SPHERE FEDERATION

Scholes (Elmet) Primary
St James' CE Primary
Moortown Primary

Opening schools more widely: social distancing and other Covid-19 safeguarding priorities

Date: 29 May 2020, updated 05.06.20 following LA H&S guidance

School leaders have prepared an extensive risk assessment to make sure that our children and staff stay safe in school from Tuesday 02 June 2020. Without our school community (pupils, parents / carers and staff) all adhering to the government guidance on social distancing, the measures we take in school will be undermined.

This policy outlines how children and staff can stay safe at school by being alert to social distancing beyond school hours, and by adhering to other aspects of staying safe in the context of coronavirus, such as handwashing and being alert to Covid-19 symptoms.

Although the following refers to 'child' and 'parent / carer', the content applies equally to staff members.

The policy has been produced following assessment of the risks surrounding coronavirus, many of which are set out in Leeds City Council's risk assessment template, and some of which are also raised by parents and staff – it's important to recognise these as valid concerns and attempt to address the issues raised.

Social distancing

The government's message about social contact is subject to reviews and updates, but we will always aim to follow the current message in school, and equally expect families to do so out of school. This is especially the case if your child is attending school.
https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/staying-alert-and-safe-social-distancing/staying-alert-and-safe-social-distancing

From 01 June in England, you'll be able to meet in groups of **up to six people** from different households **outside** as long as you **remain two metres apart**. This means that parents and carers must ensure their child stays two metres away from other people – hugging and hand-holding, games like tig, tackling in football should all be avoided.

The only people to enter a home should be members of that household.

We recognise that from 13 June, single people can 'bubble up' with a larger household to form a 'support bubble', provided that the two form a group together and not mix with others beyond that.
https://www.gov.uk/guidance/meeting-people-from-outside-your-household

If a child says something that indicates they or someone in their household has not followed government guidelines, we'll do some or all of the following.

- continue a conversation with the child in an **informal**, **friendly** way – this will help us to gain a better understanding and (hopefully) reassure ourselves that social distancing has not been undermined (there will be no leading questions)
- contact the child's parents / carers to discuss what the child has said and to clarify the situation
- isolate the child away from the rest of the children in their 'bubble' while we wait for more clarification from the child or their parents / carers

Equally, if an adult says something that indicates another family may not have followed government guidelines, we'll follow this up too.

Other Covid-19 safeguarding priorities

As well as social distancing, there are other Covid-19 safeguarding priorities. For example,

- handwashing (we have scheduled at least five times during the school day for this to happen)
- being alert to symptoms (high temperature; new, continuous cough; loss or change to sense of smell or taste) and making sure parents alert school if their child shows any of the symptoms

Pupil behaviour

Pupils' behaviour in Sphere Federation schools is good. We will continue to follow our Positive Relationships Policy (see website or contact school to request a copy) as we open up our schools more widely. The aims and positive and negative consequences set out in the policy remain important as more and more pupils return to school.

One of our school rules is 'We follow instructions'. As pupils return to school, this rule will continue to be important; for example:

- following instructions about different routines for arrival or departure
- following instructions on hygiene, such as handwashing
- following instructions on who pupils can socialise with

Serious poor behaviour in Sphere Federation schools is rare, but our Positive Relationships Policy does make reference to it; an extract is shown here:
'Serious misbehaviour (eg disrespect to staff, property or cultures, swearing, fighting) is unacceptable. Such behaviour would mean warnings are automatically by-passed to higher level warnings. We contact parents to keep them in the picture and to discuss ways to respond and gain a consistent message between home and school. A serious incident form… is typically completed in such cases.
The safety of the children is paramount in all situations. If a child's behaviour endangers the safety of others, the class teacher stops the activity and prevents the child from taking part for the rest of that session.'

The risk assessment that we have in place comes from Leeds City Council's risk assessment template, which states:
'The behaviour policy should include steps to be taken if pupils fail to follow the new rules and routines or deliberately put themselves or others at risk eg deliberately coughing or spitting on another person.'

In the context of coronavirus, we would regard behaviour such as deliberate coughing or spitting as serious misbehaviour. For the safety of other pupils and our staff, we would therefore follow our Positive Relationships Policy: in particular, we would *'contact parents to keep them in the picture and to discuss ways to respond'*. Actions taken by us following such an incident would reflect the priorities set out here in the context of safeguarding and protecting staff and pupils from Covid-19; these are set out below. This overrides what is in the Positive Relationships Policy.

Actions we will take to follow the policy

Following all the points set out in this policy will all help to stop the spread of the virus. As such we will follow this policy strictly and communicate it frequently and widely.

In these very difficult times, we do need to prioritise staying safe for all our pupils, parents and staff. We will constantly review our risk assessment to ensure our policies and practices prioritise staying safe for all.

If we have concerns, we may have to ask a parent / carer to collect their child from school, possibly to quarantine for 14 days or until they can provide evidence of a negative test result for Covid-19. This is because we have to be confident children can attend school in a way which does not undermine the safeguarding of others.

It is possible that we have to make a decision that we can't safely have a child at school due to concerns about social distancing. We would make that decision reluctantly, but the safeguarding of all pupils and staff must be our priority. (This could mean a child may lose their place in a bubble.)

'The decision as to whether a child can be or continue to be offered a place at present in school will be based on [an Individual Pupil Risk Assessment / IPRA] and will lie with a headteacher. Writing specific control measures into an IPRA for parents and pupils to follow the current government guidance outside of the school setting is perfectly acceptable. If you then felt that the child's / family's behaviour outside school was breaching those control measures and creating a significant risk to staff and other children within school, it is appropriate to take reasonable steps to manage that risk, which could include delaying or removing the offer of a placement in school.'

(Point 2, Health and Safety Bulletin 2020 no.22, Updates to the Coronavirus Risk Assessment 05.06.20)

'The final decision as to whether a child can be safely accommodated at the school rests with the headteacher / principal based on their risk assessment of the situation.'

(Saleem Tariq, Director of Children and Families, in a message to parents, 23.03.20)