

Tenax Schools Trust – COVID-19 Outbreak Management Plan

Updated October 2021

Introduction

Following the implementation of Step 4 of the roadmap out of the national lockdown, the Department for Education (DfE) has updated the Operational Guidance for schools:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/actions-for-schools-during-the-coronavirus-outbreak/schools-covid-19-operational-guidance>.

The DfE's published COVID Contingency Framework

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1011704/20210817_Contingency_Framework_FINAL.pdf

states that schools should have an “outbreak management plan”, describing what they would do if pupils or staff test positive for COVID-19, or how they would operate if they were advised to reintroduce measures to help break chains of transmission.

The overarching objective is to maximise the number of pupils in face-to-face education and minimise any disruption, in a way that best manages the COVID-19 risk.

The Operational Guidance for Schools (referenced above) sets out the day to day measures in place to manage COVID-19. This Outbreak Management Plan sets out the extra actions to be taken if the number of positive cases substantially increases.

Thresholds for additional actions

Schools will seek public health advice when one of the following thresholds is reached:

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

A group who have “mixed closely” could consist of a friendship group mixing at break or a form group.

Schools will seek public health advice if a pupil or staff member is admitted to hospital with COVID-19. This can be done by phoning the DfE helpline (0800 046 8687, option 1), or in line with other local arrangements. Hospitalisation could indicate severity of illness or a new variant of concern. Schools may be offered public health support in managing risk assessments and communicating with staff and parents.

Actions to consider

When the above thresholds are reached, schools will review and reinforce the testing, hygiene and ventilation measures based on examples in the DfE's COVID Contingency Framework. This will include:

- Review activities that can take place outdoors
- Review ways to improve ventilation
- One-off enhanced cleaning focussing on touch points and shared equipment

Schools 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 advice reflecting the local situation. In areas where rates are high, this may include advice that local circumstances mean that the thresholds for extra action can be higher than set out above. If they judge that additional action should be taken, they might advise the school to take other measures, for example extra testing.

Schools should call the Self-Isolation Service Hub on 020 3743 6715 as soon as they are made aware that any of their staff have tested positive.

If cases amongst staff mean a setting meets the threshold, described above, schools will need to provide the 8-digit NHS Test and Trace Account ID (sometimes referred to as a CTAS number) of the person who tested positive, alongside the names of co-workers identified as close contacts. This will ensure that all workplace contacts are registered with NHS Test and Trace and can receive the necessary public health advice, including the support available to help people to self-isolate. Further guidance is available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/test-and-trace-support-payment-scheme-claiming-financial-support/claiming-financial-support-under-the-test-and-trace-support-payment-scheme>

Actions to be taken if recommended by a director of public health or an HPT

School contingency plans cover the following measures if they are recommended for a particular school or area.

Temporary reintroduction of 'bubbles' - to reduce mixing between groups (taking account of potential detrimental effects this can have on delivery of education)

Testing – increased testing for staff (and pupils if already being offered). This could include more frequent testing or reintroduction of asymptomatic test sites.

- All schools can provide staff with LFD tests.
- All schools ensure they remain well stocked with LFD tests in case there is a requirement to increase home testing

Face coverings – it may be advised that face coverings should temporarily be worn. This may include face coverings in communal areas and/or classrooms for pupils and staff. Children of primary school age should not be advised to wear face coverings. Should face coverings be recommended, schools will amend their RA in line with the cohort of pupils they have.

Shielding – shielding is currently paused. In the event of a major outbreak or VoC that poses a significant risk to patients on the shielded patient list, ministers can agree to reintroduce shielding. Shielding can only be reintroduced by national government.

Should shielding be reintroduced, those on the shielded patient list will be supported to follow guidance. If this is a pupil, then the remote learning plan would be implemented. Shielding staff will be supported to work from home.

Other measures – schools may be advised to limit the following as precautions by Local Authorities, DsPH and HPTs.

- Residential educational visits
- Open days
- Transition or taster days
- Parental attendance in settings
- Live performances in settings

Attendance restrictions

These should only be considered as a short-term measure and as a last resort:

- For individual schools, on public health advice in extreme cases where other recommended measure have not broken chains of in-setting transmission; or
- Across an area, on government advice in order to suppress or manage a dangerous variant or to prevent unsustainable pressure on the NHS

In all circumstances priority will be given to vulnerable children and young people and children of critical workers to attend to their normal timetables.

Where measures include attendance restrictions, DfE may advise on any other groups that should be prioritised.

On-site provision will be retained for vulnerable children and young people and the children of critical workers. Where onsite provision is suspended temporarily on public health advice, alternative arrangements for vulnerable children and young people will be discussed with the local authority.

Schools will review whether it is appropriate for some staff to work remotely and consider guidance for clinically extremely vulnerable people.

Where pupils have EHCPs and cannot attend school a risk assessment will be undertaken to assess if they are safer at home or in school.

Remote Learning

If attendance restrictions are implemented, schools should be prepared to switch to remote education and focus on the continued active delivery of the school curriculum.

Schools will ensure that high-quality remote education is provided to all pupils or students not attending i.e.

- they have tested positive for COVID-19 but are well enough to learn from home; or
- attendance at school has been temporarily restricted

IT Access

- As part of the school remote learning plan, details will be held of who requires a device to be provided. These will be available to be collected from school or, if there is prior warning, they will be distributed prior to class/school closures.
- Part of the wellbeing calls will be to monitor this provision and pupil access to the remote learning so that support can be given as required.

Safeguarding

- It is expected that all schools have a DSL on site, if this is not possible a senior leader will take on the responsibility for coordinating safeguarding. Remote support will be given by the Director of Primary Education.
- Wellbeing calls will be made regularly (in line with individual pupil risk assessments) to ensure that pupils are safe and well at home.

Meals

- Meals will continue to be provided for those on site, those in receipt of free school meals who are not on site will either be provided with vouchers or food for the time the pupil is isolating, or the school is restricting attendance.