
OPENING SCHOOLS FOR MORE STUDENTS IN JUNE AND JULY – EMPLOYEE BRIEFING

Employee HR Information during the partial reopening of Trust schools.

VERSION 1 (Monday 1st June 2020)



Aldridge School



Queen Mary's Grammar School



Queen Mary's High School



Shire Oak Academy



The Ladder School



Walsall Studio School

Introduction

- 1.1 We all recognise the very challenging circumstances and the anxiety many staff feel as the country moves 'out of lockdown' including opening our schools to more staff and students. This briefing document outlines how we are approaching the safe return of more students and staff to our school sites in June and July. This information is consistent with the more detailed information contained in the Trust's risk assessment local arrangements in each school. It is based on DFE guidance, Walsall Local Authority and Public Health England and advice received from the Trust's HR, legal and Health and Safety advisors.
- 1.2 You should read the Trust risk assessment and documents communicating the local arrangements in your school alongside this document. You are required to read and 'sign' to confirm you have read these documents and confirming you will fulfil your duties in line with them.
- 1.3 This guidance is for staff and leaders in all Mercian schools for its consistent application to all employees in June and July.

Coronavirus Symptoms & Basic Guidance

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/coronavirus-covid-19-list-of-guidance>

- 2.1 *The most common symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19) are recent onset of a new continuous cough or high temperature or a loss of, or change in, normal sense of taste or smell (anosmia). If you have these symptoms, however mild, stay at home and do not leave your house for at least 7 days from when your symptoms started (if you live alone), or 14 days (if you live with someone who has symptoms). You do not need to call NHS 111 to go into self-isolation. If your symptoms worsen during home isolation or are no better after 7 days, contact NHS 111 online. If you have no internet access, you should call NHS 111. For a medical emergency dial 999.*
- 2.2 *It is now possible for anyone over the age of 5 to have a test if they have symptoms of Coronavirus. Students are encouraged to do this and staff who have attended or are due to attend school must do so.*
- 2.3 *Wash your hands more often than usual, for 20 seconds using soap and hot water, particularly after coughing, sneezing and blowing your nose, or after being in public areas where other people are doing so. Use hand sanitiser if that's all you have access to.*
- 2.4 *To reduce the spread of germs when you cough or sneeze, cover your mouth and nose with a tissue, or your sleeve (not your hands) if you don't have a tissue, and throw the tissue in a bin immediately. Then wash your hands or use a hand sanitising gel.*
- 2.5 **Anyone with symptoms should self-isolate and follow the Government guidelines for their family. Nobody should enter the school site with symptoms of Coronavirus.**



If you have coronavirus symptoms you should book a test as soon as possible. The Trust, as your employer, is a referrer for the testing of key workers so can help you do this if you prefer. Please contact Haydock.T@the.merciantrust.org or Koo.L@the.merciantrust.org

Shielded and Vulnerable People

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-implementing-protective-measures-in-education-and-childcare-settings>

Shielded and clinically vulnerable children and young people

- 3.1 *For the vast majority of children and young people, coronavirus is a mild illness. Children and young people (0 to 18 years of age) who have been classed as clinically extremely vulnerable due to pre-existing medical conditions have been advised to shield. We do not expect these children to be attending school or college, and they should continue to be supported at home as much as possible. Clinically vulnerable (but not clinically extremely vulnerable) people are those considered to be at a higher risk of severe illness from*

coronavirus. A small minority of children will fall into this category, and parents should follow medical advice if their child is in this category.

Shielded and clinically vulnerable adults

3.2 Clinically extremely vulnerable individuals are advised not to work outside the home. We are strongly advising people, including education staff, who are clinically extremely vulnerable (those with serious underlying health conditions which put them at very high risk of severe illness from coronavirus and have been advised by their clinician or through a letter) to rigorously follow shielding measures in order to keep themselves safe. **Staff in this position are advised not to come into work at any of our school sites.** Read COVID-19: guidance on shielding and protecting people defined on medical grounds as extremely vulnerable for more advice.

TRUST-WIDE GUIDANCE



If you have been identified as an extremely vulnerable person by your clinician or via NHS letter, please contact your headteacher or HR lead. You should work from home on tasks provided by your headteacher / line manager and should not attend any of our school sites.

3.3 Clinically vulnerable individuals who are at higher risk of severe illness (for example, people with some preexisting conditions as set out in the Staying at home and away from others (social distancing) guidance have been **advised to take extra care in observing social distancing and should work from home where possible.** Education and childcare settings should endeavour to support this, for example by asking staff to support remote education, carry out lesson planning or other roles which can be done from home. If clinically vulnerable (but not clinically extremely vulnerable) individuals cannot work from home, they should be offered the safest available on-site roles, staying 2 metres away from others wherever possible, although the individual may choose to take on a role that does not allow for this distance if they prefer to do so. If they have to spend time within 2 metres of other people, settings must carefully assess and discuss with them whether this involves an acceptable level of risk.

TRUST-WIDE GUIDANCE



If you consider yourself to be clinically vulnerable (but have not been identified as clinically extremely vulnerable by your clinician or by letter) you should take extra care in observing social distancing and following all guidance in the Trust's risk assessments and local site arrangements when coming into work at any of our school sites. Please contact your headteacher or HR Lead to explore any opportunities there may be for you to continue to work from home on alternative tasks, if possible.

Living with a shielded or clinically vulnerable person

3.4 If a child, young person or a member of staff lives with someone who is clinically vulnerable (but not clinically extremely vulnerable), including those who are pregnant, **they can attend their education or childcare setting.**

TRUST-WIDE GUIDANCE



If you live in the same household as someone who considers themselves to be clinically vulnerable (but have not been identified as clinically extremely vulnerable) you should take extra care in observing social distancing and following all guidance in the Trust's risk

assessments and local site arrangements when coming into work at any of our school sites to undertake work as directed by your headteacher/line manager.

- 3.5 *If a child, young person or staff member lives in a household with someone who is extremely clinically vulnerable, as set out in the COVID-19: guidance on shielding and protecting people defined on medical grounds as extremely vulnerable guidance, it is advised they **only attend an education or childcare setting if stringent social distancing can be adhered to** and, in the case of children, they are able to understand and follow those instructions. This may not be possible for very young children and older children without the capacity to adhere to the instructions on social distancing. If stringent social distancing cannot be adhered to, we do not expect those individuals to attend. They should be supported to learn or work at home.*

TRUST-WIDE GUIDANCE



If you live in the same household as someone who has been identified as an extremely vulnerable person by your clinician or via NHS letter, please contact your headteacher or HR lead. You should work from home on tasks provided by your headteacher / line manager and should not attend any of our school sites.

BAME Considerations

- 4.1 Recent publications from the ONS have highlighted racial disparities in the impact of Covid-19. While detailed analysis of the statistics is important, the reported headlines are that BAME communities have been disproportionately affected. Our Trust seeks to treat BAME employees in the same way as employees who are clinically vulnerable (but not clinically extremely vulnerable). We also seek to treat employees who live in the same household as a BAME person in the same way as employees who live in the same household as someone who considers themselves clinically vulnerable but not clinically extremely vulnerable. The Trust has provided each school with a BAME staff risk assessment document for school leaders to use in discussions with any BAME member of staff who wishes to discuss their work onsite.

TRUST-WIDE GUIDANCE



If you consider yourself to be a greater risk by nature of your ethnicity or the ethnicity of someone in your household you should take extra care in observing social distancing and following all guidance in the Trust's risk assessments and local site arrangements when coming into work at any of our school sites. Please contact your headteacher or HR Lead to explore any opportunities there may be for you to continue to work from home on alternative tasks, if possible.

Staff requiring childcare for their own children

- 4.2 As each of our schools open for more students in June and July more staff will be on rota each school day. All employees who are not clinically extremely vulnerable (or who live with someone who is clinically extremely vulnerable) should be available for work. We recognise that many staff have been working from

home while home-schooling their own children (which has reduced the need for more staff in schools across the country since March 20th). However, from June 15th onwards staff should make appropriate arrangements for childcare should they be required to attend their school site to work. Staff should discuss any difficulties that may arise with school leaders who will be flexible with the staff rota where possible. Due to the important nature of social distancing and careful management of numbers of people onsite at each school it is not possible for school leaders to permit staff to bring their own children into school with them. Where employees are unable to complete duties as directed because of their parental responsibilities there is provision within the Trust's family leave policy for all employees with at least one year's continuous service to take up to 18 weeks' unpaid parental leave in respect of each child.

TRUST-WIDE GUIDANCE



If you have difficulty undertaking work duties as directed because of your parental responsibilities, you should contact your headteacher or line manager to discuss if any changes to the staff rota are possible. If this is not possible, you should follow provisions of the Trust's family leave policy (section 8: parental leave).

Practical Steps

Social Distancing

5.1 2m Guidance – Everyone (staff and students) should have respect for others around them and aim to keep a distance of 2m from other people at all times. It is each individual's responsibility to observe social distancing whilst on the school site and also when travelling to and from school. School leaders will keep under review all operational matters in this regard including:

- Entrances / Exits
- Rooms to be used
- Desks and spacing of desks
- Movement around the school in corridors and outside spaces

What to bring and what to wear

5.2 Tissue – You should bring tissue or toilet paper in your pocket (in case you need to sneeze or cough). A box of tissues is provided in every classroom for staff and students. Used tissues should be put in the bin in the room which has a plastic liner and will be emptied regularly.

5.3 Own Pens, Paper and Devices and Essential Equipment – You should bring your own electronic devices, pens, notebooks etc. as you will not have access to communal staff rooms. You will have access to tea and coffee facilities in each school, but you must use your own cup or mug and you should wash them up and take them away with you when you leave. No items should be left in or around sinks.

5.4 Business Dress, No Masks – Although staff in all schools have been dressed more casually than normal while working with vulnerable students and the children of key workers since March, moving forward you should now wear professional business dress as you would for any normal school day. In line with DFE guidance you should not wear masks on any school site.

5.5 Arrival Time – Please only arrive to the school site a few minutes before you need to. Please enter via reception at each school site and use the hand sanitiser provided. You should wash your hands regularly.

5.6 **Rota** – You should only attend school when you are on the rota to work with students or if you are given permission to attend site for a specific job that cannot be carried from home. You should leave as soon as you have finished work – and wash your hands or use sanitiser before you leave.

Becoming ill during the school day

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-implementing-protective-measures-in-education-and-childcare-settings>

5.7 *When a child, young person or staff member develops symptoms compatible with coronavirus, they should be sent home and advised to self-isolate for 7 days. Their fellow household members should self-isolate for 14 days. All staff and students who are attending an education or childcare setting will have access to a test if they display symptoms of coronavirus and are encouraged to get tested in this scenario.*

5.8 *Where the child, young person or staff member tests negative, they can return to their setting and the fellow household members can end their self-isolation.*

5.9 *Where the child, young person or staff member tests positive, the rest of their class or group within their childcare or education setting should be sent home and advised to self-isolate for 14 days. The other household members of that wider class or group do not need to self-isolate unless the child, young person or staff member they live with in that group subsequently develops symptoms.*

5.10 *As part of the national test and trace programme, if other cases are detected within the cohort or in the wider setting, Public Health England's local health protection teams will conduct a rapid investigation and will advise schools and other settings on the most appropriate action to take. In some cases a larger number of other children, young people may be asked to self-isolate at home as a precautionary measure – perhaps the whole class, site or year group. Where settings are observing guidance on infection prevention and control, which will reduce risk of transmission, closure of the whole setting will not generally be necessary.*

TRUST-WIDE GUIDANCE



If you become ill with coronavirus symptoms while in school, you must report this to the senior member of staff on duty and leave the school site immediately. You should self-isolate in accordance with government guidelines for your household and obtain a COVID-19 test as soon as possible. You should not return before 7 days has passed unless a clear/negative test result has been obtained.

First Aid

5.11 First Aid will only be administered to staff or students if necessary. The First Aider will wear a face mask and gloves and maintain social distancing where possible. Students may be asked to treat themselves, e.g. to apply a plaster.

Managing Behaviour

5.12 All students are expected to follow normal school rules as well as additional measures outlines in the risk assessments. Behaviour policies are being updated in all Trust schools to include provision for appropriate staff to contact parents in the event of any behaviour concerns related to social distancing or other COVID-19 guidance. Headteachers have the authority to rescind the invitation into school of any student for the duration of this term.

Fire Evacuation

5.13 The fire alarm and evacuation routines remain unchanged from a normal school day. The building should be evacuated as quickly and quietly as possible while maintaining social distancing.

Other measures

The Trust risk assessment and local arrangements in schools addresses the full range of measures being taken. These typically include:

Site ✓ Restricted numbers of rooms/buildings open for use by staff and students

✓ Maximum class sizes of 10 or less in most rooms ✓ Numbers of people in toilets restricted and clearly labelled on doors ✓ Separate safeguards and instructions for any contractors on site

Posters ✓ Posters displayed around the school to provide reminders about handwashing ✓ Posters around school directing access to mental health support ✓ Posters around school directing how to make disclosures of domestic abuse (domestic violence)

Sanitiser and Cleaning ✓ Sanitiser provided by photocopiers and in staff areas as well as all classrooms used ✓ Increased cleaning and disinfecting daily and ongoing cleaning during the day of phones, door handles, bannisters etc.

Student Support ✓ Students with EHCPs to be individually assessed on their first day (or before) returning to school ✓ Students with new or live safeguarding referrals to be assessed on their first day returning to school

TRUST-WIDE GUIDANCE



If you have any questions, concerns or apprehensions about the opening of Mercian schools to more students and staff in June and July please contact your headteacher or the Trust central team directly using the email addresses below.

Tina Haydock Haydock.T@the.merciantrust.org or Lin Koo Koo.L@the.merciantrust.org

