#### COVID-19 – a Risk Assessment for UK Schools

#### Introduction

The COVID-19 outbreak is dynamic, changing daily, if not hourly, and there are now many agencies providing information almost to the point of information overload.

ISBA's role in this crisis is to supply up to the minute advice and guidance to the independent schools community through the bursar and their staff. There is no monopoly on good ideas and practice and so do please email any comments and suggestions to <a href="mailto:office@theisba.org.uk">office@theisba.org.uk</a> so as to support others and develop best practice.

This COVID-19 risk assessment provides advice and guidance in identifying, assessing and describing methods of controlling risks. It aims to prompt the thought and decision-making processes but with the normal caveat: that it is only as good as for the minute it is published.

It must be dynamic and be updated whenever advice, circumstances, or any of the assessed risk factors are seen to have changed.

A regular update to this document will be supplied via ISBA's COVID-19 bulletin. Changes will be highlighted and dated. Do please check the bulletin (currently issued on a Tuesday and Thursday mid-afternoon) for changes and updates.

Reference documents are available in ISBA's weekly bulletins and have been removed from this edition.

#### Rationale

The logic behind these actions, and the need for this note, is the ongoing 'duty of care' the school has for their whole community: governors, staff, parents and pupils.

1

A 'duty of care' means a legal obligation to ensure the safety and well-being of others. Some duties are established, such as "the teacher and pupil relationship", and "the employer and employee relationship". With COVID-19 schools are having to make difficult and timely decisions in order to fulfil this duty to their pupils, parents and staff.

The test when considering whether a duty has been properly discharged is "what would the reasonable person have done, or not done, in the circumstances of this particular incident?".

For COVID-19 there are three important factors to take into account:

- a. state of knowledge the developing knowledge of the virus itself and up-to-date government guidance at the time decisions are made.
- b. seriousness of likely injury this will have to be assessed on a case by case basis. For example, if there has been a confirmed case in the school population. A proportionate risk assessment would also have to be taken to identify where the affected individual has been, with whom they had contact and areas they have used. A further concern is for pupils that may be more vulnerable to COVID-19 than others.
- c. Cost and difficulty of taking precautionary measures closing schools has had considerable costs and difficulties from furloughing staff, ensuring the provision of education remotely to school fees and examinations.

#### The School – States of Operation

For the purposes of this risk assessment a number of stages of operation for schools have been considered:

- 1. Fully Open Business as usual: no travel or trip restrictions.
- Open Business as usual: with caveats no visitors or trips.
- 3. Open T In transition: some teaching in school and some remotely.
- 4. Open B In transition: with boarders and Open K (below).
- 5. Open K Key staff and vulnerable children in school. All other teaching remote.
- 6. Open R Teaching is all achieved remotely.
- 7. Fully Closed No one on site except residents, security and maintenance staff.

#### Risk Assessment

Government advice states that "every setting should carry out a risk assessment before opening. The assessment should directly address risks associated with coronavirus (COVID-19), so that sensible measures can be put in place to control those risks for children and staff. All employers have a duty to consult employees on health and safety, and they are best placed to understand the risks in individual settings."

#### Running the School - Assessing the Risk

Assessing COVID-19 is particularly awkward as the outcome of the risk assessment for one group within a school will have an impact on another: teaching staff, support staff, visitors and contractors (if these groups are allowed access) and pupils of varying age groups and class size.

The overall assessment of risk will require daily revision and should include but not be limited to:

- A. Is government advice being regularly accessed, assessed, recorded and applied?
- B. Are changes regularly communicated to staff, pupils, parents and governors?
- C. Are changes reviewed by governors?
- D. Is access to school controlled effectively and are visitor (if allowed) details recorded?
- E. Are Social Distancing (SD) and other hygiene rules communicated, understood and applied?
- F. Are staff and pupils being reminded and checked to ensure they are complying with hygiene and SD rules?
- G. Is there sufficient supplies of hygiene materials and are they well placed?
- H. Has the cleaning regime been regularly re-assessed and, if necessary, revised to high risk areas such as toilets, door handles, switches, hand rails and regularly used hard surfaces?
- I. What precautions are being used to keep shared teaching equipment (e.g. musical instruments) hygienic?
- J. Are high risk areas being regularly monitored (including boarding areas) for hygiene?
- K. Are contingency plans in place for the transition to full opening (or re-closing) including rapidly sharing decisions?
- L. Are all the risks identified properly mitigated and regularly re-assessed?

In addition to the above, the following will need to be considered for pupils, parents and staff:

- M. What SD rules have the school decided? Are they different for various activities (play, games, drama, music) and locations (classroom, playground, boarding house) and have all adhered to these SD rules?
- N. What PPE has been recommended and, dependent on risk assessment, what has the school decided to equip staff and pupils? The range of PPE may include:
  - a. Masks:
  - b. Gloves;
  - c. shields (for face or lecterns, desk separators, staff desks);
  - d. sanitisers (gel and tissues).
- O. Medical. Who has:
  - a. Pre-existing medical conditions and are they fully declared?
  - b. Have all vulnerable pupils, parents and staff been identified and recorded?
  - c. Tested positive for COVID-19 and is it recorded? (for elimination purposes)?
  - d. Come into contact with anyone tested positive to COVID-19?
  - e. Travelled where: other than home and school? (via app or written diary).
  - f. Been sent home with COVID-19 symptoms (a cough, high temperature or shortness of breath)?
- P. Have all adhered to the external socialising rules set by the school such as:
  - a. shopping;
  - b. parties;
  - c. games and play;
  - d. travel (other than home to school and return).
- Q. Are plans being considered for school events including plays, concerts, parent and teacher meetings etc?

A grid, to record the risks, control measures and outcomes, is at Annex A.

#### Conclusion

The phrase "a lot of moving parts" has never been so correctly applied to a situation where the risk posed by the virus is dynamic and will remain so. So many different stakeholders of varying ages and health will bring multiple shifting risks which must be considered on a daily basis for the safety of pupils, staff and parents.

The leadership team must analyse and then co-ordinate the way ahead. To do this, information from agencies and knowledge of the school are paramount factors and we, at ISBA, hope to be able to bring the right information at the right time to schools to allow informed decisions and changes that reflect a safe and secure school environment. **Overall Risk Assessment in the COVID-19** 

Last Revised 27 May 2020

#### **Environment**

	Risk	Control Measures	Outcome	Remarks / Re-ssessment
A	Is government advice being regularly accessed, assessed, recorded and applied?	SLT are monitoring the following sources DfE ISC AGBIS ISBA IAPS Cheshire East BSA	Risk acceptable	Advice is being used to plan for reopening the School on 1 June  Much information is being accessed but advice can vary according to source.
В	Are changes regularly communicated to staff, pupils, parents and governors?	Teaching staff are working and SLT/Head ensure that they are kept informed. Weekly online PL meetings and staff meetings plus update letters from the Head. Furlough staff have been rung.  Pupils are involved in online lessons	Risk acceptable	Communication processes in place and need to be maintained.
		and so are kept up to date  Parents receive regular updates from the Head  Governors are kept informed by the Head and hold online meetings on a regular basis,		

С	Are changes reviewed by governors?	Regular online meetings are being held with governors. These are minuted so decisions are evidenced.	Risk acceptable	
D	Is access to school controlled effectively and are visitor (if allowed) details recorded?	Parent access to School for drop off and collection is controlled with a protocol according to age.  There is also a protocol for outsiders visitors.	Risk acceptable .	Parents to be monitored to ensure that Social Distancing (SD) controls are adhered to. SD signs to be installed around the School Safety measures will be put in place for the School Reception to ensure SD
E	Are SD and other hygiene rules communicated, understood and applied?	There will be a difficulty with the youngest pupils in terms of social distancing. Classroom layouts have been reviewed and amended. The timetable has been revised and meal/break times flexed.  Pupils had regular instruction of hygiene before lockdown and this will continue on re-opening. Additional portable washing facilities have been purchased	Risk acceptable	Further consideration to be given to staircases/corridors to minimise risks in circulation areas. How things operate in practice will need to be observed and if necessary adjusted.

F	Are staff and pupils being reminded and checked to ensure they are complying with hygiene and SD rules?	There will be supervision in class and in outside areas to keep children distanced from each other. Signs pointing out the SD requirements will be installed.	Risk acceptable	
		There is signage around the School advising on hygiene. Staff will monitor pupils and ensure that they are following instructions.		
		Online assemblies will reinforce the message on both SD and hygiene.		
G	Is there sufficient supplies of hygiene materials and are they well placed?	The school has a substantial supply of hygiene materials including soap, hand sanitiser and commercial cleaning materials. Soap and hand sanitiser will be distributed to toilets, eating spaces and classrooms.	Risk acceptable	Regular review of inventory levels to ensure that stock is maintained.
Н	Has the cleaning regime been regularly re-assessed and, if necessary, revised to high risk areas such as toilets, door handles, switches, hand rails and regularly used hard surfaces?	The cleaning regime will ensure that all contact surfaces, toilets, eating areas etc are kept clean.	Risk acceptable	Cleaning regime to be amended so that all contact surfaces are cleaned twice a day. Sodexo staff to

				augment in-house cleaning team
I	What precautions are being used to keep shared teaching equipment (e.g. musical instruments) hygienic?	Lessons will be planned to avoid use of shared equipment. Pupils will bring their own writing equipment and take it home with them. In Early Year	Risk acceptable	
J	Are high risk areas being regularly monitored (including boarding areas) for hygiene?	Checking will be done by School staff	Risk acceptable No biological testing planned.	Possibility of outside testing to be investigated if need arises
K	Are contingency plans in place for the transition to full opening (or re-closing) including rapidly sharing decisions?	Plans will evolve as the school moves to reopening as we can learn from actual practice. SLT and online meetings with governors will continue to monitor the situation.	Risk acceptable	Distance learning can be quickly put into operation if the school re-closes.
L	all the risks identified properly mitigated and regularly re-assessed?	The procedures that have or will be put in place will be monitored constantly through SLT and adjusted as necessary	Risk acceptable	The SLT agenda includes health & safety issues but may need to expand that to include all Covid 19 issues

Pupils, Parent and Staff Risk Assessment in the COVID-19 Environment

	Risk	Control Measures	Outcome	Remarks / Re-assessment
1	Are communication channels working and being reviewed? Email, text, facebook etc	The communication channels are working and there have been no issues raised so far.	Risk acceptable	
2	Is there a robust feedback and reply system to ensure best practice and two-way communications for pupils, parents, staff and governors?	Teachers are talking and listening to pupils. Parents can email or phone the School and there has been regular feedback as the crisis has developed. The School has listened to parental concerns and made adjustments. Regular online meetings are taking place with staff including monitoring of their wellbeing.  Governors are being kept informed with	Risk acceptable	
		regular on;line meetings		
3	If there is a governor and / or officer for the school / department nominated to be responsible for COVID-19 matters, are their contact details known and are they on call?	The Head is leading on the managing the School through the crisis but has the assistance of a "Crisis" group made up of the Deputy Head, Head of Boarding and the Bursar. A management group has also been set up which includes the Chair and Vice Chair of Governors, the Head and the	Risk acceptable	

		Bursar. The School website has contact details.		
4	Is there a system to communicate with parents and staff that have not returned to school for fear of infection?	The communication channels with staff and parents include everyone whether they are in school or not	Risk acceptable	
5	Who has travelled where: other than home and school? (via app or written diary).	The School has used online survey platforms in the past to seek information regarding travel from parents. This can and will be repeated.	Risk acceptable	
6	What are, and have the hygiene rules set by the school been adhered to by pupils, parents and staff?	Pupils have been requested to wash their hands frequently (at breaks, after visits to the toilet and before meals.  Teaching staff have monitored this as best they can.	Risk acceptable	
		Staff are advised to wash their hands frequently and use the sanitiser placed around the school.		
		Parents and visitors will not enter the School unless absolutely necessary and will asked to use sanitisers/wash hands		

7	Are all staff trained and regularly updated in COVID-19 symptoms, SD and how these rules apply to teaching?	Staff are updated via emails from the Head and advice from the School's Medical Officer	Risk acceptable	
8	Is school transport operating to reflect SD, hygiene, PPE and cleaning arrangements?	School transport is not operating.	Risk acceptable	
9	How is registration throughout the day managed including temperature / health checks?	The School has temperature checks in place	Risk acceptable	
10	Are transit spaces (corridors), social zones (car parks, common rooms, playgrounds) configured to SD rules?	The School has very little circulation space. There is a small amount in the Senior teaching block which will be managed as pupils have to follow current access rules. Common rooms will be closed. The car park area is large and social distancing can be maintained	Risk acceptable	This will need to be constantly monitored to ensure that SD requirements are maintained.
11	Are learning and games spaces configured to SD rules?	Yes. Classrooms have been re-configured and games sessions amended to reflect SD considerations	Risk acceptable	
12	Are different age groups catered for in terms of timetabling, length of the school day and exposure to other age groups.	Yes. The School day has been restructured according to the needs of the different age groups	Risk acceptable	

13	Is there a system in place to deal	The School has excellent pastoral	Risk acceptable	
	with bereavements, trauma, anxiety,	provision together with a part time		
	behavioural issues?	School Counsellor		
				1

## Pupil and Staff - Safety Risk Assessment in the COVID-19 Environment

	Risk	Control Measures	Outcome	Remarks / Re-assessment
1	Have safeguarding, code or practice, and staff handbook policies been updated, regularly reviewed and shared?	Yes. The School's DSL with the assistance of the Governor who leads on safeguarding has ensured that the School's safeguarding procedures are up to date. Staff handbook and policies are available on the staff Google Drive	Risk acceptable	
2	Is the DSL and ADSL easily contacted and their contact information known to all?	Yes. Contact details are widely distributed.	Risk acceptable	
3	Is there a COVID-19 specific policy that includes medical responses, SD, teaching, socialising, feeding, well-being etc?	No	Risk acceptable	A specific policy on the School's operation under Covid 19 to be drawn up.
4	Are class sizes reduced and kept together in their "bubble" (minimising contact with others) and properly supervised?	Yes. Some supervised non contact interaction with other children e.g. football will be allowed.	Risk acceptable	

5	Should the needs of each age group and class be considered separately in terms of support, activities and facilities?	This has been done as the EYFS team have drawn up risk assessments and operating plans for their pupils	Risk acceptable
6	Are staff having sufficient down time / rest during the working day / week?	Yes	Risk acceptable
7	How are new staff and pupils inducted and has the registration and recruit process been adapted to ensure compliance?	No new staff or pupils at present. The recruitment process has been amended with virtual tours of the School on offer and any actual tours done under SD rules.	Risk acceptable
8	Are sporting, play and SD rules clear to staff and puils?	Yes. The Director of Sport has laid down guidelines	Risk acceptable
9	Are drama, dance and music activities applying SD rules?	SD will be applied across the School	Risk acceptable
10	How are staff meetings and staff rooms regulated in terms of space, equipment, resources (copiers, kettles, biscuits etc) timings, SD and purpose?	Currently all are being done on a virtual basis. Staff will be asked to maintain SD rules with regard to the Staff Room (no more than 3 people) and shared resources	Risk acceptable
11	Are all security, CCTV and access systems regularly checked, updated and (where necessary) re-coded?	Yes.	Risk acceptable

12	Are drop-off and pick-up procedures, in/out routes shared, understood and applied?	Rules have been drawn up and the pick up/drop off areas will be marshalled.	Risk acceptable
13	Are transit spaces (corridors), social zones (common rooms / playgrounds) configured to SD rules?	Yes	Risk acceptable
14	Do classrooms reflect SD layout, PPE, screening and regular cleaning rules?	Yes	Risk acceptable
15	Have unnecessary items been removed from classrooms and other learning environments?	Yes. Soft toys have been disposed of. In Early Years a limited number of non soft toys have been retained and will be sterilised at the end of each day.	Risk acceptable
16	Are soft furnishings, soft toys and toys that are hard to clean been removed?	See above	Risk acceptable
17	Can staff manage, whilst in the transition phase, both in school and remote learning?	Yes. Arrangements have been made to facilitate dual operation	Risk acceptable
18	Are assemblies, break times, drop-off and collection times sufficiently well staggered?	Yes. All managed and planned	Risk acceptable
19	Are meal times de-conflicted, reflecting SD in the servery and dining hall whilst providing sufficient nourishment?	The School is working with its catering contractor to provide nourishing meals whilst keeping staff and pupils safe.	Risk acceptable

20	What are the risks of providing breakfast and after school clubs?	Breakfast Club and Supper Club have stopped. Wrap around care will be available but operated with regard to pupil and staff safety.	Risk acceptable	
21	What vulnerable staff and children are in school / home, is medical advice being followed and are they properly supported?	The individual needs of pupils will be factored into their school day.	Risk acceptable	
22	Is pupil and staff mental health and wellbeing properly considered with individual needs identified and supported?	of their pupils and the School	Risk acceptable	
23	Where activities have been re-scheduled is SD working and are the timings sufficient?	To be monitored as School resumes operation.	Risk acceptable	

#### **Medical Risk Assessment in the COVID-19 Environment**

	Risk	Control Measures	Outcome	Remarks / Re-assessment
	Is the science of risk understood e.g. less severe symptoms in adults, younger children less likely to become unwell, small class sizes will help?	normal staff sessions and with advice and guidance from the Medical Officer	Risk acceptable	

2	How effective are the hygiene rules? Is "catch it, bin it, kill it" still publicised and applied?	These will be monitored. Yes there is publicity around the school for the "catch it" advice.	Risk acceptable	
3	Is there anyone in addition supervising the normal medical staff?	The School Medical Officer (a G.P.) is providing assistance to staff.	Risk acceptable	
4	Are there sufficient medical staff to deal with temperature testing, isolating suspect COVID-19 cases, outside appointments and normal medical issues?	Yes	Risk acceptable	
5	If temperature testing or taking other precautions that require new equipment, do operators have the appropriate training and has it been recorded?	Yes. Simple handheld digital thermometer in use.	Risk acceptable	
6	Have medical policy, procedures and appropriate response to spectrum of medical issues been revised and shared?	To be reviewed	Risk acceptable	
7	Is the medical room(s) properly equipped?	Yes. There are male and female medical rooms which have been equipped on the advice of the Medical Officer	Risk acceptable	
8	What has the school decided is the level of PPE required for pupils and staff and are they trained as to their purpose, use, care and disposal?	PPE for pupils has been left to parents. The PPE available for staff includes visors, face masks gloves and aprons.	Risk acceptable	

		A disposal process will be implemented and staff briefed.	
9	Do the sickness management rules need to be re-stated and the "don't come to work if you are ill" understood.	Many staff will be working from home. Staff will be advised not to come into School if they feel unwell.	Risk acceptable
10	As different age groups have different risk profiles is each group (staff and pupils) risk assessed?)	Yes.	Risk acceptable
11	Is the school aware of all pre-existing medical conditions?	To the best of our knowledge.	Risk acceptable
12	Who has tested positive for COVID-19 and is it recorded? (for elimination purposes)?	So far only one staff member (who was furloughed) recorded positive.	Risk acceptable
13	Who has come into contact with anyone tested positive to COVID-19 and is it recorded?		Risk acceptable
14	Who has been sent home with COVID-19 symptoms (a cough, high temperature or shortness of breath)?	None yet recorded	Risk acceptable
15	Is there regular dialogue with those that have suffered from COVID-19 and / or are isolated at home?	Yes	Risk acceptable
16	Who is shielding another family member and/or who has a condition that precludes their attendance at school?	A number of staff are currently unable to attend school because of age or an underlying condition.	Risk acceptable

17	Is proof required for shielding and of individual conditions?	No	Risk acceptable
18	If there is a separate area for temperature testing, holding and isolation areas and are they easily identified and regularly cleaned?	Yes	Risk acceptable
19	Is temperature testing safe, reflecting SD rules, recorded and kept appropriately?	Pupil temperatures will not be recorded	Risk acceptable
20	If emergency services are called is there a (revised?) well understood procedure, RV and cleared routes in and out?	Yes	Risk acceptable
21	Are staff and pupils regularly supervised and checked to ensure they are complying with hygiene rules and the use of PPE?	Yes	Risk acceptable
22	If essential work is required on site are contractors properly registered, inducted supervised and temperature checked?	Yes	Risk acceptable
23	Do medical staff have the appropriate PPE, cleaning materials and training?	Yes	Risk acceptable
24	What is the policy on washing school clothes so as to prevent infection?		Risk acceptable

	come in in their sportswear and not	
	change in school	

# **Boarding Risk Assessment in the COVID-19 Environment**

	Risk	Control Measures	Outcome	Remarks / Re-assessment
1	Are boarding policies and procedures updated, regularly reviewed and communicated?	Yes	Risk acceptable	
2	Are all security and access systems regularly checked, updated and re-coded?		Risk acceptable	
3	Do boarding staff have the appropriate PPE, cleaning materials and training?	Yes	Risk acceptable	
4	Are separation and socialising rules adhered to in the boarding house?	Boarding suspended	Risk acceptable	
5	Are fire instructions and new procedures reviewed, understood and rehearsed?	Boarding suspended	Risk acceptable	
6	Are there sufficient rooms to isolate pupils (and staff)?	Boarding suspended	Risk acceptable	
7	Does the staff to pupil ratio reflect SD rules? This should include medical and emotional support.	Boarding suspended	Risk acceptable	

8	If bed space has been reconfigured are there still sufficient bathroom facilities?	Boarding suspended	Risk acceptable	
9	Are all clothes and bed linen washed regularly and at appropriate setting (65°)?	Boarding suspended	Risk acceptable	
10	Are boarders equipped with authorised equipment to stay-in touch with parents?	Boarding suspended	Risk acceptable	

# **Support Staff Risk Assessment**

	Risk	Control Measures	Outcome	Remarks / Re-assessment
1	Are support staff briefed on changes regularly?	Yes	Risk acceptable	
2	Do support staff have the appropriate PPE, cleaning materials and training?	Yes. They have access to visors, face masks gloves and aprons. Good quality cleaning materials are in stock	Risk acceptable	
3	Are cleaning regimes reviewed and inspected regularly and conforming to revised hygiene rules?	Yes. Regimes will be constantly monitored to ensure best results	Risk acceptable	
4	Are all security and access systems regularly checked, updated and re-coded?	Yes	Risk acceptable	

5	Have reconfigured areas, zones and routes hampered fire exits and routes?	Fire risk inspection carried out and no issues	Risk acceptable	
6	Are fire and other emergency procedures reconfigured, routes clear and regularly inspected?	Yes	Risk acceptable	

# **Facilities Management Risk Assessment**

	Risk	Control Measures	Outcome	Remarks / Re-assessment
1	Heating system including fuel levels sufficient?	Yes	Risk acceptable	
2	Gas supply, venting and valves?	Yes	Risk acceptable	
3	Have air conditioning ducts and units been checked and reviewed?	Maintenance regime is in place	Risk acceptable	
4	Electrical tests up-to-date including emergency lighting and PAT?	Up to date	Risk acceptable	
5	Water testing for temperature, flow and legionella in date for test?	Weekly checks/ procedure have been done during lockdown	Risk acceptable	To contact outside testing company to restart bacterial tests when required
6	What is the status of the swimming pool and are appropriate measures in force?	Not in use	Risk acceptable	
7	Fire alarm panel, system and extinguishers in date and serviced?	Yes	Risk acceptable	
8	Laundry washers and dryers serviceable, able to cope with	Boarding suspended and pupils sports kit going home	Risk acceptable	

	demand, temperature requirements and have sufficient washing products?			
9	Have waste procedures been reviewed?	Yes	Risk acceptable	
10	Are pest control services recorded, deficiencies identified and actioned?	Regular checks in place and recorded	Risk acceptable	
11	School vehicles fully registered, insured, maintained and stocked with appropriate hygiene materials if they are to be used?	Yes but they are not being used	Risk acceptable	