



Schools' Closure Due to Coronavirus (COVID-19)

Return to Schools' Opening Policy

Summer Term 2020

Introduction

The priority in considering to re-open a school is the safety and welfare of employees, and pupils and students. We will follow government guidance at all times in considering whether and how schools might reopen, and promote home working where essential.

The Trust's Scheme of Delegation for 19/20 (page 10 in the Roles and Responsibility matrix document) places the responsibility for Health and Safety (H&S) with Local Academy Boards (LAB) and Heads – who know their schools well and can make the local decisions most knowledgably, as follows:

LAB	Head
<p>To appoint a Local Governor responsible for health and safety</p> <p>To review the risk register of the School</p> <p>To adopt a health and safety policy for the School (in line with the Trust-wide policy)</p> <p>To review the implementation of the above policy and ensure that appropriate risk assessments are being carried out in the School</p> <p>To conduct site inspections to review any health and safety issues and the security of premises and equipment</p>	<p>To prepare the risk register for the LAB having regard to the risks identified by the Board</p> <p>To prepare and implement a health and safety policy for the School (in line with the Trust-wide policy) for adoption by the LAB</p> <p>To monitor the accident book and agree appropriate actions</p> <p>To ensure suitable risk assessments are prepared and appropriate actions taken</p> <p>To review security of premises and equipment</p> <p>To implement the Trust-wide lettings policy</p> <p>To draw up, agree and monitor an accessibility plan for the School in consultation with the CFO</p>

Re-opening a school is an operational decision which is taken by school leaders. Clearly any decision made by school leaders will need to take into account the DfE guidance, applying it to the school's individual context. School leaders must consult with their LABs, and notify the Trust, as the employer. Additional consideration of the duty of care to pupils must be made.

Guidance

The Trust and schools will have regard to the updated guidance available from the government, and the collection of documents can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus>

The Trust's H&S Policy and the schools' own policies and procedures are linked to this policy, as are the Trust's HR policies, and its Safeguarding Policy.

Approach

Throughout this continued period of closure/re-opening and until the government gives an assessment that COVID-19 no longer poses a threat to staff, pupils and students, we will use a risk assessment approach.

Risk assessments will be undertaken and regularly reviewed by senior staff, in each school of:

1. Site, buildings/learning environment and recorded, including consultation with staff
2. Staff profile - to understand how many staff would be available if the school re-opened or extended its provision.
3. Individual staff risk assessment profile undertaken with their line manager to ensure comprehensive understanding and support for each employee.

These documents are available in each school.

Prior to any re-opening or extension to opening, the LAB will be consulted on the risk assessment and a site walk will be undertaken with the LAB's nominated governor either prior to any change or within 5 days of the change taking place.

Any amendments/adaptations to risk assessments will always be recorded, initialled and dated to provide an on-going record, and reported to the Chair of the LAB weekly

Obligations

The Health and Safety at Work Act (1974) is the underpinning legislation, which places a duty on employers and employees. This requires what is reasonably practicable to be done.

The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations (1999) places an obligation on the employer to make a suitable and sufficient assessment of the risks an employee may be exposed to whilst at work.

Employees also have a duty within this legislation, they have a duty to take care of their own health and safety and that of others who may be affected by their actions at work. Employees must co-operate with employers and co-workers to help everyone meet their legal requirements. For example, to wash hands regularly in the manner recommended by the government.

With testing now being available for key workers, and more widely, the trust expects that any employee who has symptoms of COVID-19, must apply for a test. This can be done by visiting this website <https://www.gov.uk/apply-coronavirus-test> or through the trust by emailing the CFO zbratt@abingdonlearningtrust.org and the following the guidance regarding self-isolation until the test result is available.

Once antibody tests are available, the Trust will hope that employees will take advantage of this, with payment for the tests provided by the Trust.

The results of a COVID-19 test must be shared with your line manager as soon as you receive it. The provisions of the GDPR cover sharing this sensitive information, and the result will only be used in supporting the individual's risk assessment.

There is also the requirement to consider the risks to people who are not employees, such as pupils and students. Detailed risk assessments will be undertaken by senior school staff.

In responding to the legislation, the Trust will be following the guidance produced by the government Implementing Protective Measures in Education and Childcare Settings, published on 11 May 2020, and relevant support through Oxfordshire County Council (such as the weekly provision of PPE if required).

The Trust expects that school leaders will communicate and consult with staff about reopening, in advance of this, and have consulted parents. This latter is particularly important to understanding what the response might be to an invitation for their child to return to school.

Parents will not be fined for non-attendance at this time, and schools and colleges will not be held to account for attendance levels, in line with current government guidance.

Employment support and processes

Each school will identify staff who can't return to school at this point (for example, those who are extremely clinically vulnerable or those who are clinically vulnerable or living with someone who is extremely clinically vulnerable and stringent social distancing cannot be adhered to on site) and how they can work from home (for example, supporting remote education).

In response to the cancellation of tests and exams this year, and that there will be no publication of exam or test results for 2020, the trust has already adapted

its **Appraisal Policy**. Pupil progress objectives will be deemed to have been met in all cases, unless concerns were raised before schools were closed.

In line with national guidance, staff who self-isolate due to COVID-19 symptoms will not be required to produce a fit note, for the 7 or 14 day period and are expected to request a COVID-19 test. However, retaining contact with the school is critical and the usual procedures for notification of absence need to be followed.

There may be situations where employees are concerned, even after the risk assessment and mitigations have been discussed, to return to work.

The line manager will discuss the concerns with the member of staff, and if there persist to be concerns or anxieties that are not medically supported (by a fit note, for example), then unpaid leave may be agreed for a specified period of time, based on the Oxfordshire Emergency and Special Leave provisions – which allow for up to 13 days of leave in a rolling year. Starting the 'rolling year' at 1st June 2020, employees can have up to 5 days paid leave and a further 8 days unpaid leave. This needs to be agreed with the Head.

Individual circumstances will be taken into consideration and recorded, so that employees can feel secure that their health and safety concerns have been taken very seriously. Advice will be sought at this point. In extreme situations, continued absence without a medical practitioner's support could result in disciplinary action.

There may be staff who have childcare needs that cannot be met if they return to work, and their child/children's nursery/school is not yet open. In this situation, a period of paid dependant leave can be agreed with the Head, again as above, for 5 paid days and a further 8 days unpaid.

Individual circumstances will be taken into consideration and recorded, so that employees can feel secure that their circumstances have been taken into account.

If absence is likely to extend beyond this then the Head can agree unpaid leave up to a further 3 weeks.

Welfare and wellbeing

Each school has a Wellbeing Manager, who should be contacted if an employee has worries or concerns. Additionally, the members of each school's senior team are available, and the CEO is also available for staff to contact.

Additionally, further professional support is being sought and should be secured by August 2020, from an external occupational health and wellbeing source.