



DUDLEY ACADEMIESTRUST

COVID-19: Outbreak Management Plan (Secondary)

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Introduction

This Outbreak Management Plan is based on the [Contingency Framework for Managing Local Outbreaks](#) of Coronavirus (COVID-19), published by the Department for Education (DfE).

The purpose of this plan is due to the government making it a national priority that education and childcare settings continue to operate as normal during the COVID-19 pandemic. The DfE's COVID-19 Contingency Framework states that schools should have an outbreak management plan, which describes how they would operate if there were an outbreak in school.

This plan outlines how The Link Academy would operate if any of the additional measures, due to a Variant of Concern (VoC), were recommended for our setting or area and includes how The Link Academy will ensure every learner receives the quantity and quality of education and care to which they are normally entitled.

We will only implement some, or all, of the measures in this plan in response to recommendations provided by our local authority (LA), directors of public health (DsPH), UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) health protection team or the national government.

It may be necessary to implement these measures in the following circumstances:

- To help manage a COVID-19 outbreak within the academy. Actions will be considered when either of the following thresholds are met:
 - There are 5 positive cases amongst learners or staff who are likely to have mixed closely within a 10-day period.
- If COVID-19 infection rates in the community are, extremely high, and other measures have failed to reduce transmission.
- As part of a package of measures responding to a 'variant of concern' (VoC).
- To prevent unsustainable pressure on the NHS.
- If an outbreak occurs, the academy will work with Dudley health protection team to help identify individuals who may have been in contact with known infectious individuals.

Seeking Public Health Advice

When one of the thresholds above is met, we will review the testing, hygiene and ventilation measures already in place.

We will also seek public health advice from a director of public health or health protection team by telephoning the DfE helpline (0800 046 8687).

Guidance

The Link Academy continues to seek guidance from:

- [Actions for early years and childcare providers during the COVID-19 outbreak](#)
- [Actions for schools during the COVID-19 outbreak](#)
- [Protective measures for holiday and after-school clubs, and other out-of-school settings during the COVID-19 pandemic](#)

- [Summer schools programme guidance](#)
- [Contingency framework: education and childcare settings](#)

Scenario 1: Single Confirmed COVID-19 Case

If one case is identified in the academy, the following steps will be taken in line with the latest guidance:

- The academy will liaise with Public Health passing on the relevant information.
- The academy will follow Dudley Academies Trust reporting guidance.
- Those in close contact will be asked to isolate.
- Consideration will be given to transport and visitor contacts.
- Remote learning plan to be implemented for those isolating.
- The academy's COVID-19 Risk Assessment to be evaluated in light of any learning from new case.

Scenario 2: Outbreak within Setting

The definition of an outbreak in a non-residential setting is:

Two or more test-confirmed cases of COVID-19 among individuals associated with a specific non-residential setting with illness onset dates within 14 days, and one of the following:

- Identified direct exposure between at least 2 of the test-confirmed cases in that setting (for example under one metre face to face, or spending more than 15 minutes within 2 metres) during the infectious period of one of the cases.
- When there is no sustained local community transmission - absence of an alternative source of infection outside the setting for the initially identified cases.

An outbreak is deemed to last 28 days from the last positive diagnosis.

The best way to avoid an outbreak in a setting is to ensure preventative measures are in place. Within the academy, the following will be in place:

- A risk assessment that reflects the current government guidance
- Appropriate PPE will be provided and worn in line with guidance
- Hand sanitiser will be freely available
- Staff who can work from home will do so
- The Dudley Academies Trust (DAT) COVID Response will be followed
- LFT testing will be available for staff, visitors and secondary learners.

Scenario 3 – The Setting Is Affected By A Package of Local or National Measures

The COVID-19 situation is ever changing, as are the directed responses. The academy will work with Dudley Academies Trust to ensure the implementation of any local or national restrictions and guidance. The academy will work in collaboration with professionals and stakeholders to limit the impact on educational delivery. This will include with the following:

- Parents/Carers
- Learners
- Public Health
- Local Authority
- Social Care
- DfE.

The following plans are in place to support the continued delivery of education under local or national measures:

Testing

If recommended, we will increase the use of home testing by secondary aged learners and all staff. If it is advised that we reintroduce an asymptomatic testing site (ATS) at our academy, we will consult with the director of public health (DsPH) to discuss any further support we need to do this.

These measures may be advised:

- For an individual setting or a small cluster of settings only, by Directors of Public Health as part of their responsibilities in outbreak management. In most cases a “cluster” will be no more than 3 or 4 settings linked in the same outbreak.
- For settings across areas that have been offered an enhanced response package, where settings and Directors of Public Health decide it is appropriate.

Note: Learners who have tested positive in the last 90 days are exempt from testing during an outbreak unless they have new symptoms. These children will need to be accommodated in school as normal based on staff capacity and risk assessment.

Dedicated Testing Sites

The Link Academy to establish dedicated testing sites following national guidance and previous guidance from Schools, Colleges Testing Handbook V3.7.

The academy will reintroduce specific roles to support testing. These roles were identified in the Schools, Colleges Testing Handbook V3.7 and used on sites in January 2021.

Refresher training for staff will be made available if required.

The academy’s senior leaders will ensure that ATS does not negatively affect the education provided to learners.

Home Testing

The academy will continue to provide testing kits to staff and secondary learners twice a week and encourage their use.

Additional use of home testing by staff and learners may be advised and will be encouraged by the academy.

Evidence of negative test results may be requested for access to academy sites for events such as open days and school proms.

Test Refusal

If a parent/carer refuses a test and insists on a learner attending the academy, the academy can take the decision to refuse the learner if, in their reasonable judgement, it is necessary to protect other learners and staff from possible infection with COVID-19.

It is reasonable to refuse attendance without the PCR test result. The learner should be treated as positive (on the grounds of probability in relation with the outbreak that they are part of) and would isolate from the academy for 10 days.

Face Coverings

The Link Academy will introduce the use of facemasks in the academy for staff and secondary learners in cases of Variants of Concern including communal areas and classrooms.

All staff and secondary learners (unless exempt) will be asked to wear a face covering in classrooms or during activities, unless social distancing can be maintained or a face covering would affect the ability to take part in exercise or strenuous activity, in line with the cohort of learners they have.

The academy's COVID-19 risk assessment will be updated in line with guidance and parents/carers will be informed of the reintroduction of face coverings. The academy will ensure that they have sufficient stock of PPE including facemasks.

Education Workforce

The Link Academy will continue to support learners and staff through individual risk assessments and support who are:

- Clinically Vulnerable (CV)
- Clinically Extremely Vulnerable (CEV)
- Pregnant/Expectant mothers
- BAME

We will continue to implement the system of controls set out in the COVID-19 operational guidance for educational settings. The academy's COVID-19 risk assessment explains to stakeholders the measures that have been put in place to reduce risks to learners and staff, including how these protective measures have been reviewed as part of an updated workplace risk assessment.

Other Measures

Parents, carers, learners and staff will be informed promptly about the introduction of control measures. This will be done by sending letters via Weduc, information being published on the academy's website and staff briefing notes, once a decision has been made.

If recommended, we will limit:

- Residential educational visits
- Open days
- Transition or taster days

- Parents/carers coming into the academy
- Live performances

Residential Educational Visits

Risk assessments for trips, including COVID-19 procedures, are updated following national guidance.

Educational Day Visits: any educational day visits must be conducted in line with relevant COVID-19 secure guidelines and regulations and a full risk assessment in relation to all educational visits must be undertaken to ensure they can be undertaken safely. As part of this risk assessment, we will need to consider what control measures need to be used and follow wider advice on visiting indoor and outdoor venues. The academy will consult the health and safety guidance on educational visits when considering visits.

Educational Day Visits: will be reviewed and potentially postponed.

Domestic Residential Educational Visits: any domestic residential educational visits must be conducted in line with relevant COVID-19 guidance and regulations and risk assessments should be undertaken.

Domestic Residential Educational Visits will be reviewed and potentially postponed in the event of a Variant of Concern.

International Visits: the government has now published [red, amber and green list](#) rules for entering England. Given the complexities attached to international travel at this stage of the pandemic, the government recommends schools do not go on any international visits this academic year up to and including 5th September 2021. The position beyond 5th September 2021 will be reviewed again in advance of Step 4.

International Visits will be reviewed and potentially postponed in the event of a Variant of Concern.

Open Days

In the event of a Variant of Concern, transitional, and open days will be managed through the completion of a thorough risk assessment in line with agreed system of controls and aligned with the advice contained from the government roadmap out of lockdown.

Open days will be reviewed and potentially postponed/cancelled in the event of a Variant of Concern.

In the event of cancellation, Dudley Academies Trust and academy leaders will manage remote transitional and open days.

Individual academy risk assessments will be completed and will include:

- Parents/carers will be asked to produce a negative COVID-19 test before entry to site
- Separate entry and exit points to the academy
- Minimum number of participants (if any)
- All visitors to wear face coverings (unless exempt) and regularly wash/sanitise hands.

Parental Attendance in Settings

- In the event of a Variant of Concern, parents/carers advised to limit their access to the academy as much as possible.
- Parents/carers or visitors permitted on the academy site by invitation only and must have an arranged appointment.
- Visitors will be collected from reception as soon as possible to avoid unnecessary waiting.
- All visitors (unless exempt) expected to wear a face covering and informed of this when a meeting is booked. This can be removed in the venue for the meeting if social distancing is possible.
- Where possible conversations with parents/carers staff will be either over the phone or via the academy's email address.
- Parents/carers are not be permitted to attend academy fixtures such as football matches etc.

Performance in Settings

If the academy is planning an indoor or outdoor face-to-face performance in front of a live audience, staff should continue to follow the latest [performing arts guidance](#) and the guidance on [delivering outdoor events](#).

Performances will be reviewed and potentially postponed/cancelled in the event of a Variant of Concern.

Events and Proms

Outdoor events are generally lower risk. Once the academy has undertaken a risk assessment and planned the event in line with the system of controls, the academy may consider an outdoor event (for example a leavers' celebration or prom) that caters for more than one bubble or consistent group, as long as the groups continue to be kept separate.

Events and Proms will be reviewed and potentially postponed/cancelled in the event of a Variant of Concern.

Local authorities, Directors of Public Health (DsPH) and PHE Health Protection Teams (HPTs) may recommend these precautions in one setting, a cluster of settings, or across an entire area.

Summer Schools (delivered under DfE's summer school funding scheme)

In most circumstances, learners should be allowed to attend summer schools as planned. Facilities and activities should reflect any local or national restrictions.

If attendance restrictions are needed as a last resort, the academic element of the programme may need to be delivered remotely.

Learners should still also be allowed to attend holiday activities and food programme provision "in most circumstances".

However, if we decide not to hold face-to-face holiday clubs as a result of COVID-19, for example if they are cancelled following government advice, we will operate flexibly to ensure that eligible learners still receive support that meets the aims of the programme.

Attendance Restrictions

Attendance restrictions will only be recommended as a last resort. Where measures include attendance restrictions, the Department for Education (DfE) may advise on any groups that should be prioritised.

The government will try to give as much notice as possible of any changes to the way settings should operate.

As with other periods of restricted attendance, academies within Dudley Academies Trust will provide high quality remote education for all learners or those not attending.

Local teams for individual settings or clusters of closely linked settings may advise restrictions on attendance.

If attendance restrictions are required across an area, The Link Academy will determine the workforce required onsite and if it is appropriate for some staff to work remotely.

Where learners have EHCPs and cannot attend school, a risk assessment will be undertaken to assess if they are safer at home or in the academy.

If some attendance restrictions are needed, all vulnerable children and young people, children of critical workers, learners in years 10 and 11, and other learners who were due to take external exams this academic year should still be allowed to attend. If, by exception, attendance is restricted further, vulnerable children and young people and children of critical workers should still be allowed to attend.

Eligibility to Remain In School

In the first instance, we will stay open for:

- Vulnerable learners
- Children of critical workers

Education and Support for Learners At Home

All other learners will be required to stay at home and will receive remote education.

We will aim to deliver remote education that meets the same quality and quantity of education that learners would receive in school, as outlined in our remote learning plan and policy on the academy's website.

The Link Academy will continue to provide meal options for all learners who are in school. Meals will be available free of charge to all learners who meet the benefits-related free school meals eligibility criteria.

The Link Academy will continue to provide free school meals support in the form of meal vouchers for learners who are eligible for benefits related free school meals and who are not attending school because they:

- Are self-isolating
- Have had symptoms or a positive test result themselves
- Are a close contact of someone who has COVID-19

Further information is available in the guidance on '[Providing school meals during the COVID-19 outbreak](#)'. The Link Academy will continue to support learners who are eligible for, and usually receive, free meals even if learners are studying remotely due to COVID-19.

Cleaning

The Link Academy continues to follow robust cleaning regimes such as:

- Additional COVID-19 response cleaners
- Enhanced cleaning of academy site
- Enhanced touch-point cleaning processes

Following the identification of the person with COVID-19 symptoms, COVID-19 response cleaners will clean and disinfect:

- All surfaces that the symptomatic person has come into contact with, including objects which are visibly contaminated with body fluids; and
- All potentially contaminated high-contact areas such as toilets, door handles, telephones, grab-rails in corridors and stairwells.

In the event of a Variant of Concern or local outbreak, cleaning will be enhanced further:

- Deep clean of whole academy and specific areas
- Additional cleaning support
- Additional training of cleaners

Waste

The Link Academy continues to manage effective waste management.

All waste from possible cases and cleaning of areas where possible cases have been (including disposable cloths and tissues) should be:

- Put in a plastic rubbish bag and tied when full. That plastic bag should then be placed in a second bin bag and tied.
- Stored safely and kept away from learners. Waste should not be put in communal waste areas for at least 72 hours. It can then be disposed of normally.

Infection Prevention and Control Precautions

Infection prevention and control precautions continue to be implemented including:

- Good hand hygiene before entering and after leaving the academy, as well as regularly throughout the day.
- Ensuring that everyone (learners and staff) catch coughs and sneezes in tissues. If a tissue is not available, then the crook of the elbow should be used rather than hands.
- Dispose of tissues promptly in a waste bin and then perform hand hygiene.

Vulnerable Learners

Where vulnerable learners are absent, The Link Academy will:

- Follow up with the parent/carer, working with the local authority and social worker (where applicable), to explore the reason for absence and discuss their concerns
- Encourage the learner to attend educational provision, working with the local authority and social worker (where applicable), particularly where the social worker and the Virtual School Head (where applicable) agrees that the learners attendance would be appropriate
- Focus the discussions on the welfare of the learner and ensuring that they are able to access appropriate education and support while they are at home
- Have in place procedures to maintain contact, ensure they are able to access remote education support, as required, and regularly check if they are doing so.

If we have to temporarily stop onsite provision on public health advice, we will discuss alternative arrangements for vulnerable learners with Dudley Academies Trust.

Safeguarding

We will review our Child Protection and Safeguarding policy to make sure it reflects the local restrictions and remains effective.

We will aim to have a trained DSL or deputy DSL on site wherever possible. On occasions where there is no DSL or deputy on site, a senior leader will take responsibility for co-ordinating safeguarding on site and the Trust's Senior Inclusion Manager and Safeguarding Lead will give remote support.

Wellbeing calls will be made regularly (in line with individual learner risk assessments) to ensure that learners are safe and well at home.

When vulnerable learners are absent, we will:

- Speak to parents/carers and, where appropriate, social workers and the local authority, to work out the reason for absence
- Encourage attendance
- Ensure vulnerable learners can access appropriate education and support while at home
- Maintain contact, and check regularly that the pupil/learner is able to access remote education provision.

IT Access

As part of Dudley Academies Trust remote learning plan, details will be held of who requires a device to be provided. These will be available to be collected from the academy or, if there is warning, they will be distributed prior to class/academy closures.

Part of the wellbeing calls will be to monitor this provision and learner access to the remote learning so that support can be given as required.

Additional Measures

This Outbreak Management Plan outlines how The Link Academy would operate if any additional measures were recommended from national guidance due to a Variant of Concern or extended lockdown measures.

DAT COVID-19 Risk Assessment for Full Opening of Schools

Dudley Academies Trust continues to update its Trust-wide COVID-19 risk assessment in line with national guidance. The risk assessment is updated in consultation with academy leaders and uploaded regularly to academy websites.

The Trust-wide COVID-19 risk assessment will be updated in the event of:

- Changes to National Guidance
- Updates on COVID-19 Roadmap
- Local outbreaks
- Academy Related Outbreaks
- Variants of Concern.