Northumberland
County Council

School COVID19 Outbreak Contingency Plan

Greenhead and Henshaw Primary Schools

3rd September 2021

About this Outbreak Contingency Plan

Please note the following:

- It is based on the content of the Operational Guidance for Schools, the "Contingency framework: education and childcare settings" document and advice from the local Health Protection Team. It has been written by the NCC Corporate Health and Safety Team, in conjunction with the NCC Education and Public Health Teams.

Introduction

All education and childcare settings are required to have an outbreak management plan (sometimes called a contingency plan) which **outlines how they would operate if any of the measures described in this document were recommended for their setting or area**. This includes how they would ensure every child, pupil or student receives the quantity and quality of education and care to which they are normally entitled.

The school management team (SMT) recognises the need to respond to outbreaks of COVID-19 quickly, effectively, and proportionately, to ensure a safe school environment whilst minimising the effect of loss of face-to-face education by prioritising measures which ensure business continuity. In all circumstances, the potential benefit of measures to reduce transmission will be weighed against the potential impact on education and restrictions on attendance will only be considered as a last resort. The health and safety of staff, pupils and visitors remains our number one priority.

The COVID-19 risk assessment for the school records the key protective measures in place, including some measures which may need to be re-introduced as part of this plan.

What is an Outbreak?

Where the number of positive cases substantially increases, this could indicate transmission is happening in the school. At this point, advice is sought from the NCC Public Health Team in the following circumstances [applicable to most settings]:

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

Identifying a group that is likely to have mixed closely will be different for each setting. A group will rarely mean a whole setting or year group. For schools, this could include:

- a form group or subject class
- a friendship group mixing at breaktimes
- a sports team
- a group in an after-school activity

[For other settings, such as early years and wraparound care close mixing examples can be found in the "Contingency framework: education and childcare settings" document]

The school will also seek public health advice if a pupil, student, child or staff member is admitted to hospital with COVID-19. Hospitalisation could indicate

increased severity of illness or a new variant of concern. Support in managing risk assessments and communicating with staff and parents may be offered.

Communication and Record Keeping

This plan is kept under periodic review by Sarah Hutchinson and will be reviewed following an outbreak to identify any aspects which worked well or areas for improvement.

The following arrangements are in place/will be put in place in the event of a case(s) of COVID-19:

- Parents are asked to inform the school of any positive COVID-19 case as soon as possible, as per normal arrangements for reporting sickness absence via the school office.
- NHS Test & Trace will undertake contact tracing and provide advice to close contacts. From 16 August those under 18 will no longer be required to self-isolate at home but they will be advised to take a PCR test. *Note: staff are instructed not to share contact details of individuals with anyone other than Test and Trace/Public Health Team (staff should not share contact details of close contacts with other parents/carers)*
- Details of the positive case will be kept so that any linked cases can be identified - including dates of symptoms/date of positive test/date last in school/details of class or social group.
- NCC Public Health Team are notified of the positive case(s) via the on-line notification form. If, later, the school become aware that an individual has been hospitalised, the Public Health Team will be notified via the enquiry form.
- Staff are informed when there has been a case of COVID-19 within the school and to be vigilant of anyone displaying symptoms.
- Inform and advise communications are sent to parents of groups of pupils who may be possible contacts of the positive case. This will request them to be vigilant for symptoms, keep pupils off school if they become symptomatic, go for a PCR test if they are identified as close contacts by Test and Trace.

Activating the Plan - Collaboration

The Local Authority, Director of Public Health for Northumberland, and Public Health England local health protection teams are responsible for managing localised outbreaks. They play an important role in providing support and advice to education and childcare settings. In all situations where this plan is implemented, the school will liaise and cooperate with the above to agree on the most appropriate protective measures which may need to be reintroduced to contain an outbreak, bearing in mind the priority of maintaining school attendance.

The plan will be activated in the following circumstances:

- to help manage a COVID-19 outbreak within the school
- if there is extremely high prevalence of COVID-19 in the community and other measures have failed to reduce transmission
- as part of a package of measures responding to a Variant of Concern (VoC)

The Head Teacher or Deputy Head Teacher will contact the NCC Public Health Team if they consider there may be an outbreak within the school due to illness reported. The NCC Public Health Team will contact the Head Teacher or Deputy Head from the school if they become aware of a possible outbreak within the school/area from PHE data they receive.

Step A – a single case or cases below the threshold of an Outbreak of COVID-19 in setting

- Parents notify school of a positive case, or the school is notified by the NCC Public Health Team.
- NHS Test & Trace will undertake contact tracing and advise close contacts to arrange a PCR test. The school is not expected to follow up the results of PCR tests.
- School administrators should note details of the case so that any linked cases within school can be identified.
- Notify the Public Health Team of the positive case(s) via the on-line notification form.
- The actions in the **Communication and Record Keeping section** are implemented.
- Covid risk assessment/existing protective measures are reviewed to identify any areas for improvement [as a very minimum enhanced cleaning, ongoing hand and respiratory hygiene and good ventilation should already be in place].
- Staff/pupils are reminded of the importance of following the protective measures in place within the setting.

Step 2 - An outbreak of COVID-19 in setting

When the school becomes aware of a possible outbreak Greenhead/ Henshaw Primary School will contact the NCC Public Health Team via their enquiry line:

https://form.northumberland.gov.uk/form/auto/covid19_education_enq

The NCC Public Health Team will:

- work with the school to identify the cohort the cases belong to and undertake an assessment including number of cases, spread within the school and evidence of ongoing transmission.
- work with the school to determine appropriate public health action in the event of an outbreak

- Hold an Outbreak Control Team meeting if required (informed by the public health team's risk assessment)
- Variant of Concern (VOC) cases – may be managed differently. Additional actions / investigations may be undertaken if a new variant is detected and that this will be led by the Health Protection Team in Public Health England (PHE).

The school/setting will:

- Implement the Outbreak Management Plan.
- Follow protocol as in **Step A for a single case.**
- Review and reinforce the testing, hygiene and ventilation measures they already have in place.
- Consider whether any activities could take place outdoors, including exercise, assemblies, or classes
- Consider ways to improve ventilation indoors, where this would not significantly impact thermal comfort
- Arrange a one-off enhanced cleaning focussing on touch points and any shared equipment
- Follow the advice of the NCC Public Health Team/Outbreak Control Team to implement recommended additional protective measures.
- Follow the actions in the **Communication and Record Keeping section** .

Possible Protective Measures – Arrangements

The following may be considered as additional protective measures to be reintroduced in school in the event of an outbreak.

Reintroduction of "bubbles"/Limits on mixing of pupils

The DfE advise that any recommendation for the reintroduction of 'bubbles' is not taken lightly and would need to take account of the detrimental impact they can have on the delivery of education. However, in certain settings (e.g. early years/first/primary schools) it's likely that this can be done without too much impact on education.

School transport seating plans are reintroduced (if not already in place).

Face coverings (staff and visitors)

The reintroduction of face coverings is one of the least disruptive protective measure and can be quickly and easily activated. Where this is recommended the school will:

- Agree with NCC Public Health Team if these will be worn in communal areas and/or classrooms, school transport (although these are likely to be already

being worn). Where reintroducing these back into the classroom the impact on learning balanced against the risk of transmission will be considered.
- Review and update the school COVID-19 risk assessment/separate face coverings risk assessment.
- Implement the control measures detailed in the risk assessment e.g. ensure sufficient bins for disposal, ensure there is a supply of disposable face coverings
- letter/messages home to parents informing them of the change in practice.

Restricting Attendance

Due to the number of days of missed on-site education, restricting attendance of pupils at school will only be considered if absolutely necessary and on the advice from the DfE/Government/Public Health Team/Director of Public Health for Northumberland. Where restrictions are put in place across a geographical area, the government will issue detailed operational guidance.

- Where restricted attendance is in place, the school will reactivate its arrangements to enable high quality remote learning including the loaning of IT equipment, safeguarding/pastoral requirements and free school meal provision. Priority for on-site attendance is given to vulnerable children and children of critical workers.
- Early years settings – all vulnerable children and children of critical workers are still able to attend.
- Primary Schools - all vulnerable children, children of critical workers, children in reception, year 1 and year 2 are allowed to attend. If attendance is restricted further, vulnerable children and children of critical workers should still be allowed to attend.

Shielding

Shielding for those identified as clinically extremely vulnerable from COVID-19 is currently paused. In the event of a major outbreak or variant of concern that poses a significant risk to individuals on the shielded patient list (SPL), ministers can agree to reintroduce shielding. Shielding would be considered in addition to other measures to address the residual risk to people on the SPL, once the wider interventions are taken into account.

Shielding can only be reintroduced by national government. If this were to happen the school will:

- Reactivate remote learning/support for pupils of the shielding list.
- Review individual risk assessments for relevant staff. Make arrangements to support working from home.
- Additional resources may be needed – agency staff, staff redeployment.

Other measures

It may be necessary to cancel, postpone or review arrangements for out of school visits, after school activities or large-scale gatherings/events. This will include:

- Church assemblies
- Christmas productions and PTA events indoors.
- Residential educational visits - Any attendance restrictions should be reflected in the visits risk assessment and setting leaders should consider carefully if the educational visit is still appropriate and safe. Only children who are attending the setting should go on an educational visit. Education settings should consult the health and safety guidance on educational visits when considering visits.
- Open days
- Transition or taster days
- Parental attendance in settings
- Performances in settings

Resources:

COVID-19 management flowchart – including link to notification/enquiry form.

Government Guidance:

Operational Guidance for Schools

"Contingency framework: education and childcare settings"

Document History:

First version: 3rd September 2021