

## VLUK Outbreak Management Plan

The government has made it a national priority that education settings should continue to operate as normally as possible during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Measures affecting education and childcare may be necessary in some circumstances, for example:

- to help manage a COVID-19 outbreak within a setting
- as part of a package of measures responding to a variant of concern (VoC) or to the extremely high prevalence of COVID-19 in the community
- to prevent unsustainable pressure on the NHS

This plan describes what VLUK would do if additional measures needed to be put in place described in this document to help break chains of transmission.

The overarching objective is to maximise the number of young people in face-to face education and minimise any disruption, in a way that best manages the COVID-19 risk. We will endeavour to keep any measures to the minimum number of campuses or groups possible, and for the shortest amount of time possible.

We will keep all measures under regular review and lift them as soon as the evidence supports doing so.

This plan will cover:

- roles and responsibilities
- when and how to seek public health advice
- details on the types of control measures we might put in place and how they would be put in place quickly.
- how we would ensure every learner receives the quantity and quality of education and support to which they are normally entitled
- how we would communicate changes to learners, staff, parents, carers and partners.

The [VLUK Covid Policy December 2021](#) sets out the measures we have in place to manage transmission of COVID-19 day to day.

If positive cases substantially increases extra measures may be put in place, as it could indicate transmission is happening in the setting. The thresholds, detailed below, can be used as an indication for when to seek public health advice if felt necessary, either;

- 5 learners or staff, who are likely to have mixed closely, test positive for COVID-19 within a 10-day period. 2 learners in campuses with fewer than 20 learners.
- 10% of learners or staff who are likely to have mixed closely test positive for COVID-19 within a 10-day period

When the thresholds are reached, we will ensure the measures already in place, testing, hygiene and ventilation are being carried out.

VLUK may seek additional public health advice if we are concerned about transmission in the setting, by phoning the DfE helpline (0800 046 8687, option 1).

Should extra measures need to be taken, this may include

## **Testing**

Asking learners or staff to test more frequently using lateral flow devices (LFD).

## **Face Coverings**

These may need to be temporarily worn in more areas, at current they are only advised in communal areas, for example in classrooms.

In all cases any educational and wellbeing drawbacks in the recommended use of face coverings should be balanced with the benefits in managing transmission.

## **Shielding**

Following expert clinical advice and the successful rollout of the COVID-19 vaccine programme, people previously considered to be clinically extremely vulnerable (CEV) will not be advised to shield again.

## **Other possible measures**

VLUK may stop, or limit:

- residential educational visits
- sporting fixtures
- open days/evenings
- parental attendance in settings
- live performances in settings

## **Attendance restrictions**

High-quality face-to-face education remains a government priority. Attendance restrictions should only ever be considered as a short-term measure and as a last resort:

- for individual settings, on public health advice in extreme cases where other recommended measures have not broken chains of in-setting transmission
- across an area, on government advice in order to suppress or manage a dangerous variant and to prevent unsustainable pressure on the NHS

In all circumstances, priority should continue to be given to vulnerable children and young people and children of critical workers to attend to their normal timetables.

Attendance restrictions are unlikely to be a proportionate response to the level of risk that COVID-19 currently poses to young people, and public health authorities would only consider them as a last resort if all other risk mitigations proved insufficient to break chains of transmission.

## **Remote education**

High-quality remote learning in schools, further education, and higher education settings should be provided for all learners if:

- they have tested positive for COVID-19 but are well enough to learn from home
- attendance at their setting has been temporarily restricted

On-site provision should in all cases be retained for vulnerable children and young people and the children of critical workers. If settings have to temporarily stop onsite provision on public health advice, VLUK will discuss alternative arrangements for vulnerable children and young people with the learners and care givers.

## **Safeguarding and designated safeguarding leads**

If attendance restrictions are needed all safeguarding processes will remain in place and the DSL will be vigilant and responsive to all safeguarding threats with the aim of keeping vulnerable children and young people safe, particularly as more learners will be learning remotely. Our DSL will review their child protection policy so that it reflects the local restrictions and remains effective and remain contactable via phone and email as normal.

## **Vulnerable children and young people**

Where vulnerable children and young people are absent, VLUK will:

- follow up with the parent or carer, working with the local authority and social worker (where applicable), to explore the reason for absence and discuss any concerns
- encourage the young person to attend educational provision if they wish to.
- focus the discussions on the welfare of the young person and ensuring that the young person is able to access appropriate education and support while they are at home
- have in place procedures to maintain contact, ensure they are able to access remote education support, as required, and regularly check if they are doing so.

## **Plan for when additional measures are needed**

- Director of Operations (DOP) will make the decision, in discussion with COO and Governors, when additional measures are needed. This may or may not involve seeking public health advice.
- DOP will communicate change of plans to all staff, learners and parent/carers and partners by email. DOP will be available to take calls or emails from any stakeholders with questions or concerns.
- Director of Quality will review the remote education on offer and ensure it is being provided and is of a high standard (where necessary).
- DSL will communicate with vulnerable learners to ensure their needs are met (where necessary).

## **December 2021 Measures in place**

### **These measures are currently in place across all campuses**

1. Staff and students should continue to test twice weekly at home, with lateral flow device (LFD) test kits, 3 to 4 days apart. Testing remains voluntary but is strongly encouraged.
2. All learners in higher education (HE) settings should test before they travel back to university. On arrival at university, all students should take 2 lateral flow device (LFD) tests (3 to 4 days apart). All HE learners and staff should continue to test in line with [government guidelines](#).
3. FE learners and staff should test before returning to campus in January.
4. Those who test positive should isolate, take a confirmatory polymerase chain reaction (PCR) test, and continue to isolate if the result is positive.
5. Ensure good hygiene for everyone, including cleaning regimes, keep occupied spaces well ventilated (without impacting thermal comfort), and follow public health advice on testing and managing confirmed cases of COVID-19.
6. Strong messaging about signs and symptoms, isolation advice and testing, to support prompt isolation of suspected cases. Encouraging vaccination uptake for eligible learners and staff.
7. Contacts of positive cases should take a LFD test at home for 7 days but continue to attend the setting as normal.

## Contingency Plan for January 2022

VLUK will continue to plan and provide for face to face education in January 2022 however, if the Government instruct us to return to remote education the follow process will be followed

- Director of Operations (DOP) will receive this instruction and inform COO and Governors that additional measures are needed.
- DOP will communicate change of plans to all staff via email that lessons will be online and request that staff plan accordingly, including emailing learners links for live lessons.
- DOP will email learners and parent/carers to outline the change to delivery method.
- DOP will email partners (including PPMs) to update them on processes being followed.
- DOP will email enrichment officers to ask them to plan online sessions. Director of Quality (DoQ) to monitor sessions taking place.
- ACLs to collate online learning links for all staff so DoQ can review the remote education on offer and ensure it is being provided and is of a high standard.
- DoQ will ensure all learners have suitable hardware and connectivity to access the education on offer via ACLs. This should be a minimal amount of learners due to the online day in place this academic year so far allowing these potential issues to be identified already.
- If there are high levels of staff absence staff without full teaching timetables may be asked to cover as an interim measure.
- Designated Safeguarding Lead will communicate with vulnerable learners to ensure their needs are met and organise onsite access for them if necessary.
- DOP will be available to take calls or emails from any stakeholders with questions or concerns.

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