



School Response
and Strategy to
Covid-19

Abbey School Response to Covid-19

During the Coronavirus Covid -19 Pandemic Abbey School responded using a family centred approach that considered the official Government Guidance but considered the views and opinions of all stakeholders of school. This ensured that both staff and families felt in control and aware of the daily changes and updates. Open and honest communication with families and staff have been the consistent cornerstone to the successful integration back into education for pupils.

What happened when the Country was locked down by the Government?

Staff quickly adapted their schemes of work to fit the needs of home learning for all pupils. This meant loaning equipment to families that needed it and offering weekly supportive phone calls to families to ensure children and young people were continually safeguarded but also families felt empowered to continue their child's learning at home in whatever way suited them as a family. This personalised approach was reviewed weekly with the support of families opinions and thoughts.

Gift bags were taken out to families at timely intervals to ensure that staff had seen all pupils several times during lockdown. All pupils had access to Purple Mash an online learning platform that allows staff to set work but also communicate personally with pupils to give feedback and emotional support where needed. The platform allows pupils to email each other in a safe and secure way so that contact and friendships were not lost during the lockdown period. To safeguard pupils staff can log onto accounts and allow or block emails. Frequent communication with families encouraged the use of Purple Mash as the safest way of communication for families. Videos to support families understanding of the learning platform were shared frequently.

Staff recorded online videos to stimulate learning at home but also reflected on the challenges that many of our families faced having children with special educational needs at home full time.

During lockdown key worker children were supported to attend school with normal school hours. Many key worker families chose to keep their children at home but several checks were continually made each week to offer places or support.

The school ran 3 different approaches; pupils physically in school, an online curriculum and an outreach service. This service offered families opportunity to have staff visit family homes and take pupils out on socially distanced activities. This reassured families who were shielding the safety of their child not being exposed to the virus but also allowed them support for their own wellbeing. Some students received several phone calls throughout the day by staff to ensure they developed a routine at home. For example a member of Post-16 staff would telephone a year 12 student at 9.30 to ensure they were out of bed. They then discussed what work needed completing for the day and telephoned at 3pm to ensure work had been completed. This is an example of a particularly successful strategy for students with Autism.

Staff were supported by twice weekly online meetings. The weekly SLT safeguarding meeting took into consideration both children's safeguarding concerns and staff safeguarding also. Staff were roted to ensure any possible incubation times of the virus were accounted for. This also reassured

staff that only the 'bubble group' would need to isolate if a positive case was to occur rather than the whole staff team. Again another positive strategy to use if needed in the future.

How did the school meet the needs of all children?

The following strategies were quickly implemented when lockdown began.

- Home learning offer – all pupils were supported with the loan of school equipment. The website was reviewed and relaunched during lockdown based upon the initial views of the families and pupils.
- Key Worker Children – families where one parent was a registered key worker were given opportunity to send their child into school on a timetable that most suited their work patterns. Staff were roled on a timetable to support this group of pupils.
- Outreach visits – some families opted for an outreach visit where staff took pupils on socially distanced activities normally physically demanding to ensure pupils used up excess energy.
- Safeguarding – Staff ensured home visits were quickly completed where contact from families was limited in weekly phone calls. This information was shared on a central database ensure communication lines were as transparent as possible.
- Ipads were loaned to families to ensure all pupils had access to online lessons.
- Paper copies of learning activities were delivered to the doorstep of pupils where families asked in their weekly phone call.

How were families consulted with during lockdown?

Families were sent weekly messages via the schools text messages service and also messages each week (daily at the peak of the virus) via the schools 'closed' facebook page. Questionnaires were sent via text to families and comments and suggestions from weekly phone calls were recorded and shared with SLT to act upon accordingly.

Families were given the opportunity to raise their views on what a return to school would 'look like' for them. This ensured all pupils were offered a place in the school upon reopening before the Summer break. It also built the confidence of the vast majority of families to return their child to full time education in September.

How was staff wellbeing kept at the forefront?

Staff were communicated using a open and transparent approach throughout the time. At each stage of the lockdown the staff had virtual meetings where they had an opportunity to raise views and thoughts. This ensured they felt part of the school planning throughout the pandemic. Staff returned to school as 2 separate bubbles before the end of the summer term. This approach was used to support those staff who had been shielding in particular to ensure they felt some level of routine had returned to support their own mental health. Counselling was offered to all staff. Where staff were particularly worried about contracting the virus individual risk assessments were completed via an online meeting before their physical return to school.

What are the arrangements for all pupils to return to full time education?

Families were informed in August of the risk assessment and changes to daily routines to ensure the school was Covid safe. They were then given the opportunity to reply on whether they were intending to send their child back to school in September. All pupils returned to their original 2019-20 classes for the first week in September, this allowed the familiar routines of school to be re-established for pupils. It is also a strategy that families suggested in their feedback. New pupils started school a week later (7.9.2020) when all pupils moved to their new classes. This approach reflects the end of year approach that has been successful over the past couple of years. All families were offered an online meeting with their child's new class teacher, Head of department and where appropriate the Head of School. For families that didn't want this option a personal phone call was made to discuss returning back to school.

All pupils received their usual broad and balanced curriculum. Specialist rooms have enhanced cleaning procedures between class groups to ensure they are covid safe. The school work in the following bubbles-

- Lower School Bubble
- Transitions corridor Bubble
- Upper School Bubble
- Horizon Bubble
- WAVEE Bubble.

Transport for WAVEE, main school site and the Horizon site are all separate to ensure cross contamination on each site is limited as possible.

For student who are required to continue to medically shield an online education offer is given with weekly contact visits to the home.

Adaptations to rooms have been made to ensure minimal pupil movements are on all corridors. These have been installing outside doors into the lower school classrooms.

Sanitising stations have been installed throughout the school for example at the ends of corridors, outside classrooms and outside access doors. Pupils have access to hand washing stations in classrooms. All students on the 3 sites must wash their hands immediately upon arrival into the classrooms.

What happens if there is a positive case?

If anyone within the school community has a positive test result the Executive Headteacher will inform the CEO of Nexus Academy Trust. It is the CEO who is responsible for closing the school taking the guidance of Public England. The school will act immediately upon this advice and communicate to families as soon as is reasonably possible.

Do all children need to return in September?

It is the Governments view that all schools are safe for children to return to school in September. Where a child has medical advice seen by school to continue shielding a covid-19 related code will be put into their registration records. These pupils will receive an online offer.

How are policies and procedures updated?

The school follows the guidance set by the DFE / Government. Our risk assessments are reviewed weekly unless a new Government update is released.

Updated 1st September 2020.