Communicable Infections Guidance including COVID-19

Changes to Government Guidance for the control of COVID-19 means that there is no longer a legal requirement to complete and update COVID Secure Risk Assessments in the majority of settings. At Morecambe Road School, we realise the vulnerabilities of our children, and we will maintain vigilant in monitoring the health situation of all communicable infections, including Covid-19.

It is important that we do not lose the good practice that COVID controls have allowed us to establish.

This guidance outlines the control measures necessary to help maintain a COVID-19 secure and infection free school. It is expected that headteachers in all schools will adhere to the principles. Where necessary, and particularly in areas where an outbreak is suspected, local arrangements will be developed in line with the guidance; the action plan template at the end of this document will be used for this purpose.

Further guidance on maintaining a Covid secure school can be found on the HSE website.

Potential hazards and guidance on how to control them
Ventilation
The amount of respiratory virus in the air can build up in poorly ventilated areas. The risk of spreading COVID-19 and other respiratory infections increases if there are more infected people present. The virus can also remain in the air after an infected person has left the area. Premise Managers must follow LCC's Simple Steps for Good Ventilation guidance (DILUTE) and complete and regularly review a Ventilation Checklist for the building. Steps must be taken to implement any actions identified in the ventilation checklist. Specialist advice on ventilation concerns identified through the completion of the Ventilation Checklist can be obtained from the Building Services Engineers duty.engineer@lancashire.gov.uk. Staff must be made aware of the ventilation controls and be provided with instructions on how to adhere to ventilation measures, for example, the use of CO_2 monitors to measure the ongoing suitability of ventilation and the opening and shutting of windows or vents. There is further advice on the HSE website.
Crowded Enclosed Spaces
There is no government requirement or recommendation to limit capacity in the workplace. Where necessary staff should discuss their individual needs with their line manager. Where necessary an individual risk assessment should be completed.
Hand & Respiratory Hygiene
Washing your hands regularly is one of the easiest and most effective ways to protect yourself and others from illnesses such as COVID-19, colds, flu and norovirus by removing dirt, viruses and bacteria to stop them spreading to other people and objects.

Potential hazards and guidance on how to control them

Public Health England provides guidance on how to wash your hands. An LCC poster is also available to promote good hand washing practice.

Coughing and sneezing increases the number of particles released by a person, the distance the particles travel and the time they stay in the air. Cover your mouth and nose with disposable tissues when you cough or sneeze. Put used tissues in a bin and immediately wash your hands or use hand sanitiser. If you do not have a tissue, cough or sneeze into the crook of your elbow.

Cleaning

COVID-19 and other infections can be spread through the touching of contaminated surfaces and it remains especially important to clean surfaces that people touch frequently.

Personal Protective Equipment and Face Coverings

Wearing a face covering or face mask can reduce the number of particles containing viruses that are released from the mouth and nose of someone who is infected with COVID-19 and other respiratory infections. Face coverings can also protect the person wearing the face covering from becoming infected by some viruses.

When to consider wearing a face covering:

- when you are coming into close contact with someone at higher risk of becoming seriously unwell from COVID-19 or other respiratory infections
- when COVID-19 rates are high and you will be in close contact with other people, such as in crowded and enclosed spaces
- when there are a lot of respiratory viruses circulating, such as in winter, and you will be in close contact with other people in crowded and enclosed spaces

The safe removal and disposal of PPE are critical considerations to avoid the spread of infection. Staff should familiarise themselves with the Government guidance on the use of personal protective equipment.

People at Higher Risk of Becoming Seriously Unwell

The Government provides guidance for people previously considered clinically extremely vulnerable from COVID-19 and for people whose immune system means they are at higher risk.

The HSE provides guidance protecting vulnerable workers during COVID-19.

Consideration needs to be given to workers facing mental and physical health difficulties.

An individual risk assessment must be completed for any staff member who has significant risk factors or who is experiencing mental health issues in relation to COVID-19.

A New and Expectant Mothers Checklist & Risk Assessment form must be completed for individuals who are pregnant to identify any additional control measures or support required.

Vaccination

Vaccines are the best defence against COVID-19 and other respiratory infections such as flu. They help protect young people and adults, and benefit those around them. Vaccination makes people less likely to catch the virus and less likely to pass it on.

Potential hazards and guidance on how to control them

To book a COVID vaccination, please visit: Book or manage a coronavirus (COVID-19) vaccination – NHS (www.nhs.uk).

To book a seasonal flu vaccination please contact your GP, visit the NHS website or speak to your manager to identify if you are eligible for this vaccination through LCC.

Testing and Isolation

Employees are advised to stay at home if they feel unwell or if they are displaying any COVID-19 or flu like symptoms to help prevent the spread of communicable viruses.

Children and young people who are unwell and have a high temperature should stay at home and avoid contact with other people, where they can. They can go back to school, college or childcare when they no longer have a high temperature, and they are well enough to attend.

For information on public health recommended exclusion periods for infections in schools please refer to the UKHSA exclusion table.

For more information, refer to the Government guidance People with symptoms of a respiratory infection including COVID-19.

Staff who have a positive COVID-19 test are advised to stay at home and avoid contact with other people for at least 5 days after the day they took their test and until they no longer have a high temperature and feel unwell. Children with a positive result are advised to stay at home for 3 days after the day they took their test. Employees are advised to avoid contact with people at higher risk of becoming seriously unwell from COVID-19 for 10 days after the day they took their test.

Communication with Customers, Visitors, and Contractors

Provide clear guidance on any local arrangements for reducing the risk of COVID-19 and other communicable infections.

Local Arrangements

Where additional service or local arrangements are required in specific settings, to increase or reduce general control measures and principles, these should be recorded in the following action plan or incorporated into existing risk assessments.

Any service or local arrangements should be reviewed on a regular basis or in the event of any significant changes.

Service/Team:	
Address:	
Completed by:	
Date:	
Proposed review date:	

ACTION PLAN Local Arrangements/Action required					
Hazard	**Local Arrangements/Action required**	**Person(s) to undertake action?**	**Timescale**	**Notes / comments**	**Date completed**