IMPORTANT COVID-19 INFORMATION September 2021

At St George's CEP School, we have contingency plans outlining what you would do if children, pupils, students or staff test positive for COVID-19 or how you would operate if you were advised to take extra measures to help break chains of transmission.

Given the detrimental impact that restrictions on education can have on children and young people, any measures in schools should only ever be considered as a last resort, kept to the minimum number of schools or groups possible and for the shortest amount of time possible.

Central government may offer local areas of particular concern an enhanced response package to help limit increases in transmission.

Information on what circumstances might lead you to consider taking additional action, and the steps you should work through, can be found in the contingency framework.

The contingency framework describes the principles of managing local outbreaks of COVID-19 in education and childcare settings. Local authorities, directors of public health (DsPH) and PHE health protection teams (HPTs) can recommend measures described in the contingency framework in individual education and childcare settings – or a small cluster of settings – as part of their outbreak management responsibilities.

Control measures

At St. George's CEP School, we:
1. Ensure good hygiene for everyone.
2. Maintain appropriate cleaning regimes.
3. Keep occupied spaces well ventilated.
4. Follow public health advice on testing, self-isolation and managing confirmed cases of COVID-19.

1. Ensure good hygiene for everyone

Hand hygiene
Frequent and thorough hand cleaning is now a regular practice. You should continue to ensure that pupils clean their hands regularly. This can be done with soap and water or hand sanitiser.

Respiratory hygiene
The 'catch it, bin it, kill it' approach continues to be very important.

Use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)
Most staff in schools will not require PPE beyond what they would normally need for their work. The guidance on the use of PPE in education, childcare and children's social care settings provides more information on the use of PPE for COVID-19.

2. Maintain appropriate cleaning regimes, using standard products such as detergents

We have regular cleaning of areas and equipment (for example, twice per day), with a particular focus on frequently touched surfaces.

3. Keep occupied spaces well ventilated

When our school is in operation, it is important to ensure it is well ventilated and that a comfortable teaching environment is maintained.

We identify any poorly ventilated spaces as part of our risk assessment and take steps to improve fresh air flow in these areas, giving particular consideration when holding events where visitors such as parents are on site, for example, school plays.

Opening external windows can improve natural ventilation, and in addition, opening internal doors can also assist with creating a throughput of air. If necessary, external opening doors may also be used (if they are not fire doors and where safe to do so).

We will balance the need for increased ventilation while maintaining a comfortable temperature.

The Health and Safety Executive guidance on air conditioning and ventilation during the COVID-19 pandemic and CIBSE COVID-19 advice provides more information.

DfE is working with Public Health England, NHS Test and Trace, and the Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies (SAGE) on a pilot project to measure CO_2 levels in classrooms and exploring options to help improve ventilation in settings where needed.

4. Follow public health advice on testing, self-isolation and managing confirmed cases of COVID-19

When an individual develops COVID-19 symptoms or has a positive test
Pupils, staff and other adults should follow public health advice on when to self-isolate and what to do. They should not come into school if they have symptoms, have had a positive test result or other reasons requiring them to stay at home due to the risk of them passing on COVID-19 (for example, they are required to quarantine).
If anyone in your school develops COVID-19 symptoms, however mild, we will send them home and they should follow public health advice.

For everyone with symptoms, they should avoid using public transport and, wherever possible, be collected by a member of their family or household.

If a pupil is awaiting collection, they should be left in a room on their own if possible and safe to do so. A window should be opened for fresh air ventilation if possible. Appropriate PPE should also be used if close contact is necessary. Further information on this can be found in the use of PPE in education, childcare and children's social care settings guidance. Any rooms they use should be cleaned after they have left.

The household (including any siblings) should follow the PHE stay at home guidance for households with possible or confirmed coronavirus (COVID-19) infection.

Asymptomatic testing

Testing remains important in reducing the risk of transmission of infection within schools. That is why, whilst some measures are relaxed, others will remain, and if necessary, in response to the latest epidemiological data, we all need to be prepared to step measures up or down in future depending on local circumstances.

Staff should undertake twice weekly home tests whenever they are on site until advice is given to stop.

Confirmatory PCR tests

Staff and pupils with a positive LFD test result should self-isolate in line with the stay at home guidance for households with possible or confirmed coronavirus (COVID-19) infection. They will also need to get a free PCR test to check if they have COVID-19.

Whilst awaiting the PCR result, the individual should continue to self-isolate.

If the PCR test is taken within 2 days of the positive lateral flow test, and is negative, it overrides the self-test LFD test and the pupil can return to school, as long as the individual doesn't have COVID-19 symptoms.

Additional information on PCR test kits for schools and further education providers is available.

Admitting children into school

In most cases, parents and carers will agree that a pupil with symptoms should not attend the school, given the potential risk to others.

If a parent or carer insists on a pupil attending our school, we will take the decision to refuse the pupil if, in our reasonable judgement, it is necessary to protect other pupils and staff from possible infection with COVID-19. Our decision would need to be carefully considered in light of all the circumstances and current public health advice.

Attendance

School attendance is mandatory for all pupils of compulsory school age and it is a priority to ensure that as many children as possible regularly attend school.

Where a child is required to self-isolate or quarantine because of COVID-19 in accordance with relevant legislation or guidance published by PHE or the DHSC, they should be recorded as code X (not attending in circumstances related to coronavirus). Where they are unable to attend because they have a confirmed case of COVID-19 they should be recorded as code I (illness).

For pupils abroad who are unable to return, code X is unlikely to apply. In some specific cases, code Y (unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances) will apply. Further guidance about the use of codes is provided in the school attendance guidance.

Remote education
Not all people with COVID-19 have symptoms. Where appropriate, we will support those who need to self-isolate because they have tested positive to work or learn from home if they are well enough to do so. Schools subject to the remote education temporary continuity direction are required to provide remote education to pupils covered by the direction where their attendance would be contrary to government guidance or legislation around COVID-19.

We will continue to deliver high-quality remote education for the next academic year, including for pupils who are abroad, and facing challenges to return due to COVID-19 travel restrictions, for the period they are abroad.

The remote education provided should be equivalent in length to the core teaching pupils would receive in school.

We will work collaboratively with families and put in place reasonable adjustments so that pupils with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) can successfully access remote education.