

Summary of considerations in advance of proposed reopening of Schools on

Tuesday 1 September 2020

In preparation for the full reopening of our schools to all pupils on Tuesday 1 September, the St Thomas Aquinas Executive Team members have worked with the 21 Headteachers from across the Trust to produce a detailed Risk Assessment (RA). The RA applies to all of our schools, and is accompanied by *school-specific protocols* which related directly and exclusively to each individual school. These individual protocols are based around each school's physical environment, facilities available, entrances, exits, building layouts and so on.

In all cases, our RA and the school protocols follow the guidance issued by the Department for Education (DfE) and Public Health England (PHE). We will not deviate from this advice.

Listed below are the key, broad areas we have considered in developing the extensive, detailed RA for our schools. This is not an exhaustive list, but is shared (principally with and for parents and carers) to provide reassurance. Should you have any questions which are specific to your child's school, please contact the school to discuss them with school leaders.

1. Controlling and preventing any potential spread of the virus:

- We have ensured that all schools are fully aware of how to deal with any suspected case of the virus including: the immediate actions to take; the communications necessary; how to access testing for staff & the information to share about testing with parents/carers; how to arrange for the 'deep clean' needed.
- We have ensured that all schools are clear on who should and should not be permitted onto the school site including staff, pupils, parents, contractors and visitors.
- Careful consideration has been given to any communal areas, and new ways of working have been introduced to ensure that regulations are adhered to.
- Clear instructions will be given, and constantly reinforced, to pupils around safety with particular emphasis on handwashing. In our primary schools there will be periodic supervision of pupils' handwashing.
- There will be minimal sharing of any resources and, in most cases, resources will not be carried between home and school for this initial period of time.
- Secondary schools in areas of local lockdown (currently Leicester city at the time of writing) will require pupils and staff to use face masks in specific areas and contexts including: moving between lessons on corridors; communal areas where social distancing cannot be maintained; and, coming into and leaving the school buildings.

2. Social distancing:

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- Wherever possible, pupils and staff will maintain a 2-metre distance between each other whilst in school. The DfE has recognised that there will inevitably be situations in school settings in which this is not possible. As such they have issued a 'hierarchy of measures' which we will be following:
 - Avoiding contact with anyone with symptoms
 - Frequent hand cleaning and good respiratory hygiene practices
 - Regular cleaning
 - Minimising contact and mixing
- In primary schools class groups will be defined as 'bubbles' and will spend the vast majority of their day together. Staff members working with these groups will be kept to a minimum and, as far as is possible, will remain the same during each week (if not longer in most cases).
- In secondary schools, the 'bubble' will be the entire year group. To minimise mixing, sharing and contacts, each year group will largely work in a zoned area of the school, other than for specific, practical learning.

3. Personal Protective Equipment (PPE):

- Most staff will not be wearing PPE as the DfE guidance is clear that it is not required for the majority of activities in a school setting (notwithstanding the point about secondary schools in lockdown areas above). Some staff *may* use PPE, and staff *will* use it if a pupil they are supervising becomes ill, if the member of staff has to provide first aid to a pupil, or if a member of staff is providing intimate care for a child. The Trust is providing PPE packs to each of our schools for these three, specific purposes.

4. Food & catering:

- All kitchens in our schools have 5* hygiene certificates and we will maintain this highest standard of cleanliness.
- Breakfast services in our schools (where applicable) will be provided following the guidelines for lunchtime services. If pupils are eating in halls or canteens, all tables and chairs will be cleaned in between uses. If, for any reason, this is not possible, pupils will eat in their classrooms.
- Where possible our schools will provide hot food, but this may not involve daily choices from serveries. If hot food cannot be provided, schools will provide cold, pre-packed food.
- Queueing will be avoided if possible and, if it is necessary, social distancing will be applied.

5. Visitors:

- No non-essential visitors will be permitted to access the school site. Essential visitors would include contractors carrying out routine maintenance, Health & Safety work and members of the Trust central team.
- Should parents/carers need to contact the school this should be done **by telephone or email unless it is an absolute emergency**. With the greatest of respect to all, parents/carers will be refused access to the site if the school considers their visit to be non-essential.

6. Cleaning & hygiene:

- Over the summer holidays, schools have had the opportunity for cleaning teams to fully clean, then shut off significant parts of the building. As such, we begin reopening with very clean and hygienic school environments.
- Clear cleaning advice has been given to all school Premises Officers from the Trust's Business Services Director including: increasing the number of daily cleans; focusing specifically on areas of increased movement and increased physical contact (e.g. stairways); ensuring that cleaning stocks are well supplied.
- Wherever possible (and paying careful attention to fire regulations), doors will be propped open to both increase ventilation, but more importantly to reduce the number of surfaces pupils and staff need to touch.

7. "Normal" Health & Safety procedures:

- The safeguarding of our pupils has always been, and remains, the highest individual priority for our trust and all of our schools. We have had to modify our safeguarding processes during this period of school closure to meet the new ways of working, and we will continue to assess and modify them to ensure that we keep our young people as safe as they can possibly be.
- In addition to all of the extra measures we are taking in light of the COVID-19 situation, all usual Health & Safety checks and procedures will be taking place as they normally do. These include, but are not limited to: water hygiene tests; electrical tests; fire drills & other evacuation procedures; routine maintenance and servicing of equipment and systems; and, detailed staff training in relation to a wide range of issues.

In recognition of the rapidly-changing landscape we are currently working in, we will be reviewing our RA on a weekly basis throughout the first half term. The process of review will, itself, be reviewed when we get to the half-term break in October. A copy of the full RA template is available on the Trust website. Finally, please remember to address any specific questions you may have about your child's school setting directly to the school.

N Lockyer
Chief Executive Officer

28 August 2020