



The North & South West Durham
LEARNING FEDERATION

COVID-19 (Coronavirus) Policy

Approved by:

Date: 16th March 2020

Signed by:

(Chair)

Last reviewed on: March 2020

Next review due by: Spring 2021

1 Executive Summary

The objective of this policy is to minimise the risk to students and staff during the COVID-19 epidemic. It is consistent with current Government Guidance, but **if the guidance changes that will take precedence over the actions in this policy.**

It recognises that some of the students of the Federation are among the more vulnerable members of society and so may need additional precautions.

It also recognises that for many of the students, the routine and structure of school is extremely important for their wellbeing, so aims to maintain normal routine as much as possible.

The Federation policy in response to the COVID-19 epidemic is summarised below, with details in the rest of this document:

- **Limit Risk to Students**
 - Implement additional **personal hygiene requirements** for staff and students as they move around the school (hand washing / sanitising). Face masks will not be used.
 - Limit **Student Travel**
 - Cancel any foreign trips
 - Review the risk of trips in the community in the light of COVID-19 risk.
 - Limit **Staff Travel** such as conferences and training.
 - Limit **Visitors to School/College**
 - **Parental Choice:** The school will authorise absence if parents / carers take the view that the risk to a student is minimised by staying away from school (for example a particularly vulnerable student).
- **Illness of Staff or Students**
 - If a member of staff or student shows symptoms that would require 'self-isolation' under the current Government guidance, they will be **sent home** to 'self-isolate'
 - **Sick pay will be paid** to staff who are self-isolating in line with government guidance.
- **School Closure**
 - Current Government advice is that blanket school closure in response to the COVID-19 epidemic is **not appropriate at this time**, unless advised by the relevant health authorities.
 - The Local authority will be informed by the Executive head teacher if in her judgement:
 - The overall staffing absence level is so high that the **safety of students** cannot be guaranteed.
 - The rate of staff or student illness is excessive.

In which case a decision may be made for one or more of the Federations schools should be closed

2 Introduction

The COVID-19 (Coronavirus) epidemic is developing rapidly. This document sets out the Federation policy on actions to be taken in response to the epidemic.

It should be noted that any compelling advice issued by central government or the local authority will take precedence over the actions set out in this policy.

3 Responsibilities

The following people have responsibilities under this policy.

3.1 *Executive Head Teacher*

Assign a member of each of the senior leadership teams to maintain up to date knowledge of the development of the epidemic and the current advice from the Government, Local Authority and NHS (COVID-19 Lead).

3.2 *COVID-19 Lead*

- Maintain up to date knowledge of the development of the epidemic and the current advice from the Government by subscribing to the relevant information feeds including advice to care homes (as this is advice to another vulnerable group) and monitoring them on at least a daily basis.
- Bring any changes in the recommended actions in response to the epidemic to the attention of the senior leadership team immediately.
- Communicate the requirements for 'self isolation' to school staff.

3.3 *School Staff*

- Follow the government guidance as advised by the COVID-19 lead on self-isolation if they show symptoms that would require self isolation to report it to their line manager immediately and go home.
- Report any concerns over a student displaying relevant symptoms to the COVID-19 lead or a member of the SLT team immediately.

4 Policy

4.1 *Policy Objectives*

- The objective of this policy is to minimise the risk to students and staff during the COVID-19 epidemic.
- It takes account of the current Government advice that blanket closure of schools is not appropriate at the current time (16 March 2020) [1].
- It recognises that some of the students of the Federation are among the more vulnerable members of society and so may need additional precautions.
- It also recognises that for many of the students, the routine and structure of school / college is extremely important for their wellbeing, so aims to maintain normal routine as much as possible.

4.2 *Limit Risk*

4.2.1 **Hygiene Precautions**

- Students and Staff will be required to follow the government advice on regular hand washing as being the best method of avoiding transmission of the virus.
- Hand sanitiser and tissues will be deployed around school premises.
- Signs and posters will be used to remind staff and students to use them
 - Where possible students will be involved in the design and manufacture of the signs to improve ownership of the issue by students.
- Hand washing routines will be made part of the normal routine of moving around school, so it is 'just what we do when we come into a class room' etc.
- Face masks will not be worn unless explicitly advised by the Government / Local Authority or NHS as this would be a significant change from normality for the students which would be very distressing for many of them.

4.2.2 **Student Travel**

- There should be no foreign travel until further notice.
- It is recognised that trips into the community (for example to shops, cafes or museums) are a regular part of school for many pupils. These will generally be cancelled. Some educational activities to less populated area may continue. Staff must consider the COVID-19 risk and additional precautions are expected to be appropriate such as:
 - Choosing destination based on likely exposure risk – it may be more appropriate to have an outdoor trip than an indoor one.
 - Avoiding busy times for visits to reduce exposure.
 - Including hand washing / use of sanitiser as part of the trip.
- Review arrangements for home-school transport with the LA to manage the risks to students.

4.2.3 **Staff Travel**

- Staff should limit attendance at external events such as conferences and training or information exchange visits to other schools / colleges until further notice.

4.2.4 **Visitors to School / College**

- General information exchange visits to school/college should be cancelled to minimise the exposure of our students.
- Other visitors to school can be admitted provided:
 - The visit is essential for the education, health or wellbeing of a student.
 - The visit is to carry out essential urgent maintenance on school property – non- urgent maintenance should be carried out when students are not present in school / college.
 - The visitor is not showing any symptoms that would require 'self isolation' under the current government guidance.
 - The visitor follows the hand washing / sanitisation requirements.

4.2.5 Parental Choice

- The Federation recognises that some parents / carers may judge that the risk to a student will be minimised if they do not attend school. This is most likely to be the case for those students at highest risk from COVID-19.
- Where this is the case the school will authorise the absence.

4.3 *Illness of Member of Staff or Student*

4.3.1 Sending Home Staff or Students who become ill

- If a member of staff or student becomes ill, the symptoms will be assessed against the current Government advice.
- If the symptoms are consistent with a requirement to 'self isolate' the member of staff or student will be sent home.

4.3.2 Sick Pay

- Sick pay will be paid to staff who are self-isolating in line with the Government advice and this policy.

4.4 *School Closure*

- Current (16 March 2020) Government advice is that blanket school / college closure in response to the COVID-19 epidemic is not appropriate at this time, unless advised by the relevant health authorities.
- The executive head teacher (or nominated Head of School, Deputy or Assistant Head) has the discretion recommend closure one or more of the Federation sites if in her judgement:
 - The overall staffing absence level is so high that the safety of students cannot be guaranteed.
 - The rate of staff or student absence is such that the virus appears to be being transmitted in the school, despite the additional precautions specified

4.4.1 Staffing Levels

- The safety of our students while in school is our overriding priority.
- The varying needs of our students means that it is not possible to specify a simple number of staff that are needed to ensure the safety of our students.
- The ability of us to ensure the safety of all our students will be assessed on a 'per class' basis daily, considering the following:
 - Numbers of students expected to attend that day.
 - The numbers of the normal teaching and support staff for that class who are expected to be at work.
 - The potential to re-deploy suitably qualified and experienced staff from other classes to support those classes with a shortage of staff.
 - The ability to keep students safe and provide school meals etc.
- If in the judgement of the executive head teacher (or nominated deputy), there are insufficient staff to ensure the safety of all students, one or more classes will be closed for a period and the students sent home.

- The choice of which class(es) to close will be based on the relative staffing shortfall and the risk to COVID-19 of the affected students.
- Classes with students at highest risk from COVID-19 will be closed in preferentially.

4.4.2 Administrative Staff

- It may be necessary to maintain many of the administrative, health and safety, maintenance and IT functions of the Federation, even if the school is closed completely
- If there is significant staff absence in the administrative functions, precautions to reduce the risk of not meeting the essential requirements will be implemented such as:
 - Separating key personnel into different offices
 - Some staff working from home.

5 Review Period

This policy shall be reviewed every week and revised if necessary. The document will be approved by the CEO.

6 References

- [1] [Government COVID-19 advice web site](#)