

## Infection Control Policy – September 2020

This policy incorporates Public Health England guidance 'Health Protection in Schools and Other Childcare Facilities' and DfE guidance 'COVID 19 Infection Prevention and Control'.

### Introduction

Schools are common sites for transmission of infections. Children are particularly susceptible because:

- They have immature immune systems
- Have close contact with other children
- Sometimes have no vaccinations
- Have a poor understanding of hygiene practices

This policy [provides information for staff managing a range of common and important childhood infections in school settings, including the principles of infection prevention and control to enable safe working during the coronavirus outbreak.

### Infection in schools

Many diseases can spread before the individual shows any symptoms at all. Infection prevention and control measures aim to interrupt the cycle of infection by promoting the routine use of good hygiene standards so that transmission of infection is reduced. This is usually through:

- Immunisation of pupils and/or staff
- Good hand washing
- Making sure the environment is clean

### How infection spreads

Infections are spread in a variety of ways:

**Respiratory spread** – contact with cough or other secretions of an infected person, like influenza. This can happen by being near to an infected person when they cough and then breathe in the infection; or by picking up the organism from an infected item eg. a used tissue, or a classroom object.

**Direct contact spread** – by direct contact eg. contact during sport or PE and contact with skin infections such as impetigo.

**Gastrointestinal spread** – resulting from contact with contaminated food or water (Hep A) contact with infected faeces or unwashed hands after the toilet eg. Typhoid.

**Blood borne virus spread** – contact with infected bodily fluids or blood. For example, while attending to a bleeding person or from bites from infected people which break the skin. These situations need to be carefully managed.

**Coronavirus spread** – mainly occurs via respiratory droplets generated during breathing, talking, coughing or sneezing. These droplets can directly infect the respiratory tracts of others if there is close contact. They can also infect others indirectly. This happens when a droplet goes onto a surface and another person touches the surface and then their eyes or mouth.

In all education settings, preventing the spread of coronavirus involves preventing the direct transmission (close contact with those sneezing or coughing) and indirect transmission (touching contaminated surfaces)

### Prevention and control

Hand washing is one of the most important ways to control the spread of infections, especially those that cause diarrhoea, vomiting and respiratory disease. Liquid soap, water and hand towels or hand sanitizer is recommended and used by the school.

The following practices are used:

- All staff and pupils wash hands upon entry to the school building, after using the toilet, after break times and lunchtimes and before eating food
- Cover all cuts and abrasions with a plaster
- Children and adults are encouraged to cover their mouths and noses when coughing and sneezing using the nook of their elbow. Spitting is discouraged at all times
- Catch it, bin it, kill it is adopted as a policy in school
- Disposable gloves and aprons are used during instances of first aid to minimise the risk of blood borne infections. Goggles or face coverings would need to be worn if there is a risk to splashing to the face

### Bites

If a bite does not break skin, wash with soap and water and no further action is required.

If a bite does break skin; clean immediately with soap and water. Record incident and seek medical advice as soon as possible to treat potential infection.

### Needle stick injury

Wash the wound thoroughly with soap and water.

Cover with a waterproof dressing.

Record the incident and complete an accident form.

Seek immediate medical attention from local A and E department.

### Cleaning blood and bodily fluids

All spillages of blood, saliva, faeces and other bodily discharges must be cleaned up immediately with PPE. If using a detergent to clean, always follow the manufacturer's

instructions. Use disposable towels to clean up blood and bodily fluid spills. These should then be disposed of in a sealed bag immediately.

### Children with continence aids

Pupils who use continence aids like catheters should be encouraged to be as independent as possible. Disposable powder free gloves must be used in all instances, along with a plastic apron. These must be changed every pupil and disposed of in a sealed bag. Good hand washing practice must be deployed immediately after.

### Dealing with contaminated clothing

Clothing of a child or first aider may become contaminated with blood or other fluids. Clothing should be removed as soon as possible and placed in a plastic bag to be sent home with the child. The clothing should be washed separately to the other washing in a washing machine, on the hottest setting.

### COVID 19 prevention and control

Please see COVID 19 risk assessment.

A detailed risk assessment covers at least the following and must be adhered to by all staff, children, parents and visitors to the school:

- Minimising contact with unwell pupils
- Good hand hygiene practices in place
- Catch it, bin it, kill it adopted across the school
- Enhanced cleaning, including frequently touched areas
- Minimise contact and mixing
- PPE used
- Social distancing measures in place
- Soft furnishings, toys and hard to clean items have been removed
- The use of shared resources reduced
- Air flow and ventilation increased
- Active engagement with local authorities, public health and test and trace.

### What to do if you suspect an outbreak of infection

For COVID 19, please see risk assessment.

An outbreak is defined as an incident in which two or more people experience a similar illness are linked in time or place eg. same class. A greater than expected rate of infection compared with the usual rate for the place and time when the outbreak occurred.

### When to report

Headteachers and SLT will contact the local public health protection team as soon as they suspect an outbreak to discuss the situation and agree actions.

Managers will have the following information to hand before contacting public health:

- Total numbers affected (staff and children)
- Symptoms
- Dates when symptoms first occurred
- Number of classes affected

If uncertain that it is an outbreak, contact the local health protection team.

#### When to report

The school must contact the local public health team as soon as possible to report any serious or unusual illness particularly for:

- E Coli or VTEC infection
- Food poisoning
- Hepatitis
- Measles, mumps, rubella
- Meningitis
- TB
- Typhoid
- Whooping cough
- COVID 19

The local public health team will draft letters and provide factsheets for parents and carers to ensure that the most up to date information is given.

#### COVID 19 – cleaning and waste disposal

All objects, which are visibly contaminated with bodily fluids, must be cleaned using disposable roll or cloths and mop heads. All hard surfaces, floors, chairs, tables, door handles and sanitary fittings must be cleaned with an appropriate disinfectant solution. Steam cleaning should be used for any items that cannot be cleaned or are upholstered. Cleaning has been increased in school with cleaning taking place after break time and lunch times.

Disposal of waste – cleaning waste should be put into a plastic rubbish bag and tied. The bag then needs to be put into a second plastic bag and tied. It should be put in a suitable place and marked until the individual's test results are known. The waste should not be put in communal waste areas until negative results are known or the waste has been stored separately for 72 hours.

#### Shared toys and equipment

Only toys and equipment that can be wiped down clean with a disinfected wipe will be used in school. Play dough will not be shared and should only be available as a personal supply. Any sand pits used in school will be covered when not in use and the sand changed regularly. Any shared resources will have to be stored away for 72 hours.

## **Staff welfare**

All staff should undergo a health check before starting employment and this should include immunisation checks.

### **Sickness**

Staff should only return to work when they feel well enough to do so. For COVID 19, staff should only return to work when they provide a negative test or after the full self-isolation period and when they feel well to do so.

### **Pregnancy**

If a pregnant staff member develops a rash, they should contact their midwife or GP. Chickenpox can affect the pregnancy if they have not had the infection before and the midwife or GP needs to be informed immediately.

Measles in pregnancy can cause miscarriage or harm to the baby. If a staff member is exposed, they must contact their health professional immediately.

Slapped cheek disease can occasionally affect the pregnancy, so the staff member must contact their health professional immediately.

### **COVID 19 advice**

Staff testing: access to testing is available to all essential workers. These can be booked through the online portal. School also has access to some tests. These can be given to staff to undertake at home and/or if they cannot access an outside test.

Clinically extremely vulnerable adults have been allocated their own, smaller staff room to minimise contacts further.

There is specific guidance on what will happen if there is a local lockdown in your area and this needs to be read and referred to.

The school will follow the advice from the DfE and Public Health England.

A risk assessment is in place to assess the risk of COVID 19 and the control measures. This is reviewed on a regular basis by SLT and in light with any changes to guidance.

In the event of a pupil or staff member contracting COVID 19, the process as outlined in the risk assessment will be strictly followed and Public Health will be consulting immediately.

Link to Guidance on Infection Control in Schools:

[https://www.publichealth.hscni.net/sites/default/files/Guidance\\_on\\_infection\\_control\\_in%20schools\\_poster.pdf](https://www.publichealth.hscni.net/sites/default/files/Guidance_on_infection_control_in%20schools_poster.pdf)

