

APAT Covid -19 Outbreak Management Plan

We have been asked by the DfE to write an Outbreak Management Plan to prepare us for operational measures which may need to be implemented in the event of a local Covid outbreak, specifically a new variant. During the first phases of Covid-19 we asked our parents and carers to keep children at home if they showed any signs of illness. As the new variants arise, we expect further symptom changes and therefore expect this policy to be our front line of defence: **Children are to remain at home from the first sign of illness, whatever the symptoms and school should be contacted to agree an action plan.** Ventilation at school, regular testing, hand washing and additional cleaning also help reduce the spread of illness.

Local authorities, Directors of Public Health (DPH) and PHE Health Protection Teams (HPTs) are responsible for managing localised outbreaks. They will play an important role in providing support and advice to us as a school. We will act in accordance with the advice given at the time of the outbreak. Our advice will be issued to us as a Trust, Local Academy, or it could be applied to several local settings.

This guidance from DPH / PHE; “may happen to help manage outbreaks in schools, or if there is an “extremely high prevalence” of Covid-19 in the community and other measures have failed to reduce transmission, or as part of a package of measures “responding to a variant of concern”.

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/995020/COVID-19_Contingency_Framework_-_Education_and_Childcare_June-2021.pdf

Plan for limits on attendance of pupils to school

As a last resort there may be requirements to restrict attendance at school for pupils. This guidance would come via the local public health department who could close a small cluster of schools, or for a wider area; the Government would make the decision to restrict attendance. The suggested plan is likely to involve some year groups attending school and us being closed to others.

As you are aware our smaller academies have limited spaces and staffing options are limited in some academies; some staff may also be advised to work from home. If there is a local outbreak which requires immediate and concerted action, one choice we have is to provide a ‘firebreak’ 10 day window. Another is to offer attendance to vulnerable children, specific year groups or critical worker children. We would review this in the light of the specific guidance offered at the time from the authorities, our unique setting requirements and our staffing availability at each academy.

We will continue to offer a high-quality provision for all children including specific interventions and outreach work if feasible and safe. Safeguarding pupils remains our priority and we will ensure that the Designated Safeguarding Lead or deputies are available at all times. Vulnerable children will be prioritised for attendance and if we are closed we will ensure the Local Authority are made aware of any children for whom absence from school presents a risk.

We have a Trust remote learning policy which explains in detail our high-quality online provision and outlines additional home working resources which would be provided. This policy would be implemented as soon as closure is recommended or required. We would consult with parents as soon as we received the request to limit attendance on site.

Mandated use of face coverings could be brought back

The latest guidance states that outbreak management plan we design should: “cover the possibility that it is advised that face coverings should temporarily be worn more widely in settings in their area”.

This would be advised by local directors of public health or set from the Trust Leadership. This advice “may include face coverings in communal areas (for pupils and students) and/or classrooms (for both pupils, students and staff)”.

At APAT we will carefully consider for each individual scenario whether any educational and emotional drawbacks in the recommended use of face coverings will be mitigated by benefits in managing transmission.

Ministers may reintroduce shielding

Shielding for people who are clinically extremely vulnerable was paused earlier this year.

The Government could agree to reintroduce shielding “in the event of a major outbreak or variant of concern that poses a significant risk to individuals on the shielded patient list”. We would respond with an individual risk assessment and an informed decision in the event of this occurrence.

Limits on trips and performances may be needed

Travel to school in taxis and public transport will continue as normal whilst school is open. We have been told to make sure that plans “cover the possibility” that we are asked to limit residential trips, open days, transition or taster days, parental attendance in settings and performances. We will continue to offer an enriched curriculum including as many opportunities as possible, recommended and safe.

At APAT we believe that all children have the right to a high quality, broad and balanced education including social and emotional learning and development. We work tirelessly to

keep children and the wider community safe and you can rest assured that we will analyse, adapt and ensure a safe 2021/22 provision for your child.