

Covid-19 Contingency Plan September 2021



This contingency plan is based on the guidance that is and has been published by GOV.UK. It is reviewed as the guidance changes.

Its primary objective is to outline schools provision, system of controls and responses to outbreaks (in school, localised or otherwise).

Introduction

It is the plan of Greenbank School that all pupils will return to school on **Monday 6th September**, with Year 7 pupils having completed a slimmed down transition programme.

The risk to children themselves of becoming severely ill from coronavirus (COVID-19) is very low and there are negative health impacts of being out of school. In relation to working in schools, whilst it is not possible to ensure a totally risk-free environment, the Office of National Statistics' analysis on coronavirus (COVID-19) related deaths linked to occupations suggests that staff in educational settings tend not to be at any greater risk from the disease than many other occupations. There is no evidence that children transmit the disease any more than adults.

Throughout the Covid-19 pandemic school and the governing board has and will continue to work closely with parents, staff, the LA and unions when agreeing the best approaches for their circumstances.

School has complied with Health & Safety law, completing a comprehensive risk assessment for both school day and residential provision and proportional control measures. The risk assessments are present on the school website and reviewed regularly. In drawing up the risk assessment school has used the *system of controls* present within GOV.UK guidance. Essential protective measures include:

- a requirement that people who are ill stay at home
- robust hand and respiratory hygiene
- enhanced cleaning arrangements
- active engagement with NHS Test and Trace
- formal consideration of how to reduce contacts and maximise distancing between those in school wherever possible and minimise the potential for contamination so far as is reasonably practicable

System of controls

This is the set of actions schools has taken. They are grouped into 'prevention' and 'response to any infection' and are outlined in more detail in

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-for-full-opening-special-schools-and-other-specialist-settings/guidance-for-full-opening-special-schools-and-other-specialist-settings>

Prevention

- 1) Minimise contact with individuals who are unwell by ensuring that those who have coronavirus (COVID-19) symptoms, or who have someone in their household who does, do not attend school.
- 2) Where recommended, use of face coverings in schools.
- 3) Clean hands thoroughly more often than usual.
- 4) Ensure good respiratory hygiene by promoting the 'catch it, bin it, kill it' approach.
- 5) Introduce enhanced cleaning, including cleaning frequently touched surfaces often, using standard products such as detergents and bleach.
- 6) Minimise contact between individuals and maintain social distancing wherever possible.
- 7) Where necessary, wear appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE).

Numbers 1 to 5 are in place, all the time.

Number 6 has been properly considered and schools and put in place taking into account the pupil population profile and the physical environment of school.

Number 7 applies in specific circumstances, where a pupil is able to access the use of face coverings or visors in communal areas (E.g. moving between lesson) or where staff are supervising a pupil who is displaying any of the 3 Covid-19 symptoms published by the NHS.

Response to any infection

- 8) Engage with the NHS Test and Trace process.
- 9) Manage confirmed cases of coronavirus (COVID-19) amongst the school community.
- 10) Contain any outbreak by following local health protection team advice.

Numbers 8 to 10 will be followed in every case where they are relevant.

Prevention

School will minimise contact with individuals who are unwell by ensuring that those who have coronavirus (COVID-19) symptoms, or who have someone in their household who does, do not attend school. School has written to parents with this preventative measure.

Pupils, staff and other adults will not be allowed to come into school if they have coronavirus (COVID-19) symptoms or have tested positive in at least the last 10 days. Anyone developing those symptoms during the school day will be sent home. In a household where someone has tested positive for Covid-19, **all** other household members will be asked to access a PCR test. If anyone else

in the household starts displaying symptoms, stay at home and access a PCR test. If they are unable to they will need to stay at home for at least 10 days from when their symptoms appear.

The ending isolation section below has more information.

- * If you have symptoms, try and stay as far away from other members of your household as possible.
- * Reduce the spread of infection in your home by washing your hands regularly for 20 seconds using soap and water, or use hand sanitiser, and cover coughs and sneezes.
- * Consider alerting people who you do not live with and have had close contact within the last 48 hours to let them know symptoms of COVID-19 are in the household.

Other essential actions will be considered to reduce the risk of transmission further. A flow chart of responses and 'Action Card' is in place in the event of a suspected / confirmed case of Covid-19 in school. This information lies with managers and has been shared with all staff in order to gain a consistency of approach.

Use of Face coverings

School, in liaison with parents and staff, have decided that face coverings and visors are optional when moving around school. Some pupils find the coverings uncomfortable and are unable to manage them safely. School also has a number of additional measures in place to reduce risk- Frequent hand washing, access to sanitiser, promotion of the 'catch it, bin it, kill it' message, a one-way system, staggered breaks and lunch, staggered arrival / departure times from school, management of the classroom environment, a more frequent cleaning schedule of toilets and classroom surfaces, observation of social distancing and closed bins in every classroom. A supply of visors and face coverings are held in reserve at school.

a) **Pupil grouping:** Bubbles no longer form part of the school response. This allows school to operate normally delivering a full and wide curriculum and provide opportunities for breaks that do not shorten or lengthen the school day. In the event of an outbreak pupil groupings will be re-visited.

All teaching, teaching assistant staff and therapists are able to operate across school in order to deliver the timetable and provide the therapies that pupils require in order to help them access their education. Staff will observe as much as they can the 2M distancing from each other.

b) **The classroom:** Ideally staff will endeavour to maintain a 2M distance from each other and pupils. Where a pupil needs support or is distressed staff will always provide this support, relying on hand hygiene and the other measures mentioned previously to keep themselves and pupils safe. Where practically possible pupil desks will face forwards rather than face to face. Workstations may also be used to protect pupils and staff.

A one-way system is in place to minimise mixing of pupils. Breaks and lunch are staggered. Staff room access is also limited.

c) **Arriving / departing school:** School welcomes pupils every day from across Cheshire West and other authorities. We currently have over 20 taxi vehicles and 15 family vehicles accessing the school site every day. This places immense pressure on the limited car parking that is available. In response arrival times for taxis have been staggered for the start and end of the day. This is managed by a colour semaphore system. Parents have the flexibility to escort their child into / from school as they arrive on site. Pupils line up on designated socially distanced signs. On entry to school they sanitise their hands and move directly to class. Those students who wear face coverings or visors remove them in class, where they are stored in a bag until the end of the day. Disposable coverings are placed in a sealed bin.

d) **Other:** Immunisation programmes will run as normal. Specialist equipment such as IT, P.E., Science, FT and DT is cleaned between lessons. Class surfaces are cleaned at the end of each lesson. Resources that need to be shared are left unused for 48 hours (72 for plastic). Outdoor play equipment will be cleaned more frequently. Devices are cleaned daily and stored in an open tray in a locked store cupboard.

PPE

At Greenbank School staff will not require PPE beyond what they would normally need for their work. PPE is only needed in a very small number of cases for example where an individual pupil becomes ill with coronavirus (COVID-19) symptoms while at school and only then if a distance of 2 metres cannot be maintained or where a pupil already has routine intimate care needs that involve the use of PPE, in which case the same PPE should continue to be used. To provide as much flexibility as possible and to reassure staff can opt to wear a visor.

Response to any infection

School is clear in its duties in responding to any infection by engaging with the NHS test and trace process. School will ask parents and staff to inform them immediately of the results of a test and follow this guidance:

* If someone tests negative, if they feel well and no longer have symptoms similar to coronavirus (COVID-19), they can stop self-isolating. They could still have another virus, such as a cold or flu – in which case it is still best to avoid contact with other people until they are better. Other members of their household can stop self-isolating.

* If someone tests positive, they should follow the guidance for households with possible or confirmed coronavirus (COVID-19) infection and must continue to self-isolate for at least 10 days from the onset of their symptoms and then return to school **only** if they **do not** have symptoms other than cough or loss of sense of smell/taste. This is because a cough or anosmia can last for several weeks once the infection has gone. The 10-day period starts from the day when they first became ill. If they still have a high temperature, they should keep self-isolating until their temperature returns to normal. Other members of their household do not need to self-isolate but are asked to access a PCR test x2 weekly. This will help to reduce asymptomatic spreading in school

Manage confirmed cases of coronavirus (COVID-19) amongst the school community

School will take swift action when it becomes aware that someone who has attended has tested positive for coronavirus (COVID-19). School will contact the local health protection team, who will carry out a rapid risk assessment. Further work will take place in order to guide school through the actions that need to be taken. The health protection team will provide definitive advice on who must be sent home. School will keep a record of pupils and staff in each group, and any close contact that takes places between children and staff in different groups to help support this process. School will **not** share the names or details of people with coronavirus (COVID-19) unless essential to protect others.

Schools will **not** request evidence of negative test results or other medical evidence before admitting pupils or welcoming them back after a period of self-isolation.

In the majority of cases, school would hope that school and parents will be in agreement that a child with symptoms should not attend school, given the potential risk to others. In the event that a parent or guardian insists on a child attending school, school can take the decision to refuse the child if in schools reasonable judgement it is necessary to protect other pupils and staff from possible

infection with coronavirus (COVID-19). Any such decision will be carefully considered in light of all the circumstances and the current public health advice.

Containing any outbreak

If school has two or more confirmed cases within 14 days, or an overall rise in sickness absence where coronavirus (COVID-19) is suspected, we may have an outbreak and must continue to work with the local health protection team who will be able to advise if additional action is required.

In consultation with the local Director of Public Health, where an outbreak in school is confirmed, a mobile testing unit may be dispatched to test others who may have been in contact with the person who has tested positive. Testing will first focus on the person's class, followed by their year group, then the whole school if necessary, in line with routine public health outbreak control practice.

Transport

Pupils attending Greenbank School attend either by dedicated transport (taxi) or parent vehicle. There has been a significant increase in the number of parents bringing their child to school this academic year, placing pressure on the available parking spaces. From the autumn term, local authorities will not be required to uniformly apply the social distancing guidelines on dedicated school. However, distancing should still be put in place within vehicles wherever possible. Pupils have the option to wear a face covering or visor.

Wherever it is possible:

- * social distancing should be maximised within vehicles
- * children sit with the same constant group of children each day
- * children should clean their hands before boarding transport and again on disembarking
- * additional cleaning of vehicles is put in place
- * organised queuing and boarding is put in place
- * ventilation of fresh air (from outside the vehicle) is maximised, particularly through opening windows and ceiling vents

Attendance

Attendance expectations

The usual rules on school attendance will apply, including:

- * parents' duty to secure that their child attends regularly at school where the child is a registered pupil at school and they are of compulsory school age
- * schools' responsibilities to record attendance and follow up absence
- * the availability to issue sanctions, including fixed penalty notices in line with local authorities' codes of conduct

Shielding or self-isolating

Where a pupil is unable to attend school because they are complying with clinical or public health advice, school will offer access to remote education. School will monitor engagement with this activity as set out in the action for all schools and local authorities section.

Where pupils are not able to attend school as parents and carers are following clinical or public health advice, for example, self-isolation or family isolation, the absence will **not** be penalised.

Pupils and families who are anxious about return to school

All other pupils must attend school. Where families are anxious, school will work with families to identify the specific issues and provide as much support as possible.

School workforce

Schools are not currently considered high risk settings when compared to other workplace environments. Shielding measures were paused from 1 August 2020. It is therefore appropriate for teachers and other school staff to return to their workplace setting. All staff should follow the measures set out in the system of controls to minimise the risks of transmission.

Governing boards and school leaders have regard to staff (including the headteacher) work-life balance and wellbeing. School has ensured it has explained to all staff the measures proposed to be put in place and has involved all staff in that process.

School has a duty of care to all employees, and this extends to their mental health. School already has mechanisms to support staff wellbeing and these will be particularly important, as some staff may be particularly anxious about returning to school.

In the event of staff having to quarantine school will review staff deployment in order to minimise the impact on pupils education and wellbeing. Pupil safety and welfare is a primary concern. If in the event of significant numbers of staff having to isolate, provision will have to be reviewed.

Teacher Performance Management and staff appraisal cycles and supervision will continue to run as normal. Some consideration will be given to the impact lockdown has had on staff opportunities to meet PMR/appraisal objectives (although it will also be taken into account that teachers have had the opportunity between October and March to make progress against objectives).

For the foreseeable future it is difficult to predict how lockdown abroad will change. School is asking staff to take this into account when booking well deserved breaks. This would include Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland, where Covid-19 arrangements are different.

Safeguarding

School has amended its Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy and Behaviour Policy to reflect the impact of Covid-19 on pupils.

Catering

The school kitchen is fully open and compliant with the guidance for food businesses on coronavirus.

School Building

During the period of lockdown since March, school has maintained its schedule of Health & Safety, for example water quality testing.

All available windows are open to provide good ventilation. Doors are also propped open during the school day and closed at the end of the day.

Educational visits

Overnight residential visits have been postponed until further notice.

An important part of the curriculum for students is access to the local community. This may be a park or other outdoor resource, such as Delamere Forest. Visits to supermarkets to buy healthy snack items have resumed. All visits off site are accompanied by a full risk assessment.

School uniform

Uniform plays a valuable role in contributing to the ethos of a school and setting an appropriate tone. The school uniform policy remains in place. Uniforms do not need to be cleaned any more often than usual, nor do they need to be cleaned using methods which are different from normal. On days pupils have P.E. they should attend school in their P.E. kit and have access to a jumper / tracksuit bottoms / joggers. P.E. kit should be washed before the next P.E. session.

Curriculum

A full broad and balanced national curriculum (including accreditation for Pre-Entry, Entry Level, Functional Skills and GCSE English and Maths pupils) will be in operation from 6th September. Remote education arrangements will remain on standby should a pupil be unable to attend school due to covid-19. However, there is no substitute for face to face teaching.

Physical activity in schools

Outdoor and sports equipment thoroughly cleaned between each use by different individual groups. Outdoor sports will be prioritised where possible, and the gym used where it is not, maximising natural ventilation flows (through opening windows and doors or using air conditioning systems wherever possible) distancing between pupils and paying scrupulous attention to cleaning and hygiene. Swimming groups access to the school pool and Brio pool in Northwich has resumed.

Whole School Celebrations

Currently all whole school celebrations- Harvest Festival, Winter Fair, Christmas Carol service- have been postponed. Assembly gatherings in the gym on a Monday, Wednesday and Friday have resumed. In the event of an outbreak of Covid-19 these arrangements will revert to remote occasions.

Pupil wellbeing and support

Pupils may have experienced a variety of emotions in response to the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak, such as anxiety, stress or low mood. School set up a system of welfare calls to keep in touch with pupils and families. School also has a team of Emotional Support Literacy Assistants (ELSA's) who have contacted some pupils. From September school is also putting into place a therapy provision to support students. The school website also signposts pupils and families to mental health and wellbeing services.

Exams

The current plan is that Entry, GCSE's will take place in summer 2022 but with adaptations, including those which will free up teaching time. School expects similar arrangements to be in place for all accredited courses.

Contingency planning for outbreaks

If a local area sees a spike in infection rates that is resulting in localised community spread, appropriate authorities will decide on which measures to implement to help contain the spread. Greenbank is unique in that it supports children from across Cheshire West and Chester, Cheshire East, Shropshire, Halton and Warrington. This will potentially present unique challenges for our school community.

For individuals or groups of self-isolating pupils, remote education plans will be in place.

In the event of a local outbreak, the PHE health protection team and local authority will advise school of next steps in order to effectively control transmission.

Pupils and staff must not attend school / work if they, have symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19). Household members can continue to access school but are asked to access a PCR test.

Resolving issues and raising concerns

It schools ambition that school, staff and families should always come together to resolve issues of concerns.

September 2021