

COVID-19 Policy

Contents

COVID-19 Policy.....	1
Introduction.....	2
Policy.....	3
Implementation.....	3
Monitoring.....	4
Review.....	4
Operating standards.....	4
Employee awareness.....	4
Personal hygiene.....	4
Cleaning & disinfecting.....	5
System of controls.....	5
Prevention.....	5
Response to any infection.....	5
Prevention.....	5
General approach to face coverings.....	8
Where local restrictions apply.....	8
Exemptions.....	9
Access to face coverings.....	9
Safe wearing and removal of face coverings.....	9
How we will group learners.....	11
Response to any infection.....	13
Cheshire and Merseyside HPT.....	13
Communication.....	16
The following scenarios must be reported as follows:.....	16

Document Code:	POL029
File Location:	Teams/Quality/Document Library/Policies & Procedures
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Date:	14.09.20
Next Review Date:	14.10.20 -unless government guidelines significantly change

Introduction

COVID-19 is a new illness that can affect the lungs and airways. It is caused by a virus called coronavirus.

The main symptoms of coronavirus are:

- **a high temperature** – this means you feel hot to touch on your chest or back (you do not need to measure your temperature)
- **a new, continuous cough** – this means coughing a lot for more than an hour, or 3 or more coughing episodes in 24 hours (if you usually have a cough, it may be worse than usual)
- **a loss or change to your sense of smell or taste** – this means you've noticed you cannot smell or taste anything, or things smell or taste different to normal

Most people with coronavirus have at least 1 of these symptoms.

Covid-19 is generally spread by virus particles from coughing or sneezing landing in the mouth or nose of others nearby and on some surfaces where others pick it up on their hands and transfer it to their mouth, nose or eye. The virus is believed to live outside the body on some surfaces for several hours.

People and businesses are concerned about Covid-19 for several reasons that may include the following:

- The scientific community is learning quickly about this virus but there is a lot they don't know yet. Uncertainty about how long it will last and how serious it will be leads to concern. On top of that, endless media speculation about what might happen in the future and some of the sensationalist headlines we are seeing on TV and in the newspapers doesn't help
- The mortality rate (number of deaths relative to the number of cases) is believed to be higher than seasonal flu
- This virus is believed to be more contagious than seasonal flu
- Vaccines that protect people most at risk of flu and its complications do not protect against all flu viruses and there is currently no vaccine for Covid-19. This will almost certainly change in the future, but not in the short term
- Covid-19 has symptoms like most other flu viruses, so it can be hard to know if you have it. This isn't a problem for most people because symptoms are likely to be relatively mild, but they can be more serious for some including the elderly (generally over 60), those with a weak immune system and those with long-term conditions like diabetes, cancer and chronic lung disease
- People can carry the virus without realising for up to 14 days but there is little evidence to show that people without symptoms are infectious to others
- A global epidemic can be bad news for countries without such an effective health system. This is one reason why Governments around the world are taking the situation so seriously. Another reason is the damage that can be

Document Code:	POL029
File Location:	Teams/Quality/Document Library/Policies & Procedures
Last Reviewed By:	KL
Date:	14.09.20
Next Review Date:	14.10.20 -unless government guidelines significantly change

done to the UK and global economy if the population suddenly changes and people stop moving around

The purpose of this policy is to establish the management arrangements and operating standards required for ensuring that Innovative Alliance Ltd (IA) have appropriate measures in place for the protection of employees, others who are not in employment (learners, visitors and suppliers etc.) and for the purpose of demonstrating this to others as part of due diligence processes.

Policy

So far as is reasonably practicable and in line with UK government advice, we are committed to reducing the risk of exposure to Covid-19 to our employees, members of the public and others (guests, contractors and visitors etc.).

The Department of Health and Social Care and Public Health England publish their guidance to www.gov.uk/coronavirus. This information and links to other relevant GOV.UK guidance is the primary source of information upon which this policy and operating standards are based.

For the purpose of compliance with health and safety law, the content of this document is designed to meet the functional requirements of the following legislation:

- The Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974
- The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999
- The Personal Protective Equipment Regulations 2002
- The Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002
- The Workplace (health, safety and welfare) Regulations 1992

Implementation

This policy and operating standards, along with all revisions, will be issued to each employee.

Each departmental manager is responsible for:

- Implementing this policy and operating standards within the company under their control and for maintaining the standards in place always through regular checks that must include enforcing regular handwashing
- Providing operational feedback to assist with improvements to this policy and/or operating standards to the CEO
- Providing returning travel advice to employees in line with the information provided at www.gov.uk/coronavirus
- Directing employees requesting travel advice to www.gov.uk/guidance/travel-advice-novel-coronavirus

Document Code:	POL029
File Location:	Teams/Quality/Document Library/Policies & Procedures
Last Reviewed By:	KL
Date:	14.09.20
Next Review Date:	14.10.20 -unless government guidelines significantly change

Monitoring

The Department of Health and Social Care and Public Health England website will be monitored daily by the CEO. Any significant changes that affect this policy or operating standards will be communicated to all personnel via the All Staff/COVID-19 channel:

Review

The CEO is responsible for making any agreed changes and for issuing updated versions of this document to each departmental manager and distributing to all staff and displaying on noticeboards.

Operating standards

Employee awareness

"Covid-19 Coronavirus" posters must be displayed as follows:

- On the health and safety notice board
- In the employee kitchen area
- In offices
- In the classroom

Personal hygiene

Hand wash stations must be provided with hot and cold running water, anti-bacterial hand soap and disposable towels. The frequency of checking these requirements must be increased as usage is likely to be higher than normal.

Alcohol hand rub/gel dispensers containing a minimum of 60% alcohol must be positioned conspicuously at the following locations:

- Reception Desks
- In the classroom
- In the administration offices

Boxes of tissues should also be placed around head office and in every classroom. The purpose of this is to allow people to cover the mouth and nose when coughing or sneezing.

Antimicrobial wipes with anti-viral properties should be provided around the workplace and employees should be encouraged to clean items they might share such as keyboards/mouse and telephones etc.

Document Code:	POL029
File Location:	Teams/Quality/Document Library/Policies & Procedures
Last Reviewed By:	KL
Date:	14.09.20
Next Review Date:	14.10.20 -unless government guidelines significantly change

Cleaning & disinfecting

The frequency of cleaning and disinfecting high contact hard surfaces such as door handles, lift buttons, toilet handles, taps, handrails, bar tops and reception counters etc. should be increased to remove the virus.

System of controls

This is the set of actions IA must take. They are grouped into prevention and response to any infection.

Prevention

1. Minimise contact with individuals who are unwell by ensuring that those who have coronavirus (COVID-19) symptoms, or who have someone in their household who does, do not attend the setting.
2. Where recommended, use of face coverings in FE settings.
3. Clean hands thoroughly more often than usual.
4. Ensure good respiratory hygiene by promoting the 'catch it, bin it, kill it' approach.
5. Introduce enhanced cleaning, including cleaning frequently touched surfaces often, using standard products such as detergents.
6. Minimise contact between individuals and maintain social distancing wherever possible.
7. Where necessary, wear appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE).

Numbers 1 to 5 must be in place in all settings, all the time.

Number 6 must be properly considered and settings must put in place measures to maintain social distancing where possible.

Number 7 applies in specific circumstances.

Response to any infection

8. Engage with the NHS Test and Trace process.
9. Manage confirmed cases of coronavirus (COVID-19) amongst the education setting community.
10. Contain any outbreak by following local health protection team advice.

Numbers 8 to 10 must be followed in every case where they are relevant.

Prevention

IA and its staff will ensure that the following actions are put into place to help prevent the risk of infection.

Document Code:	POL029
File Location:	Teams/Quality/Document Library/Policies & Procedures
Last Reviewed By:	KL
Date:	14.09.20
Next Review Date:	14.10.20 -unless government guidelines significantly change

1. Minimise contact with individuals who are unwell by ensuring that those who have coronavirus (COVID-19) symptoms, or who have someone in their household who does, or who have been advised by NHS Test and Trace to stay at home, do not attend the setting. Individuals formally advised by NHS Test and Trace as a close contact should also self-isolate.

Ensuring that ~~students~~learners, staff and other adults do not come into an IA delivery site if they have [coronavirus \(COVID-19\) symptoms](#), or have tested positive in the last 10 days is essential to reduce the risk in education settings and further drive down transmission of coronavirus (COVID-19). Make sure anyone developing those symptoms while on site is sent home. Individuals formally advised by NHS Test and Trace as a close contact should also self-isolate.

If anyone in an IA setting becomes unwell with a new, continuous cough or a high temperature, or has a loss of, or change in, their normal sense of taste or smell (anosmia), they must be sent home and advised to follow [guidance for households with possible or confirmed coronavirus \(COVID-19\) infection](#). This sets out that they should self-isolate for at least 10 days and should [arrange to have a test](#) to see if they have coronavirus (COVID-19).

If they have tested positive whilst not experiencing symptoms but develop symptoms during the isolation period, they should restart the 10 day isolation period from the day they develop symptoms.

Other members of their household (including any siblings) should self-isolate for 14 days from when the symptomatic person first had symptoms.

If a learner is awaiting collection, they should be moved, if possible, to a room where they can be isolated behind a closed door, depending on the age and needs of the person. Ideally, a window should be opened for ventilation. If it is not possible to isolate them, move them to an area which is at least 2 metres away from other people.

If they need to go to the bathroom while waiting to be collected, they should use a separate bathroom if possible. The bathroom must be cleaned and disinfected using standard cleaning products before being used by anyone else.

PPE must be worn by staff caring for the individual while they await collection if a distance of 2 metres cannot be maintained (such as for a young person with complex needs). More information on PPE use can be found in the [safe working in education, childcare and children's social care settings, including the use of personal protective equipment \(PPE\)](#) guidance.

For more information on how to care for a symptomatic student while protecting the welfare of other students and staff, read the [guidance on isolation for residential educational settings](#). [For more information on how to care for a symptomatic learner](#)

Document Code:	POL029
File Location:	Teams/Quality/Document Library/Policies & Procedures
Last Reviewed By:	KL
Date:	14.09.20
Next Review Date:	14.10.20 -unless government guidelines significantly change

while protecting the welfare of other learners and staff, read the guidance on isolation for residential educational settings.

As is usual practice, in an emergency, call 999 if someone is seriously ill or injured or their life is at risk. Anyone with coronavirus (COVID-19) symptoms should not visit the GP, pharmacy, urgent care centre or a hospital except in an emergency situation.

Any members of staff who have helped someone with symptoms and any learners who have been in close contact with them do not need to go home to self-isolate unless:

- they develop symptoms themselves (in which case, they should arrange a test etc.)
- the symptomatic person subsequently tests positive or
- they have been requested to do so by NHS Test and Trace

Everyone must wash their hands thoroughly for 20 seconds with soap and running water or use hand sanitiser after any contact with someone who is unwell. The area around the person with symptoms must be cleaned after they have left to reduce the risk of passing the infection on to other people. See the [COVID-19: cleaning of non-healthcare settings guidance](#).

Public Health England is clear that routinely taking the temperature of learners is not recommended as this is an unreliable method for identifying coronavirus (COVID-19).

2. Where recommended, use of face coverings in FE settings.

From 1 September, new advice will apply to the [use of face coverings by staff and students in further education settings](#). From 1 September, new advice will apply to the use of face coverings by staff and learners in further education settings.

Returning to education is vital for a learner's education and for wellbeing. Time out of education is detrimental for their cognitive and academic development, particularly for disadvantaged learners, therefore we need to ensure all learners can return to education sooner rather than later.

This guidance is not mandatory and any legal exemptions that apply to the wearing of face coverings in shops and on public transport also apply to this new advice.

There is additional guidance available about wearing [face coverings](#) in public spaces where social distancing is not always possible.

Document Code:	POL029
File Location:	Teams/Quality/Document Library/Policies & Procedures
Last Reviewed By:	KL
Date:	14.09.20
Next Review Date:	14.10.20 -unless government guidelines significantly change

General approach to face coverings

The government is not recommending face coverings are necessary for education settings generally because a system of controls, which are applicable to all education environments, provides additional mitigating measures.

Further education providers will have the discretion to require the use of face coverings in communal areas where social distancing cannot be safely managed if they believe that it is right in their particular circumstances.

IA recommend the wearing of face coverings for learners and staff in communal settings where the layout of the setting makes it difficult to maintain social distancing when staff and learners are moving around the premises (for example, in corridors).

We also permit the use of face coverings where, on top of the hygiene measures and the [system of controls](#), it would provide additional confidence to [students/learners](#) to support a full return to education.

Based on current evidence and the mitigating measures that FE providers are putting in place, face coverings will not generally be necessary in the traditional classroom setting, even where social distancing is not possible. There is greater use of the [system of controls](#) for minimising risk, including keeping in small and consistent groups, and greater scope for physical distancing by staff within classrooms. Face coverings would have a negative impact on learning and teaching and so their use in the classroom should be avoided.

Outside of the traditional classroom setting, we recommend the use of face coverings where:

- teaching settings are more reflective of, or are a workplace environment, for example, during assessment for barbering learners on live models
- it is a requirement of the workplace or other indoor setting and where the teaching is taking place in an area in which learners or staff are likely to come into contact with other members of the public (complying with relevant coronavirus (COVID-19) sector guidance) – This applies mainly to our barbering courses where these are delivered in training facilities attached to practicing Barber shops open to the general public.

Where local restrictions apply

IA will take additional precautionary measures in local restriction areas, where the transmission of the virus is high. In FE settings in these areas, face coverings should be worn by adults and learners when moving around, such as in corridors and communal areas where social distancing is difficult to maintain. It will not usually be necessary to wear face coverings in the classroom, where protective measures already mean the risks are lower, and they may inhibit teaching and learning.

Document Code:	POL029
File Location:	Teams/Quality/Document Library/Policies & Procedures
Last Reviewed By:	KL
Date:	14.09.20
Next Review Date:	14.10.20 -unless government guidelines significantly change

In the event of new local restrictions being imposed, we will communicate quickly and clearly to staff, learners and parents and carers, where relevant that the new arrangements require the use of face coverings in certain circumstances.

Exemptions

Some individuals are exempt from wearing [face coverings](#). For example, people who:

- cannot put on, wear or remove a face covering because of a physical or mental illness or impairment, or disability
- are speaking to or providing assistance to someone who relies on lip reading, clear sound or facial expression to communicate

The same exemptions will apply in education settings, and we would expect trainers and other staff to be sensitive to those needs.

Access to face coverings

It is reasonable to assume that staff and ~~students~~[learners](#) will now have access to face coverings due to their increasing use in wider society. Public Health England has published guidance on how to make a simple [face covering](#).

- However, IA have a small contingency supply available for people who:
- are struggling to access a face covering
- are unable to use their face covering as it's become soiled or unsafe
- have forgotten their face covering

No-one should be excluded from education on the grounds that they are not wearing a face covering.

Safe wearing and removal of face coverings

You should have a process for removing face coverings when those who use face coverings arrive and when face coverings are worn on your premises in certain circumstances. This process should be communicated clearly to learners and staff.

Safe wearing of face coverings requires the:

- cleaning of hands before and after touching, including to remove or put them on
- safe storage of them in individual, sealable plastic bags between use

Where a face covering becomes damp, it should not be worn and the face covering should be replaced carefully.

Document Code:	POL029
File Location:	Teams/Quality/Document Library/Policies & Procedures
Last Reviewed By:	KL
Date:	14.09.20
Next Review Date:	14.10.20 -unless government guidelines significantly change

Learners must be instructed to:

- not touch the front of their face covering during use or when removing it
- dispose of temporary face coverings in a 'black bag' waste bin or, where appropriate a recycling bin (if safely bagged and left for 72 hours out of reach)
- place reusable face coverings in a plastic bag they can take home with them
- wash their hands again before heading to their classroom

Guidance on [safe working in education, childcare and children's social care](#) provides more advice.

3. Clean hands thoroughly, more often than usual.

Coronavirus (COVID-19) is an easy virus to kill when it is on skin. This can be done with soap and running water or hand sanitiser. We must ensure that learners clean their hands regularly, including

- when they arrive at an IA site
- when they return from breaks
- when they change rooms
- before and after eating

Regular and thorough hand cleaning is going to be needed for the foreseeable future.

IA will ensure:

- all delivery sites have enough hand washing or hand sanitiser 'stations' available so that all learners and staff can clean their hands regularly
- there is supervision and help with hand sanitiser use given risks around ingestion for learners with complex needs - skin-friendly skin cleaning wipes can be used as an alternative
- we build these routines into our culture, supported by behaviour expectations, and helping ensure younger learners and those with complex needs understand the need to follow them

4. Ensure good respiratory hygiene by promoting the 'catch it, bin it, kill it' approach.

The 'catch it, bin it, kill it' approach continues to be very important, so education settings must ensure that they have enough tissues and bins available to support learners and staff to follow this routine. As with hand cleaning, you must ensure those with complex needs are helped to get this right, and all learners understand that this is now part of how IA delivery sites operate.

Some learners with complex needs will struggle to maintain as good respiratory hygiene as their peers, for example, those who spit uncontrollably or use saliva as a

Document Code:	POL029
File Location:	Teams/Quality/Document Library/Policies & Procedures
Last Reviewed By:	KL
Date:	14.09.20
Next Review Date:	14.10.20 -unless government guidelines significantly change

sensory stimulant. This should be considered in risk assessments in order to support these learners and the staff working with them and is not a reason to deny these learners face to face education.

5. Introduce enhanced cleaning, including cleaning frequently touched surfaces often, using standard products such as detergents.

IA will ensure:

- All delivery venues have a cleaning schedule that ensures cleaning is generally enhanced and includes:
 - more frequent cleaning of rooms and shared areas that are used by different groups
 - frequently touched surfaces being cleaned more often than normal
- that toilets will need to be cleaned regularly and learners must be encouraged to clean their hands thoroughly after using the toilet - different groups being allocated their own toilet blocks could be considered but is not a requirement if the site does not allow for it

IA will aim to follow Public Health England guidance for [cleaning non-healthcare settings](#). This contains advice on the general cleaning required in addition to the existing advice on cleaning those settings when there is a suspected case.

6. Minimise contact between individuals and maintain social distancing wherever possible.

Minimising contacts and mixing between people reduces transmission of coronavirus (COVID-19). This is important in all contexts, and we must do everything possible to minimise contacts and mixing while delivering a full programme of study. Where possible we will maintain 2 metres between people.

The overarching principle to apply is reducing the number of contacts between learners and staff. IA will achieve this through keeping groups separate (in 'bubbles') and through maintaining the distance between individuals.

How we will group learners

Consistent groups reduce the risk of transmission by limiting the number of learners and staff in contact with each other to only those within the group.

Maintaining distinct groups or 'bubbles' that do not mix makes it quicker and easier in the event of a positive case to identify those who may need to self-isolate, and keep that number as small as possible.

IA will only have one trainer allocated to a face to face course. All cohorts will form their own 'bubbles' and cohorts will not be physically mixed at any time. Trainers will

Document Code:	POL029
File Location:	Teams/Quality/Document Library/Policies & Procedures
Last Reviewed By:	KL
Date:	14.09.20
Next Review Date:	14.10.20 -unless government guidelines significantly change

minimise the need to be in close proximity contact with other IA staff as much as possible to ensure that we limit contact between different groups. This means they will only attend the IA head office when absolutely necessary.

By limiting contact between different groups, this means that if one person in a group tests positive for coronavirus (COVID-19), we can be confident that they have only had close contact with some or all of that group.

IA would rarely have more than one cohort attending training in the same venue at once however in the rare case that this did occur we would also apply the following controls.

- Although passing briefly in the corridor or external areas is low risk, avoid creating very busy corridors or entrances and exits.
- consider staggered break times and lunch times (and time for cleaning surfaces in any shared areas between groups).

Because staff deliver end to end to a cohort there will be minimal need for staff to move between groups. In the event that a staff member is absent and a covering trainer is needed, they should adhere to broader protective measures such as maintaining distance from learners where possible.

7. Where necessary, wear appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE).

The majority of staff in education settings will not require PPE beyond what they would normally need for their work. PPE is only needed in a very small number of cases, including where a learner:

- becomes ill with coronavirus (COVID-19) symptoms while at an educational setting, and only then if a distance of 2 metres cannot be maintained
- already has routine intimate care needs that involve the use of PPE, in which case the same PPE should continue to be used

Read the guidance on [safe working in education, childcare and children's social care](#) for more information about preventing and controlling infection. This includes when and how PPE should be used, what type of PPE to use, and how to source it.

Face coverings are not classified as [PPE \(personal protective equipment\)](#). PPE is used in a limited number of settings to protect wearers against hazards and risks, such as surgical masks or respirators used in medical and industrial settings. A face covering is a covering of any type which covers your nose and mouth.

Document Code:	POL029
File Location:	Teams/Quality/Document Library/Policies & Procedures
Last Reviewed By:	KL
Date:	14.09.20
Next Review Date:	14.10.20 -unless government guidelines significantly change

Response to any infection

These are the steps IA will take to respond to any infection. All IA staff must make sure that each step is followed at all times.

8. Engage with the NHS Test and Trace process.

We will adhere to the NHS Test and Trace process and how to contact our local [Public Health England health protection team](#).

For most courses this will be:

Cheshire and Merseyside HPT

Public Health England North West
Suite 3B
3rd Floor
Cunard Building
Water Street

Liverpool
L3 1DS

Email Candmhpu@phe.gov.uk; PHE.candmhpu@nhs.net

Telephone 0344 225 0562 (option 1)

Out of hours advice 0151 434 4819

For courses delivered outside of the Cheshire/Merseyside areas. Please confirm the appropriate contact [here](#).

IA will ensure that staff members, [students/learners](#), and parents and carers (where necessary) understand that they will need to be ready and willing to:

- [book a test](#) if they are displaying symptoms - staff and [students/learners](#) must not come into classes if they have symptoms, and must be sent home to self-isolate if they develop them whilst onsite
- provide details of anyone they have been in close contact with if they were to test positive for coronavirus (COVID-19) or if asked by NHS Test and Trace
- [self-isolate](#) if they have been in close contact with someone who develops coronavirus (COVID-19) symptoms or someone who tests positive for coronavirus (COVID-19)

Anyone who displays symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19) can and should get a test. Tests can be booked online through the [NHS website](#), or ordered by telephone via NHS 119 for those without access to the internet. Essential workers, which includes anyone involved in education or childcare, have [priority access to testing](#).

Document Code:	POL029
File Location:	Teams/Quality/Document Library/Policies & Procedures
Last Reviewed By:	KL
Date:	14.09.20
Next Review Date:	14.10.20 -unless government guidelines significantly change

The government will ensure that it is as easy as possible to get a test through a wide range of routes that are locally accessible, fast and convenient. More details on new testing avenues as and when they become available will be released on an ongoing basis, so that we understand the quickest and easiest way to get a test.

Like all FE providers, IA will have access to a small number of home testing kits that we can give directly to learners or a parent or carer of a learner who has developed symptoms on site, or staff who have developed symptoms on site, where they think providing one will significantly increase the likelihood of them getting tested. Please see **POL034 – Coronavirus Test allocation Policy and Procedure** for more details.

IA will ask learners and staff to inform us immediately of the results of a test.

If someone begins to self-isolate because they have symptoms similar to coronavirus (COVID-19) and they get a test which delivers a negative result, they feel well and no longer have symptoms similar to coronavirus (COVID-19), they can stop self-isolating. They could still have another virus, such as a cold or flu, in which case it is still best to avoid contact with other people until they are better. Other members of their household can stop self-isolating.

If someone tests positive, they should follow the [guidance for households with possible or confirmed coronavirus \(COVID-19\) infection](#) and must continue to self-isolate for at least 10 days from the onset of their symptoms and then return onsite only if they do not have symptoms other than a cough or loss or change in sense of smell/taste. This is because a cough or anosmia can last for several weeks once the infection has gone. The 10-day period starts from the day when they first became ill. If they still have a high temperature, they should keep self-isolating until their temperature returns to normal. Other members of their household should continue self-isolating for the full 14 days.

9. Manage confirmed cases of coronavirus (COVID-19) amongst the education setting community.

IA will take swift action when we become aware that someone who has attended has tested positive for coronavirus (COVID-19). A member of the Senior Management Team will contact the [local health protection team](#). This team may also contact IA directly if they become aware that someone who has tested positive for coronavirus (COVID-19) attended your premises, as identified by NHS Test and Trace.

The health protection team will carry out a rapid risk assessment to confirm who has been in close contact with the person during the period that they were infectious, and ensure they are asked to self-isolate.

The health protection team will work with IA in this situation to guide us through the actions we need to take. Based on the advice from the health protection team, we will send home those people who have been in close contact with the person who

Document Code:	POL029
File Location:	Teams/Quality/Document Library/Policies & Procedures
Last Reviewed By:	KL
Date:	14.09.20
Next Review Date:	14.10.20 -unless government guidelines significantly change

has tested positive, advising them to self-isolate for 14 days since they were last in close contact with that person when they were infectious. Close contact means:

- direct close contacts - face to face contact with an infected individual for any length of time, within 1 metre, including being coughed on, a face to face conversation, or unprotected physical contact (skin to skin)
- proximity contacts - extended close contact (within 1 to 2 metres for more than 15 minutes) with an infected individual
- travelling in a small vehicle, like a car, with an infected person

The local health protection team will provide definitive advice on who must be sent home. To support them in doing so, IA keep a record of learners and staff in each group and will support any hired venues in ensuring we also adhere to their own individual processes. This will be a proportionate recording process.

IA staff will not share the names or details of people with coronavirus (COVID-19) unless essential to protect others.

Household members of those contacts who are sent home do not need to self-isolate themselves unless the **student/learner** or staff member who is self-isolating subsequently develops symptoms. If someone in a group that has been asked to self-isolate develops symptoms themselves within their 14-day isolation period they should follow [guidance for households with possible or confirmed coronavirus \(COVID-19\) infection](#). They should get a test, and:

- if someone who is self-isolating because they have been in close contact with someone who has tested positive for coronavirus (COVID-19) starts to feel unwell and gets a test for coronavirus themselves, and the test delivers a negative result, they must remain in isolation for the remainder of the 14 day isolation period - this is because they could still develop coronavirus (COVID-19) within the remaining days
- if the test result is positive, they should inform IA immediately, and must isolate for at least 10 days from the onset of their symptoms (which could mean the self-isolation ends before or after the original 14 day isolation period), their household should self-isolate for at least 14 days from when the symptomatic person first had symptoms, following [guidance for households with possible or confirmed coronavirus \(COVID-19\) infection](#)

IA will not request evidence of negative test results or other medical evidence before admitting learners or welcoming them back after a period of self-isolation.

Further guidance is available on [testing and tracing for coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#).

Document Code:	POL029
File Location:	Teams/Quality/Document Library/Policies & Procedures
Last Reviewed By:	KL
Date:	14.09.20
Next Review Date:	14.10.20 -unless government guidelines significantly change

10. Contain any outbreak by following local health protection team advice.

If there are 2 or more confirmed cases within 14 days, or an overall rise in sickness absence where coronavirus (COVID-19) is suspected, then IA may have an outbreak. IA will:

- continue to work with the local health protection team who will be able to advise if additional action is required
- inform ESFA of the health protection team advice either direct or via the DfE Helpline 0800 046 8687

In some cases, health protection teams may recommend that a larger number of other students/learners self-isolate at home as a precautionary measure, perhaps the whole site or a specific group. Whole site closure based on cases within IA settings will not generally be necessary, and should not be considered except on the advice of health protection teams.

Communication

The following scenarios must be reported as follows:

- Any employee who is tested for Covid-19 must be notified to Ian Green immediately
- Any employee who is a confirmed case of Covid-19 must be notified to Ian Green immediately

Document Code:	POL029
File Location:	Teams/Quality/Document Library/Policies & Procedures
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Next Review Date:	14.10.20 -unless government guidelines significantly change