Coronavirus Policy & Procedure

Last Update: 17ᵗʰ March 2020 (Version 2.0)

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Document Control

Changes History

Version	Date	Amended by	Recipients	Purpose
1.0	4/3/2020		All Plymouth CAST staff	New Policy
2.0	17/3/2020	Adelle Pope	All Plymouth CAST staff	Government Updates

Approvals

This policy requires the following approvals:

Board	Chair	CEO	Date Approved	Version	Date for Review
		☒	March 2020	1.0	Ongoing
		X	March 2020	2.0	Ongoing

National/Local Policy

☒ This policy must be localised by Academies

☒ This policy must not be changed, it is a CAST/National Policy (only change logo, contact details and any yellow highlights)

Position with the Unions

Does the policy require consultation with the National Unions under our recognition agreement? ☐ Yes ☒ No
If yes, the policy status is: ☐ Consulted and Approved ☐ Consulted and Not Approved ☐ Awaiting Consultation

1. Vision and Values

1.1 Plymouth CAST is a multi-academy trust of Catholic schools which is part of the mission of the Catholic Church dedicated to human flourishing and the building of a kingdom of peace, truth and justice. The Trust is to be conducted in all aspects in accordance with canon law and the teachings of the Roman Catholic Church and at all times to serve as a witness to the Catholic faith in Our Lord Jesus Christ.

1.2 Our vision and values are derived from our identity as a Catholic Trust. Central to our vision is the dignity of the human person, especially the most vulnerable. Our academies are dedicated to providing an education and formation where all our pupils and young people flourish in a safe, nurturing, enriching environment. All governors in our academies are expected to be familiar with the vision, mission, values and principles of the Trust and not in any way to undermine them. They should support and promote the vision and conduct themselves at all times in school and on school business according to the vision and principles of the Trust

1.3 Plymouth CAST expects all its employees to recognise their obligations to each school within the Multi-Academy Trust, the public, pupils and other employees and to provide consistently high standards of education and performance at all times and in accordance with Plymouth CAST's vision, mission and principles.

2. Purpose

To provide clear guidance on what action should be taken during the course of the Coronavirus outbreak.

3. Scope

This policy applies to all Plymouth CAST employees.

4. Equal Opportunities

This policy must always be applied fairly and in accordance with employment law and the Plymouth CAST Equal Opportunities Policy.

5. Control of Infectious Diseases

Plymouth CAST has a duty of care to minimise the risk of all infectious diseases spreading in the workplace. All employees are required to cooperate to reduce this risk to themselves and others.

6. What actions are Plymouth CAST taking to reduce risks of exposure in the workplace?

- Provide facilities to all employees and pupils ensure good hand hygiene.

- All staff to ensure pupils are practising good hand hygiene.

- Schools and Offices to ensure tissues, hand sanitiser and antibacterial cleaning products are available where possible.

- Provide regular updates on the guidelines from Public Health England (https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/public-health-england).

- Ensure contact numbers and emergency contact details are up to date for each employee.

7.   Employee Actions

- If you feel unwell alert your line manager that you are off sick using usual communication procedures to avoid spreading infections in the workplace, regardless of if you have travelled to an affected area, or come into contact with someone who has.
- Have good hand hygiene at all times, washing your hands regularly with hot water and soap.
- Use hand sanitiser gels provided.
- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or your sleeve (not your hands) when you cough or sneeze.
- Put used tissues in the bin straight away.
- Ensure your desk is clear at the end of the day to allow it to be cleaned.

8.   Travel outside of Work

8.1 We advise that you follow the most recent guidance on travel.

8.2 If you are returning from an area currently affected by the outbreak, please follow the guidance provided by Public Health England (https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/public-health-england)

8.3 Government advice is in place for what to do if you have returned in the last 14 days from specified countries or areas which is being updated on an ongoing basis.

9.   Covid-19 (Coronavirus) - Information about the virus
A coronavirus is a type of virus. As a group, coronaviruses are common across the world. COVID-19 is a new strain of coronavirus first identified in Wuhan City, China in January 2020.

The incubation period of COVID-19 is between 2 to 14 days. This means that if a person remains well 14 days after contact with someone with confirmed coronavirus, they have not been infected.

10.   Signs and symptoms of COVID-19
The following symptoms may develop in the 14 days after exposure to someone who has COVID-19 infection:

- cough

- difficulty in breathing

- fever

Generally, these infections can cause more severe symptoms in people with weakened immune systems, older people, and those with long-term conditions like diabetes, cancer and chronic lung disease.

If you display symptoms for over 7 days and/or your symptoms are severe, please call NHS 111. Do not go directly to your GP or other healthcare environment. You are not required to call NHS 111 if you are self-isolating.

11. **Guidance on Facemasks**

     Current advice from the UK government health service is: Employees are not recommended to wear facemasks (also known as surgical masks or respirators) to protect against the virus. Facemasks are only recommended to be worn by symptomatic individuals (advised by a healthcare worker) to reduce the risk of transmitting the infection to other people.

12. **What happens if an employee is required to go into self-isolation?**

     12.1 The employee must tell their line manager as soon as possible if they cannot work. Employees should inform the line manager of the reason and how long they are likely to be off for.

     12.2 Self-isolation for 14 days is required for employees living with others that are displaying symptoms associated with coronavirus.

     12.3 Self-isolation is required for employees who live alone but are displaying symptoms associated with Coronavirus.

     12.4 Where someone is self-isolating in line with 12.2 above and is well and is displaying no symptoms they will be assumed to be working from home and therefore paid normally.

     12.5 Where Statutory sick pay (SSP) is applicable, this will be paid from the first day of absence.

13. **What happens if an employee is tested positive for Coronavirus?**

     13.1 The employee must tell their line manager as soon as possible if they cannot work. Employees should inform the line manager of the reason and how long they are likely to be off for.

     13.2 The absence will be treated as sickness absence and will be paid in line with the employees' contract.

     13.3 Where Statutory sick pay (SSP) is applicable, this will be paid from the first day of absence.

14. **What happens if an employee is told not to go to work or the School/Office has been closed?**

     14.1 Employees will continue to receive their normal pay.

     14.2 Where possible employees will be required to work from home in line with the advice in section 16.

15. **Social distancing is required for employees who are at risk of severe illness from Coronavirus.**

    Social distancing is an effort to reduce your interaction with other people to slow the spread of an infectious disease. There are employees who are at risk of severe illness from Coronavirus.

What is social distancing?

Social distancing measures are steps you can take to reduce the social interaction between people. This will help reduce the transmission of coronavirus (COVID-19).They are:

- Avoid contact with someone who is displaying symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19). These symptoms include high temperature and/or new and continuous cough;

- Avoid non-essential use of public transport, varying your travel times to avoid rush hour, when possible;

- Work from home, where possible. The Trust will support you to do this.

- Avoid large gatherings, and gatherings in smaller public spaces such as pubs, cinemas, restaurants, theatres, bars, clubs

- Avoid gatherings with friends and family. Keep in touch using remote technology such as phone, internet, and social media.

- Use telephone or online services to contact your GP or other essential services.

Everyone should be trying to follow these measures as much as is pragmatic.

For those who are **over 70, have an underlying health condition or are pregnant**, we strongly advise you to follow the above measures as much as you can, and to significantly limit your face-to-face interaction with friends and family if possible.

This group includes those who are:

- aged 70 or older (regardless of medical conditions)
- under 70 with an underlying health condition listed below (ie anyone instructed to get a flu jab as an adult each year on medical grounds):
- chronic (long-term) respiratory diseases, such as asthma, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), emphysema or bronchitis
- chronic heart disease, such as heart failure
- chronic kidney disease
- chronic liver disease, such as hepatitis
- chronic neurological conditions, such as Parkinson's disease, motor neurone disease, multiple sclerosis (MS), a learning disability or cerebral palsy
- diabetes
- problems with your spleen – for example, sickle cell disease or if you have had your spleen removed
- a weakened immune system as the result of conditions such as HIV and AIDS, or medicines such as steroid tablets or chemotherapy
- being seriously overweight (a BMI of 40 or above)
- those who are pregnant

People falling into this group are those who may be at particular risk due to complex health problems such as:

- People who have received an organ transplant and remain on ongoing immunosuppression medication
- People with cancer who are undergoing active chemotherapy or radiotherapy
- People with cancers of the blood or bone marrow such as leukaemia who are at any stage of treatment
- People with severe chest conditions such as cystic fibrosis or severe asthma (requiring hospital admissions or courses of steroid tablets)
- People with severe diseases of body systems, such as severe kidney disease (dialysis)

In line with the Government's current guidance, which may be updated, as per appendix 1, if you fall into one of these groups, we are strongly advising you to work from home where possible with immediate effect, until further notice.

If you choose not to follow our strong advice, you will be required to put that decision in writing to your line manager. An example of this wording to shown in appendix 3.

If you live with a person with increased risk but neither of you are showing any symptoms, you should then follow appendix 1.

16. Working from home

When an employee is working from home it is under the direction of the line manager.

17. What happens if an employee needs time off work to look after someone?

17.1 Employees are entitled to time off work to help someone who depends on them (a 'dependent') in an unexpected event or emergency. This would apply to situations to do with coronavirus. For example:

17.1.1 if they have children they need to look after or arrange childcare for because their school has closed.

17.1.2 to help their child or another dependent if they're sick, or need to go into isolation or hospital

17.1.3 Where this is for an extended period employees will be considered to be working from home where this is practical, under the direction of their line manager.

18. What happens if an employee doesn't want to go to work?

18.1 Employees may feel that they do not want to go to work if they are afraid of catching coronavirus.

18.2 Line managers should listen to the employees concerns and offer alternatives ways of working where possible.

18.3 Employees can request a period of unpaid leave, but this will need to be approved inline with the scheme of delegation.

18.4 Unauthorised absence could result in disciplinary action.

19.   Review

19.1   The content of this procedure may be subject to revision in line with Public Health guidelines (https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/public-health-england).

Appendix 1- Summary of Advice

Group/ Action	Wash hands more often	Household isolation for 14 days*	Self - isolation for 7 days**	Social mixing in the community***	Having friends and family to the house	Use remote access to NHS and essential services	Vary daily commute and use less public transport	Home working
0 – 69	Yes	Yes	Yes	Advised against	Advised against	Advised	Advised	Advised
70+	Yes	Yes	Yes	Strongly advised against	Strongly advised against	Strongly advised	Strongly advised	Strongly advised
Any age Member of vulnerable group with an underlying health condition[1]	Yes	Yes	Yes	Strongly advised against	Strongly advised against	Strongly advised	Strongly advised	Strongly advised
Pregnant women	Yes	Yes	Yes	Strongly advised against	Strongly advised against	Strongly advised	Strongly advised	Strongly advised
Those with serious underlying health conditions	As above, but further bespoke guidance will be provided by your GP next week							

Appendix 2- Advice for home isolation

Your local health protection team (HPT) and your doctor have agreed that you may stay at home while you wait for the results of tests for COVID-19 (SARS-CoV-2) infection. This is because you do not need to be admitted to hospital and because you have agreed to follow the important instructions described below.

1. Stay at home

You or the person you are caring for should remain in your home, except for getting medical care (see sections 3 and 8 before getting medical care). Do not go to work, school, or public areas, and do not use public transport or taxis until you have been told that is safe to do so.

You will need to ask for help if you require groceries, other shopping or medications. Alternatively, you can order by phone or online. The delivery instruction needs to state that the items are to be left outside, or in the porch, or as appropriate for your home.

2. Separate yourself from other people in your home*

You should stay in a well-ventilated room with a window to the outside that can be opened, separate from other people in your home. Keep the door closed.

Use a separate bathroom from the rest of the household, if available. If you have to share these facilities, regular cleaning will be required. If a separate bathroom is not available, consideration should be given to drawing up a bathroom rota for washing or bathing, with the isolated person using the facilities last, before thoroughly cleaning the bathroom themselves (* if able or appropriate). Ensure the isolated person uses separate towels from other household members, both for drying themselves after bathing or showering and for hand hygiene purposes.

If you live in shared accommodation (university halls of residence or similar) with a communal kitchen, bathroom(s) and living area, you should stay in your room with the door closed, only coming out when necessary, wearing a facemask if one has been issued to you.

If you share a kitchen with others (such as university halls of residence or similar), and if possible, avoid using it whilst others are present. If this is not possible then wear a facemask if you have been issued with one. Take your meals back to your room to eat. Use a dishwasher (if available) to clean and dry your used crockery and cutlery. If this is not possible, wash them by hand using detergent and warm water and dry them thoroughly, using a separate tea towel.

If these recommendations cannot be implemented, then home isolation should be avoided.

3. Call ahead before visiting your doctor

All medical appointments should be discussed in advance with your designated medical contact, using the number that has been provided to you. This is so the surgery or hospital can take steps to minimise contact with others.

4. Wear a facemask if advised to
If you have been provided with facemasks, then you should wear the mask when you are in the same room with other people and when you visit a healthcare provider. If you cannot wear a facemask, the people who live with you should wear one while they are in the same room with you.

5. Cover your coughs and sneezes

Cover your mouth and nose with a disposable tissue when you cough or sneeze. Carers of others undergoing testing for COVID-19 infection should use disposable tissues to wipe away any mucus or phlegm after they have sneezed or coughed.

Dispose of tissues into a plastic waste bag (see note 10. below for managing rubbish), and immediately wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds rinse and dry thoroughly. Carers should wash their hands as well as helping the person they are caring for following coughing or sneezing

6. Wash your hands

Wash your hands or assist the person you are caring for in washing their hands. This should be done often and thoroughly with soap and water, for at least 20 seconds, rinse and dry thoroughly. The same applies to those caring for anyone that is being tested for SARS-CoV-2. Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.

7. Avoid sharing household items

You should not share dishes, drinking glasses, cups, eating utensils, towels, bedding or other items with other people in your home when you have used them (or after your child or the person you are caring for has used them). After using these items, wash them thoroughly with soap and water; dishwashers may be used to clean crockery and cutlery.

Laundry, bedding and towels should be placed in a plastic bag and washed once it is known that the tests for SARS-CoV-2 (COVID-19) are negative. If this is not possible and you need to wash the laundry see below for further advice on handling laundry.

8. Do not have visitors in your home

Only those who live in your home should be allowed to stay. Do not invite or allow visitors to enter. If you think there is an essential need for someone to visit, then discuss it with your designated medical contact first. If it is urgent to speak to someone who is not a member of your household, do this over the phone.

9. If you have pets in the household

Try to keep away from your pets. If this is unavoidable, wash your hands before and after contact.

10. Waste

All waste that has been in contact with the individual, including used tissues, and masks if used, should be put in a plastic rubbish bag and tied when full. The plastic bag should then be placed in a second bin bag and tied.

Do not dispose of it or put it out for collection until you know that patient does not have novel coronavirus.

Should the individual test positive, you will be instructed what to do with the waste.

11. Monitor your symptoms (or the person you are caring for, as appropriate)

Seek prompt medical attention if your illness is worsening, for example, if you have difficulty breathing, or if the person you are caring for symptoms are worsening. If it's not an emergency, you should call your designated medical contact point using the number that has been provided to you.

If it is an emergency and you need to call an ambulance, inform the call handler or operator that you are being tested for SARS-CoV-2 (or that you are caring for someone being tested for SARS-CoV-2, as appropriate).

12. What to do if you have a negative result

If you are tested and receive a negative result for COVID-19 and you have travelled to a specified Category 1 country or area, please continue to self-isolate until you have been back in the UK for 14 days, even if your symptoms have gone.

If you receive a negative result and have travelled to a specified Category 2 country or area, please continue to self-isolate until either your symptoms have gone or you have been back in the UK for 14 days, whichever is sooner.

If you receive a negative result and have had contact with a person known to have had COVID-19 you should remain in isolation until the end of the 14-day period.

If you develop new symptoms or your existing symptoms worsen within your 14-day isolation period, then please call NHS 111 and follow their advice.

Appendix 3- Letter to Line Manager

Dear (Line Manager)

I acknowledge that I have been strongly advised to work from home in line with the current government guidance, due to my declared medical condition. I have decided that I will continue to attend work against this advice and recognise the risk that this puts me under.

Yours Sincerely

(Employee Name)

Appendix 4- Trust Issued Guidance

Operational Guidance for Schools

- No school should close in response to a suspected (or confirmed) COVID-19 case unless advised to do so by **Public Health England** – please liaise with your ESM/Director of Education
- A school's Local Authority/Council has statutory responsibilities, duties and powers – it holds **local civil contingency responsibilities.** Schools must act in accordance with directions given by PHE, and those given by its LA under its civil contingency responsibilities. In such circumstances Headteachers should work closely with ESMs/Director of Education.
- Copy your ESM/Director of Education into all communication with PHE and the Local Authority
- Please inform the Trust immediately of any suspected or confirmed COVID-19 cases in your school
- When directed/advised by Public Health England to undertake a Deep Clean of the school contact Paul Stewart for advice paul.stewart@plymouthcast.org.uk

- If a Local Authority takes a unilateral decision to close all of its schools under its **civil contingency responsibilities** Plymouth CAST schools should act accordingly. Headteachers should discuss this immediately with ESM/Director of Education.
- If a Local Authority takes a unilateral decision to close all of its maintained schools as the employer/accountable body, outside its **civil contingency responsibilities,** Headteachers will notify the Director of Education/ESM immediately. The decision will be made by the Headteacher/Director of Education.

- Schools should support reasonable decisions made by parents regarding the attendance of their children at school during this crisis. Particular consideration should be given to the absence of children with SEND and medical conditions.

- Whilst we continue to support the government's policy of keeping schools open whenever possible, staff absence will make this increasingly challenging. Headteachers continue to be responsible for judging whether it is safe to do so given each school's unique and individual circumstances.
- If a school leader, in consultation with the ESM/Director of Education, feels it is not safe to keep the school open due to staff shortages, he/she may need to implement a partial or full closure – CAST will support these decisions.
- Inform parents/carers as soon as possible about partial or full school closures – remember to notify all agencies, contractors, services etc affected by the closure
- Notify LA Social Services working with specific children when a school is planning on closing/partially closing. Ensure that Social Services has the contact details of a responsible member of staff to liaise with as required
- Headteachers should advise Chairs of LGBs of the changing situation and of decisions taken by Headteacher/Trust.

- In order to stay open for as long as possible, schools should try to enlist supply staff, or use shared staff resource with other CAST and local authority or other multi academy trust schools where possible
- Consider partial closures – reducing the impact on the community by closing for some classes or children.
- Re-align thinking and resource deployment to provide *day-care* rather than education – plan for use of space, staff etc – this will extend the time that the school can remain open before full closure
- If possible, prioritise vulnerable children, and the children of front-line NHS and emergency service workers, rather than simply closing for discrete year groups.
- Liaise with other local CAST, Local Authority and MAT schools about the possibility of providing a service for local children on one site with shared staff. Advise ESM/Director of Education of such arrangements.

- Ensure that staff are fully briefed about home-working arrangements/expectations if school is closed
- Ensure that staff are fully briefed about homeworking arrangements/expectations if self-isolating or social distancing and are well.

- In anticipation of school closure please ask all teaching staff to prepare work to provide children/students with during the closure period
- Explore and prepare IT solutions for setting and reviewing/marking children's work
- Ensure that children and parents have the necessary web addresses and log-in details for all relevant websites such as *Purple Mash, IExel, Bug Club, TT Rockstars etc*
- **Staff work email accounts** can be used for setting and receiving student work.
- **Staff personal email accounts** must not be used for communicating with children/students/parents.
- **Staff should communicate with students via students' school-based email accounts NOT their personal email accounts**
- If using webcams/video conferencing ensure that strict protocols are observed to protect children and staff: *appropriate dress code; appropriate surroundings; No 1 to 1 video contact.*
- Ensure that all necessary safeguarding measures are taken and that policy is understood by all staff.
- Consider providing laptops/tablets etc for children who do not have access to computers at home. **This should be with the understanding and agreement of the parent/guardian.** A simple agreement could be signed by the parent to acknowledge that they have borrowed the equipment and agree to return it when requested.

- Line managers should prepare work streams for staff to cover the duration of the anticipated closure – an opportunity to review, amend, prepare policies; work plans; course work; school self-evaluation; action plans; undertake

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research/reading; engage with professional development; online team meetings etc

- Headteachers should ensure that arrangements are in place to check on the security of the school building during a period of closure. This should be at the beginning and end of the school day.
- Headteachers should ensure that the school and its equipment/resources are as secure as possible prior to a closure.
- Headteachers should ensure that all windows doors etc are secure prior to a school closure.
- Headteachers should ensure that all electrical items that can be turned off are turned off prior to a closure
- Headteachers should ensure that all taps are turned off prior to a closure.
- Headteachers should ensure that the school heating is set to a frost setting prior to a closure.

- Cancel all events that involve bringing together members of the wider school community within the school, such as: assemblies, concerts, productions, fairs/fetes, open evenings/parents evenings, PTFA events.
- Cancel additional mass-pupil events such as film nights, discos etc
- Cancel Local Governing Board meetings
- Cancel school trip/educational visits.
- Cancel training events with attendees from other schools/organisations/wider community
- Staff should not attend external training events.
- Cancel all school lettings
- All CAST central training events and meetings until the end of May (in the first instance) are cancelled

Ofsted Inspections

- Ofsted is to temporarily suspend routine inspections of schools, colleges, early years settings, children's social care providers and local authorities to reduce the burden on staff who are providing vital services to the nation in response to coronavirus

Updated DfE Advice on Recording Pupil Absence (17/03/2020)

- *No school will be penalised for the impact on school attendance of coronavirus (COVID-19). Please record absences as follows:*
- *Where a pupil cannot attend school due to illness, as would normally happen, the pupil should be recorded as absent in the attendance register and the school will authorise the absence. Code I (Illness) should be used in this instance.*

- *Where a pupil is in self-isolation, in accordance with latest information and advice from Department of Health and Social Care and Public Health England, the pupil should be recorded as unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances in the attendance register. Code Y (Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances) should be used in this instance.*

- *Where a pupil does not attend school and is not self-isolating, the pupil will be marked as absent. We back headteachers' judgement and to be pragmatic – having spoken to parents – on whether to authorise such absence, taking into account individual circumstances. We expect, in particular, headteachers will authorise absence where a pupil is not able to attend because of an underlying health condition that means they, or a family member in their household, are particularly vulnerable to coronavirus (COVID-19).*

Latest Covid-19 updates can be found at:

- https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus

- https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-to-educational-settings-about-covid-19

Department for Education Coronavirus Helpline

- Phone: 0800 046 8687