



Matrix Academy Trust Outbreak Management Plan

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To be reviewed in line with Government changes and guidelines.

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1. Introduction

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

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

- to help manage a COVID-19 outbreak within a setting
- if there is extremely high prevalence of COVID-19 in the community and other measures have failed to reduce transmission
- as part of a package of measures responding to a Variant of Concern (VoC)

1.3 This Outbreak Management Plan outlines how Matrix Academy Trust would operate if any of the additional measures due to a Variant of Concern were recommended for our setting or area. This plan includes how Matrix Academy Trust will ensure every child receives the quantity and quality of education and care to which they are normally entitled.

1.4 Matrix Academy Trust is a multi-academy trust comprising of 5 schools based over 6 sites located in the West Midlands area, along with Barr Beacon SCITT (School Centred Initial Teacher Training). Our school cohorts range from 3-18 year old. The schools currently operated by the Trust are:

- Barr Beacon School (Secondary), Old Hall Lane, Aldridge, Walsall, WS9 0RF
- Etone College, Leicester Road (Secondary), Nuneaton, CV11 6AA
- Bloxwich Academy (Secondary), Leamore Lane, Bloxwich, Walsall, WS2 7NR
- Bloxwich Academy (Primary), Bloxwich Lane, Bloxwich, Walsall, WS2 7JT
- Dame Elizabeth Cadbury School (Secondary), Woodbrooke Road, Birmingham, B30 1UL
- Turves Green Boys School (Secondary), Northfield, Birmingham, B31 4BS

2. Guidance

2.1 Matrix Academy Trust continues to seek guidance from:

- National Government Guidance
- COVID-19 Contingency Framework: Education and Childcare June 2021
- Public Health England (PHE)
- Confederation of School Trusts (CST)
- Matrix Trust COVID-19 School Risk Assessments

3. Prioritising Education

3.1 The impacts of having missed education during the pandemic are severe for children, young people and adults. In all cases, any benefits in managing transmission should be weighed against any educational drawbacks.

3.2 Decision-makers should endeavour to keep any measures in education and childcare to the minimum number of settings or groups possible, and for the shortest amount of time possible.

3.3 Decision-makers should keep all measures under regular review and lift them as soon as the evidence supports doing so.

3.4 Measures affecting education and childcare settings across an area should not be considered in isolation, but as part of a broader package of measures.

3.5 Attendance restrictions should only ever be considered as a last resort. Where measures include attendance restrictions, the Department for Education (DfE) may advise on any groups that should be prioritised.

3.6 The Government will try to give as much notice as possible of any changes to the way settings should operate.

3.7 Prioritising Certain Year Groups

3.7.1 The DfE has stated that early years and primary settings should be “prioritised to continue to operate as normal”, although the department “may advise that other groups should be prioritised”.

4. Early Years

4.1 If attendance restrictions are needed, vulnerable children and children of critical workers should be allowed to attend.

5. Primary Schools

5.1 If some attendance restrictions are needed, all vulnerable children, children of critical workers, children in reception, year 1 and year 2 should still be allowed to attend. If, by exception, attendance is restricted further, vulnerable children and children of critical workers should still be allowed to attend.

6. Secondary Schools

6.1 If some attendance restrictions are needed, all vulnerable children and young people, children of critical workers, pupils in years 10, 11, 12 and 13, and other pupils who were due to take external exams this academic year should still be allowed to attend. If, by exception, attendance is restricted further, vulnerable children and young people and children of critical workers should still be allowed to attend.

7. 16 to 19 academies

7.1 16 to 19 academies should follow the guidance for either sixth forms or FE, according to which type of provision their own provision most closely reflects.

8. Limits on Attendance

8.1 If attendance needs to be restricted further at either phase, vulnerable children and young people and children of critical workers should still be able to attend.

8.2 Limits on attendance will only ever be considered as a last resort.

8.3 As with other periods of restricted attendance, schools within the Matrix Academy Trust will provide high quality remote education for all pupils or those not attending.

8.4 Restrictions on attendance may be advised by local teams for individual settings or clusters of closely linked settings.

8.5 If attendance restrictions are required across an area, the Government will publish detailed operational guidance for schools.

8.6 If restrictions on pupil attendance are needed, Matrix Academy Trust will determine the workforce required onsite and if it is appropriate for some staff to work remotely.

8.7 Vulnerable Children and Young People

8.7.1 Where vulnerable children and young people are absent, Matrix Academy Trust and School Leaders 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 their concerns
- encourage the child or young person to attend educational provision, working with the local authority and social worker (where applicable), particularly where the social worker and the Virtual School Head (where applicable) agrees that the child or young person's attendance would be appropriate
- focus the discussions on the welfare of the child or young person and ensuring that the child or 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

8.7.2 If settings have to temporarily stop onsite provision on public health advice, they should discuss alternative arrangements for vulnerable children and young people with the local authority.

9. School and FE Meals

9.1 Matrix Academy Trust will continue to provide meal options for all pupils who are in school. Meals will be available free of charge to all infant pupils and pupils who meet the benefits-related free school meals eligibility criteria.

9.2 Matrix Academy Trust will continue to provide free school meals support in the form of meals or lunch parcels for pupils who are eligible for benefits related free school meals and who are not attending school because they:

- are self-isolating
- have had symptoms or a positive test result themselves
- are a close contact of someone who has COVID-19

9.3 Further information is available in the guidance on providing school meals during the COVID-19 pandemic. Matrix Academy Trust will continue to support pupils who are eligible for, and usually receive, free meals even if pupils are studying remotely due to COVID-19.

10. Additional Measures:

10.1 This Outbreak Management Plan outlines how Matrix Academy Trust would operate if any of additional measures were recommended for the school sites from national guidance due to a Variant of Concern or extended lockdown measures.

11. COVID-19 Risk Assessment

11.1 Matrix Academy Trust continues to update site specific COVID-19 Risk Assessments in line with national guidance. COVID-19 Risk Assessments are updated in consultation with school leaders and uploaded regularly to school websites.

11.2 COVID-19 Risk Assessments will be updated in the event of:

- Changes to National Guidance
- Updates on COVID-19 Roadmap
- Local outbreaks
- School Related Outbreaks
- Variants of Concern

12. Testing

12.1 Matrix Academy Trust is prepared for the reintroduction of Asymptomatic Testing Sites (ATS).

12.2 These measures may be advised:

- for an individual setting or a small cluster of settings only, by Directors of Public Health as part of their responsibilities in outbreak management. In most cases a “cluster” will be no more than 3 or 4 settings linked in the same outbreak
- for settings across areas that have been offered an enhanced response package, where settings and Directors of Public Health decide it is appropriate

12.3 Dedicated Testing Sites

- Matrix Academy Trust schools to establish dedicated testing sites following national guidance and previous guidance from Schools, Colleges Testing Handbook V3.7.
- Schools within the Matrix Academy Trust will reintroduce specific roles to support testing. These roles were identified in the Schools, Colleges Testing Handbook V3.7 and used on sites in January 2021. Refresher training for staff will be made available if required.
- Matrix Academy Trust and School Leaders will ensure that ATS does not negatively impact on the education provided to students.

12.4 Home Testing

- Schools will continue to provide testing kits to staff and pupils twice a week and encourage their use.
- Additional use of home testing by staff and pupils may be advised and will be encouraged by schools.
- Evidence of negative test results may be requested for access to school sites for events such as taster days and school proms.

13. Face Coverings

- Matrix Academy Trust will introduce the use of face masks in schools for staff and pupils in cases of Variants of Concern including communal areas and classrooms.

- COVID-19 Risk Assessments will be updated in line with guidance and parents/carers will be informed of the reintroduction of face coverings.
- Site Managers will ensure that schools have sufficient stock of PPE including face masks.
- School COVID-19 Risk Assessments still state that all visitors to school sites including parents and contractors are to wear face coverings at all times.

14. Shielding

14.1 Shielding is currently paused. In the event of a major outbreak or Variant of Concern that poses a significant risk to individuals on the Shielded Patient List (SPL), ministers can agree to reintroduce shielding. Shielding would be considered in addition to other measures to address the residual risk to people on the SPL, once the wider interventions are taken into account.

- Risk Assessments will be updated to include shielding and Matrix Academy Trust will support individuals with remote working if required.

Please note: Shielding can only be reintroduced by National Government.

14.2 Education Workforce

14.2.1 Matrix Academy Trust will continue to support staff and pupils through individual Risk Assessments and support who are:

- Clinically Vulnerable (CV)
- Clinically Extremely Vulnerable (CEV)
- Pregnant/Expectant mothers
- BAME

14.2.2 Matrix Academy Trust will continue to implement the system of controls set out in the COVID-19 operational guidance for educational settings. The COVID-19 Risk Assessments explain to staff the measures that have been put in place to reduce risks to staff, including how these protective measures have been reviewed as part of an updated workplace risk assessment.

15. Other Measures

15.1 Residential Educational Visits

15.1.1 Risk Assessments for trips include COVID-19 procedures and are updated following national guidance.

- **Educational Day Visits** were able to resume from 12th April 2021. Any educational day visits must be conducted in line with relevant COVID-secure guidelines and regulations and a full risk assessment in relation to all educational visits must be undertaken to ensure they can be undertaken safely. As part of this risk assessment, schools will need to consider what control measures need to be used and follow wider advice on visiting indoor and outdoor venues. School Leaders should consult the health and safety guidance on educational visits when considering visits.
- Educational Day Visits will be reviewed and potentially postponed in the event of a Variant of Concern.

- **Domestic Residential Educational Visits** can be undertaken from 17th May 2021. Any domestic residential educational visits must be conducted in line with relevant COVID-19 guidance and regulations and risk assessments should be undertaken.
- Domestic Residential Educational Visits will be reviewed and potentially postponed in the event of a Variant of Concern.
- **International Visits:** The Government has now published red, amber and green list rules for entering England. Given the complexities attached to international travel at this stage of the pandemic, the Government recommends schools do not go on any international visits this academic year up to and including 5th September 2021. The position beyond 5th September 2021 will be reviewed again in advance of Step 4.
- International Visits will be reviewed and potentially postponed in the event of a Variant of Concern.

15.2 Open Days

- In the event of a Variant of Concern, transitional, taster and open days will be managed through the completion of a thorough risk assessment in line with agreed system of controls and align with the advice contained from the Government roadmap out of lockdown.
- Open days will be reviewed and potentially postponed/cancelled in the event of a Variant of Concern.
- In the event of cancellation, remote transitional, taster and open days will be managed by school leaders.

15.2.1 Individual site risk assessments will be completed and will include:

- parents/carers will be asked to produce a negative COVID-19 test before entry to site
- separate entry and exit points to school
- minimum number of participants (if any)
- All visitors to wear face coverings and regularly wash/sanitise hands

15.3 Parental Attendance in Settings

15.3.1 In the event of a Variant of Concern, parents/carers will be advised to limit their access to site as much as possible.

- Parents/carers or visitors permitted on school site by invitation only and must have an arranged appointment.
- Visitors will be collected from reception as soon as possible to avoid unnecessary waiting.
- All visitors will be expected to wear a face covering and will be informed of this when a meeting is booked. This can be removed in the venue for the meeting if social distancing is possible.
- Where possible conversations with parents/carers staff will be either over the phone or via the school's post-box email address.
- Parents/carers will not be permitted to attend school fixtures such as football matches etc.

15.4 Performances in Settings

- If the school is planning an indoor or outdoor face-to-face performance in front of a live audience, staff should continue to follow the latest performing arts guidance, and the guidance on delivering outdoor events.

- Performances will be reviewed and potentially postponed/cancelled in the event of a Variant of Concern.

15.5 Events and Proms

- Outdoor events are generally lower risk. Once the school have undertaken a risk assessment and planned the event in line with the system of controls, the school may consider an outdoor event (for example a leavers' celebration or prom) that caters for more than one bubble or consistent group, as long as the groups continue to be kept separate.
- Events and Proms will be reviewed and potentially postponed/cancelled in the event of a Variant of Concern.

15.5.1 Local authorities, Directors of Public Health (DsPH) and PHE Health Protection Teams (HPTs) may recommend these precautions in one setting, a cluster of settings, or across an entire area.

15.6 Summer Schools (delivered under DfE's summer school funding scheme)

15.6.1 In most circumstances, children should be allowed to attend summer schools as planned. Facilities and activities should reflect any local or national restrictions.

15.6.2 If attendance restrictions are needed as a last resort, the academic element of the programme may need to be delivered remotely.

15.6.3 Children should still also be allowed to attend holiday activities and food programme provision "in most circumstances".

15.6.4 However, if Matrix Academy Trust and School Leaders decide not to hold face-to-face holiday clubs as a result of COVID-19, for example if they are cancelled following Government advice, schools will operate flexibly to ensure that eligible children still receive support that meets the aims of the programme.

15.7 Out-of-School Settings and Wraparound Childcare

15.7.1 If attendance restrictions are needed, vulnerable children and young people should be allowed to attend. For all other children, parents and carers should only be allowed to access these providers for face-to-face provision for their children for a limited set of essential purposes, such as to allow them to go to or seek work, attend a medical appointment, or undertake education and training.

15.7.2 Restrictions on attendance may need to vary depending on whether provision will be operating during school term-time and/or school holidays, when schools are otherwise closed to ensure sufficient childcare provision remains available to those that need it most. Therefore, the advice outlined above could be subject to change.

15.7.3 Further advice will be provided should this be the case. In the meantime, providers should continue to refer to guidance on protective measures for holiday, after school clubs and other out-of-school settings for children during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

16. Cleaning

16.1 Matrix Academy Trust continues to follow robust cleaning regimes in schools such as:

- Additional COVID-19 Response Cleaners
- Enhanced cleaning of school sites
- Enhance Touch-Point cleaning processes

16.2 Following the identification of the person with COVID-19 symptoms, COVID-19 Response Cleaners will clean and disinfect:

- All surfaces that the symptomatic person has come into contact with, including objects which are visibly contaminated with body fluids; and
- All potentially contaminated high-contact areas such as toilets, door handles, telephones, grab-rails in corridors and stairwells

16.3 In the event of a Variant of Concern or local outbreak cleaning will be enhanced further:

- Deep cleans of whole school and specific areas
- Additional cleaning support
- Additional training of cleaners

17. Waste

17.1 Matrix Academy Trust continues to manage effective waste management on school sites. All waste from possible cases and cleaning of areas where possible cases have been (including disposable cloths and tissues), should be:

- Put in a plastic rubbish bag and tied when full. That plastic bag should then be placed in a second bin bag and tied.
- Stored safely and kept away from children. Waste should not be put in communal waste areas for at least 72 hours. It can then be disposed of normally.

17.2 Infection Prevention and Control Precautions

17.2.1 Infection prevention and control precautions continue to be implemented including:

- Good hand hygiene before entering and after leaving the setting, as well as regularly throughout the day.
- Ensuring that everyone (staff and pupils) catch coughs and sneezes in tissues. If a tissue is not available, then the crook of the elbow should be used rather than hands.
- Dispose of tissues promptly in a waste bin and then perform hand hygiene.