Management of COVID-19 Outbreaks in Educational Settings

Wirral Council

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Contents

Appendices:

This document outlines what will happen in the event of a local outbreak in a school, early years or further education setting in Wirral. It clarifies the respective roles of key organisations within the outbreak and describes the actions that you will need to play on behalf of your setting.

This is part of the wider response to the COVID-19 pandemic and as such, needs to go hand-in-hand with the previous guidance you have received regarding prevention of transmission and actions you must take with single suspected or confirmed cases. See Appendix A, page 10, for "Previous local guidance and sources of further help"

This document is also part of the Wirral Outbreak Prevention & Control Plan, which can be accessed through:

https://www.wirral.gov.uk/sites/default/files/all/Health%20and%20social%20care/Health%20in%20Wirral/Coronavirus/COVID-19%20Outbreak%20Management%20Plan%20for%20Wirral.pdf

Please remember that prevention is the most effective method of stopping transmission and outbreaks of COVID-19. See Appendix D, page 13, for "Key Prevention Advice"

What do we mean by an Outbreak?

Two or more confirmed cases of COVID-19 among individuals associated with a specific setting within the same 14-day period.

How will an outbreak be identified?

If a child, pupil, student or member of staff tests positive for COVID-19, the Test & Trace system (combining national, regional and local teams) will help to identify people at high risk of having been exposed to the virus through recent close contact. If this process identifies two or more cases of COVID-19 from the same setting within a 14-day period, the outbreak notification process will be activated.

An initial assessment of the situation and the associated risks will be made between Public Health England and Wirral's Health Protection Team (led by the Director of Public Health for Wirral), who will then agree on the next steps. You will be notified of this at the earliest possible stage, though it is highly likely by this point that you will also have suspected an outbreak within your setting.

Whilst the Test & Trace system has been set up to detect outbreaks at a very early stage, it is also possible that a suspected COVID-19 outbreak may be first be spotted by:

- Your setting
- Wirral Public Health via local surveillance data

- Wirral's Infection Prevention and Control Team
- Environmental Health

If you suspect an outbreak within your setting, but have not been contacted by Public Health England, Wirral's Test & Trace hub or Wirral's Infection Control Team, please ring:

- **0151 604 7750** (Wirral Community Infection Prevention and Control Service, 9am-5pm)

or if out-of-hours,

- **0151 434 4819** (Public Health England. Ask for dedicated on-call for COVID-19)

What will happen next?

Wirral's Infection Prevention and Control Team, together with Public Health England, the Merseyside Test & Trace hub and the local Wirral hub will work with you to carry out a risk assessment of the situation. The initial investigation to clarify the nature of the outbreak should begin within 24 hours of receiving the initial report.

Public Health England and the local Director of Public Health will decide whether or not to set up an Outbreak Control Team (OCT). This will be set up when any of the following apply to your setting:

- A large number of close contacts
- A cluster of cases

- High numbers of vulnerable people as potential contacts within the setting.
- Potential impact on service delivery if staff are not in the workplace for 14 days from exposure.
- Death or severe illness reported in the case or contacts
- High likelihood of media or political interest in the situation

When an OCT has been set up, they will decide on the response actions required (actions might include infection control measures, mass testing, additional self-isolations, but very rarely, school closure).

What you will need to do

1. As soon as an outbreak is suspected, you will need to let the Single Point of Contact (SPOC) for your setting know as soon as possible. These are as follows:

For schools:
- Alison Simpson (Head of Service, School Effectiveness). Tel: 07917 628352

or

- Sue Talbot (Assistant Director of Education) Tel: 07962 172823

For Early Years:

- Pip Lander (Early Years Quality Improvement & Training Manager). Tel: 07585 990373

or

- Carol Fenlon (Head of Service - Early Childhood Services)

Tel: 07769 365275

For Further Education:

- Paul Smith (Head of Service, Integrated skills, learning and employment) Tel: 07786 800351

or

- Sue Talbot (Assistant Director of Education) Tel: 07962 172823

2. Assign a lead individual from your setting to liaise with PHE/local outbreak team and to contribute to the investigation and management of the outbreak.

3. Check that no-one is still working at or attending your setting who has symptoms of COVID-19. Send anyone who has symptoms home immediately to self-isolate.

4. Work with the Contract Tracers to identify direct and close contacts of the cases during the 48 hours prior to the child or staff member falling ill (See Appendix E, page 14, for Definition of Contacts).

Ensure that all identified direct and close contacts go home to self-isolate for 14 days starting from the day they were last in contact with the case. Contacts should be sent home as soon as practically possible. There may be a number of pupils, students or staff who may not be able to leave immediately. Therefore, provision will be required to support these individuals until they can leave the setting.

5. Send out the relevant letters from your setting (see Appendix C, page 12, for customisable templates). These need to be sent out as soon as possible after the notification of a suspected outbreak.

6. Make sure that your outbreak checklist is kept updated (See Appendix B, page 11, for the correct checklist for your setting). You should also ensure that you maintain your normal registers for daily attendance/absence.

7. Strongly reinforce the universal prevention measures within your setting: hand hygiene, respiratory hygiene, frequent cleaning and social distancing (See Appendix D, page 13, for prevention guidance and Appendix G, page 16, for cleaning guidance).

8. Reinforce the message that any child, pupil, student or staff member who has symptoms of COVID-19 must get a test by day 5 of onset at the latest and should tell you the results as soon as they are available (See Appendix F, page 15, for information on testing)

Please note:

Your setting will very rarely need to close on Public Health grounds. Your setting may only need to close if there are staff shortages due to illness or being identified as contacts. If there are a number of confirmed cases across different classes and year groups concurrently, the setting may be advised to close.

It is expected only the class of a confirmed case will be asked to remain at home.

When will the outbreak be declared over?

The Outbreak Control Team (OCT) will decide when the outbreak is over and will make a statement to this effect. If there has been no OCT convened the outbreak will be declared over by the Director of Public Health/other nominated lead.

The decision to declare the outbreak over will be based on the outcomes of the ongoing Risk Assessment. This will only be considered when:

- there is no longer a risk to the public health
- the number of cases has declined
- when there have been no new confirmed or suspected cases within a continuous 14-day period.

Appendix A: Previous local guidance and sources of further help

- **Government guidance on all aspects of COVID-19:** www.gov.uk/coronavirus

- **'Actions to Take' guidance:** steps you need if informed of suspected/confirmed case.

  ACTIONS TO TAKE
  FOR EDUCATIONAL S

- **Local resource packs:**

  Schools COVID19
  Resource Pack.docx

  Early Years COVID19
  Resource Pack.docx

- **Infection Control Guidance:**

  Wirral COVID19
  Infection Control Guic

- **Guidance on cleaning:** COVID-19: cleaning of non-healthcare settings

- **For non-urgent local queries on COVID-19:**

Helpline: Mon to Fri 9am - 5pm on 0151 666 5050
Email: covid19enquiries@wirral.gov.uk
Webpage: www.wirral.gov.uk/covid19outbreak

Appendix B: Checklists for recording outbreak details

Please note that:

- All details relating to the outbreak within your setting should be recorded using one of the checklists below

- Your setting should keep hold of this document. This will enable you to identify patterns of illness and work effectively with PHE/local health protection teams.

- Records of normal registers for daily attendance / absence for the Education setting (for the DfE) should remain in place.

Checklist for schools:

COVID-19 Schools
Outbreak Checklist.dc

Checklist for Early Years:

COVID-19 Early
Years Outbreak Check

Checklist for Further Education:

COVID-19 Colleges
Outbreak Checklist.dc

Appendix C: Template letters

Schools and Early Years Settings:

General alert to parents in the event of an outbreak:

For all parents and
carers 14.7.20.docx

For parents of direct close contacts in the event of an outbreak:

For parents of close
contacts 14.7.20.docx

Further Education/Colleges:

General alert for students in the event of an outbreak:

For all students.docx

For students identified as close contacts in the event of an outbreak:

For students
identified as close con

Appendix D: Key prevention advice

If the following approached are employed effectively across all educational settings, the risk of transmission of infection will be substantially reduced:

- minimising contact with individuals who are unwell by ensuring that those who have COVID-19 symptoms, or who have someone in their household who does, do not attend childcare settings, schools or colleges
- cleaning hands more often than usual - wash hands thoroughly for 20 seconds with running water and soap and dry them thoroughly or use alcohol hand rub or sanitiser ensuring that all parts of the hands are covered
- ensuring good respiratory hygiene by promoting the 'catch it, bin it, kill it' approach
- cleaning frequently touched surfaces often using standard products, such as detergents and bleach
- minimising contact and mixing as much as possible

For further detail:

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-implementing-protective-measures-in-education-and-childcare-settings/coronavirus-covid-19-implementing-protective-measures-in-education-and-childcare-settings

Appendix E: Who is a contact?

A contact is defined as a person who has had contact (see below) at any time from 48 hours before onset of symptoms (or test if asymptomatic) to 7 days after onset of symptoms (or test):

- a person who has had face-to-face contact (within one metre) with someone who has tested positive for coronavirus (COVID-19), including:
    - being coughed on, or
    - having a face-to-face conversation, or
    - having skin-to-skin physical contact, or
    - any contact within one metre for one minute or longer without face-to-face contact

- a person who has been within 2 metres of someone who has tested positive for coronavirus (COVID-19) for more than 15 minutes

- a person who has travelled in a small vehicle *with* someone who has tested positive for coronavirus (COVID-19) or in a large vehicle *near* someone who has tested positive for coronavirus (COVID-19)

- people who spend significant time in the same household as a person who has tested positive for coronavirus (COVID-19)

Note that in a setting where Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) is routinely used, any person who wore appropriate PPE or maintained appropriate social distancing (over 2 metres) would not be classed as a contact.

Appendix F: How to access testing

Please note:

- Those with COVID-19 symptoms need to apply for testing within 3 days of having symptoms, as it may take a day or two to arrange. The test is best taken within 5 days of symptoms starting.

- The tests will only confirm that an individual has coronavirus at the time of testing. It will not tell them if they have previously had the virus. Antibody testing (to check if an individual has had the virus) is currently only offered to certain groups of NHS and care home staff.

- Any child over 3 years of age can access testing at the Wirral Testing Centre. We also have an arrangement with Alder Hey Hospital for testing for 2 years and under if required.

Routes to access testing are as follows:

- Wirral Bidston Satellite Testing Site by completing the online referral form via www.wirral.gov.uk/testing. This is a drive-through and walk-in facility.
- Regional Testing Sites via Gov.uk (Manchester/Haydock)
- Requesting a home test kit via Gov.uk
- Calling the Covid19 Helpline 0151 666 5050 where an advisor will complete the referral on behalf of the individual (Mon-Fri, 9am - 5pm)
- Calling 119 if no internet access
- If a staff member or child/pupil has no access to transport, they can email Covid19testing@wirral.gov.uk for the Community Home Swabbing Service.

Appendix G: Cleaning requirements

- Deep cleaning is not required following a suspected or confirmed case.

- Cleaning an area with normal household disinfectant (following an individual leaving the premises with suspected coronavirus (COVID-19) will reduce the risk of passing the infection on to other individuals.

- Appropriate Personal Protective Equipment such as disposable or washing-up gloves and aprons for cleaning should be used.

- So long as regular cleaning is thorough and maintained at all times there is no need for additional cleaning.

For further guidance on cleaning, use the following link:
[Guidance - cleaning of non-healthcare settings](#)

Appendix H: Members of an Outbreak Control Team

Membership would usually include the following:

- Local Authority Director of Public Health (or
- nominated deputy);
- Public Health Consultant;
- Infection Prevention and Control Nurse;
- Environmental Health Practitioner;
- Communications Manager;
- Administrative Support;
- Relevant setting e.g. School, Early Years or Further Education setting
- Data intelligence officer.

Additional membership may include:

- Consultant Microbiologist /Virologist
- Public Health England Epidemiologist
- Clinical Commissioning Group representative (CCG)
- Ambulance Service
- General Practitioner
- Police