

ST EDWARD'S ACADEMY

Schools operating safely - Risk Assessment

JANUARY 2022



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St Edward's Academy recognises that there remain considerable challenges from the Covid-19 pandemic. The Department for Education's guidance is at [Schools COVID-19 operational guidance - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/guidance/schools-covid-19-operational-guidance). This risk assessment is updated in the light of feedback, experience and guidance. Trade unions and staff are invited to comment and the Risk Assessment is made public on the school's website. Staff, parents/carers, students, visitors and key contractors working at the school are made aware of the school's control measures and the ways of working that are set out below.

This risk assessment has been updated in the light of the very high numbers of positive test results for Covid-19, particularly the very high transmission levels of the Omicron variant. At the start of the Spring Term:

- Staff will wear face coverings in communal areas outside of the classroom (unless exempt for medical reasons);
- Students will wear face coverings in communal areas outside of the classroom (unless exempt for medical reasons);
- Students will wear face coverings in classrooms (unless exempt for medical reasons) until at least 26th January, this will be reviewed by the Government and revised guidance subsequently issued;
- Only essential visitors will attend the school site (staff will confer with members of the St Edward's senior leadership team to determine whether a visit is deemed to be essential);
- Any visitors will wear a face covering while onsite (unless exempt for medical reasons);
- Large gatherings will be avoided. If a whole school assembly takes place, this will be online. Year group assemblies will continue, in person, with all students and staff wearing face coverings. Whole staff training and meetings and large parents' meetings (including Parents' Evenings) will take place online;
- After school clubs and enrichment opportunities will continue but may be restricted if/when we are advised we should do so.

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Control measures

There are four key areas where more detail is provided below:

1. Ensure good hygiene for everyone.
2. Maintain appropriate cleaning regimes.
3. Keep occupied spaces well ventilated.
4. Follow public health advice on testing, self-isolation and managing confirmed cases of COVID-19.

1. Ensure good hygiene for everyone

- Hand hygiene - Frequent and thorough hand cleaning should continue to be regular practice. We will continue to ensure that pupils clean their hands regularly. This can be done with soap and water or hand sanitiser. We are refreshing the importance of these measures at the start of the term through the assemblies planned for each Year group.
- Respiratory hygiene - The 'catch it, bin it, kill it' approach continues to be very important (the e-Bug COVID-19 website contains free resources, including materials to encourage good hand and respiratory hygiene).
- Use of personal protective equipment (PPE) - Most staff in schools will not require PPE beyond what they would normally need for their work. The guidance on the use of PPE in education, childcare and children's social care settings (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/safe-working-in-education-childcare-and-childrens-social-care>) provides more information on the use of PPE for COVID-19.

2. Maintain appropriate cleaning regimes

Our cleaning schedule includes daily cleaning of all areas and equipment, with a particular focus on frequently touched surfaces. We take the lead from the Public Health England guidance on the cleaning of non-healthcare settings (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/Covid-19-decontamination-in-non-healthcare-settings>). Action Cleaning (our providers) are well versed in requirements and expectations and meet regularly with the Headteacher and Site Manager to discuss cleaning regimes.

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We are refreshing the importance of vigilance and rigour both by our cleaning team (Action Cleaning) and all members of the school community. This includes through the additional mindfulness of good practice in the working and learning environment by all members of the school community in their workspaces.

3. Keep occupied spaces well ventilated

When the school is in operation, it is important to ensure that the building is well ventilated and that a comfortable teaching and learning environment is maintained. We have looked at the ventilation in spaces across the site and have taken steps to improve fresh air flow in these areas. Where possible, we have acted to increase the ventilation rate and have checked to confirm that normal operation meets current guidance and that only fresh outside air is circulated (for example, when we are having to use air conditioning in certain specific areas). Where systems cannot be adjusted to full fresh air, then systems will be operated as normal as long as they are within a single room and are supplemented by an outdoor air supply (open windows). Where possible, opening external windows improves natural ventilation, and opening internal doors (and some external opening doors) also assists with creating a throughput of air.

We are using the CO₂ monitors that the Department for Education have provided to all schools. These allow staff to identify where ventilation needs to be improved. The CO₂ monitors have been in use in selected classrooms since their arrival from the DfE. Staff are well-trained in their response to the monitor display. We are also exploring the latest suggestion from the DfE for air purifiers for use in poorly ventilated areas of the school, where these are available.

The current version of the risk assessment restricts events onsite involving members of the community. When these restrictions are lifted and events onsite can resume, will give particular consideration when holding events where visitors such as parents/carers are onsite (for example, school plays or concerts).

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5. Following public health advice on testing, self-isolation and managing confirmed cases of Covid-19

The main symptoms of coronavirus (Covid-19) are:

- a high temperature – this means you feel hot to touch on your chest or back (you do not need to measure your temperature)
- a new, continuous cough – this means coughing a lot for more than an hour, or 3 or more coughing episodes in 24 hours (if you usually have a cough, it may be worse than usual)
- a loss or change to your sense of smell or taste – this means you've noticed you cannot smell or taste anything, or things smell or taste different to normal

A number of symptoms are commonly known now and associated with a possible case of Covid -19, from headaches, muscle aches, runny noses, sneezing, lower back pain, and night sweats. There are other signs of the virus have been reported, linked to the Omicron variant. These include nausea, hair loss, conjunctivitis, coughing, a fever, and a slight loss of smell and taste. The loss of smell, though, is more associated with the Delta variant than with Omicron. If in any doubt, please test.

Schools no longer carry out contact tracing with close contacts now being identified via NHS Test and Trace.

Children over the age of 5 and up to 18 years and 6 months and fully vaccinated adults (who have had 2 doses of an approved vaccine) who are identified as a contact of someone with Covid -19 do not have to automatically self-isolate. Instead, they are strongly advised to take a lateral flow test every day for 7 days and continue to attend their setting as normal, unless they have a positive test result. Pupils with SEND identified as close contacts will be supported by their school and their families to agree the most appropriate route for testing including, where appropriate, additional support to assist swabbing. Adults who choose not to get vaccinated, will need to self-isolate if identified as a close contact of someone with Covid -19.

All adults and children that have a positive test for Covid-19 (or are told to do so by NHS Test and Trace) should self-isolate. This means not leaving home because you have or might have Covid-19. This is a legal requirement.

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If someone lives with someone who has symptoms or tested positive, they will need to self-isolate unless:

- they are fully vaccinated – this means 14 days have passed since a second dose of an approved Covid-19 vaccine
- they are under 18 years and 6 months old

If someone who is fully vaccinated lives with someone who has symptoms or tested positive, whether or not they have symptoms, they are strongly advised to do daily rapid lateral flow tests (1 a day for 7 days), consider limiting contact with people who are at higher risk from Covid-19 and tell people who have been in close contact within the past 48 hours that they have been in close contact with people who have symptoms.

If someone tests positive, the self-isolation period includes the day symptoms started (or the day of the test if there weren't any symptoms) and next 10 full days. This will need to continue for longer if symptoms emerge or do not go away. The self-isolation can end after 7 days if rapid lateral flow tests on days 6 and 7 of the self-isolation period (with the tests at least 24 hours apart) are both negative and the person is not running a high temperature.

Self-isolating can stop after the 10 days if either there are no symptoms or the symptoms are limited to just a cough or changes to the sense of smell or taste (as these can last for weeks after the infection has gone).

Where a member of the trust central team is a contact of a positive case, they will take greater care than usual when visiting schools if they are not required to self-isolate. This will include holding meetings with face coverings/social distancing and avoiding classrooms and the staffroom.

If anyone in the school develops Covid-19 symptoms, however mild, they will be sent home and they should follow public health advice. Not all coughs will be Covid-19.

Everyone with symptoms should avoid using public transport as far as is feasible and, wherever possible, be collected by a member of their family or household to return home.

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If a pupil is awaiting collection, they should be left in a room on their own if possible and safe to do so. A window will be opened for fresh air ventilation if possible. Appropriate PPE should also be used if close contact is necessary. Any rooms they use will be cleaned thoroughly after they have left by Action Cleaning staff.

In most cases, parents and carers will agree that a pupil with symptoms should not attend the school, given the potential risk to others. If a parent or carer insists on a pupil attending, St Edward's Academy can take the decision to refuse the pupil if, in our reasonable judgement, it is necessary to protect other pupils and staff from possible infection with Covid-19. Any such decision would need to be carefully considered in light of all the circumstances and current public health advice.

All staff and secondary aged children are asked to continue to use lateral flow testing kits test twice weekly at home. All secondary aged children will be asked to have a Covid test onsite at school at the start of the Spring Term. At St Edward's this testing takes place on Thursday 6th and Friday 7th January 2022.

Staff and pupils with a positive LFD test result should self-isolate. They will also need to get a free PCR test to check if they have Covid-19 using [Get a free PCR test to check if you have coronavirus \(Covid-19\) - GOV.UK \(https://www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test\)](https://www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test); whilst awaiting the PCR result, the individual should continue to self-isolate; if the PCR test is taken within 2 days of the positive lateral flow test, and is negative, it overrides the self-test lateral flow and the individual can return to school, as long as the individual doesn't have Covid-19 symptoms.

Other considerations

- We encourage all staff and eligible pupils to take up the offer of two vaccinations, and adults the booster too. We do not keep a record of those who have been vaccinated and do not discriminate against those who have not had two vaccinations.
- Staff that have not had two vaccinations, and so would have to self-isolate if identified as a close contact of someone who tests positive, are asked to make the headteacher aware of this.

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- We support the Government drive for the vaccination of 12-15 year olds to slow the spread of Covid-19 in schools. We appreciate that staff and pupils may require time off to attend vaccination appointments (including booster appointments) which will be authorised.
- We acknowledge that, on occasions, the vaccine can result in side effects which may trigger an absence. In this instance, allowances will be made.
- Face coverings should be worn in enclosed and crowded spaces where there is contact with people not normally met - this includes public transport (and adheres to the Transport for London expectations for the compulsory wearing of face coverings on buses and tubes).
- Staff from the central team that visit a school will wear a face covering.
- Public health advice will be sought if there are significant concerns, including as set out in the outbreak management plan below, or if a pupil, student, child or staff member is admitted to hospital with Covid-19.
- We encourage all 12-17-year-olds to take up the offer of vaccination.
- All children and young people previously referred to as clinically extremely vulnerable (CEV) should attend the education setting unless they are one of the very small number of children and young people under paediatric or other specialist care who have been advised by their clinician or other specialist not to attend. This will be discussed with the St Edward's medical support team.
- All secondary aged pupils are asked to use home testing kits test twice weekly at home. Home testing kits are provided by the school.
- School attendance is mandatory for all pupils of compulsory school age and it is a priority to ensure that as many children as possible regularly attend school. Where a child is required to self-isolate or quarantine because of Covid-19 in accordance with relevant legislation or guidance they are recorded as:
 - code X (not attending in circumstances related to Covid-19)
 - code I (illness) - where they are unable to attend because they have a confirmed case of Covid-19
 - for pupils abroad who are unable to return, code X is unlikely to apply - in some specific cases, code Y (unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances) will apply.
- Travel and quarantine – Parents/carers travelling abroad should bear in mind the impact on their child's education which may result from any requirement to quarantine or isolate upon return, and avoid any travel that may be likely to involved reduced school attendance;

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- Remote education – the school is maintaining its capacity to deliver high-quality remote education for the next academic year, including to support those who need to self-isolate because they have tested positive to work or learn from home (if they are well enough to do so), and for pupils who are abroad and facing challenges to return due to Covid-19 travel restrictions for the period they are abroad. Remote education provided will be equivalent in length to the core teaching pupils receive in school (ie the full timetable). Where necessary, we expect to work collaboratively with families and put in place reasonable adjustments so that pupils with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) can successfully access remote education.
- The USP HR team will assist with individual risk assessments for clinically extremely vulnerable (CEV) staff, pregnant staff and staff who have not / will not receive the vaccine due to various personal / medical reasons and identify themselves as requiring alternative safety measures to receiving the vaccine (i.e. continued use of face coverings / PPE).
- School meals – where a child is entitled to a Free School Meal, but is required to isolate or is not in school due to Covid-19, a voucher will be provided to the family to cover the cost of the meal. School Administrators will apply for the vouchers to the USP team at fsm@unitysp.co.uk.
- A separate risk assessment will be carried out for each educational visit, extra-curricular provision, breakfast clubs and after school provision.

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Outbreak Management Plan

This outlines how St Edward's will operate if any of the measures described below are recommended by Government or Public Health England for our area, or if any of these thresholds are reached:

- 5 students or staff, who are likely to have mixed closely, test positive for Covid-19 within a 10-day period;
- 10% of students or staff who are likely to have mixed closely test positive for Covid-19 within a 10-day period;

We consider close mixing to include:

- staff and students taking part in the same activity session together;
- a form group or subject class;
- a friendship group who often spend time together (including on the journey to school);
- a friendship group mixing at breaktimes and lunchtimes;
- sports team;
- a group in an after-school activity;
- a tutor offering one-to-one tuition to a student, or to multiple students at the same time.

At the point of reaching a threshold, we will review and reinforce the testing, hygiene and ventilation measures already in place and consider:

- whether any activities could take place outdoors, including exercise, assemblies, or lessons;
- any ways to improve ventilation indoors, where this would not significantly impact thermal comfort;
- one-off enhanced cleaning focussing on touch points and any shared equipment.

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We will seek additional public health advice from the DfE helpline (0800 046 8687, option 1) local public health, and consider the extent to which additional actions should be taken because it is assessed that transmission is likely to be occurring in the school. These actions could include the following and will last for a short period without having reached the outbreak stage:

- further encouragement for students to undertake twice weekly rapid asymptomatic home testing and reporting;
- temporarily retaining face coverings for staff and students in classrooms;
- increased frequency of testing.

We would limit:

- residential educational visits;
- open days;
- transition or taster days;
- parental attendance;
- performances.

In extreme cases, and as a last resort, where all other risk mitigations have not broken chains of in-school transmission, the school may be advised to introduce short-term attendance restrictions, such as sending home a form class or Year group. Remote learning would then be provided for all pupils well enough to learn from home. Onsite provision will in all cases be retained for vulnerable learners and the children of critical workers.