



Infection Prevention and Control Policy

Introduction

BWAF Academies are potentially a common site for transmission of infections and infectious illnesses, particularly as children and young persons are more susceptible because:

- They have immature immune systems;
- They have close contact with other children;
- They may have no or incomplete vaccinations; and
- They may have poor understanding of, or reluctance to manage, good hygiene practices.

The purpose of this procedure, which applies to both staff and students, is to ensure that all staff are aware of the potential risks and how to prevent or control cases or outbreaks of infectious illnesses by promoting available immunisations, exclusion or isolation of infectious persons and maintaining good standards of personal and communal hygiene. Where possible students should be provided with relevant information on infection prevention and control. It is important to remember that many infectious illnesses can spread before the individual shows any symptoms. It will outline the key responsibilities of management and staff.

Responsibilities

- **Chief Financial Officer is responsible for:**
 - Ensuring that H & S and Site Facilities Managers are supporting Site Managers, by way of provision of appropriate resources and training; and
 - Ensuring that risk assessments and safe systems of work are being documented by Health and Safety and Site Facilities Manager / Site Managers for infection prevention and control, and that these are suitable and sufficient and are communicated to relevant staff.
- **Heads of Academy are responsible for:**
 - Ensuring suitable and sufficient site-specific risk assessments have been undertaken and that all necessary controls have been identified and implemented;
 - Adequate training, information, and instruction is provided to all staff, and where necessary students, to ensure that infection prevention and control measures are followed;
 - Ensuring local policy implemented for exclusion of staff and students on medical grounds when required and for suitable communication with parents/carers;
 - Identifying and managing any individuals who may be immuno-compromised and therefore more susceptible; and
 - Ensuring suitable cleaning procedures are in place, with the use of approved cleaning contractors where possible.
- **Health and Safety and Site Facilities Manager is responsible for:**
 - Ensuring suitable and sufficient risk assessments have been undertaken by Academies and that all necessary controls have been identified and implemented; and

- Ensuring infection prevention and control policy and measures are suitably resourced, implemented and communicated.
- **Site Managers are responsible for:**
 - Following infection prevention and control guidelines and assisting in their implementation and enforcement; and
 - Ensuring routine and enhanced cleaning standards are maintained.
- **Teaching Staff are responsible for:**
 - Make certain appropriate information / instruction / training / supervision are provided so that appropriate infection prevention and control measures are implemented and followed.

Infection Prevention and Control

The following measures provide additional information on the potential sources of infections, how they can be spread, how they can be prevented and how they can be controlled if any cases do occur:

- **How infections spread.** Infectious illnesses can be spread in different ways, commonly:
 - **Respiratory.** Contact with infections through coughing, sneezing either directly through close contact or indirectly through contact with infected items and then touching mouth or nose;
 - **Skin Contact.** Usually relating to skin infections (e.g. impetigo) through either direct contact between persons or indirect through contact with infected items;
 - **Ingestion.** Usually through ingestion of contaminated food or drink or poor personal hygiene measures, particularly after using the toilet; and
 - **Blood borne.** Although relatively uncommon in school settings, by contact with infected blood or bodily fluids through needlestick injury, attending to bleeding person or bites from humans, animals or insects.
- **Prevention.** Measures should be in place to ensure that as far as possible infectious illnesses are prevented from occurring or spreading by the following:
 - **Exclusions.** Prompt exclusion of any individual is essential to preventing or minimising the spread of infectious illness. Ideally this would be prior to them attending Academy premises, but if necessary, exclusion if they become ill or show symptoms while in attendance. Exclusion must be for the minimum time required dependant on infection.¹ It is important to ensure that parents/carers and also visitors co-operate with these measures;
 - **Handwashing.** This is one of the most important ways of preventing and controlling the spread of infections particularly for ingestion borne and respiratory infections. The use of warm running water, liquid soap and disposable paper towels/hot air dryers are the recommended methods. Use of hand sanitiser AFTER handwashing will aid hygiene but should not be used as an alternative cleaning method. Staff and students should wash their hands after using the toilet, handling animals and before handling food. Coughing and sneezing etiquette should be encouraged with individuals covering their mouth/nose when coughing or sneezing, ideally with a disposable tissue, either way, hands should be washed. Spitting should be prohibited; and

¹ https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/789369/Exclusion_table.pdf

- **Managing cuts, bites, nose bleeds and needlestick injuries.** Any contact with potentially infected blood or bodily fluids must be appropriately managed, usually this would be by trained first aid staff:
 - **Bites.** If a bite does not break the skin, clean with soap and water, if it has broken the skin, clean with soap and water, cover with suitable sterile dressing and seek further medical advice as soon as possible;
 - **Cuts, nose bleeds, bodily fluids.** If in contact with potentially infected blood or bodily fluids (i.e. faeces, urine, saliva, vomit, nasal discharge) appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) must be worn, such as disposable gloves and apron, following which the blood or bodily fluid can be cleaned up using designated spillage or first aid equipment; and
 - **Needlestick injuries.** Although uncommon, potential contact with discarded hypodermic needles could occur. Where this happens, wash the wound with soap and water, cover with sterile waterproof dressing and seek immediate medical advice. Where possible, and if safe to do so, remove or isolate the discarded needle to prevent further injury.

Dealing with an Outbreak

An outbreak can be defined as an incident in which two (2) or more people experience a similar infectious illness that are linked in time or place, or a greater than expected rate of infection compared with the usual background rate for the place and time where the outbreak occurred. Examples can include:

- Two (2) or more cases of diarrhoea/vomiting from same classroom, shared communal area or same activity;
- Higher than usual numbers of scabies, impetigo, scarlet fever, etc; and
- Two (2) or more cases of measles within the setting.

Any suspected or confirmed outbreaks must be notified to the local Health Protection Team (HPT) from Public Health England (PHE)² as soon as possible to ensure the correct actions are taken, initial information required is likely to include – total number affected, symptoms and date started. These actions may be exclusion/isolation of infected cases and enhanced personal and communal hygiene standards. Notification would be the responsibility of the Head of Academy.

Good communications, particularly with parents/carers, should be maintained, whilst still ensuring required confidentiality measures to protect privacy of individuals. In extreme situations, closure of all or part of the school or activities may be required. Where necessary, an appropriate investigation will be undertaken to determine potential causal and contributory factors for the outbreak and ensure a recurrence is prevented.

Immunisation

In order to provide a good level of acquired immunity against general or specific infectious illnesses, appropriate vaccinations are encouraged amongst both staff and students. A number of vaccinations are available at different ages from baby through to adulthood either routinely or where additional risk factors are identified including measles, mumps and rubella (MMR), human papillomavirus (HPV), pre-school and teenage boosters for diphtheria, tetanus, whooping cough and polio, influenza, pneumococcal infections (PCV, PPV), shingles, tuberculosis (BCG), hepatitis B and chickenpox. Natural immunity should occur when a person has been exposed to the illness and thereby produce specific

² <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/contacts-phe-health-protection-teams>

antibodies to fight the infection, these can remain as life-long protection. Further information on specific vaccinations is available from the NHS³.

Cleaning the Environment

Suitable and sufficient cleaning of the school environment, particularly areas or equipment with high frequency of contact or increased risk of contamination (i.e. toys, sandpits, shared classroom equipment), is an important method of preventing the spread of infections and also assists with the control of any infectious illness cases or outbreaks.

It is important that a cleaning schedule is implemented which details what is to be cleaned, how often, using what equipment and materials, method and who by, this could be provided by in-house staff or external cleaning contractor. Suitable measures must be in place to ensure that those undertaking cleaning activities are competent by means of training and experience, are provided with the correct cleaning equipment and materials and control measures are implemented, including PPE, where necessary. Monitoring is the responsibility of Site Manager and the Health and Safety and Site Facilities Manager.

All spillages of blood, faeces, saliva and vomit must be cleaned up immediately, wearing personal protective equipment. Clean spillages using a product which combines detergent and disinfectant, and ensure it is effective against both bacteria and viruses. Always follow the manufacturer's instructions. Use disposable paper towels or cloths to cleaning up blood and body fluid spills, and dispose of after use. Dedicated spill kits are provided for the cleaning up of blood and bodily fluid spills.

In the event of a suspected or confirmed outbreak, enhanced cleaning will be required, as recommended by the local HPT, of communal areas and equipment such as door handles, toilet facilities, handrails, shared classroom equipment, etc.

Staff Health

As detailed above, staff members are encouraged to be up-to-date with their immunisation status in line with NHS and government advice, details can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/immunisation> In addition, the same rules regarding exclusion in the event of infectious illness apply to staff until considered safe to return.

Particular attention should be provided to pregnant staff members due to the increased risks from certain infections such as chickenpox, measles, rubella and parvovirus.

Staff undertaking food handling duties could present an increased risk of gastrointestinal illness through contaminating food, drink or associated equipment. Site-specific food safety management procedures should be followed, whether it is in-house staff or external contractors. It is important that exclusion is enforced should a member of staff display symptoms, this is usually for a minimum of 48 hours following recovery from the symptoms. It is incumbent on those staff to report to management immediately if they are suffering from symptoms.

Pets and Animal Contact

Although pets and other animals (mammals, reptiles, insects, etc.) can enhance the learning experience for students, they can present a risk of biological, fungal and parasitic infections and therefore use and contact should be controlled, either within the school setting or external visits. The following measures should be followed:

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https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/849579/PHE_11490_IMM_young_people_A5_booklet_Dec2019.pdf

- Only mature, toilet trained, immunised, well behaved pets should be permitted, with appropriate, knowledgeable handler. Where necessary, ensure suitable liability insurance is in place;
- Adequate supervision should be maintained whilst in contact with the animals to minimise their distress and ensure handling is appropriate. Any persons in contact with the animals should ensure they wash their hands thoroughly immediately afterwards; and
- For external trips, ensure a suitable and sufficient risk assessment is undertaken and control measures followed, including provision of, and regular use of handwashing facilities, minimising direct contact where possible with the animals and their faecal matter, avoiding unpasteurised foods. If individuals have any cuts, scratches or abrasions, they should be covered with a suitable waterproof dressing.

Managing Specific Infectious Diseases

Controls for generic infectious diseases, from inhalation, ingestion, contact or blood borne sources are detailed above. For the control measures relating to more specific diseases, Public Health England (PHE) provide appropriate guidance.⁴ This guidance does not include the controls required for the prevention and control of COVID-19, these are available under separate cover and are also available from PHE, NHS and government sources.⁵

A checklist is provided for the dealing with an outbreak of diarrhoea and vomiting⁶.

⁴ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/health-protection-in-schools-and-other-childcare-facilities/chapter-9-managing-specific-infectious-diseases>

⁵ <https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus>

⁶ https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/625991/Appendix_3.pdf