

Coronavirus (Covid-19) Management Policy

This policy has been written to cover the operational procedures necessary for Gloverspiece to protect its pupils, visitors and staff from the risks presented by coronavirus (Covid-19) infection.

What is coronavirus?

The World Health Organisation defines coronaviruses as a family of viruses that cause infectious illness ranging from very mild to very severe diseases such as Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS-CoV) and Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS-CoV). Covid-19 is a new strain which originated in China at the end of 2019. It has since spread to other countries initiating a global public health pandemic.

How is coronavirus spread?

It is understood that the virus is highly infectious and moves from person to person in droplets from the nose or mouth which are spread when a person with Covid-19 coughs or exhales. In addition, the virus can survive for up to 72 hours out of the body on surfaces.

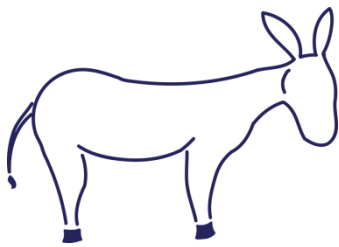
People can catch Covid-19 directly if they breathe in the droplets or indirectly if they touch infected surfaces and then touch their eyes, nose, or mouth.

It is known that infected individuals who show no symptoms may still be able to pass on the virus, especially in the early stages of infection. This is described as asymptomatic spread.

What are the symptoms?

The NHS recognise the main symptoms of coronavirus Covid-19 infection as fever and high temperature, a new, continuous dry cough and/or loss or change to the sense of smell or taste. Other less common symptoms include aches and pains, nasal congestion, headache, tiredness, and fatigue. Symptoms begin gradually and are usually mild.

Most people (about 80%) recover from the disease without needing special treatment. A small percentage can become seriously ill and develop difficulty breathing. This is particularly dangerous for people with weakened immune systems, for older people, and for those with long-term conditions such as diabetes, cancer, and chronic lung disease.



Prevention and self-isolation

The following general “handwashing and respiratory hygiene” precautions should be taken to help prevent spreading the virus:

- Cover the mouth and nose with a tissue or sleeve (not hands) when coughing or sneezing (*Catch it, Bin it, Kill it*)
- Put used tissues in the bin straight away
- Wash hands with soap and water often — wash for 20 seconds and use hand sanitiser gel if soap and water are not available
- Try to avoid close contact with people who are unwell
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces
- Do not touch eyes, nose, or mouth if hands are not clean

In addition, the government requires people to “self-isolate” if they have symptoms or if they have been tested and are found to be infected. This means staying at home and not leaving their house for 10 days from when the symptoms started. Those that live in a household with others should stay at home for 14 days from the day when the first person in the house became ill.

Public health information

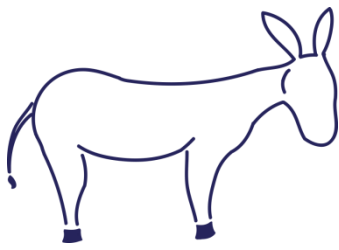
The Covid-19 pandemic has presented an unprecedented and fast-moving crisis throughout the UK which has placed enormous pressure not only on health and social care systems but also on emergency services and national and local government. The response from public health and from education authorities has been a rapidly evolving one and official guidance has changed repeatedly throughout the pandemic. In addition, conspiracy theories and misinformation have spread.

This school will keep up to date with the latest public health and government information about the risk of coronavirus in the UK. The senior leadership team and Headteacher will maintain close links with local health protection teams and will be responsible for circulating essential information to staff, pupils, and parents. Staff will do all they can to combat misinformation.

Staying home and social distancing

In March 2020 the government announced a countrywide “lockdown” with the temporary closure of places where people gather and meet, such as pubs, restaurants, cafes, non-food shops, gyms, cinemas, churches, and leisure centres. Schools and early years childcare were also closed with a partial service remaining open to support certain children (Gloverspiece remained open throughout this period, for those parents who chose to send their children). People were urged not to travel and to stay at home. They were permitted to go outside only when shopping for necessities, for medical or care needs and to exercise.

People staying home were advised not to have visitors, not even from friends or family. Those that did go out were asked to do so for only short periods and to go straight home afterwards. While out they were asked to observe “social distancing” rules and keep a safe distance of at least 2 metres from others not in the same household.



Vulnerable people, including those aged 70 and over, were advised to be particularly stringent in staying at home and following social distancing measures when outside. Those whose preexisting medical conditions made them more vulnerable to the virus were identified as at moderate risk (such as older people and those with diabetes or lung conditions) or high risk (such as those who have had organ transplants or who have serious lung conditions). The latter were made subject to special “shielding” arrangements.

The lockdown was considered essential to halt the spread of the virus. Once infection rates were low enough it was progressively eased through the summer on the basis that people still follow current “social distancing” rules.

The revised safety arrangements introduced a “1 metre plus” rule which means that wherever a distance of 2 metres between people cannot be achieved an additional risk reduction measure must be adopted, such as wearing a mask or face-covering. They also introduced additional requirements for wearing masks, for instance, in shops and on public transport. Restrictions may be reimposed on a regional basis if transmission rates increase.

Gloverspiece is aware that plans were introduced under the lockdown easing for a phased reopening before the summer. However, in England these were delayed on safety grounds and replaced with an intention to fully reopen schools for the autumn term. As stated before, Gloverspiece remained open, so we planned to move from partial to full opening.

School safety measures

Gloverspiece will fully implement all official guidance where possible, from the Department for Education (DfE) and Public Health England (PHE) relevant to minimising the transmission of the Covid-19 virus and ensuring the safety of pupils and staff.

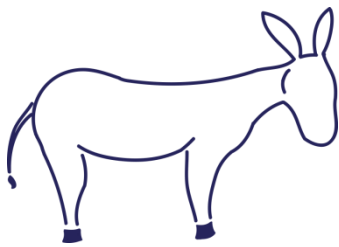
In this school three key infection control measures will be applied:

- a requirement that children or staff who are ill stay at home
- robust measures covering hand and respiratory hygiene
- enhanced environmental cleaning arrangements

The controls will be supported by a wide range of further measures including:

- active engagement with the NHS Test and Trace system
- reasonable measures to reduce contacts between pupils, staff, and visitors, wherever possible, and maximising “social distancing” (social distancing is impossible within our setting)
- the provision of “Covid-safe” facilities and adjustments to premises
- the appropriate use of face shields
- effective school transport arrangements
- staff health and wellbeing plans

Details of the risk assessment and control measures will be disseminated to all staff.



Staff and pupil sickness

In this school:

- staff who are unwell with suspected Covid-19 or who have come into contact with an infected individual or who share a household with someone who is unwell should not come to work but must comply with the latest government advice about self-isolating themselves in their home
- pupils who are unwell should stay at home
- pupils or staff who become unwell while on the school site with a new, continuous cough or a high temperature or loss of sense of taste or smell should be sent home

An unwell pupil should be isolated while waiting to be picked up. The door should be closed and a window opened for ventilation. Staff looking after them while they wait should wear appropriate personal protective equipment as advised in *Safe working in education, childcare and children's social care settings, including the use of personal protective equipment (PPE)*.

If clinical advice is required, the pupil (or their teacher, parent or guardian) should go online to NHS 111 (or call 111 if they do not have internet access). In an emergency, 999 should be called if they are seriously ill or injured or their life is at risk.

Reducing contact

At Gloverspiece, every child have support workers, from individual (1:1) to group (1:3) support and children are regularly reminded of social distancing rules. Our guidance as indicated in the risk assessment, to enable staff and pupils to manage their face-to-face contacts and maintain safe distancing, where possible. The purpose is to reduce transfer of the virus between individuals. Methods used will be informed by DfE and PHE advice

Wearing face masks in school

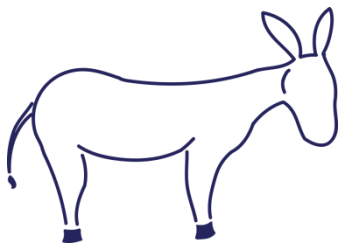
At Gloverspiece, face masks or coverings may be required in circumstances where our risk assessment suggests that effective safe distancing cannot be maintained.

Gloverspiece understands the guidance to state that schools have the discretion to require face coverings in indoor communal areas where social distancing cannot be safely managed, if they believe that it is right in their particular circumstances.

Where face coverings are required, it is vital that they are worn correctly. In this school:

- clear instructions must be provided by staff to pupils on how to put on, remove, store, and dispose of face coverings to avoid inadvertently increasing the risks of transmission
- a small contingency supply of masks should be kept for pupils who are struggling to access one
- no-one will be excluded from education on the grounds that they are not wearing a face covering
- some individuals may be exempt from wearing face coverings, e.g. people who cannot put on, wear, or remove a face covering because of a physical or mental illness or impairment, or disability

Examples of where masks may be required includes areas where the layout makes distancing difficult.



Supporting respiratory and hand-hygiene

Effective hand hygiene is known to reduce the chance of the Covid-19 virus being passed on indirectly by touch. Staff and pupils should be encouraged to clean their hands regularly during the day, including when they arrive in school. Hand cleaning “routines” may be introduced.

Respiratory hygiene refers to catching coughs and sneezes in tissues and then disposing of these in an appropriate manner. Tissues and bins will be made available throughout the school. Bins will be regularly emptied.

Providing a Covid-safe school environment

The school will make appropriate adjustments to its premises to enable staff and pupils to maintain social distancing and comply with high standards of respiratory and hand hygiene. Adjustments may include:

- classrooms will be arranged with forward-facing desks
- as much space allowable, will be left between front desks and the area where the teacher would normally stand
- “group” table arrangements will not be used
- Signage to remind pupils, visitors and staff to social distance
- establishing maximum room occupancy numbers
- adequate hand hygiene facilities will be in place for all classes and groups, including suitable hand washing facilities and/or hand sanitiser
- hand sanitiser use should be supervised to prevent risks related to ingestion

Enhanced school site cleaning

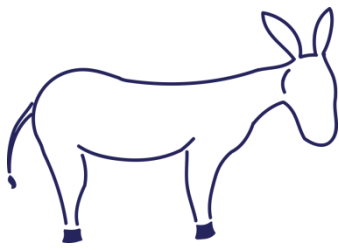
Enhanced school cleaning schedules will be in place throughout the pandemic. These will be managed in collaboration with the infection control and cleaning team.

Frequently touched surfaces will be cleaned on a more regular basis. Such surfaces will include:

- toilet and handwashing areas
- flush levers and taps
- door handles
- tabletops
- computers, mice and computer keyboards
- electronic devices (such as tablets)

Cleaners should use standard detergents and bleach for routine cleaning. These are known to be effective in removing the Covid-19 virus on surfaces.

If a person with suspected or confirmed Covid-19 infection has been present in the school, or in the case of an outbreak, additional “deep clean” arrangements should be implemented using appropriate disinfectant. In an outbreak situation the school will work closely with local public health protection experts and arrange for enhanced cleaning as advised.



School transport, drop-off, and pick-up adjustments

In this school:

- The Headteacher will liaise with school transport providers to ensure the safety of pupils while travelling to school
- Staggered finish times will be used to reduce the number of pupils waiting for collection
- Parents will be asked not to gather at the school gate

SEND pupils, health plans and safeguarding

Even though formal “shielding” arrangements for pupils considered “high-risk” from Covid-19 have been suspended the school will maintain additional support for all pupils identified in this category. Health plans associated with such pupils will be kept under regular review.

This school is very aware that the pandemic has placed unprecedented pressure on both pupils and parents and that some families may have struggled with problems related to issues such as illness, poverty, bereavement, stress, mental health, and domestic violence during the lockdown. They may also have found themselves without their normal support mechanisms. All school staff should therefore be especially vigilant to identify vulnerable pupils who may require additional support through established pastoral and safeguarding arrangements.

Support for home learning

This school is aware that some pupils may not be able to attend school at some times, particularly if local lockdown measures are introduced or if pupils or their families are infected with Covid-19 and have to self-isolate. In such cases the school will expect staff to do all they can to support remote home learning as they did during the lockdown. In all cases staff should use digital learning support platforms supported by the school and be mindful of online safety requirements.

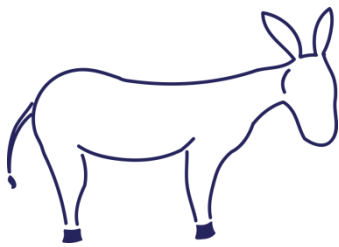
School trips

Government advice is that certain day trips and educational visits should be safe to resume as long as the site or venue visited has suitable Covid-safe arrangements in place and appropriate Covid-safe transport is arranged. This school understands that this limits the scope of any visits at this stage to small groups and precludes any overnight or overseas educational visits or use of public transport. In all cases appropriate risk assessments should be completed and permissions sought according to established school trip planning procedures.

Anti-social behaviour associated with coronavirus

This school asks its staff, pupils, and their parents to comply with its coronavirus safety measures at all times. This is considered the best way to keep everybody safe. Parents who have concerns and wish to discuss measures should be encouraged to talk to an appropriate member of staff.

Gloverspiece issued a guide to pupil behaviour, for parents to sign up to.



Staff health and wellbeing

Gloverspiece will make every effort to support its staff and their health and wellbeing is a key priority. Every effort should be made to consult with staff and keep people safe and informed.

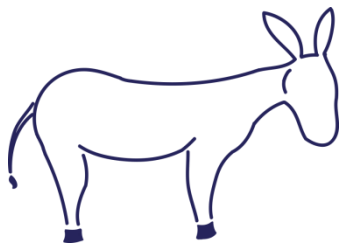
The government has advised that schools are regarded as “low risk” settings and that staff who have been considered high-risk or “extremely vulnerable” due to underlying health conditions during the height of the pandemic should be safe to return to work provided appropriate safeguards are in place, including robust hand hygiene and social distancing arrangements. Where additional reasonable adjustments are required these will be applied and kept under review. Staff who have ongoing concerns, particularly those who have been considered moderate or high risk, should discuss these with their line manager.

Business continuity procedures and pandemic recovery planning

In addition to the school’s general business continuity and recovery planning policies, Gloverspiece recognises the need to have a separate pandemic contingency plan and procedure. This is because a general business continuity plan focuses on a short-term recovery programme. In contrast, the effects of the coronavirus pandemic are likely to last many months.

The following procedure sets out key contingency measures to be introduced at Gloverspiece:

- the situation will be kept under review by the senior leadership team to ensure the safety of staff and pupils as their primary concern
- information will be provided to staff via e-mail and through team meetings - as well as other important information, employees will be briefed on the symptoms of the virus and who to contact should they believe that they or a pupil may have the virus – unnecessary meetings will be cancelled and greater use made of digital/virtual communication in order to reduce people contacts
- during any national or local lockdown staff whose role enables them to work from home will be supported to do so
- staff who are required to self-isolate themselves at home if they or a member of their family has the virus will be fully supported by the school – they should inform the school at the earliest opportunity of their status
- school staffing will be reviewed on a daily basis and contingency plans put in place to ensure that the school remains open wherever possible – this will be done whether the school is fully open or running partially closed
- during any national or local lockdown teaching staff will explore all means of using virtual/digital communication systems to support pupils who are at home
- if it becomes impossible for Gloverspiece to maintain even a reduced service due to staffing constraints the school will make alternative arrangements – in such an event the school will inform parents at the earliest opportunity



2024 Update

- Since March 2022 when the final Covid restrictions were lifted the UK Health and Security Agency (UKHSA) has advised that COVID-19 should be managed like other respiratory infections, such as flu.
- COVID-19 presents a low risk to children and young people. This, combined with high vaccination rates in the population, means there are no longer specific rules relating to COVID19 in schools, colleges, childcare and other education settings.
- To enable us to reduce the risk of transmission in our setting, we ask all parents, carers and members of staff to inform us of a positive test so that others can decide whether to wear face coverings or other means of personal protection.

SLT will be responsible for ensuring that staff understand the school's pandemic plans. Staff should familiarise themselves with the plans and should speak to the head teacher if they have any questions or concerns.

Monitoring and Review

This policy will be monitored and updated by the Headteacher to take account of any changes to the official advice provided about coronavirus.

Issued by:	Lynne Duffy
Date:	07/09/2020
Policy review date:	Ongoing, as needed (last update 26/03/24)