


TOVE LEARNING TRUST

Rushden Academy



**Coronavirus (COVID-19) Policy
for Education**

January 2021

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Tove Learning Trust COVID-19 Policy Statement

Introduction

Tove Learning Trust (TLT) is committed to ensuring the health, safety and welfare of all employees, pupils/students and visitors. This policy describes the measures that we have put in place to protect us all from the risks of the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak and the duties that fall upon us.

Scope

This policy applies to all our employees, pupils/students, contractors and visitors.

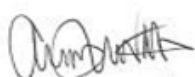
The Trustees recognise that they have a legal duty of care towards protecting the health and safety of our employees and others who may be affected by our activities during the COVID-19 pandemic.

In order to discharge our responsibilities, we request that Headteachers carry out the following:

- Bring this Policy Statement to the attention of all staff
- Carry out and regularly review risk assessments to identify proportionate and pragmatic solutions to reducing the risk of contracting or spreading COVID-19
- Communicate and consult with staff on matters affecting their health and safety
- Comply fully with all relevant legal requirements and government guidance
- Control risks to health, safety and wellbeing so far as is reasonably practicable
- Encourage staff to identify and report hazards in relation to COVID-19 so that we can all contribute towards improving safety
- Work with relevant stakeholders to agree best approaches within their school
- Ensure that emergency procedures are in place at all locations for dealing with the virus
- Maintain the school premises, and provide and maintain safe plant and equipment
- Only engage contractors who are able to demonstrate due regard to health and safety matters and who are effectively managing the risks from the virus
- Provide adequate resources to control the risks arising from all work activities in relation to the virus
- Provide adequate information, instruction and training and ensure that all employees are competent to do their tasks safely
- Plan for a local lockdown and how the school will ensure continuity of education, and
- Regularly monitor and revise policies and procedures as guidance changes.


This policy statement will be reviewed and revised as necessary to reflect changes to the trust's activities and any changes to legislation or government guidance. Any changes to the policy will be brought to the attention of all employees.

Signed:



Dated: 25 January 2019

Name: Mr Christopher Watt
Chair of Trustees

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Rushden Academy Coronavirus (COVID-19) Policy

COVID-19 responsibilities

The overall responsibility for health and safety and management of the virus rests at the highest management level. However, it is the responsibility of every employee to co-operate in providing and maintaining a safe place of work.


It is important that everyone is aware of their responsibilities and has a clear understanding of their areas of accountability in controlling factors that could lead to ill health, injury or loss and the virus being spread. Line managers are required to provide clear direction and accept responsibility.

The following roles are identified as having key responsibilities for the implementation of COVID-19 control measures:

COVID-19 Supervisor (The Principal and members of SLT)

We will:

- Implement and follow the Coronavirus (COVID-19) Policy
- Supervise staff to ensure that they work safely, providing increased supervision for new, vulnerable and young workers
- Communicate and consult with staff on COVID-19 issues
- Keep ourselves up to date with developments and guidance relating to COVID-19
- Encourage staff to report hazards and raise concerns
- Where issues concerning safety are raised by anyone are thoroughly investigated and, when necessary, further effective controls implemented and communicated to staff
- Request that any safety issues that cannot be dealt with are referred to the SLT for action
- Ensure safety training for staff is identified, undertaken and recorded to ensure that they are competent to carry out their work in a safe manner
- Ensure safe systems of work are developed and implemented where needed
- Ensure COVID-19 incidents inside and outside of work are recorded, investigated and reported where needed
- Ensure personal protective equipment (PPE) is readily available and maintained where appropriate, and relevant staff are aware of the correct use of this and the procedures for replacement
- Ensure hazardous substances are stored, transported, handled and used in a safe manner according to manufacturers' instructions and established rules and procedures, and
- Ensure regular and effective cleaning takes place.

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Line managers

Line managers must ensure that:

- Good communication is in place between management and employees, particularly where there are organisational and procedural changes including working from home
- Plans for local lockdown are planned, developed, implemented and amended to ensure continuity of education
- Employees are fully trained to discharge their duties, and
- Where necessary, they look to offer additional support to any employees who are experiencing additional stress outside of work, e.g. bereavement, illness of family members or anxiety about the general safety of their loved ones.

Employees

Employees must:

- Follow any information, instruction, training and supervision provided to them regarding looking after their health, safety and wellbeing (including mental health) during the COVID-19 outbreak, and
- Take responsibility for raising any issues or concerns with their line manager or safety representative where applicable.

Visitors

Visitors to site should be avoided where possible. Where this is not possible, the visitor must:


- Complete the visitor declaration and an individual risk assessment if required, and
- Inform us of any COVID-19 symptoms.

The school will maintain a visitor log for fire evacuation purposes and to help with test and trace purposes.

Staff carrying out cleaning activities

Staff carrying out cleaning activities must:

- Take reasonable care of their own safety
- Take reasonable care of the safety of others affected by their actions
- Observe the safety rules
- Submit their health and safety policy and relevant risk assessments to the school for approval if not employed by the organisation
- Comply with and accept the school's COVID-19 Policy
- Conform to all written or verbal instructions given to them to ensure their personal safety and the safety of others
- Dress as appropriate for their work activities

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- Use all equipment, safety equipment, devices and protective clothing as directed
- Avoid any improvisations of any form which could create an unnecessary risk to their personal safety and the safety of others
- Maintain all equipment in good condition and report defects to their supervisor, and
- Ensure that chemicals are used appropriately and that contact times are followed.

Arrangements

Reoccupation of our setting

From time to time following a period of lockdown, in line with current and any new government guidance, there will be a partial or full reoccupation of the facility and resumption of the curriculum.

Attendance

No-one with symptoms or a positive test, in the last ten days, should attend our setting for any reason.

Throughout the pandemic, guidance will change due to whether pupils should or should not attend the site depending on the current rate of infection and local tiers. In all instances, the school will follow the guidance as issued by the DfE and the World Health Organisation.


When pupils/students cannot attend the site to comply with clinical and/or Health Protection advice, they will immediately be offered remote educational options, and engagement with this will be monitored.

When pupils/students can attend school, the school will bear in mind the potential concerns of pupils/students, parents and households who may be reluctant or anxious about returning and put the right support in place to address this. This may include pupils/students who have themselves been shielding previously but have been advised that this is no longer necessary, those living in households where someone is clinically vulnerable, or those concerned about the comparatively increased risk from COVID-19, including those from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) backgrounds or who have certain conditions such as obesity and diabetes. When attendance is required, the school will be clear with parents that unless a statutory reason is given, attendance is compulsory.

Where applicable, the school will resume taking an attendance register and continue to complete the online Educational Setting Status form, which gives the Department for Education daily updates on how many pupils/students and staff are attending.

To encourage attendance at school, the following measures will be considered and implemented:

- Communicate clear and consistent expectations around school attendance to families (and any other professionals who work with the family where appropriate) throughout the pandemic
- Identify pupils/students who are reluctant or anxious about returning or who are at risk of disengagement and develop plans for re-engaging them. This should include disadvantaged and vulnerable children and young people, especially those who were persistently absent prior to the pandemic or who have not engaged with school regularly during the pandemic

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- Use the additional catch-up funding schools will receive, as well as existing pastoral and support services, attendance staff and resources and schools' pupil premium funding to put measures in place for those families who will need additional support to secure pupils/students' regular attendance
- Work closely with other professionals as appropriate to support the return to school, including continuing to notify the child's social worker, if they have one, of non-attendance.

Priority groups

We will consider how we integrate pupils/students from priority groups who are attending but are not in any of the transition year groups to ensure we make the right decision for how our pupils/students are supervised, continue to learn and are supported in school.

School workforce

The Trust, Governors and SLT are conscious of the health, safety and wellbeing of all staff and will, where possible, support the staff in the return to work and normal curriculum.

It is recognised that during periods of full student / pupil attendance most school staff will not be able to work from home.

At various times this will include previously shielded groups who may be able to attend the workplace as long as social distancing is maintained. Vulnerable persons will still be identified, and suitable additional controls applied.

School leaders will be flexible and allow homeworking where possible or working within the facility where distancing is possible. Additional assistance available to staff will also be circulated i.e. Employee Assistance Programmes, helplines and counselling support.

Transport

Staff and pupils/students will be encouraged to walk or cycle to and from school and avoid public transport wherever possible.


We will work together with all parties and transport providers to put in place arrangements appropriate to our circumstances, including measures to reduce contact.

Wherever possible, we will avoid the use of school minibuses. However, where use is essential, social distancing will be maintained (see example below). The minibus will be thoroughly cleaned after each use and pupils/students will wash their hands before boarding/unboarding.



Food

When pupils/students who attend our educational setting, we will aim to reopen our kitchen and ensure that meals are able to be prepared and served safely. We will provide meals, where

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required, for all pupils/students, including those who meet the free school meal (FSM) eligibility criteria.

We will also continue to work with our food providers to offer meals or food parcels for benefits-related FSM pupils/students not in the setting.

Staff should bring their own lunch and ensure that the staff room is kept clean and tidy and dirty dishes are put in the dishwasher (where applicable).

Effective infection monitoring, protection and control


There are important actions that pupils/students, their parents and our staff can take during the COVID-19 outbreak to help prevent the spread of the virus.

Although it is difficult to put some of these measures in place protective measures are possible. Hygiene will continue to be important in our school.

Preventing the spread of COVID-19 involves dealing with direct transmission (for instance, when in close contact with those sneezing and coughing) and indirect transmission (via touching contaminated surfaces). A range of approaches and actions will be employed to do this. These can be seen as a Hierarchy of Controls that, when implemented, create an inherently safer system, where the risk of transmission of infection is substantially reduced. These include:

- Minimising contact with individuals who are unwell by ensuring that those who have COVID-19 symptoms, or who have someone in their household who does, do not attend our setting
- Providing Lateral Flow Test kits that staff must use to test themselves weekly if they are attending school
- Following the DfE guidance for mass testing of students to identify any positive Covid-19 cases
- Cleaning hands more often than usual – washing hands thoroughly for 20 seconds with running water and soap and drying them thoroughly (using disposable hand towels, where possible) or using alcohol hand rub or sanitiser ensuring that all parts of the hands are covered
- Ensuring good respiratory hygiene – promoting the ‘catch it, bin it, kill it’ approach
- Recognising that some pupils/students with complex needs will struggle to maintain as good respiratory hygiene as their peers, for example those who spit uncontrollably or use saliva as a sensory stimulant. This will be considered in risk assessments in order to support these pupils/students and the staff working with them, and they will not be denied face-to-face education on this basis
- Cleaning frequently-touched surfaces often using standard products, such as detergents and enhancing our cleaning provisions
- Minimising contact and mixing by altering, as much as possible, the environment (such as classroom layout) and timetables (such as staggered break times), and
- Using personal protective equipment (PPE) where necessary

Notices and posters promoting infection control best practice will be displayed throughout our buildings. The ‘Staying COVID-19 Secure in 2020’ poster will be displayed in reception.

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Personal protective equipment (PPE), including face coverings and face masks

On 26 August 2020, government guidelines changed in relation to the use of face coverings in education. Further information can be found [here](#). This guidance is for schools and other education institutions that teach people in Years 7 and above in England. Nationwide, while the government is not recommending that face coverings are necessary, Rushden Academy has stipulated that all staff and students should wear face coverings in communal areas.

Changing our habits, cleaning and hygiene are effective measures in controlling the spread of the virus.

Most of our staff will not require PPE beyond what they would normally need for their work, even if they are not always able to maintain a distance of two metres from others. PPE will only be needed in a very small number of cases, including:

- Pupils/students whose care routinely already involves the use of PPE due to their intimate care needs will continue to receive their care in the same way
- If a pupil/student becomes unwell with symptoms of COVID-19 while in our setting, a face mask should be worn by the supervising adult, if a distance of two metres cannot be maintained. If contact with the pupil/student is necessary, then gloves, an apron and a face mask should be worn by the supervising adult. If a risk assessment determines that there is a risk of splashing to the eyes, for example from coughing, spitting, or vomiting, then eye protection should also be worn
- If a pupil/student becomes unwell with non-COVID-19 symptoms, they should be treated as normal with no specific additional PPE requirements

Class or group sizes

Where possible we expect pupils and staff to be two metres apart from each other. We will:


- Avoid contact with anyone with symptoms
- Ensure frequent hand cleaning and good respiratory hygiene practices
- Ensure regular cleaning of settings, including an enhanced cleaning schedule to include more frequent cleaning of rooms / shared areas that are used by different groups, and
- Minimise contact and mixing between cohorts

We appreciate that it is still important to reduce contact between people as much as possible, and we will achieve this and reduce the transmission risk by ensuring pupils/students and staff, where possible, only mix in a small, consistent group and that small group stays away from other people and groups.

While in general groups will be kept apart, brief, transitory contact, such as passing in a corridor, is deemed to be low risk.

Assemblies and worship


Assemblies and worship gatherings have been prohibited in large groups outside of controlled bubbles. The school will ensure that, where we wish to continue assemblies and gatherings for the purpose of worship, this does not involve the mixing of groups which could encourage the spread of COVID-19.

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Planning and organising including for re-opening

Prior to welcoming our pupils/students and staff back, we will:

- Refresh our risk assessment and other health and safety advice for pupils/students and staff considering recent government advice, identifying protective measures (such as the things listed below). We will also ensure that all health and safety compliance checks have been undertaken before opening
- (It is, however, recognised that in the provision of key stage 4 and key stage 5, it is likely that groups, or bubbles, will need to be full year groups in order to provide a full curriculum and deliver specialist teaching)
- Constantly review group sizes alongside the latest statistical and scientific evidence
- Encourage older pupils/students to maintain distancing within these groups
- Allow teachers to move across groups provided they maintain distancing of two metres from other staff and pupils/students at all times possible
- Organise classrooms and other learning environments such as workshops and science labs for those groups, maintaining space between seats and desks where possible
- In refreshing the timetable:
 - ☐ Decide which lessons or activities will be delivered
 - ☐ Consider which lessons or classroom activities could take place outdoors
 - ☐ Use the timetable and selection of classroom or other learning environment to reduce movement around the school or building
 - ☐ Stagger assembly groups
 - ☐ Stagger break times (including lunch) so that all pupils/students are not moving around the setting at the same time
 - ☐ Stagger drop-off and collection times
 - ☐ Plan parents' drop-off and pick-up protocols in a way that minimises adult-to-adult contact, and
 - ☐ For periods of partial closure, we will consider how best to supplement remote education with some face-to-face support for pupils/students
- It was previously recommended that materials were removed from the classroom; this is no longer the case. Frequently-used items such as pens and pencils used by staff and pupils/students will be individual to the user. Classroom resources such as books and games can be kept in the classroom but should be used within the groups and cleaned frequently, together with any other touch points
- Resources shared between groups, such as sports, science and art equipment, will be cleaned between groups or isolated for 48 hours (72 for plastic) prior to reuse
- We will consider how pupils/students arrive at our setting, and reduce any unnecessary travel on coaches, buses or public transport where possible
- A process will be implemented for pupils/students removing face coverings safely upon arrival at school and of washing their hands. This will be clearly communicated to them

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- Within music lessons, playing of instruments or singing will be restricted to groups of no more than 15, with pupils/students positioned back-to-back or side-to-side and the room adequately ventilated. Singing, wind and brass playing will not take place in school choirs or assemblies and sharing of instruments will not take place
- Ensure that, wherever possible, pupils/students use the same classroom or area of a setting throughout the day, with a thorough cleaning of the rooms at the end of the day. Wherever possible, we will seat pupils/students at the same desk each day

Communication


We will communicate our plans as follows:

- Telling pupils/students, parents, carers or any visitors, such as suppliers, not to enter our setting if they are displaying any symptoms of COVID-19
- Telling parents that if their child needs to be accompanied to our setting, only one parent should attend
- Telling parents and young people their allocated drop-off and collection times and the process for doing so, including protocols for minimising adult-to-adult contact (for example, which entrance to use)
- Making it clear to parents that they cannot gather at entrance gates or doors, or enter the site (unless they have a pre-arranged appointment, which will be conducted safely)
- Ensuring parents and young people are aware of recommendations on transport to and from our setting (including avoiding peak times)
- Talking to staff about the plans (for example, safety measures, timetable changes and staggered arrival and departure times)
- Communicating as early as possible with contractors and suppliers that will need to prepare to support our plans for opening (for example, cleaning, catering, food supplies, hygiene suppliers, etc.), and
- Discussing with cleaning contractors or staff the additional cleaning requirements and agreeing additional hours to allow for this as appropriate

When open

For cleaning and hygiene:


- Follow government guidance on cleaning, including:
 - ❑ Cleaning an area with normal cleaning products after someone with COVID-19 has left to reduce the risk of passing the infection on to other people
 - ❑ Wearing disposable gloves and aprons for cleaning (these will be double-bagged, stored securely for 72 hours, then thrown away in the regular rubbish after cleaning is finished)
 - ❑ Using disposable cloths to clean hard surfaces with warm soapy water, then disinfect these surfaces with normal cleaning products (paying particular attention to frequently-touched areas and surfaces, such as bathrooms, handrails, stairwells and door handles)

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- ☐ Where an area has been heavily contaminated, such as with visible bodily fluids, from a person with COVID-19, using protection for the eyes, mouth and nose, as well as wearing gloves and an apron, and
 - ☐ Washing hands regularly with soap and water for 20 seconds, and after removing gloves, aprons and other protection used while cleaning
- Clean surfaces that pupils/students are touching – such as desks, chairs, doors, sinks, toilets, light switches and bannisters – more regularly than normal
- Ensure that all adults and pupils/students:
 - ☐ Frequently wash their hands with soap and water for 20 seconds and dry thoroughly
 - ☐ Wash their hands on arrival at the setting, after breaks, when they change rooms, before and after eating, and after sneezing or coughing
 - ☐ Are encouraged not to touch their mouth, eyes and nose, and
 - ☐ Use a tissue or elbow to cough or sneeze and use bins for tissue waste ('catch it, bin it, kill it')
- To encourage and ensure hand washing and personal hygiene measures are followed, the following points will be considered:
 - ☐ Ensure that sufficient handwashing facilities are available for both staff and pupils/students. Where a sink is not nearby, we will provide hand sanitiser in classrooms and other learning environments
 - ☐ Adequate supervision of hand sanitiser use given risks around ingestion and flammability. Pupils/students with complex needs should continue to be helped to clean their hands properly. Skin-friendly skin cleaning wipes can be used as an alternative
 - ☐ Building these routines into school culture, supported by behaviour expectations and helping ensure younger children and those with complex needs understand the need to follow them
- Ensure that help is available for pupils/students who have trouble cleaning their hands independently
- Ensure that bins for tissues are emptied throughout the day
- Where possible, all spaces will be well-ventilated using natural ventilation (opening windows) or ventilation units
- Prop doors open, where safe to do so (bearing in mind fire safety and safeguarding), to limit the use of door handles and aid ventilation
- Get in touch with public sector buying organisation partners about proportionate supplies of soap, anti-bacterial gel and cleaning products if needed
- Confirm to staff and parents that there is no need for anything other than normal personal hygiene and washing of clothes following a day in our setting

Reduce mixing within our setting by:

- Accessing rooms directly from outside (where possible)
- Considering one-way circulation to keep groups apart as they move through the setting where spaces are accessed by corridors

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- Staggering breaks to ensure that any corridors or circulation routes used have a limited number of pupils/students using them at any time
- Staggering lunch breaks – pupils/students will clean their hands beforehand and enter in the groups they are already in. Groups will be kept apart as much as possible and tables will be cleaned between each group. Where this is not possible, pupils/students will have their lunch in their classrooms
- Ensuring that toilets do not become crowded by limiting the number of pupils/students who use the toilet facilities at one time. Toilets will be frequently cleaned, and the pupils/students will be encouraged to maintain good hygiene, and
- Noting that some pupils/students will need additional support to follow these measures (for example, routes around the school marked in braille or with other meaningful symbols, and social stories to support them in understanding how to follow rules)

Use outside space:

- For exercise and breaks
- For outdoor education, where possible, to limit transmission and more easily allow for distance between pupils/students and staff
- Contact sports will be avoided

For shared rooms:


- If class groups take staggered breaks between lessons, these areas can be shared as long as different groups do not mix (and especially do not play sports or games together) and adequate cleaning between groups is in place
- Stagger the use of staff rooms and offices to limit occupancy and with minimal usage
- Assemblies or collective worship with more than one group will be ceased until further guidance is available

Reduce the use of shared resources:

- Staff and pupils/students can take shared resources such as books home, but unnecessary sharing should be avoided
- By seeking to prevent the sharing of stationery and other equipment where possible. Shared materials and surfaces will be cleaned and disinfected more frequently
- Practical lessons will go ahead where equipment can be cleaned thoroughly, and the classroom or other learning environment will be occupied by the same pupils/students in one day or properly cleaned between cohorts

Adjust transport arrangements where necessary, including:

- Encouraging staff, parents and pupils/students to walk or cycle to the setting where possible
- Ensuring that transport arrangements cater for any changes to start and finish times
- Ensuring that transport providers' employees do not work if they or a member of their household are displaying any symptoms of COVID-19
- Ensuring that transport providers, as far as possible, follow hygiene rules and try to keep distance from their passengers

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- Taking appropriate actions to reduce risk if hygiene rules and social distancing is not possible, for example when transporting pupils/students with complex needs who need support to access the vehicle or fasten seatbelts, and
- Communicating revised travel plans clearly to contractors, Local Authorities and parents where appropriate (for instance, to agree pick-up and drop-off times)

What happens if someone becomes unwell in our setting?

See Rushden Academy Risk Assessment and Emergency Action Plan.

Taking pupils/students' temperatures

We will not take pupils/students' temperatures every morning and parents and carers will not be required too either. Routine testing of an individual's temperature is not a reliable method for identifying COVID-19.

We will reiterate to parents the need to follow the standard national advice on the kind of symptoms to look out for that might be due to COVID-19, and where to get further advice. If anyone in the household develops a fever or a new continuous cough or a high temperature or has a loss of or change in their normal sense of smell (anosmia), they are advised to follow the [government guidance](#) (which states that the ill person should remain in isolation for 10 days and the rest of the household for 10 days).

Testing

Pupils/students:

All pupils/students are eligible and will be requested to participate in the Lateral Flow Testing made available to schools by the DfE. This will enable them to get back into education, and their parents or carers to get back to work, if the test proves to be negative. If the test is positive, then they will be required to take a second test as at a formal NHS testing centre to confirm the result.

Staff:


Access to testing is already available to all the staff in school. Frequency of testing will be dependent on how often they come in to school but twice weekly is recommended unless they are in a period of active monitoring.

Supporting pupils/students with complex needs

We will follow government guidance for special schools, specialist colleges, Local Authorities and any other settings managing pupils/students with education, health and care plans, including those with complex needs where appropriate.

Safeguarding

The school's Child Protection Policy will be reviewed to reflect the new arrangements from the Autumn term to ensure that all necessary measures are being taken. Designated Safeguarding Leads will be provided with time at the start of the term in order to complete this.

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Educational visits


Overnight domestic and foreign educational visits are not able to go ahead during the pandemic. However, from the start of the Autumn term, domestic non-overnight visits can be completed. This includes trips for pupils/students with SEND connected with their preparation for adulthood. These will be done in line with all protective measures of both the school and the destination, including staying within groups and social distancing. The standard approach to educational visit assessments and Educational Visit Coordinator approval should be followed and should consider all necessary measures.


School uniform

We have taken the decision that pupils/students will wear school uniform when attending school through partial or full closure periods.

Extracurricular provision

In line with government guidance, extracurricular provision will be reinstated, including breakfast clubs and after-school provision. The standard controls will be applied and, at all times possible, attendees will be kept to year groups. Where this is not possible, small consistent groups will be formed within the provision. The school will also implement adequate controls for drop-off and pick-up in line with the general controls.

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Reviewed by:	Tim Foster, Chair of Governors, 29th January 2021
Signed:	
Agreed by:	Local Governing Body
To be reviewed:	September 2021