

COVID-19 Policy

VLUK accepts our responsibilities during the Coronavirus Covid-19 pandemic to ensure we are protecting our learners and workforce and minimising the risk of spread of infection.

This policy is intended to introduce consistent measures in line with the Government's recommendations. These are exceptional circumstances and we will comply with the latest Government advice on Coronavirus at all times.

We have undertaken a risk assessment to make the working environment as safe as it possible can be to follow the Government's guidance on Coronavirus. A risk assessment has been undertaken prior to any business activities resuming, a copy of this has been shared with all staff and is also available on our website. The risk assessment should be read in conjunction with this policy.

The health and safety requirements of any business activity must also not be compromised at this time. If an activity cannot be undertaken safely due to a lack of suitably qualified personnel being available or social distancing being implemented, it should not take place.

If a partner site does not consistently implement the measures set out below, it may be required to shut down.

This policy will be reviewed annually and revised as necessary in response to changes in legislation or guidance on methods of working.

The aim of the policy is to balance minimising any risks from coronavirus (COVID-19) by maximising control measures with providing a full educational experience for our learners.

VLUK will liaise where necessary with Education Funding Partners regarding these measures and if any cases arise.

Our risk assessment and guidance is based on the following principles

Prevention:

- 1) minimise contact with individuals who are unwell by ensuring that those who have coronavirus (COVID-19) symptoms, or who have someone in their household who does, do not attend the education setting
- 2) clean hands thoroughly, more often than usual
- 3) ensure good respiratory hygiene by promoting the 'catch it, bin it, kill it' approach
- 4) introduce enhanced cleaning, including cleaning frequently touched surfaces often, using standard products such as detergents and bleach

- 5) minimise contact between individuals and maintain social distancing wherever possible
- 6) where necessary, wear appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE)

Response to any infection:

- 7) engage with the NHS Test and Trace process
- 8) manage confirmed cases of coronavirus (COVID-19) amongst the school community
- 9) contain any outbreak by following local health protection team advice.

1 - If a learner becomes unwell

If anyone in the education setting becomes unwell with a new and persistent cough or a high temperature, or has a loss of, or change in, their normal sense of taste or smell (anosmia), they must be sent home and advised to follow '[stay at home: guidance for households with possible or confirmed coronavirus \(COVID-19\) infection](#)', which sets out that they should self-isolate for at least 10 days and should [arrange to have a test](#) to see if they have coronavirus (COVID-19).

If a learner is awaiting collection, they should be moved, if possible, to a room where they can be isolated behind a closed door, with appropriate adult supervision if required. Ideally, a window should be opened for ventilation. If it is not possible to isolate them, move them to an area which is at least 2 metres away from other people.

If they need to go to the bathroom while waiting to be collected, they should use a separate bathroom if possible. The bathroom must be cleaned and disinfected using standard cleaning products before being used by anyone else.

PPE must be worn by staff caring for the child while they await collection **if** a distance of 2 metres cannot be maintained.

Any members of staff who have helped someone with symptoms and any pupils who have been in close contact with them **do not** need to go home to self-isolate unless they develop symptoms themselves (in which case, they should arrange a test) or if the symptomatic person subsequently tests positive (see below) or they have been requested to do so by NHS Test and Trace.

Everyone must wash their hands thoroughly for 20 seconds with soap and running water or use hand sanitiser after any contact with someone who is unwell. The area around the person with symptoms must be cleaned with normal household bleach after they have left to reduce the risk of passing the infection on to other people.

2 - Hygiene

Learners and staff should be encouraged to wash their hands frequently, including when they arrive at school, when they return from breaks, when they change rooms and before and after eating.

3 - Catch it, bin it, kill it

There should be enough tissues and bins available to enable learners to be encouraged to “catch it, bin it, kill it”

4 - Cleaning

Enhanced cleaning will be overseen directly by the venue. Cleaning products will be available to ensure that staff/learners can frequently clean desks, shared materials etc. more often than usual.

5 - Social Distancing

We will minimise the number of contacts that a learner has during the day whilst still delivering the necessary curriculum.

Learners will be placed either in whole site “bubbles”, or year group bubbles so we reduce the number of contact between learners and staff.

Learners should still be encouraged to social distance within their bubbles. Maintaining a distance between people whilst inside and reducing the amount of time they are in face to face to contact lowers the risk of transmission.

It is strong public health advice that staff should maintain distance from their learners, staying at the front of the class, and away from colleagues where possible. Ideally, adults should maintain 2 metre distance from each other, and from learners.

Classrooms will be set up with forward facing desks, sitting learners side by side.

Parents and carers will be asked not to gather at the venue or come onto the site without an appointment.

Staff and Learners should limit the amount of equipment they bring in each day, to essentials such as lunch boxes, hats, coats, books, stationary and mobile phones. Bags are allowed. Sharing of equipment should be avoided.

The behaviour policy has been updated to explain the consequences for poor behaviour and deliberately breaking the rules around distancing and hygiene and how we will enforce those rules including any sanctions. For example, deliberately coughing in the face of others within the context of a pandemic.

6 - PPE

Public Health England does not (based on current evidence) recommend the use of face coverings in schools. This evidence will be kept under review. They are not required in education settings as learners and staff are mixing in consistent groups, and because misuse may inadvertently increase the risk of transmission. There may also be negative effects on communication and thus education.

Staff and learners who wear face coverings when they arrive at the education setting should be instructed not to touch the front of their face covering during use or when removing it. They must wash their hands immediately on arrival (as is the case for all learners), dispose of temporary face coverings in a covered bin or place reusable face coverings in a plastic bag they can take home with them, and then wash their hands again before heading to their classroom.

7 - Test and Trace

We will ensure that staff members and parents/carers understand that they will need to be ready and willing to:

- [book a test](#) if they or their child are displaying symptoms. Staff and pupils must not come into the school if they have symptoms, and must be sent home to self-isolate if they develop them in school. All children can be tested, including children under 5, but children aged 11 and under will need to be helped by their parents/carers if using a home testing kit
- provide details of anyone they or their child have been in close contact with if they were to test positive for coronavirus (COVID-19) or if asked by NHS Test and Trace
- [self-isolate](#) if they have been in close contact with someone who tests positive for coronavirus (COVID-19), or if anyone in their household develops symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19)

Anyone who displays symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19) can and should get a test. Tests can be booked online through the NHS [testing and tracing for coronavirus website](#), or ordered by telephone via NHS 119 for those without access to the internet. Essential workers, which includes anyone involved in education or childcare, have priority access to testing.

Staff **must** communicate with their line manager or the Operations Director if anyone becomes ill with suspected Coronavirus or tests positive.

8 & 9 - Confirmed cases

We understand we will contact the local [Public Health England health protection team](#) as needed and follow their instructions.

Travel to school

Staff, parents and learners are encouraged to walk or cycle to school if at all possible rather than use public transport.

Families using public transport should refer to the [safer travel guidance for passengers](#).

Process in the event of local outbreaks

If a local area sees a spike in infection rates that is resulting in localised community spread, appropriate authorities will decide which measures to implement to help contain the spread. The Department for Education will be involved in decisions at a local and national level affecting a geographical area, and will support appropriate authorities and individual settings to follow the health advice.

Monitoring and review of risk controls

We will monitor and review these measures regularly, to ensure they are working, and taking action to address any shortfalls.

Learners who cannot attend the education setting

A small number of learners will still be unable to attend in line with public health advice because they are self-isolating and have had symptoms or a positive test result themselves, or because they are a close contact of someone who has coronavirus (COVID-19). These learners will be able to work remotely at home.