

Outbreak Management Plan

Thomas More Catholic School

This plan sets out how we would operate if we were advised to reintroduce any additional measures to help break chains of transmission. Measures affecting education may be necessary in some circumstances, for example:

- to help manage a COVID-19 outbreak within a setting
- if there is extremely high prevalence of COVID-19 in the community and other measures have failed to reduce transmission
- as part of a package of measures responding to a Variant of Concern (VoC)

This **Outbreak Management Plan** outlines how the School would operate if any of the additional measures were recommended for our setting or area. This plan includes how our school will ensure every child receives the quantity and quality of education and care to which they are normally entitled.

Principles

Prioritising education

- The overarching objective is to maximise the number of children in face-to face education and minimise any disruption, in a way that best manages the COVID-19 risk.
- The impacts of having missed face-to-face education during the pandemic are severe for children. In all cases, any benefits in managing transmission should be weighed against any educational drawbacks.
- The school will endeavour to keep any additional measures applied to the minimum number of groups possible, and for the shortest amount of time possible.
- We will keep all measures under regular review and lift them as soon as the evidence supports doing so.
- Attendance restrictions should only ever be considered as a last resort.

Roles and responsibilities

Local authorities, DsPH and HPTs are responsible for managing localised outbreaks. Local authorities, DsPH and HPTs can work with their regional partnership teams (RPTs) to escalate issues from the local level into the central Local Action Committee command structure. RPTs support local areas in managing outbreaks and provide advice and insights from across the country to the Chief Medical Officer and the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care to inform decision making. Through the Local Action Committee command structure, ministers consider and take decisions on measures on an area-by-area basis in light of all available evidence, public health advice and the local and national context. In rare circumstances, it may be necessary to escalate issues to ministers through other central government committees (for example incident management teams), but this should be by exception only.

When and how to seek public health advice

We will consider taking extra action if the number of positive cases within school substantially increases. This is because it could indicate transmission is happening in the school. We will apply the thresholds, detailed below in deciding to seek Public Health advice (whichever 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;**

or

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

All settings should seek public health advice if a pupil, student, child or staff member is admitted to hospital with COVID-19. They can do this by phoning the DfE helpline (0800 046 8687, option 1), or in line with other local arrangements. Hospitalisation could indicate increased severity of illness or a new variant of concern.

Details on the types of control measures

When the above thresholds are reached, the school will review areas such as the *testing, hygiene and ventilation measures* already in place.

The school will also consider **actions to put in place quickly**:

- whether any activities could take place outdoors, including exercise, assemblies, or classes
- ways to improve ventilation indoors, where this would not significantly impact thermal comfort
- one-off enhanced cleaning focussing on touch points and any shared equipment

We will seek additional public health advice if concerned about transmission in the school, either by phoning the **DfE helpline (0800 046 8687, option 1)** or in line with other local arrangements. A director of public health or an HPT may give settings advice reflecting the local situation. They may advise settings take **extra measures** such as:

- Strengthened communications to encourage pupils to undertake twice weekly rapid asymptomatic home testing and reporting
- Temporarily reinstating face coverings for staff and children. This should be for two weeks in the first instance, pending regular review
- Temporarily reinstating year group 'bubbles' and associated rotas etc

Other measures- the school may consider **limiting or cancelling:**

- residential educational visits
- after-school clubs
- open days
- transition or taster days
- live performances in settings
- parental attendance in settings

- Parents/carers or visitors permitted on school site by invitation only and must have an arranged appointment.

- Visitors will be collected from reception as soon as possible to avoid unnecessary waiting.

- All visitors will be expected to wear a face covering and will be informed of this when a meeting is booked. This can be removed in the venue for the meeting if social distancing is possible.

- Where possible, conversations with parents/carers & staff will be either over the phone or via Microsoft Teams virtual meetings.

Attendance restrictions

In extreme cases, and as a last resort where all other risk mitigations have not broken chains of in-school transmission, a DPH may advise introducing short-term attendance restrictions, such as sending home a class or year group.

High quality face-to-face education remains a priority. We will only consider attendance restrictions as a short-term measure and as a last resort:

- on public health advice in extreme cases where other recommended measures have not broken chains of in-school transmission;

or

- on government advice (as part of area approach) in order to suppress or manage a dangerous variant and to prevent unsustainable pressure on the NHS.

SAFEGUARDING

If attendance restrictions are needed, we will remain vigilant and responsive to all safeguarding threats and especially with the aim of keeping vulnerable children safe, particularly as more children will be learning remotely.

We will continue to apply statutory safeguarding guidance including:

- Keeping children safe in education
- Working together to safeguard children

We will have trained DSL (or deputy) available on site for vulnerable children and children of key workers who attend school

Where vulnerable children are absent, we will:

- follow up with the parent or carer, working with the local authority and social worker (where applicable), to explore the reason for absence and discuss their concerns
- encourage the child or young person to attend educational provision, working with the local authority and social worker (where applicable), particularly where the social worker agrees that the child or young person's attendance would be appropriate
- focus the discussions on the welfare of the child or young person and ensuring that the child or young person is able to access appropriate education and support while they are at home
- have in place procedures to maintain contact, ensure they are able to access remote education support, as required, and regularly check if they are doing so

SCHOOL MEALS

We will provide meal options for all pupils who are in school- free of charge to pupils who meet the benefits-related free school meals eligibility criteria.

During the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak, we will continue supporting children eligible for benefits-related free school meals who are at home during term time.

Further information is available in the guidance on providing school meals during the COVID-19 pandemic.

How we will ensure every child receives the quantity and quality of education and support to which they are normally entitled.

Remote Education

We will continue to provide high-quality remote learning (utilising Microsoft Teams and online resources such as Oak Academy) for all pupils if:

- **they have tested positive for COVID-19 but are well enough to learn from home;**

or

- **attendance at school has been temporarily restricted.**

Wherever possible we will aim to retain on-site provision for vulnerable children and the children of critical workers. If our school has to temporarily stop onsite provision, on public health advice, we will explore alternative arrangements for vulnerable children with the local authority.

How we will communicate changes to children, pupils, students, parents, carers and staff We use email and the school website to communicate with parents and staff