



Horringer Court Middle School
Schools operating safely - risk assessment
Update 1 November 2021

This risk assessment is updated in the light of feedback, experience and guidance. Trade unions and staff are invited to comment and this is being made public via the school's website. The school recognises that there remain considerable challenges from the covid-19 pandemic. The Department for Education's guidance is at

[Schools COVID-19 operational guidance - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/schools-covid-19-operational-guidance)

Staff, parents, pupils, visitors and key contractors working at the school are made aware of the school's control measures and ways of working set out below.

This risk assessment has been updated in the light of rising numbers of positive test results for covid-19. For at least two weeks from 1 November 2021:

- staff will wear face coverings in communal areas outside of the classroom, unless exempt for medical reason
- students in all secondary school will wear face coverings in communal areas outside of the classroom, unless exempt for medical reasons.
- only essential visitors will visit the school
- any visitors to wear a face covering while on-site, this includes adults collecting children in the playground
- large gatherings will not take place, so whole school assemblies will move back to being online and parents' meetings will be held virtually

Schools no longer carry out contact tracing with close contacts now being identified via NHS Test and Trace. Children under the age of 18 years old are not required to self-isolate if they are contacted by NHS Test and Trace as a close contact of a positive COVID-19 case - children will be contacted by NHS Test and Trace, informed they have been in close contact with a positive case and advised to take a PCR test.

Staff that have had two vaccinations and are contacted by track and trace as a close contact of a positive COVID-19 case are advised to have a PCR test but do not have to self-isolate

- after school clubs/enrichment opportunities and wrap around care can resume but may be restricted if this continues.

Control measures

There are four key areas where more detail is provided below:

1. Ensure good hygiene for everyone.
2. Maintain appropriate cleaning regimes.
3. Keep occupied spaces well ventilated.
4. Follow public health advice on testing, self-isolation and managing confirmed cases of COVID-19.

1. Ensure good hygiene for everyone

- Hand hygiene - Frequent and thorough hand cleaning should now be regular practice. We will continue to ensure that pupils clean their hands regularly. This can be done with soap and water or hand sanitiser
- Respiratory hygiene - The 'catch it, bin it, kill it' approach continues to be very important (the [e-Bug COVID-19 website](#) contains free resources for you, including materials to encourage good hand and respiratory hygiene)
- Use of personal protective equipment (PPE) - Most staff in schools will not require PPE beyond what they would normally need for their work. The guidance on the [use of PPE in education, childcare and children's social care settings](#) provides more information on the use of PPE for COVID-19.

2. Maintain appropriate cleaning regimes

Our cleaning schedule includes daily cleaning of all areas and equipment, with a particular focus on frequently touched surfaces, using the Public Health England guidance on the [cleaning of non-healthcare settings](#).

3. Keep occupied spaces well ventilated

When the school is in operation, it is important to ensure it is well ventilated and that a comfortable teaching environment is maintained.

We have looked at any poorly ventilated spaces and taken steps to improve fresh air flow in these areas. We will give particular consideration when holding events where visitors such as parents are on site, for example, school plays.

Our ventilation is adjusted to increase the ventilation rate wherever possible and checked to confirm that normal operation meets current guidance and that only fresh outside air is circulated. Where systems cannot be adjusted to full fresh air, then systems will be operated as normal as long as they are within a single room and supplemented by an outdoor air supply.

Where possible, opening external windows improves natural ventilation, and opening internal doors (and some external opening doors) also assists with creating a throughput of air.

We will use the CO₂ monitors that the Department for Education have said will be provided to all schools so that staff can identify where ventilation needs to be improved. We have been supplied with 15 monitors and they have been deployed around the school. Staff have received training on how to interpret the data from the monitors.

4. Following public health advice on testing, self-isolation and managing confirmed cases of covid-19

The main symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19) are:

- a high temperature – this means you feel hot to touch on your chest or back (you do not need to measure your temperature)

- a new, continuous cough – this means coughing a lot for more than an hour, or 3 or more coughing episodes in 24 hours (if you usually have a cough, it may be worse than usual)
- a loss or change to your sense of smell or taste – this means you've noticed you cannot smell or taste anything, or things smell or taste different to normal

Close contacts of those testing positive are identified via NHS Test and Trace. NHS Test and Trace will work with the positive case and/or their parent to identify close contacts. Contacts from a school will only be traced by NHS Test and Trace where the positive case and/or their parent specifically identifies the individual as being a close contact. This is likely to be a small number of individuals who would be most at risk of contracting COVID-19 due to the nature of the close contact. Schools may be contacted in exceptional cases to help with identifying close contacts, as currently happens in managing other infectious diseases. Where local public health asks us for support and suggest communications to parents or staff, we will fully cooperate with such requests.

Individuals are not required to self-isolate if they live in the same household as someone with COVID-19, or are a close contact of someone with COVID-19, and any of the following apply:

- they are fully vaccinated
- they are below the age of 18 years and 6 months
- they have taken part in or are currently part of an approved COVID-19 vaccine trial
- they are not able to get vaccinated for medical reasons

Instead, they will be contacted by NHS Test and Trace, informed they have been in close contact with a positive case and advised to take a [PCR test](#). We encourage all individuals to take a PCR test if advised to do so, and to be more cautious about mixing whilst waiting the result.

- Staff who do not need to isolate, and children and young people aged under 18 years 6 months who usually attend school, and have been identified as a close contact, should continue to attend school as normal.
- 18-year-olds will be treated in the same way as children until 6 months after their 18th birthday, to allow them the opportunity to get fully vaccinated. At which point, they will be subject to the same rules as adults and so if they choose not to get vaccinated, they will need to self-isolate if identified as a close contact.

- Where a member of the trust central team is a contact of a positive case, they will take greater care than usual when visiting schools if they are not required to self-isolate, such as holding meetings with social distancing and avoiding classrooms and the staff room.
- When an individual develops covid-19 symptoms or has a positive test, pupils, staff and other adults should follow public health advice to self-isolate - self-isolation is when you do not leave your home because you have or might have coronavirus; no one should come into school if they have symptoms, have had a positive test result or there are other reasons requiring them to stay at home due to the risk of them passing on COVID-19 (for example, they are required to quarantine)
- **If anyone in the school develops covid-19 symptoms, however mild, they will be sent them home and they should follow public health advice. Not all coughs will be covid-19.**
- Everyone with symptoms should avoid using public transport and, wherever possible, be collected by a member of their family or household to return home.
- If a pupil is awaiting collection, they should be left in a room on their own if possible and safe to do so. A window should be opened for fresh air ventilation if possible. Appropriate PPE should also be used if close contact is necessary. Any rooms they use should be cleaned after they have left.
- In most cases, parents and carers will agree that a pupil with symptoms should not attend the school, given the potential risk to others. If a parent or carer insists on a pupil attending, we can take the decision to refuse the pupil if, in our reasonable judgement, it is necessary to protect other pupils and staff from possible infection with COVID-19. Any such would need to be carefully considered in light of all the circumstances and current public health advice.
- All staff are asked to use home testing kits test thrice weekly at home
- Staff and pupils with a positive LFD test result should self-isolate. They will also need to get a free PCR test to check if they have COVID-19 via [Get a free PCR test to check if you have coronavirus \(COVID-19\) - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/get-a-free-pcr-test-to-check-if-you-have-coronavirus); whilst awaiting the PCR result, the individual should continue to self-isolate; if the PCR test is taken within 2 days of the positive lateral flow test, and is negative, it overrides the self-test LFD test and the individual can return to school, as long as the individual doesn't have COVID-19 symptoms.

- Where children or staff have been in close contact (including being in the same household) with someone who has tested positive, they are not expected to isolate or to stay away from school but are expected to take a PCR test. In addition to this, in our school we are expecting the following additional measures to look to reduce the spread of the virus:
 - as well as taking the PCR test, the child or member of staff who has been in close contact with someone who has tested positive is asked also to take a lateral flow test whilst waiting for a PCR test
 - if the lateral flow test is positive they will follow guidance and will isolate until the result of the PCR test is known
 - as per the guidance children and members of staff are expected to stay away from school if they have any symptoms of covid-19, take a PCR test and not return unless the PCR test result comes back negative
 - where a family is concerned that an asymptomatic child is likely to be positive due to being a close contact before a test result is confirmed, schools will be supportive of parents who choose to keep their child/children at home for a day or two whilst awaiting the test result

Other considerations

- There are no plans for a staggered start to the day
- We encourage all staff and eligible pupils to take up the offer of two vaccinations; we do not keep a record of those who have been vaccinated and do not discriminate against those who have not had two vaccinations. Staff that have not had two vaccinations, and so would have to self-isolate if identified as a close contact of someone who tests positive, are asked to make their headteachers aware of this. We are supporting the vaccination of 12-15 year olds in schools. We appreciate that staff and pupils may require time off to attend vaccination appointments including booster appointments which will be authorised. We acknowledge that on occasion the vaccine can result in side effects which may trigger an absence for which allowances will be made.
- The government has removed the requirement to wear face coverings in law but expects and recommends that they are worn in enclosed and crowded spaces where you may come into contact with people you don't normally meet. This includes public transport and dedicated transport to school or college.

- If any staff or pupils wish to continue to wear face coverings, they may continue to do so. Visitors to the school will be asked to wear face coverings in any congested area. Face coverings are no longer advised for pupils, staff and visitors either in classrooms or in communal areas.
- Staff from the central team that visit a school will wear a face covering in any congested area
- We are restricting all non-essential visits to the school.
- Public health advice will be sought if there are significant concerns, including as set out in the outbreak management plan below, or if a pupil, student, child or staff member is admitted to hospital with COVID-19.

(For secondary and special schools)

- We will encourage all 12-17-year-olds to take up the offer of vaccination
- All children and young people previously referred to as clinically extremely vulnerable (CEV) should attend their education setting unless they are one of the very small number of children and young people under paediatric or other specialist care who have been advised by their clinician or other specialist not to attend.
- All secondary aged pupils are asked to use home testing kits test thrice weekly at home

- School attendance is mandatory for all pupils of compulsory school age and it is a priority to ensure that as many children as possible regularly attend school. Where a child is required to self-isolate or quarantine because of covid-19 in accordance with relevant legislation or guidance they are recorded as:
 - code X (not attending in circumstances related to covid-19)
 - code I (illness) - where they are unable to attend because they have a confirmed case of covid-19
 - for pupils abroad who are unable to return, code X is unlikely to apply - in some specific cases, code Y (unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances) will apply
- Travel and quarantine - Parents travelling abroad should bear in mind the impact on their child's education which may result from any requirement to quarantine or isolate upon return, and avoid any travel that may be likely to involved reduced school attendance
- Remote education – the school is maintaining its capacity to deliver high-quality remote education for the next academic year, including to support those who need to self-isolate because they have tested positive to work or learn from home if they are well enough to do so and for pupils who are abroad, and facing challenges to return due to covid-19 travel restrictions, for the period they are abroad; remote education provided will be equivalent in length to the core teaching pupils receive in school; where necessary, we expect to work collaboratively with families and put in place reasonable adjustments so that pupils with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) can successfully access remote education.
- The HR team will assist with individual risk assessments for clinically extremely vulnerable (CEV) staff, pregnant staff and staff who have not / will not receive the vaccine due to various personal / medical reasons and identify themselves as requiring alternative safety measures to receiving the vaccine i.e. continued use of face coverings / PPE.
- School meals – where a child is entitled to a Free School Meal, but is required to isolate or is not in school due to Covid19 a voucher will be provided to the family to cover the cost of the meal. School Administrators will apply for the vouchers via fsm@unitysp.co.uk
- We resumed educational visits from September – a separate risk assessment will be carried out for each educational visit – and extra-curricular provision, breakfast clubs and after school provision

Outbreak management plan

This outlines how our school will operate if any of the measures described below are recommended by Government or Public Health England for our area, or if any of these thresholds are reached:

- 5 children, pupils or staff, who are likely to have mixed closely, test positive for COVID-19 within a 10-day period
- 10% of children, pupils or staff who are likely to have mixed closely test positive for COVID-19 within a 10-day period
- For special schools, 2 children, pupils and staff, who are likely to have mixed closely, test positive for COVID-19 within a 10-day period

We consider close mixing to include:

- all in a nursery class
- a friendship group who often play together
- staff and children taking part in the same activity session together
- a class, form group or subject class
- a friendship group mixing at breaktimes
- sports team
- a group in an after-school activity
- a tutor offering one-to-one tuition to a child, or to multiple children at the same time

At the point of reaching a threshold, we will review and reinforce the testing, hygiene and ventilation measures already in place and consider:

- whether any activities could take place outdoors, including exercise, assemblies, or classes
- any ways to improve ventilation indoors, where this would not significantly impact thermal comfort
- one-off enhanced cleaning focussing on touch points and any shared equipment

We will seek additional public health advice from the DfE helpline (0800 046 8687, option 1) local public health, and consider the extent to which we additional actions should be taken because it is assessed that transmission is likely to be occurring in the schools. These actions could include the following, some of which we have introduced in November for a short period without having reached the outbreak stage

- strengthened communications to encourage students to undertake thrice weekly rapid asymptomatic home testing and reporting
- temporarily reinstating face coverings for pupils/students, staff and visitors in indoor and/or communal spaces in secondary schools and for staff in primary and specialist settings (for two weeks in the first instance, pending regular review)
- reinstating on-site rapid LFD testing in secondary schools for a two-week period to encourage uptake of twice weekly testing
- increased frequency of testing
- children and young people aged between 4 and 18 years stay at home when a sibling they live with tests positive for COVID-19

We would limit:

- residential educational visits
- open days
- transition or taster days
- parental attendance
- performances

In extreme cases, and as a last resort where all other risk mitigations have not broken chains of in-school transmission, the school may be advised to introduce short-term attendance restrictions, such as sending home a class or year group - remote learning would then be provided for all pupils well enough to learn from home. On-site provision will in all cases be retained for vulnerable children and the children of critical workers.