

COVID-19 Policy

This policy will be regularly updated and reviewed in line with Public Health England (PHE) and Government advice.

To be read in conjunction with:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Supporting Pupils with Medical Needs Policy
- Behaviour Management Policy
- First Aid Policy
- Supervision Policy

Rationale

Atelier 21 intend to use this policy to provide precautionary measures to minimise transmission risks of disease in the school during an epidemic or pandemic. It also states ideas for continuity of business if allowed.

Legislation and leading authorities which have guided and influenced this policy are Coronavirus Act 2020, Health and Safety at Work Act (1974), Health and Safety Executive (HSE), Government Briefings, Public Health England (PHE) and World Health Organisation (WHO). Advice from but not limited to, The Secretary of State, The Chief Medical Officer, Local Authority (LA) and Department for Education (DfE). The policy also has regard to Ofsted and Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) guidance where appropriate.

We need to ensure we are doing everything we need to minimise the risk of spread of the virus, to protect all members of the community, but particularly the most vulnerable.

Aims

This policy defines and assists the operating arrangements in place within school settings that assures compliance to the Government and leading bodies' requirements with relation to the outbreak of a pandemic such as COVID-19. This information builds upon our current procedures for areas such as Safeguarding, Child Protection and Equality and Diversity, however new practices may emerge as the situation continues. The policy and considerations may evolve and be built upon as the situation deepens and new precautionary measures have been introduced and practices have been reflected upon.

Restrictions lifted

As from 16th August 2021 the government has lifted most legal restrictions including the following:

- You do not need to stay 2 metres apart from people you do not live with. There are also no limits on the number of people you can meet.
- The government is no longer instructing people to work from home if they can.
- The requirement to wear face coverings in law has been lifted. However, the government expects and recommends that people wear face coverings in crowded areas such as public transport.
- There are no longer limits on the number of people who can attend weddings, civil partnerships, funerals, and other life events (including receptions and celebrations). There is no requirement for table service at life events, or restrictions on singing or dancing.
- There are no longer restrictions on group sizes for attending communal worship.

Air ventilation

The government has decided to roll out CO2 monitors which will be provided to the school within the Autumn term 2021.

The new monitors will enable staff to identify areas where ventilation needs to be improved and provide reassurance that existing ventilation measures are working, helping balance the need for good ventilation with keeping classrooms warm.

During the winter and colder months, we ask for extra clothes to be worn by staff and pupils when the windows and/or doors may be open to provide better ventilation where required.

Pupils and Staff

Recommended Government Guidelines instruct that pupils and staff who show symptoms of Coronavirus (COVID-19) must self-isolate for a period of 10 days. The isolation period includes the day the symptoms started (or the day the test was taken if you do not have symptoms). Self-isolating is important because you could pass the infection on to others, even if you do not have symptoms. You must stay at home for the full amount of time you are told to. This remains the law regardless of whether you have been vaccinated.

Symptoms include:

- a high temperature – you feel hot to touch on your chest or back.
- a new, continuous cough – this means you've started coughing repeatedly.
- a loss of taste or smell.

Any pupils/staff who develop symptoms during the school day will need to be sent home and required to undertake a PCR test. If a positive result the pupil will need to isolate for 10 days as per government guidelines. If a pupil/staff member tests negative, then they can return to school.

Individuals are not required to self-isolate from school if they live in the same household as someone with COVID-19.

Individuals do not need to isolate if they are a close contact of someone with COVID-19, and any of the following apply:

- they are fully vaccinated
- they are below the age of 18 years and 6 months
- they have taken part in or are currently part of an approved COVID-19 vaccine trial
- they are not able to get vaccinated for medical reasons

Instead, they will be contacted by NHS Test and Trace, informed they have been in close contact with a positive case and advised to take a [PCR test](#). We would encourage all individuals to take a PCR test if advised to do so.

Staff who do not need to isolate, and children and young people aged under 18 years 6 months who usually attend school, and have been identified as a close contact, should continue to attend school as normal. They do not need to wear a face covering within the school, but it is expected and recommended that these are worn when travelling on public or dedicated transport.

All staff and pupils should continue to follow general principles of hygiene to prevent the spread of respiratory viruses, including:

- Washing hands often*
- Covering your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throwing the tissue in a bin
- avoiding touching eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands
- avoiding close contact with people who are unwell
- cleaning and disinfecting frequently touched objects and surfaces
- if soap and water are not available, using an alcohol-based sanitiser that contain at least 60% alcohol.

* Pupils, students, staff, and visitors should wash their hands:

- before leaving home
- on arrival at school
- after using the toilet
- before food preparation
- before eating lunch
- before leaving school

Visitors and Parents

- Under current guidelines, private tours of the school are organised by the head of school to minimise contact.
- Any visitor coming on site must provide reassurance that they are in good health.
- Parents are asked to contact the school where possible via phone or email, rather than coming into the school.

- Only parents who are symptom free and/or have completed the required isolation periods will be able to drop off or collect their child.

Communication

The school will communicate any change to this policy directly to those affected, via the Main Office, school website, and email. **It is very important that any pupil, member of staff or parent lets the school know as soon as possible if they believe that they may have been exposed to the virus, or if they display any of the symptoms.**

In the event of a positive case of either staff or a pupil, parents will be notified via email.

The School Day

The safety of our pupils and staff is our top priority. Consequently, we are taking precautions as advised by the Government and West Sussex County Council guidelines.

- If pupils are well, then they are all expected to attend school.
- Advice for those displaying symptoms of Coronavirus is listed above.

Using advice from Public Health England we will be putting in place a hierarchy of controls, which creates a safer system where the risk of transmission of infection is significantly reduced. These controls are:

- avoiding contact with anyone with symptoms
- frequent hand cleaning and good hygiene practises
- regular cleaning of the school, furniture, and resources
- minimising contact and mixing

Alongside good hygiene and cleaning, one of the main protective measures we can take to reduce transmission is to have small groups, or bubbles, within our classes. These bubbles may learn together, break together and lunch together. Doors will be propped open between classrooms for good ventilation.

- Whenever possible we will utilise outdoor space as much as possible for both play and learning.
- Drama and Physical Education sessions will be adapted to reflect current government guidelines and will be constantly reviewed.
- Although social distancing guidelines have been removed by the government, we ask that parents remain observant of these at drop off and collection times. Where possible only one parent should drop off or pick up.

- Staff will not be wearing PPE during the school day unless in contact with a suspected case of Coronavirus, or unless UK Government guidance changes. If pupils would like to wear a face covering, then that is permitted. If a pupil falls ill with Coronavirus symptoms the member of staff caring for them in the first floor Medical Room (F11a) will wear full PPE.
- It is important that the learning environment at Atelier 21 remains calm. If a pupil chooses to purposefully challenge the guidelines put in place by this policy, then initially, as per the Behaviour Management Policy, 'We will identify the unacceptable behaviour while making it clear that the pupil is still valued. The pupil should always reflect on his/her behaviour and identify why mistakes were made.' However, if there is a persistent failure to follow guidelines it may be deemed necessary for a pupil to be subject to a fixed-term exclusion.
- We are aware that the current circumstances can affect the mental health of our pupils, parents, and staff. While we will implement recommended procedures for the safety of our community, we will also be understanding and supportive to those struggling with some of the restrictions.
- We will have a regular cleaning routine to ensure that all frequently touched surfaces like door handles, light switches, bannisters, toys, chairs, desks, sinks, toilets, and books. Windows and doors will be propped open to aid natural ventilation, bearing in mind fire safety and safeguarding.
- We will not be reporting pupils' temperatures at the beginning of the day but will check temperature if a pupil develops symptoms.
- Sun cream should be applied at home before the child arrives at the school. T-shirts covering shoulders and leggings would be preferable to minimise how much top up of sunscreen the Class 1 staff will do. Sun cream will be reapplied after lunch, and Class 1 staff will wear appropriate PPE.

Staff

- Staff will complete a risk assessment before opening to address any risks from the virus, ensure sensible measures are in place to control risks. (See completed COVID-19 Risk Assessment in risk assessment file).
- Staff to be informed of measures in place and sign a disclaimer to state they have read and understood the school policies and procedures.
- Wherever possible staff should remain with the small group of children, the group of children who they are allocated to and not come into contact with other groups.
- Class 1 Staff: Emergency revisions to the EYFS may have been implemented which provides some flexibility on ratios and qualifications to make this feasible.
- Staff have been advised by the government not to wear PPE such as facemasks during their day, but Reception Staff should wear PPE at the usual times such as intimate care where necessary and wear disposable gloves and apron if completing one to one care.

- If supporting an ill child, a face mask should be worn if the UK Government social distancing advice cannot be maintained.
- After dealing with an ill child who displayed symptoms the staff member should continue to wear PPE and clean the affected area with disinfectant, then dispose of the PPE in the bin designated for COVID-19 waste.
- All PPE should be removed and disposed of following current government guidelines, the staff member should wash their hands for at least 20 seconds.
- The staff member who supported the unwell child does not need to go home unless they are developing symptoms themselves.
- Staff may be required to be in charge of specific rooms or areas including the outdoors to minimise their contact with surfaces etc. Staff will be responsible to ensure appropriate cleaning takes place and enough ventilation is in the room such as opening windows. If doors are open, ensure the safety of the children is maintained.
- Although social distancing guidelines have been removed, we still recommend that Staff members should avoid physical contact with each other including handshakes, hugs etc.
- Staff to wear fresh, clean clothes for each working day.
- Equipment used by staff such as stationary, tablets etc. should be allocated to individual staff members where possible and cleaned regularly.
- Staff given at home Lateral flow testing kits to test twice weekly.

BAME Staff and Pupils and those classed as ‘extremely clinically vulnerable’

As per Public Health England research and government guidelines, the school understands that BAME staff and pupils and those considered to be ‘extremely clinically vulnerable’ are at higher risk of contracting the virus. We would advise that BAME staff, pupils, pupils’ parents, and those considered ‘extremely clinically vulnerable’ refer to the current government advice, which can be found at:

- <https://www.gmcvo.org.uk/Coronavirus/BAMESupport;>
- [https://www.westsussex.gov.uk/fire-emergencies-and-crime/coronavirus-covid-19-advice-and-information/;](https://www.westsussex.gov.uk/fire-emergencies-and-crime/coronavirus-covid-19-advice-and-information/)
- <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-on-shielding-and-protecting-extremely-vulnerable-persons-from-covid-19>

Any staff, pupil, or other visitor to the school who is classed as ‘extremely clinically vulnerable’ must notify the school prior to attending so that the school is aware and, in addition to the safety measures already in place, can complete an individual risk assessment as necessary.

Supplies, Procurement & Monitoring

- The school should ensure an adequate supply of essential supplies and contingency plans such as additional suppliers are in place to minimise the impact of any shortages of supplies.
- The school will not be able to operate without essential supplies required for ensuring infection control.

- A monitoring system for the usage of PPE is essential to ensure that a supply of stock is available to all who require it as and when required to meet the operational needs of the setting. When stocks are low, other options may be considered, such as the use of washable tabards and facemasks. These items will be washed at a high temperature in accordance with relevant guidelines and separate to any other nursery washing.
- In case the supply of food is interrupted, procedures must be implemented to ensure the appropriate food alternatives are sourced and normal food safety and hygiene processes are followed.
- It may be preferable or the only option to have packed lunches which the children bring in.

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