



Highfields Inclusion Partnership

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Policy Title:	General Infection Control Policy		
Last Reviewed & Updated:	April 2020	Due for Review:	June 2021

HIGHFIELDS INCLUSION PARTNERSHIP

General Infection Control Policy - **FINAL**

AIM AND OBJECTIVES

This policy aims to provide the school community with guidance on general prevention measures and preparation in the event of an outbreak of an infection such as pandemic influenza or any contagious illness.

PRINCIPLES

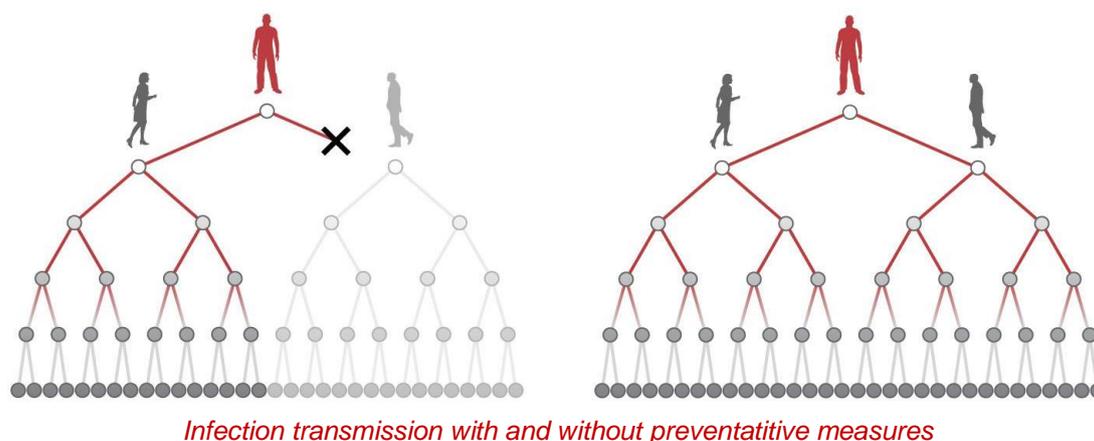
The school recognises that infections such as influenza, norovirus – and more recently COVID-19 / coronavirus - are not new. Some outbreaks, such as influenza, tend to happen seasonally and can be expected whereas other such as COVID-19 / coronavirus occurred with little notice.

We recognise the need to be prepared. Infections are likely to spread particularly rapidly in schools which, by the very nature of the work they do, involve dynamic and often intensive social interaction.

Schools also draw on a wide section of society, from staff to students to visitors – some of whom will have reduced immunity and therefore be worst affected by any outbreak of contagious illness.

In order to offer as much protection as reasonably possible, we recognise both the need for everyday preventative measures and more extraordinary / exceptional measures, such as partial or full closure of the school, in order to control an infection. However we will strive to remain open unless advised otherwise. Good pastoral care includes promoting healthy living and good hand hygiene. School staff will educate students on messages about health and well-being through lessons, through day-to-day conversation when the issue occurs and through proactive role-modelling.

EVERYDAY PRACTICAL INFECTION CONTROL



Infections are usually spread from person to person by close contact, for example:

- Infected people can pass a virus to others through droplets when coughing, sneezing or even talking within a close distance.
- Through direct contact with an infected person: for example, if you shake or hold their hand, and then touch your own mouth, eyes or nose without first washing your hands.
- By touching objects (e.g. door handles, light switches) that have previously been touched by an infected person, then touching your own mouth, eyes or nose without first washing your hands.
- Viruses can survive longer on hard surfaces than on soft or absorbent surfaces.

As demonstrated by the diagram above, whilst infection cannot be completely prevented, complacency around infection control can result in serious outbreaks of illness – which can harm people personally as well as impact on the function of the school.

In light of this, staff and students are given the following instruction about how to reduce the risk of passing on infections to others:

- Hand washing is the single most important part of everyday infection control. All members of the community should be encouraged to wash their hands regularly and properly - particularly after coughing, sneezing or blowing their nose and after use of toilet facilities. It is important that staff, students and visitors adopt a mantra of *'Wash your hands properly - don't just rinse, and certainly don't skip it!'* This can be implemented through training (PSHE and Food Tech lessons, staff CPD) and regular reminders (information posters). The school will ensure the correct handwashing products are always available to support this.
- All members of the community should develop awareness – through training (PSHE and Food Tech lessons, staff CPD) and regular reminders (information posters) – that contact between your hands and mouth/nose, unless you have just washed your hands, is a particular cause of infection being spread.

- Simple habits such as covering your nose and mouth when coughing or sneezing can also be promoted to reduce infection being spread. For example, current health guidance (April 2020) is to turn the face into a sleeve rather than cough or sneeze into hands if a tissue cannot be used. Soiled tissues must be disposed of hygienically and hands washed afterwards where possible.
- Being aware of the symptoms of the most highly-infectious common illnesses (influenza, norovirus, coronavirus / COVID-19) – and in turn, not attending school and seeking medical advice before attending again (GP, NHS helpline) can stop further spread of infection. In the case of staff, it may feel dutiful to attend school even when experiencing symptoms – so as to avoid other staff having to cover your duties etc. – but there is a wider impact on the well-being and function of the school through inadvertently spreading infection by being knowingly ill and at work.

Minimise sources of contamination

- School will ensure relevant staff have Food Hygiene Certificate or other training in food handling.
- School will ensure we store corporately-supplied food that requires refrigeration, covered and dated within a refrigerator, at recommended temperatures. Staff will adopt similar measures with any food they bring into school for personal consumption.
- All community members will wash hands before and after handling food.
- The school will ensure there is regular cleaning and disinfecting of food storage and preparation areas. Whilst our contractors have the main role in this, all staff have a responsibility to avoid creating untidy / unhygienic work and social areas.
- The school will ensure food is bought from reputable sources and used by recommended dates.

To control the spread of infection during situations that have a known higher-risk of infection:

- We ensure hand washing procedures following activities involving toileting, handling animals, gardening etc. We adopt a mantra of *'Wash your hands properly - don't just rinse, and certainly don't skip it!'* The school will ensure the correct handwashing products are always available to support this.
- Student, staff and visitors with mild colds etc. are encouraged to blow and wipe their noses when necessary and to dispose of the soiled tissues hygienically, followed by hand washing where possible. The school will actively provide tissues to help with this.
- Staff will wear personal protective equipment when dealing with accidents and suspected infectious illness. (e.g. gloves, face masks). This will always be readily available.
- The school will put in place specific risk assessments as and when there are serious outbreaks of illness – such as in the case of the COVID-19 / Coronavirus outbreak of 2020.

In order to prevent the spread of infections in school we follow the guidelines set by the Health Protection Agency, regarding the recommended period of time that pupils should be absent from school. Detailed information about many conditions is available at <https://www.gov.uk/topic/health-protection/infectious-diseases>

The school will also consult with the Local Authority.

IF A PERSON IS UNWELL AND IN SCHOOL

The school has a number of Qualified First Aiders who can assess students, staff and visitors before recommending further action. Any advice given is understood to be from a person who is not a medical specialist – the school's standard recommendation is that anybody feeling unwell must seek appropriate medical advice from a GP, dentist (in specific circumstances), NHS helpline or by attending hospital where appropriate.

If a person is presenting as unwell in school, this should be communicated to a Qualified First Aider and to reception. The standard procedure is that they then wait in one of the small meeting rooms with supervision until arrangements are made for their exit from the building.

The room will require cleaning following use.

In communication, with a view to preventing the persistence of symptoms and further spread of infection, staff will:

- Ask parents/carers to keep their young person at home if they have an infection, and to inform the school as to the nature of the infection where confirmation from a medical specialist has been provided.
- Remind parents not to bring a young person to school who has been vomiting or had diarrhoea until at least 48 hours has elapsed since the last attack.

Staff are expected to follow the same guidance.

RESPONDING TO SIGNIFICANT OUTBREAKS

In the event of the school becoming aware that a pupil or member of staff has a significant infectious illness we would direct their parents/carers to report to their GP and inform both the Local Authority and Public Health England (PHE).

During an outbreak of a known highly-infectious illness such as pandemic influenza, norovirus or coronavirus the school will seek to operate as normally as possible but will plan for higher levels of staff absence. The decision on whether school should remain fully open, partially open or closed will be based on medical evidence. This will be discussed with the relevant advisory bodies. It is likely that school will remain open but we recognise the fact that both the illness itself and the caring responsibilities of staff will impact staff absence levels. The school will close if we cannot provide adequate supervision for the young people. In the event of partial or full closure, an Action Plan will be set up, published and reviewed by SLT (in consultation with recognised advisory bodies) on a 2 – 3 weekly basis.

PREGNANCY IN SCHOOL

Any person attending the school who is pregnant should refer to the follow advice:

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/pregnancy-and-baby/your-health-at-work-pregnant/>

This is the advice school leaders will refer to in responding to pregnancy in school.

MONITORING AND REVIEW OF THE POLICY

The policy will be reviewed every two years and in the event of any outbreak / change in local or national strategy.