

drb Ignite Multi Academy Trust

COVID-19 POLICY

Phase 6 Response

July 2021

Trust Vision

drb Ignite Multi Academy Trust has been established through a shared belief that lives can be transformed by what goes on in schools. We believe that the process of teaching and learning shapes futures. To this end, our vision is to give every child learning experiences that excite them and give them the power to begin to shape their own lives.

All pupils achieve the highest standard of educational outcomes regardless of circumstances or background.

Policy Purpose

This Coronavirus (COVID-19) Policy sets out the measures the Trust is actively taking from July 2021, following a full review of its risk assessment processes in light of the government announcement that *Step 4 of the National Roadmap* would commence on *Monday 19 July 2021*.

The Policy supports the Trust's *Phase 6 Response Risk Assessment and Outbreak Management Plan* which respond to the revised government guidance for schools.

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/999689/Schools_guidance_Step_4_update_FINAL.pdf

The ongoing focus for Trustees and Senior Leaders remains the same. This is to:

- keep pupils, staff and families as safe as possible through the Covid-19 pandemic
- continue to mitigate the spread of coronavirus through robust preventative measures
- sustain healthy and safe school workplaces for all attending school
- have regard to safeguarding and on-line safety for those pupils learning from home
- respond responsibly and transparently in implementing all health and safety precautions in line with HSE System of Controls and government requirements
- ensure Trust policies, procedures and protocols are effective in the current situation
- work with parents to safely support and encourage full school attendance for all children
- work with parents to support those who may be anxious about their child returning to school for the Autumn Term 2021
- ensure the health and personal data of pupils and staff is treated with high confidentiality and sensitivity.

The Policy will continue to be reviewed and updated as further guidance is received from central government departments (DfE, DCMS, Cabinet Office), Public Health England and the Health and Safety Executive. It will be updated as soon as practicably possible.

Scope

The Policy applies to all Trust staff working in schools, the central office or working from home for whatever reason. All staff are required to read the Policy to ensure the Trust collectively and uniformly responds to the ongoing and dynamic challenges the pandemic presents. The Policy should be read together with the Trust's *Infection Control Policy* and *Outbreak Management Plan*.

Policy elements

Key health and safety measures

A SAFE ENVIRONMENT – SAFE CHILDREN AND FAMILIES – A SAFE WORKFORCE

Protecting the health and safety of children, staff and families remains the Trust's paramount and overarching concern. Two testing principles have been set for all decision making during the pandemic period:

- The safety and welfare of pupils, staff and families will always be the paramount principle for all planning
- Trust schools will continue to organise themselves in ways that are compatible with minimising spread of the virus.

From September 2021 these have been reviewed and added to:

- The safety and welfare of pupils and staff remains the Trust's paramount principle for all planning whether attending school or learning from home.
- Schools will continue to organise themselves in ways that are fully compliant with government guidance.
- Schools will keep the HSE Hierarchy of Controls under constant review.
- Schools will have robust monitoring systems in place to ensure controls are effective.
- The Trust and its schools will make decisions that best protect the needs of local communities, in line with advice from local public health teams and will act at pace as and when required.

- All school will have an *Outbreak Management Plan* that reflects the actions the Trust and its schools will take in the event of an outbreak and meets the requirements of the government's *Contingency Framework*

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-local-restrictions-in-education-and-childcare-settings/contingency-framework-education-and-childcare-settings>

Throughout all planning processes the Trust will continue to adopt a **TEST-LEARN-REVIEW** approach to ensure changes or adaptations to processes and arrangements can be made quickly.

Trust actions

Here are the main steps the Trust will continue to take:

- follow relevant **national and local guidance**, including from government, Public Health England, local authorities and unions/teacher professional organisations
- keep the **HSE Hierarchy of Controls** under constant review.
- review all risk assessments and carry out further detailed and appropriate **risk assessments** as part of the Trust's *Phase 6 Response Strategy*. These will continue to cover any risks posed by premises, and working/learning conditions from the start of the Autumn Term 2021. Advance planning on how to implement arrangements will take account of the most recent guidance in order to draw out potential issues and help minimise risk.
- ongoing and transparent **communication with all staff** on plans, providing guidance and establishing protocols on the measures that have been agreed and adopted. Information will be communicated to staff regularly and immediately following any changes by the most appropriate means e.g. email, video conference, online training with further brief updates provided afterwards Through these communications Trust leaders will encourage staff to raise questions or concerns and to share helpful ideas and feedback. A further Trust Staff Survey will be conducted in October 2021.
- teacher/workforce **teacher professional associations and workforce unions will be advised** of the Trust's *Phase 6 Response Strategy* and Risk Assessment. The Trust recognises the importance of union engagement, particularly when planning requires any changes to terms and conditions

and in order to demonstrate that health and safety requirements have been met under the Trust's statutory duty of care.

- **respond to all statutory duties of care.** These duties arise under the following legislation:
 - Sections 2 and 3 of the Health & Safety Act 1974
 - Regulations 3 and 8 of the Management of Health & Safety at Work Regulations 1999
 - Regulation 4 of the Personal Protective Equipment at Work Regulations 1992
 - Regulation 4 of the Workplace (Health, Safety & Welfare) Regulations 1992
 - Regulation 7 of the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002
- Trustees will engage directly with all Phase 6 planning and will sign off finalised arrangements. This engagement will help ensure understanding, enable valuable trustee input on proposals and ensure **effective governance continues** throughout the pandemic period.
- consider staff **working hours, workload and personal circumstances** for example, childcare arrangements, caring responsibilities, health/vulnerability considerations.
- continue to provide a high-quality **Remote Learning Programme** for those children who are required to learn from home.
- ensure effective **safeguarding for all children** whether attending school or learning from home with a particular focus on the needs of the most vulnerable children.
- support staff who are considered to be more vulnerable i.e. CEV, CV and staff who are pregnant.
- ensure the twice weekly **LFD Testing** programme continues to work effectively for staff.
- Continue to encourage pupils, families and staff to use modes of transport that **reduce exposure to others** e.g. walking, scooting or cycling, where possible when they attend school. Continue to restrict all non-essential work travel.

Assessing the work/learning space for the Autumn Term 2021

A wide range of specific measures will continue to minimise the risk of cross-contamination in the work/learning place as pupils return for the new school year in September 2021:

- **Entry/exit points to school sites** - parents will continue to be encouraged to wear face coverings.
- **Ventilation** - where security and safety allow, doors and windows will be left open so there is less touching of handles etc. and greater ventilation. The temperature of classrooms will be monitored to ensure they do not become too cold.
- **Moving around school safely** – crowding and unnecessary queuing will be monitored to maintain covid-safe spaces.
- **Bubbles** – although the placing of pupils into bubbles will be stood down, continued vigilance and covid-safe practices will be maintained around the mixing of pupils across groups
- **Access to site** - all visitor/contractor entry to the school site will continue to be monitored carefully and may require the authorisation of the headteacher.
- **Robust cleaning regimes** will be maintained across all areas including outdoor areas and equipment.
- **LFD testing (twice weekly) for staff** and for visitors on entry to school i.e. supply teachers, contractors as appropriate.

The general work/learning space. Careful consideration will be given in ongoing risk assessments to ensure that spaces are as covid-safe as possible e.g. furniture appropriately spaced as far as is possible. The curriculum will aim to ensure children continue to be out of doors as much as is possible.

Toilets and kitchens. Sensible limits will be imposed on the number of children/adults allowed to enter these spaces to avoid unnecessary crowding. Staff will continue to be encouraged to bring their own food and the safe use of coffee machines, fridges etc will be an ongoing consideration.

Meetings between staff. The risks around time spent face to face mean that staff will continue not be encouraged to meet together in confined spaces unless this is essential. If meetings are deemed essential, rooms will be arranged to respect guidance. Travel for non-critical school business will also be kept under review and avoided if possible.

Third party visitors to school sites. Visitors to school sites will continue to be required to follow all covid-safe practices. The headteacher is responsible for assessing the risks around third parties entering the school site, and aware of the Trust's obligation to ensure their health and safety. Visitors will be requested to comply with the school's covid-19 entry protocols e.g. hygiene requirements.

First aiders/fire/evacuation/lock down marshals. Arrangements for first aid provision and fire/evacuation/lockdown will be kept under review and new arrangements made as required for the Autumn Term 2021. Training will be provided for staff if necessary to ensure safety, cover and confidence around any new arrangements.

Cleaning regimes and focus on personal hygiene

From September 2021 cleaning regimes will be kept under review with a retained focus on key touchpoints e.g. equipment, handles, buttons, switches etc. Enhanced personal hygiene and cleaning protocols will continue to be robustly enforced to minimise the risk of virus transmission. These are outlined in the Trust's Phase 6 Infection Control Policy:

- adequate volumes and positioning of hand washing and sanitiser facilities
- good hygiene routines encouraged and promoted at all times
- good respiratory hygiene *catch it- bin it- kill it*
- effective, regular cleaning of resources and learning environments
- work/learning spaces deep cleaned in the event of any outbreak
- PPE equipment provided as appropriate e.g. in isolation rooms, for intimate care
- Encouragement for continued use of face covering by parents at school gates and in busy places where adults and children may congregate.

Amendments to Trust policies and procedures

In July 2021, the Trust conducted a full review of all covid-related Trust policies and procedures. **The Covid-19 Addendums added to the Trust's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and Procedures and Behaviour Policy** have also been reviewed. Other policies have been reviewed with associated Covid 19 protocols developed as necessary. The original policies have not been changed as the associated protocols cover off any changes to policy and procedures to cover this next phase of the pandemic. Protocols have been established to cover:

- Health and Safety (Duty of Care)
- Remote Education
- Pupil Behaviour

- Risk Assessment for identified pupils e.g. SEND, pupils with medical conditions
- Staff homeworking arrangements
- *Managing Covid-19 symptoms at school* protocols for staff and pupils
- Absence and attendance
- Recruitment and induction of new staff
- Staff CPD
- Staff Code of Conduct

Staff wellbeing

The Trust remains fully committed to ensuring that all staff feel safe and confident in their work. The personal health and situation of individual staff will continue to be sensitively considered and kept under review as the pandemic progresses and the new school year begins. Staff continue to be encouraged to raise any concerns they may have with their headteacher in the first instance.

As the Trust has a number of CEV, CV and pregnant staff, individualised risk assessments will remain under review as part of the Trust's *Phase 6 Response Risk Assessment*. In the particular circumstance that a staff member is unable to attend work, they will be expected to work from home at the direction of their headteacher/line manager.

Going forwards, if there are insufficient staff available to attend for work and this is considered to be a significant risk to the provision of a safe environment for children, the Trust will make the decision to temporarily close the school and will advise parents accordingly. Such a decision will be signed off by the Trust CEO and would always be an absolute last resort.

Staff Health and Safety - the legal landscape

The Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 sets out the Trust's main obligations. The Trust takes these requirements very seriously. These are summarised in the following table and are overseen by the Trust's Director of Estates and reported regularly to the Trust Board.

Trust Obligations for Staff Health and Safety

Obligations:

- ensure staff are provided with training, information, instructions and supervision which allows them to work safely and keep themselves safe
- keep all places of work under the Trust's control well maintained to ensure they are safe to work in and have safe routes for access and exit
- provide safe working environments with adequate facilities for welfare at work
- provide and maintain safe equipment and systems of work
- ensure that equipment and substances are safely used, handled, stored and transported
- prepare and regularly revise the Trust's health and safety policy, and inform staff of its existence and of any changes to it

There are also a number of regulations and approved codes of practice the Trust follows which cover specific aspects of workplace health and safety including:

- obligations to carry out risk assessments to identify health and safety risks to staff/others and take steps to remove or minimise any risks
- obligations to provide staff with information on any identified risks, the preventive/protective measures taken, and procedures in the event of an imminent danger to those at work and who is responsible for implementing them
- the requirement for and use of protective equipment

Additionally, the Trust owes a common law duty to staff to safeguard their health, safety and wellbeing. This encompasses obligations to provide:

- a safe place of work
- safe resources and equipment
- competent staff
- safe systems of work
- appointment of an officer responsible for assisting with compliance with health and safety legislation. This is the Trust's Director of Estates.

Working from home – staff required to self-isolate

The Trust is aware it has the same health and safety obligations to anyone who is required to work from home e.g. self-isolating. In order to fulfil these obligations, the Trust will:

- implement measures for keeping in touch and monitoring wellbeing
- monitor the type of work being undertaken and working hours
- consider whether the work can be done at home safely
- consider whether any control measures should be put in place in order to protect homeworkers
- ensure home workers have the appropriate equipment

If the Trust requires a staff member to use display screen equipment for long periods of time it will:

- ask the staff member to undertake display-screen and desk-risk assessments
- ensure the staff member take breaks from their display screens
- provide guidance and/or training on best practice and how to identify risks within their own environment

All policies and procedures with regard to health and safety issues have been fully reviewed and revisited in the *Phase 6 Response Strategy* and associated Risk Assessments. Furthermore, the Trust has considered that it may also become vicariously liable for the wrongful acts of its staff if committed in the course of their employment – meaning the Trust may be liable if the health of a member of staff is damaged due to a colleague's disregard of health and safety rules.

The health and safety risks arising from Covid-19 primarily arise from person to person contact, transmission through close proximity to infected individuals and surface transmission. This means it is vital that the Trust continues to ensure all staff are well briefed and trained on current government guidance and that the Trust continues to monitor and review the steps it is taking to minimise the risk of virus transmission.

The process of managing the Trust's Phase 6 Response Strategy and Risk Assessment

The Trust's process for reviewing Covid-19 planning continues to follow the **Test-Learn-Review approach referred to earlier**. This involves a repetitive stepped monitoring cycle

Step 1 – Ongoing risk assessment

The Trust and its schools will carry out thorough *Phase 6 Response* risk assessments in response to the government announcement of reduced restrictions from 19 July 2021. The risk assessments will continue to give consideration to the risks posed by bespoke features of school buildings/Trust offices, daily school routines for pupils and also for those learning from home and then take measures to minimise identified risks. Every possible measure will be taken to eliminate the risk of the transmission of Covid-19.

In relation to school sites the following measures will remain under regular and recorded through individual school risk registers.

- **Cleaning** – retained focus on high touch points such as door handles, equipment etc. Where health and safety regulations allow, doors, windows left open.
- **Hygiene facilities and routines** – hand sanitiser, hand-washing facilities, anti-bacterial wipes for surfaces and equipment.
- **Physical distancing** – as appropriate
- **Signage clear** – continued use of signage to promote government guidance e.g. *Catch it – Bin it – Kill it*
- **Disposal of waste** meets government guidance requirements
- **Site entry (visitors)** – retaining oversight of visitors to school premises e.g. supply teachers. Also ensuring Trust covid-safe practices are explained on entry. Headteacher approval sought for entry of any external visitor where there is a concern
- **Minimising risk** – considering how operations which involve high levels of mixing can be undertaken in a way which minimises risk

In relation to children and staff the following measures will remain under regular review and reported (by exception) to the CEO and Trust Board through each school's Risk Register.:

- **Safeguarding** arrangements for pupils learning at school and from home
- **Pupil access and engagement** with remote education when self-isolating
- **Feedback from parents** re: covid-safe practices
- **Welfare support arrangements** for the most vulnerable pupils
- **Use of space in school** to continue to consider covid safe practices
- **Use of PPE in school** - provision and continued availability/resourcing of personal protective equipment (PPE) to be used in isolation rooms and for intimate care
- **Face to face contact in school** – continued minimising of extended face to face contact between adults. Ensuring meeting rooms are well ventilated and equipment is not shared.
- **Use of shared staff facilities** – regular cleaning regimes continued e.g. kitchens, fridges, beverage machines, crockery
- **Staff LFD testing (as appropriate)**- to continue twice weekly as set out in revised government guidance until further notice
- **Support for vulnerable staff** – vulnerable staff to continue to be identified through individualised risk assessments and any anxieties responded appropriately.

Step 2 – Devise, revise or update appropriate policies and practices

Trust policies and practices have been reviewed in July 2021 and will remain under constant review going forwards. New operating protocols have been and will continue to be established to ensure compliance with all requirements:

- where staff/pupil data is collected e.g. testing data, all GDPR/data protection issues will be considered
- reviewed expectations of individual pupil behaviour in light of reduction of restrictions. This will ensure clear processes for supporting pupils whose behaviour creates a personal risk and risk to others
- Teacher professional associations and staff unions will be engaged and advised of the *Trust's Phase 6 Response Strategy* and Risk Assessments and ongoing communication will be established
- *Outbreak Management Plan* to ensure schools have appropriate staffing levels to remain open in the event of staff illness

- Continuing mechanisms through which employees can raise questions or make suggestions.

Step 3 – Consult, train and communicate with staff

The Trust is aware of its statutory obligation to consult with staff about any review of its Risk Assessments and the health and safety measures proposed. The Trust takes this obligation seriously and recognises that it is ongoing. The Trust will work closely with school leaders to:

- devise appropriate training for staff as the situation develops and new information must be communicated
- support staff to deliver an appropriately balanced curriculum from the outset of the Autumn Term 2021
- provide ongoing professional CPD programme for staff
- continue to hold return to work briefings for individual staff, particularly those who may be returning after illness or anxious about coming into school
- display health and safety communications and reminders in key places, e.g. at hand-washing points, at entrances and exits, in toilets


Step 4 – Monitoring and evaluation

All plans will be continually monitored and evaluated, particularly in light of any updated guidance. This will take place at a range of leadership levels i.e. headteacher, Trust leadership team, Trust Board.

Policy monitoring and review

The CEO and Trustees will review this Policy at every meeting during the Covid-19 Pandemic to ensure it reflects the Trust's current situation and that any new or changed government guidance is fully adhered to.

Monitoring and review	CEO Trust Board
Links	Phase 6 Respond Strategy and Risk Assessment Phase 6 Principles for action Staff Code of Conduct Policy Risk Management Policy Health and Safety Policy

	Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and Procedures – Covid-19 Addendum Behaviour Policy Addendum Infection Control Policy
Staff responsible	CEO, Executive Director of School Improvement, School Leaders
Committee responsible	Trust Improvement Board Trust Board
Date approved	July 2021
Review date	Ongoing throughout Covid-19 pandemic
Sign off by Chair of Trust	 Date: July 2021

Change Management

Issue No.	Change date	Change description
1.0	June 20	Initial release
2.0	July 20	First review and update
3.0	Nov 20	Review and update
4.0	Jan 21	Review and update (National Lockdown)
5.0	Mar 21	Review and update (School Opening)
6.0	July 21	Review and update (Respond)