COVID-19 Health & Safety Policy

Charing Primary School

Introduction

Charing Primary School is committed to ensuring the health, safety and welfare of all employees. This policy describes the measures we have put in place to protect our employees and others not in our employment from the risks of the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak and the duties that fall upon us.

Scope

This policy applies to all employees of Charing Primary School.

COVID-19 Health & Safety Policy Statement

Charing Primary School recognises that it has a legal duty of care towards protecting the health and safety of its employees and others who may be affected by the organisation's activities during the COVID-19 pandemic. In order to discharge its responsibilities, the organisation will:

- Bring this Policy Statement to the attention of all employees;
- Carry out and regularly review risk assessments to identify proportionate and pragmatic solutions to reducing the risk of COVID-19;
- Communicate and consult with our employees on matters affecting their health and safety;
- Comply fully with all relevant legal requirements and government guidance;
- Eliminate risks to health and safety, where possible;
- Encourage staff to identify and report hazards in relation to COVID-19 so that we can all contribute towards improving safety;
- Ensure that emergency procedures are in place at all locations for dealing with the virus;
- Maintain our premises, and provide and maintain safe plant and equipment;
- Only engage contractors who are able to demonstrate due regard to health and safety matters and who are effectively managing the risks from the virus;
- Provide adequate resources to control the risks arising from our work activities in relation to the virus;
- Provide adequate training and ensure that all employees are competent to do their tasks safely;
- Provide information, instruction and supervision for employees; and
- Regularly monitor and revise policies and procedures.

This policy statement will be reviewed and revised as necessary to reflect changes to the organisation's activities and any changes to legislation or government guidance. Any changes to the policy will be brought to the attention of all employees.

Signed: *Dated:*

Name:

COVID-19 responsibilities

The overall responsibility for management of the risks presented by COVID-19 rests at the highest management level; however, it is the responsibility of every employee to co-operate in providing and maintaining a safe place of work.

Directors shall ensure that:

- This policy is communicated across the organisation and the control measures identified are implemented and adhered to;
- Everyone is aware of their responsibilities and has a clear understanding of their areas of accountability;
- The necessary resources are provided to introduce and maintain COVID-19 control measures;
- They lead by example and are actively committed to the successful implementation of this policy; and
- This policy is regularly reviewed and reflects current government guidance and legislation.

The organisation has identified the following as having key responsibilities for the implementation of the COVID-19 control measures:

COVID-19 appointed person

The COVID-19 appointed person shall ensure that:

- A COVID-19 Risk Assessment is conducted and is suitable and sufficient;
- The principles of social distancing and all risk control measures are effectively communicated to all staff;
- Safety training for staff is identified, undertaken and recorded to ensure that they are competent to carry out their work in a safe manner;
- They keep themselves up to date with developments and guidance relating to COVID-19;
- Safe systems of work are developed and implemented where needed;
- COVID-19 incidents inside and outside of work are recorded, investigated and reported where needed;
- Personal protective equipment (PPE) is available as required;
- Staff are encouraged to report hazards and raise concerns;
- A programme of regular and effective cleaning takes place;
- A procedure to deal with any diagnosed cases or instances of staff displaying symptoms of COVID-19 is implemented;
- Sufficient stocks of all materials, including soaps and hand sanitisers, are maintained; and
- Any staff who are extremely vulnerable or vulnerable are identified and appropriate action is taken to ensure their safety.

Managers/supervisors

All managers/supervisors shall ensure that:
- Staff adhere to the preventive measures identified in the COVID-19 Risk Assessment and work safely;

- Employees are fully trained in COVID-19 risk control measures;
- Safe systems of work are developed and implemented as necessary;
- Appropriate monitoring and supervision is carried out to ensure adherence to COVID-19 risk control measures;
- Staff are encouraged to report hazards and raise concerns;
- Good communication is in place between management and employees, particularly where there are organisational and procedural changes; and
- Where necessary, they look to offer additional support to any employees who are experiencing additional stress outside of work, e.g. illness of family members or anxiety about the general safety of their loved ones.

Employees

All employees shall ensure that:

- They take reasonable care of their own safety and the safety of others affected by their actions;
- They adhere to the preventive measures identified in the COVID-19 Risk Assessment and work safely;
- They follow any information, training and instruction provided for their health, safety and welfare during the COVID-19 outbreak;
- They use all equipment, safety equipment, devices and protective clothing as directed;
- They remain at home and notify their line manager without delay if they or someone they live with are diagnosed or start to display symptoms of COVID-19;
- They raise any issues or concerns with their line manager or safety representative; and
- They comply with and accept the arrangements contained in our COVID-19 Health & Safety Policy.

Staff carrying out cleaning activities

All staff carrying out cleaning activities must:

- Take reasonable care of their own safety and the safety of others affected by their actions;
- Submit their health and safety policy and relevant risk assessments to us for approval if not employed by the organisation;
- Comply with and accept our COVID-19 Health & Safety Policy;
- Conform to all written or verbal instructions given to them to ensure their personal safety and the safety of others;
- Use all equipment, safety equipment, devices and protective clothing as directed;
- Avoid any improvisations of any form which could create an unnecessary risk to their personal safety and the safety of others; and
- Ensure that chemicals are used appropriately and that contact times are followed.

COVID-19 health and safety rules

The organisation shall make every reasonable effort to enable our staff to work from home as a first option. Where working from home is not possible, we shall make every reasonable effort to comply with the social distancing guidelines set out by the government (keeping people two metres apart wherever possible). To support this working practice, all staff must:

- Adhere to the control measures identified in the COVID-19 Risk Assessment;
- Maintain high standards of personal hygiene in the workplace, including increasing the frequency of handwashing in line with company guidelines and instruction;
- Report any diagnosis of COVID-19 or symptoms (including that of members of their household) to their line manager and refrain from attending work until further instruction; and
- Make use of any PPE deemed necessary for their protection from COVID-19.

Where the social distancing guidelines cannot be followed in full in relation to a particular activity, the organisation will consider whether that activity needs to continue for the business to operate, and, if so, take all the mitigating actions possible to reduce the risk of transmission between employees and other staff in accordance with the measures prescribed in the organisation's COVID-19 Risk Assessment.

Business status

Our current business status will determine the measures we need to put in place to manage the risks presented by COVID-19. We will complete the COVID-19 Initial Audit Form to determine the action we need to take depending on the status of the business (i.e. whether we are closed, partially closed or open).

Premises and activities closed

Although our business activities have been temporarily suspended and our premises have been unoccupied (or partially occupied) during the COVID-19 pandemic, the organisation recognises that there are important checks that we still need to perform. As such, we shall ensure that our premises and buildings are checked periodically so that they remain safe and ready to be reoccupied when the government announcement is made. We shall ensure that prior to reoccupation, reopening checks are undertaken to ensure all necessary COVID-19 risk control measures can be implemented.

Working from home

The organisation recognises its duty of care to its employees and shall make every reasonable effort to enable working from home as a first option to reduce the transmission of COVID-19. In doing so, we will assess the suitability of the role for homeworking and undertake a Homeworking Risk Assessment where it is agreed.

Returning to work

Prior to returning to work at our premises after lockdown, the organisation will consider the following:

- Are there any staff who can continue to work from home?
- Which staff cannot work from home and must therefore return to work?
- Who will continue to be furloughed until further notice?

This will then inform the organisation on who is at risk when we reoccupy our premises and what risk controls to implement. We shall ensure that prior to reoccupation, reopening checks are undertaken to ensure all necessary COVID-19 risk control measures can be implemented.

Arrangements

The following sections sets out the arrangements the organisation has put in place to fulfil its commitment to controlling the risks presented by COVID-19 at work.

COVID-19 Risk Assessment

The organisation shall make a suitable and sufficient assessment of the risks presented by COVID-19 in the workplace. The assessment will be documented, and a record made of all significant findings. Results of the risk assessment will be shared with all staff. The assessment will be reviewed periodically and/or when circumstances change to ensure it remains suitable and sufficient.

Vulnerable Persons Risk Assessment

The organisation recognises that certain people may be at increased risk of severe illness from COVID-19. Clinically extremely vulnerable individuals are advised not to attend work. Clinically vulnerable individuals who are at higher risk of severe illness should work from home where possible. If clinically vulnerable (but not clinically extremely vulnerable) individuals cannot work from home, they will be offered the safest available on-site role to ensure that they can stay two metres away from others wherever possible. If they have to spend time within two metres of other people, we will carefully assess and discuss with them whether this involves an acceptable level of risk.

Employees who are living with a shielded or clinically vulnerable person can attend the workplace. If an employee lives in a household with someone who is extremely clinically vulnerable, it is advised that they only attend the workplace if stringent social distancing can be adhered to. If this is not possible, we do not expect those individuals to attend and they will be supported to work from home.

The organisation will undertake an individual risk assessment for the above categories to identify appropriate controls to ensure their health and safety.

Social distancing

The organisation will assess all work activities to ensure that they meet social distancing measures. To achieve this, the organisation will avoid crowding and minimise opportunities for the virus to spread by maintaining a distance of at least two metres (three steps) between individuals wherever possible. This advice applies both to inside the workplace and to where staff may need to interact with customers, contractors or visitors.

The organisation will ensure that:

- Where it is possible to maintain two metres between persons, floor markings are used to indicate appropriate distancing (particularly in crowded areas);

- Where it is not possible to maintain two metres between persons, staff work side-by-side, or facing away from each other, rather than face-to-face (if possible);
- Where face-to-face contact is essential, it is kept to 15 minutes or less (wherever possible);
- Signage is used to direct movement into lanes (whilst maintaining a two-metre distance);
- Entry is controlled so that the premises do not become overcrowded;
- Additional signage is used to ask customers not to enter the premises if they have symptoms;
- If feasible, plexiglass barriers are placed at points of regular interaction (i.e. payment points) as an additional element of protection for workers and customers. Where bodily contact is likely, we will ensure that this plexiglass is cleaned and disinfected as often as is feasible in line with standard cleaning procedures.
- The use of digital and remote transfers of material is encouraged where possible (rather than paper format);
- As much as possible, teams of workers are kept together (cohorting) and these teams are kept small as possible; and
- Regular announcements are conducted to remind staff/customers to follow social distancing advice and to wash their hands regularly.

Infection control and effective hygiene

There are important actions that employees can take to help prevent the spread of COVID-19. The organisation will promote:

- Regular and thorough handwashing by employees and cleaning hands more often than usual;
- Good respiratory hygiene (the 'catch it, bin it, kill it' approach); and
- No handshaking or physical contact.

The organisation will also:

- Place sanitising hand rub dispensers in prominent places around the workplace and make sure that they are refilled regularly;
- Make tissues available in the workplace for those who develop a runny nose or cough at work, along with closed bins for hygienically disposing of them;
- Minimise contact with individuals who are unwell by ensuring that those who are diagnosed with or displaying symptoms of COVID-19 do not attend the workplace; and
- Minimise contact with other employees by altering, as much as possible, the environment (such as office layout) and eating areas (such as staggered break times).

Notices and posters promoting infection control best practice will be displayed throughout our buildings. The 'Staying COVID-19 Secure in 2020' poster will be displayed in reception.

IMPORTANT NOTE

Wash hands thoroughly and in particular:

- After coughing or sneezing;
- After going to the toilet; and
- Before eating and drinking.

Cleaning regime

It is possible that COVID-19 can be spread by touching contaminated surfaces and then touching your eyes, nose and mouth. Cleaning an area with normal household disinfectant will reduce the risk

of passing the infection on to other people. The organisation recognises the importance of a thorough and effective cleaning regime and will introduce cleaning of regularly-used hand contact points throughout the working day. These include:

- Door handles;
- Banisters;
- Window handles; and
- Regularly-touched items.

Food

Staff are encouraged to bring in their own food to work each day and staff canteens and distributors should move to takeaway(s). Where no practical alternatives exist, workplace canteens may remain open to provide food to staff with appropriate adjustments for social distancing and subject to the following:

- Staff wash their hands using soap and water for 20 seconds before and after eating;
- Areas are kept clean and tidy and dirty dishes are put in the dishwasher (where applicable);
- A frequent clean and disinfect regime of regularly-touched surfaces is in place, using standard cleaning products; and
- Meal times are extended/staggered to avoid crowding.

Personal protective equipment (PPE)

The organisation will carry out a risk assessment to determine whether PPE is required to be worn in the workplace and for particular activities. However, changing our habits, cleaning and hygiene are the most effective measures in controlling the spread of the virus. Current guidance is that wearing a respirator in non-clinical settings is not required; however, the organisation will remain alert to guidance and modify its policy accordingly.

[Insert if appropriate: We encourage staff to wear face coverings.]

Site visitors and contractors

The organisation will need to take the necessary measures to protect staff from the risks of COVID-19 through visitors, contractors and others coming to site. Unless absolutely essential, the organisation will aim to limit visitors and contractors to the workplace in order to reduce the risk of transmission. If visitors attend our site, we shall seek assurances that all visitors have implemented their own COVID-19 arrangements to include the protection of others. All visitors shall be inducted by their host and:

- Will be made aware of our COVID-19 arrangements;
- Will be given adequate information to ensure their safety, including emergency information;
- Must adhere to applicable health and safety instructions and rules during their visit; and
- Must wear any protective clothing as required.

Any accidents/incidents involving visitors are reported through the accident reporting arrangements.

Employees visiting other premises

The organisation will carry out a risk assessment of all employees who undertake visits to other places as part of their work and shall appraise them of the measures they need to take to protect themselves from contracting COVID-19. The assessment will consider the safest form of transport.

When driving to a client/customer's site, employees should ensure that they have adequate alcohol hand rub with them in order to clean their hands before onward travel. The interior of the car and door handles will need to be regularly cleaned.

Getting to work

The organisation encourages employees to use their own car, cycle or walk to work and to maintain good social distancing and follow the hand hygiene guidance. Where employees are required as part of their employment to share a vehicle, they shall ensure, where possible, that this is with the same persons (i.e. working in cohorts). Windows should be kept open where possible. Employees should wash their hands after being in the vehicle and ensure that the internal areas are regularly cleaned with a disinfectant.

Public transport

When using public transport, employees should attempt to avoid rush hour times and aim to social distance (where possible). If there is a need to sneeze, they should sneeze into tissues or the upper part of the sleeve. Employees should wash their hands for 20 seconds after to using public transport or at least use alcohol hand rub.

First aid

The organisation will undertake a first aid risk determine the level of first aid provision required on site. The assessment will take into account:

- The status of the business (open or partially open);
- The activities that continue and the level of risk they present; and
- The number of staff on site and the availability of trained first aiders and training of other persons who can respond to an incident.

The risk assessment will be reviewed regularly to ensure such arrangements are adequate.

Accidents and incidents

Certain COVID-19 incidents are RIDDOR reportable. The organisation shall ensure that a report is made under RIDDOR (The Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013) in relation to COVID-19 when:

- An unintended incident at work has led to someone's possible or actual exposure to COVID-19. This must be reported as a dangerous occurrence.
- A worker has been diagnosed as having COVID-19 and there is reasonable evidence that it was caused by exposure at work. This must be reported as a case of disease.
- A worker dies as a result of occupational exposure to COVID-19.

Statutory checks

The organisation will ensure that statutory inspections as required under health and safety legislation continue to be undertaken. Checks on such items as lifting equipment and pressure systems will be undertaken in accordance with the inspection schedule for as long as they continue to be used. If difficulty is encountered trying to arrange for the inspection and the due date expires, the organisation will undertake and document a separate risk assessment if it wishes to continue using the equipment. The assessment will demonstrate whether it is safe to continue to use the equipment and reasons for arriving at that decision.

Fire safety

The organisation recognises it is likely that our fire risk has changed during the lockdown. As such, we will review our Fire Risk Assessment to ensure it remains compliant with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 effective and communicate findings to all staff. Prior to reoccupying the workplace, we shall ensure that fire alarms and emergency lighting functions properly, all fire extinguishers are in their correct location, and fire doors are robust. We will also ensure that we have a sufficient number of fire marshals in place to undertake proactive checks and respond in the event of an emergency situation.

Dealing with emergencies

The organisation will develop an effective COVID-19 Emergency Plan outlining how it will deal with a suspected case of COVID-19 in the workplace. The plan will be communicated across the business so that everyone understands what action will need to be taken should someone experience symptoms or be confirmed as having the virus. In the event of a suspected case of COVID-19 where the person potentially could have spread this to others, we will communicate all relevant findings and necessary actions to those affected, including employees and other relevant parties.

Staff information and training

The organisation will provide clear instructions and information and adequate training to its employees on COVID-19. We will ensure that everyone has the right level of information and training on:

- The hazards and risks they may face, if any;
- The measures in place to deal with those hazards and risks, if necessary; and
- How to follow any emergency procedures.

Employees will also be reminded that they also have responsibilities under health and safety law to:

- Take care of their own health and safety and that of others;
- Co-operate with their employer to help us comply with health and safety legislation;
- Follow any instructions or health and safety training provided;
- Tell us about any work situations that present a serious and imminent risk; and
- Let us know about any other failings they identify in our health and safety arrangements.

The organisation will select the most appropriate means of effectively providing information and training on COVID-19.

Monitoring

The organisation recognises the importance of checking that we are managing COVID-19 risks in the workplace. Such checks provide the confidence that the control measures and other arrangements we have implemented are working properly or, if not, how we could do things better in the future.

We will set up an effective COVID-19 monitoring system in which we will proactively manage the risk through a programme of workplace checks performed at suitable intervals. We will also monitor the health of employees on entry and during the working day to ensure no risks are introduced.

Review

The organisation will review this policy on a regular basis to ensure it remains effective and aligns with current government guidance and legislation. We will work with staff to assess what is and isn't working and continually refine our controls so that they offer the best possible protection against COVID-19.