In addition to the Academy general business continuity and recovery planning policies, the Academy recognises the need to have a separate pandemic contingency plan and procedure. This is because a general business continuity plan focuses on a short-term recovery programme. In contrast, the effects of the coronavirus pandemic are likely to last many months.

The following procedure sets out key contingency measures to be introduced in this Academy:

- the situation will be kept under review by the Senior Leadership Team who will work alongside governors to ensure the safety of staff and pupils as their primary concern
- a coronavirus communications strategy will be developed to ensure that staff, pupils and parents are provided with up-to-date and accurate information on the status of the pandemic and on the Academy response
- information will be provided to staff via e-mail, and employees will be briefed on the symptoms of the virus and who to contact should they believe that they or a pupil may have the virus – unnecessary meetings will be cancelled and greater use made of digital/virtual communication in order to reduce people contacts
- During partial closure a rota will be put in place that minimises the amount of time that staff are required to be on-site. All staff will be required to support on-site for a proportion of the week to ensure parity across all staff.

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- staff who are required to self-isolate themselves at home if they or a member of their family has the virus will be fully supported by the Academy – they should inform the Academy at the earliest opportunity of their status
- During periods of partial school closure, Academy staffing will be reviewed on a daily basis and contingency plans put in place to ensure that the Academy remains partially open wherever possible. Academy teaching staff will explore all means of using virtual/digital communication systems to support pupils who are at home.
- the leadership team will develop flexible attendance and sick leave policies that encourage pupils and staff to stay home when sick or when caring for sick family members.
- Leaders will discourage the use of perfect attendance awards and incentives and plan for possible academic calendar changes, particularly in relation to breaks and exams.
- if it becomes impossible for the Academy to maintain even a reduced service due to staffing constraints the Academy will work with the local authority to make alternative arrangements – in such an event the Academy will inform parents at the earliest opportunity
- The Senior Leadership Team and line managers will be responsible for ensuring that staff understand the Academy's pandemic plans. Staff should familiarise themselves with the plans and should speak to their line manager if they have any questions or concerns.
- The Academy will cancel any community events/meetings or lettings that usually take place on Academy premises, based on risk.

Monitoring and Review

This policy will be continuously monitored and updated by the governors and Executive Principal to take account of any changes to the official advice provided about coronavirus.