



Introduction

The risks and consequences of COVID-19 (novel coronavirus) have been considered carefully following the news of a global outbreak. It is now appropriate to gather the information into a more coherent policy statement to which all staff may have access. This information is drawn from Public Health Information, RBKC and DFE Guidance and shared policy with RBKC Head Teachers.

Summary of main points

- School will remain open unless instructed otherwise by Public Health England
- Some classes may be closed if there are not enough staff available to teach children and ensure their safety.
 - If anyone becomes unwell or suspects they are unwell from coronavirus, he or she must not come to school – they must self-isolate and inform school of the steps they have taken. We will authorise absence and will not expect medical certificates. Staff will be paid.
- Hygiene – frequent handwashing is key. Coughs and sneezes should be caught in tissues. Hard surfaces to be cleaned and disinfected regularly.
- We will greet each other through gestures and words. We won't be shaking hands.

1. Medical Aspects

General Aspects

COVID-19 is a new illness that can affect your lungs and airways. For some people who contract the COVID-19 virus, known as novel coronavirus, the symptoms will be mild, and it is even possible that a person will not notice the infection. Others with COVID-19 will suffer no worse symptoms than those of seasonal flu. However, for others, the virus may lead to symptoms severe enough to require hospital care, most commonly due to its escalation to viral pneumonia.

It is a new illness and so it is not known exactly how coronavirus spreads from person to person. Similar viruses are spread in cough droplets and between people who are in close contact with one another (within about 6 feet).

Symptoms of coronavirus

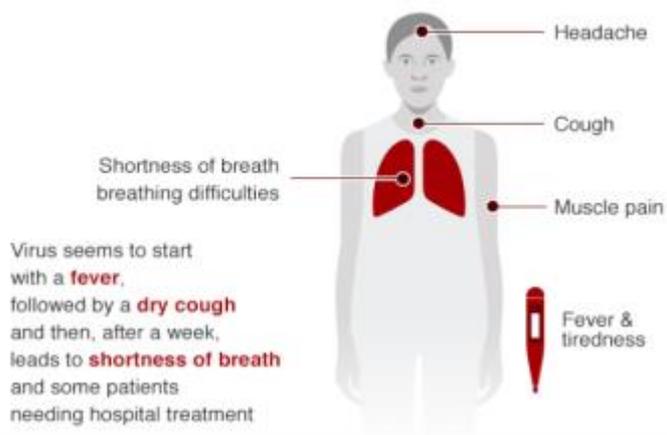
The common symptoms of coronavirus are:

- a cough;
- a high temperature;
- shortness of breath.

Less common symptoms include: limb and joint pain, headache, sore throat, tiredness, aching muscles or loss of appetite.

These symptoms do not necessarily mean a person has COVID-19, being the same or similar to symptoms of other illnesses, such as seasonal colds and 'flu.

Symptoms of coronavirus (Covid-19)



Staff should send any person who shows symptoms to the school office immediately.

Risk groups:

The groups at particular risk if they contract COVID-19 are:

- People with suppressed or compromised immune systems;
- Asthmatics;
- Diabetics;
- The elderly;
- Pregnant women.

Pregnant women: Although pregnant women are no more likely to catch COVID-19 than anybody else, in certain cases the consequences of the illness for somebody who is pregnant can be more severe and may require hospitalisation.

The following will therefore need to be considered:

- If multiple cases of COVID-19 are reported, or a single case in a year group taught by a pregnant employee, whether to take advice as to if any such pregnant employee should be sent home during the infectious period.
- Notifying any pregnant employee of any primary contacts within the school community.
- If a high incidence of cases develops in London, considering whether a pregnant member of staff may be granted a temporary alteration to working hours, such that she may avoid travelling during busy periods 'rush hours' when the probability of infection is increased.

Vaccination: There is currently no vaccine available or imminently available for COVID19.

Asymptomatic carriers: As mentioned above, even when a person is newly infected with COVID-19, certain carriers of the illness - 'asymptomatic carriers' - may show no symptoms at all or will merely feel mildly under the weather. However, such people will be infectious to others and therefore, if fever is present together with the other symptoms described above, members of staff who might otherwise feel prepared to work should nonetheless stay at home for the infectious period (see below). Infectious period: People with COVID-19 are considered to be infectious for up to 14 days from the first day on which they noticed the symptoms.

Although it has been the schools' practice to encourage staff back to work as soon as possible, where a head teacher suspects a COVID-19 infection of a member of staff, then that member of staff should not return to the workplace for 14 calendar days from the onset of symptoms, even if he / she feels recovered.

Infection control

Like any virus COVID-19 is spread by:

- Infected people passing the virus to others through large droplets when coughing, sneezing, or even talking within a close distance (one metre or less).
- Direct contact with an infected person: for example, shaking or holding their hand(s), and then touching one's own mouth, eyes or nose without first washing hands.
- Touching objects (e.g. door handles, light switches) that have previously been touched by an infected person, then touching one's own mouth, eyes or nose without first washing hands.

Viruses in general are understood to survive for longer on hard surfaces than on soft or absorbent surfaces.

Hygiene and the disinfection of hard surfaces: it is not yet known how long the COVID19 virus can survive on a hard surface. However, it is generally considered that the virus can quickly be rendered inactive using common disinfectants. The wiping down of hard surfaces with an appropriate disinfectant agent several times a day is highly advisable.

Regular cleansing of hard surfaces during the day is required to address the possibility of contamination of such surfaces by people who have arrived at school at the start of the day, and who are carrying the virus in an infectious state but are not yet aware of it. During the period of heightened national awareness of COVID-19, all cleaning staff should be instructed to conduct an enhanced clean of all hard surfaces.

Computer and musical keyboards should not be overlooked, similarly, climbing frames, slides and other playground equipment should also be disinfected regularly and where feasible, after using this equipment children should wash their hands. The cloth containing the antiviral agent need not be particularly wet, a cloth damp with a disinfecting agent will be effective.

Washing hands: The washing of hands is proven to be a very effective way to control infections, whether bacterial or viral. The incidence and frequency of this basic hygiene precaution for both children and all employees should be high and heads are encouraged to review this practice regularly at staff meetings, etc.

Alcohol hand sanitiser gels: Although gels are less effective than washing hands, alcohol hand sanitiser gels may be used with children when it is impractical for the children to wash their hands to some reasonable effect against COVID-19. Many gels are effective, particularly ones that contain ethyl alcohol.

Cloth towels: No cloth towels should be used ANYWHERE for the drying of hands. Cloth towels provide an ideal breeding ground for bacteria and an excellent location where viruses may reside waiting for the opportunity to find a new host.

The only acceptable method of drying hands in the school from now on should be with the installed hot air dryers or paper towels.

Tea towels may continue to be used to complete the drying of crockery, etc, (rather than hands) but such towels should be replaced with freshly laundered linen each day.

What to do if an incidence of suspected COVID-19 is reported:

If a member of the school community reports COVID-19 symptoms whilst in the care of the school:

The person should advise the head teacher, go home and self-isolate up to 14 days; NHS Direct 111 should be contacted and immediate advice taken and followed;

The head teacher should provide clear and timely communication to all staff and all members of the school community.

If a member of the school community reports COVID-19 symptoms whilst away from the school

The person should self-isolate for up to 14 days;

NHS Direct 111 should be contacted and immediate advice taken and followed;

The head teacher should provide clear and timely communication to all staff and all members of the school community.

Closure of schools:

Current DfE advice states that no school should close in response to a suspected (or confirmed) COVID-19 case unless advised to do so by Public Health England (PHE).

It is unlikely that schools will be directed by the local office of the PHE to close but this option remains a possibility.

In this connection, maintaining the schools' data for all methods of communication with families is paramount. Should a case be confirmed within the school community, the school may be required to close temporarily whilst a deep and thorough clean of the premises is undertaken.

It is not expected that this closure will last more than 48 hours. It will be appropriate to notify parents of a confirmed case of either a pupil or member of staff.

PHE advice states: 'In most cases, closure of the childcare or education setting will be unnecessary but this will be a local decision based on various factors such as establishment size and pupil mixing.' The PHE Health Protection team would be in touch with the school, to carry out necessary assessments and to give advice.

They will also identify who will amount to a 'contact', which will invariably include pupils and staff within the school, and advise those people on steps they should take, which may include self-isolation.

Communication:

The experience of schools that have experienced a COVID-19 infection and / or had to close for a short period to counteract infection, is that early and effective communication with parents is vital.

Parents are to be texted and emailed in a proportionate, measured and informative manner, to notify the entire community of any such case and to remind parents that in addition to texts, families should also refer frequently to the school website for any COVID-19 updates and information. This text notification will have to be sent very promptly because, in an age of emails and social networking, it will be important for

the school to cause and retain the information initiative before misinformation abounds.

Sources of information and appendices Department for Education Coronavirus helpline

Phone: 0800 046 8687 (Opening hours: 8am to 6pm (Monday to Friday))

Email: DfE.coronavirushelpline@education.gov.uk Local authority helpline:

Schools Standards Business Support Team during office hours on 0207745 6444
Tony Andrews, emergency planning manager 07817 055 070 07977 931 697

Official websites Latest information: <https://www.gov.uk/government/topical-events/coronavirus-covid19-uk-government-response> GOV.uk:
<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-information-for-the-public>

NHS:

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/>

Review of this policy

The policy will be kept under frequent review with any updates brought to the attention of staff as necessary.

Avis Hawkins 15.3.2020.

Signed: *Avis Hawkins*

Name of School	Christ Church and Holy Trinity Primary Schools Chelsea
Policy review Date	March 2020
Date of next Review	weekly
Who reviewed this policy?	Avis Hawkins, Head Teacher
Ratified by Governors	In draft