



## Full opening of schools: a decision-making framework for Trust Boards

*The Confederation of School Trusts (CST) is the national organisation and sector body for academy and multi-academy trusts. We believe that strong and resilient governance and decision-making are essential to help schools and trusts deal with the current challenging circumstances. We have updated our decision-making framework to reflect the [DfE guidance on the full opening of schools in the Autumn 2020](#).*

*The framework outlines a series of strategic actions for trust boards to take before decisions can be made about the full opening of schools in September in the safest possible way. It does not include all possible actions that could or should be taken in the specific context of your trust or your group of schools. It is intended to be a strategic framework to guide decision-making and we have therefore attempted to be concise.*

*The sections in the framework could be used as your board agenda. In each case, risks and actions to mitigate risks should be identified and recorded formally by the trust board. This is because the trust board is the responsible body, legal entity and employer.*

*Some of the actions identified in this framework may be delegated to school-level and/or your scheme of delegation may need to be amended for a specified period to give delegations or withdraw delegations, depending on your risk assessment and risk tolerances.*

*If you follow the **system of controls** set out in annex A of this guidance, you will effectively reduce risks in the school or groups of schools and create an inherently safer environment. CST has separately commissioned Browne Jacobson to provide clarity on [directors' liabilities](#).*

*The strategic job now is to ensure a balance of risk – using the system of controls to prevent infection alongside ensuring pupils have a broad and ambitious curriculum.*

*We will keep this framework up to date as the DfE publishes additional guidance.*

## Decisions and actions to take before opening Nunthorpe Primary in September

|                                 | Areas to consider  | Actions  |
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| <p><b>Health and safety</b></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review health and safety risk assessments ensuring these are based on the Public Health System of Nine Controls in the <a href="#">DfE guidance</a> summarised in <b>annex A</b> below. More information about health and safety risk assessments is set out in annex A of the DfE guidance. Consider using <a href="#">HSE managing risks and risk templates</a>.</li> <li>Ensure consultation has taken place with all staff and their representatives in line with <a href="#">HSE requirements</a></li> <li>Ensure statutory site checks are carried out, if required (DfE guidance <a href="#">here</a>. Additional advice on safely reoccupying buildings can be found in the Chartered Institute of Building Services Engineers' guidance on <a href="#">emerging from lockdown</a>)</li> <li>Commission cleaning of all sites using <a href="#">guidance on cleaning non-health care settings</a></li> <li>Review arrangements to ensure good ventilation. Advice on this can be found in Health and Safety Executive guidance on <a href="#">air conditioning and ventilation during the coronavirus outbreak</a></li> <li>Agree a policy and procedures should a child or adult fall ill with the coronavirus on site, fall ill having recently been on site and/or if a number of people fall ill related to a particular site (use DfE guidance on the system of controls, response to any infection points 7-9 <a href="#">here</a> and guidance on testing <a href="#">here</a>)</li> <li>Ensure there is a critical path decision making process/ contingency plan in case of the need for further closures, or</li> </ul> | <p>The Nine Controls are all addressed in our Risk Assessment and in our guidance for staff. Risks will be mitigated if routines are followed.</p> <p>Appendix 1</p> <p>Staff have been surveyed through an online questionnaire.</p> <p>Caretaker to carry out checks (or arrange for them to be done) as per DfE guidance and SLT to ensure that these are adhered to.</p> <p>The caretaker and cleaners are working on a timetable to provide enhanced cleaning throughout the day and when children leave.</p> <p>New cleaning team have received training on Monday 13<sup>th</sup> July.</p> <p>Windows will be open to ensure good ventilation, when the outside weather/ temperature allows.</p> <p>Included on Risk Assessment. If staff fall ill they will be directed towards the NHS Test &amp; Trace system and told to isolate. The local health protection team will be informed. Pupils will be isolated in school until they are collected. Parents will be informed of their responsibilities regarding notifying authorities, isolating and tracing contacts.</p> <p>Appendix 3 – How to advise people</p> <p>If we need to close, pupils will access work via Microsoft Teams.</p> |

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|                           | <p>scaling back operations, to address local infections (local lockdown guidance can be found <a href="#">here</a>)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assess transport-related health and safety risks and how these can be mitigated</li> </ul>  | <p>Majority of our pupils either walk to school or come in a private car. Few, if any, use a public bus.</p> <p>Year 6 can walk to and school independently</p>   |
| <b>Pupils and parents</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assess parental confidence and ensure processes are in place to communicate clear and consistent expectations around school attendance to families throughout the summer ahead of the new school year</li> <li>Ensure appropriate support and arrangements are in place for pupils with EHC plans</li> <li>Ensure that pupils most at risk of disengagement/most in need of additional support are identified and support is in place</li> <li>Audit wider family services supporting mental health, bereavement, domestic violence etc in order to be able to signpost/refer families where required (Public Health England has published <a href="#">guidance on supporting children and young people’s mental health</a>, <a href="#">Every Mind Matters</a> and <a href="#">advice for groups with specific mental health needs</a>)</li> </ul> | <p>On our instructions for parents it states that attendance is compulsory in all but a few exceptional cases. We will work with families who struggle to return to school.</p> <p>EHC plans have been updated.</p> <p>This will be addressed with individual support plans in September following the completion of a vulnerability indicator.</p> <p>Monthly Safeguarding Audit with our EHP and advice to follow on the website.</p> |
| <b>Workforce and HR</b>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review your trust’s workforce audit. The clinically extremely vulnerable list will be paused on 1st August. Some people on this list will remain under the care of their doctor or specialist and may be advised not to return to work. Assess how many staff remain in this much smaller group and the impact on the workforce – CST is seeking further clarification on clinical vulnerability</li> <li>Assess how many staff may be at increased risk due to protected characteristics and disparities in outcomes. Consider using an Equalities Impact Assessment. CST will ask Stone King to update advice on this issue</li> </ul>  | <p>Staff survey.</p> <p>HR meetings have taken place, to support individual circumstances.</p> <p>We don’t have any staff in either of the vulnerable groups.</p>   |

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|  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In light of this assessment, scrutinise how staff will be deployed</li> <li>• If necessary and applicable in your circumstances, consider using longer assignments with supply teachers and agree a minimum number of hours across the academic year</li> <li>• Determine whether staff training is required prior to the full return of pupils in September</li> <li>• Consider what arrangements might be put in place for staff wellbeing</li> </ul><br><ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure designated safeguarding leads (and deputies) are provided with more time, especially in the first few weeks of term, to help them provide support to staff and children regarding any new safeguarding and welfare concerns and the handling of referrals to children social care and other agencies where these are appropriate</li> </ul> | <p>In order to reopen to all pupils safely on 1<sup>st</sup> September. The following training has been completed:</p> <p>All staff have been involved in the development of documents to ensure a safe return to school, including PPE training and guidance, prior to opening.</p> <p>All staff groups have been represented at longer planning meetings. Daily briefings have provided reassurance to staff during the planning stages and allowed them to contribute to the comprehensive plans for reopening.</p> <p>Formal staff training taking place at a PD day on 17<sup>th</sup> July to share risk assessments, guidelines for staff and CST planning tool which covers training around the use of PPE. All staff and trainees for September 2020 will be in attendance. This will be revisited at the end of the summer break prior to reopening on September 1<sup>st</sup> (in agreement with staff).</p> <p>Medical training for children with diabetes has been completed on 10<sup>th</sup> July 2020, including the use of PPE.</p> <p>Team Leaders monitor the team; HT to monitor Team Leaders. All staff are represented in the planning stages of re-opening. Good communication with timely feedback to alleviate anxiety. Access to counselling for staff if required.</p> <p>HT and DHT to complete as necessary.</p> |
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| <p><b>Curriculum and timetabling</b></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Scrutinise the plans for identifying the most important missed knowledge and how this will be covered, within a broad curriculum in all subjects</li> <li>• Ensure the curriculum remains broad and ambitious and that all pupils continue to be taught a wide range of subjects</li> <li>• Ensure that there is a staffing plan and timetable for each school, including any special arrangements where necessary and practicable e.g. staggered starting and ending times of the school day, drop off and collection and/or break and lunch arrangements</li> <li>• Scrutinise the plan for spending the trust's allocation of tuition funding and ensure curriculum alignment and relevant training is in place (Education Endowment Foundation guidance can be found <a href="#">here</a>)</li> <li>• Scrutinise plans for how remote education will be offered where a class, group or small number of pupils need to self-isolate, or where there is a local lockdown (online learning resources <a href="#">here</a>, Oak National Academy <a href="#">here</a>, technology support <a href="#">here</a>, guidance for parents on supporting home learning <a href="#">here</a>, guidance for parents of children with SEND to support home learning <a href="#">here</a> and EEF best evidence in remote learning can be found <a href="#">here</a> - there is also a <a href="#">summary</a> of findings and a <a href="#">toolkit</a> to support home learning. DfE has also published case studies using various methods to <a href="#">adapt the curriculum for remote education</a> to best meet the needs of pupils and <a href="#">adapt teaching practice for remote education</a> and <a href="#">keep pupils engaged</a></li> <li>• Review the approach to physical activity within the school day, ensuring pupils remain in consistent groups where possible, sports equipment is thoroughly cleaned between each use, contact sports are avoided and outdoor sports</li> </ul> | <p>Teachers are moving up with their class from Nursery to Y3 to aid transition. Focus on reading and phonics in early years as part of catch-up plan. Y4-6 will do detailed transition meetings.</p> <p>The curriculum will remain broad and balanced, with teachers addressing missed knowledge.</p> <p>As per our reopening guidance for staff and parent letter.</p> <p>Use vulnerability indicator to ascertain pupils most in need.</p> <p>All pupils have Teams accounts. Remote education plans will be produced on an individual basis.</p> <p>PE will be taking place in accordance with government guidelines (i.e. equipment will be cleaned between groups, outdoor activity where possible, avoidance of contact sports).</p> |
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|                                | <p>are prioritised where possible, and large indoor spaces used where not, maximising distancing between pupils and paying attention to cleaning and hygiene.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review your before and after-school provision and plan whether/ how to restart these in the autumn term. And ensure where parents are using external providers, that the school or trust has a plan in place to and consider how such provision will work alongside their wider protective measures, including keeping children within their year groups or bubbles where possible.</li> </ul>   | <p>Breakfast/ Afterschool Club will be held in the hall.<br/>Children will work in consistent groups and separated, where possible, from other groups.<br/>Breakfast won't involve any cooking or preparation.<br/>Children will use toilets associated with their own year groups.</p>                 |
| <b>Policies and procedures</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review at least the following policies and procedures and if you have addendums to policies consider whether these need to be amended or removed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Health and safety</li> <li>Child protection and safeguarding (safeguarding and remote education <a href="#">here</a>)</li> <li>Attendance</li> <li>Behaviour</li> <li>Exclusions</li> <li>Pastoral/Welfare</li> </ul> </li> <li>Consider whether enhanced safeguarding and welfare provision needs to be put in place – plan for the potential increase in disclosures and welfare needs including mental health</li> <li>Amend procedures for fire drills</li> <li>Assess whether any other trust and/or school-based policies and procedures need to be reviewed and amended</li> <li>Consider whether any delegations in your scheme of delegation need to be amended or stood down</li> </ul> | <p>All policies have been reviewed for September re-opening.</p> <p>ELSA time has been increased.<br/>Specific time to teach good mental health through planned lessons.</p> <p>Revert back to normal fire drills as groups don't mix.<br/>Use of Teams to meet with staff from other Trust schools</p> |
| <b>School kitchens, supply</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Scrutinise plans to reopen school kitchens and compliance with the <a href="#">guidance for food businesses</a> on COVID-19</li> </ul>   | <p>We will work with Mellors to reactivate school lunches.</p>  |

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| <b>chains and contracts</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reactivate and amend catering and/or cleaning contracts, including bringing staff out of furlough where necessary if this has not already been done</li> <li>• Reactivate supply chains if this has not already been done</li> <li>• Ensure there is free school meals provision over the summer (see DfE’s summer food programme)</li> <li>• Check suppliers know and understand the system of controls and hygiene arrangements</li> <li>• Agree approach to any scheduled or ongoing building works in relation to safety</li> </ul>  | <p>Vouchers have been issued.</p> <p>Checked with suppliers</p> <p>Normal H&amp;S regs apply, following Covid19 restrictions.</p> |
| <b>Communications</b>       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Plan and agree communications to staff, including but not limited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Arrangements for keeping staff and pupils safe</li> <li>- Staff deployment and attendance expectations</li> <li>- Curriculum and timetabling</li> <li>- Workload and wellbeing</li> <li>- Training</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Plan and agree communications to parents/carers, including but not limited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Attendance expectations</li> <li>- Uniform expectations</li> <li>- The curriculum</li> <li>- Transport</li> <li>- Dropping off and picking up</li> <li>- Parents/ carers visiting the school</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Agree the frequency of communications with parents or delegate to school-level</li> </ul> | <p>Guidance for Staff/ Guidance for Parents/ Training will cover all aspects.</p>   |

## Decisions and actions to manage the financial and educational impacts and regulatory and accountability environments

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| <b>Financial impacts</b>      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure additional cost pressures due to COVID-19 have been identified and an end-of-year forecast which factors them in has been produced for the board</li> <li>• Assess whether schools in the trust are eligible for financial support (DFE has published <a href="#">guidance</a> on the financial support schools and trusts will receive to reimburse them for exceptional costs incurred during COVID-19. These relate to increased premises-related costs; support for free school meals for eligible children who are not attending school and where those costs are not covered by the FSM national voucher scheme and additional cleaning costs)</li> <li>• Assess impact on reserves and review reserves policy</li> <li>• Assess impact on three-year financial strategy</li> <li>• Explore additional sources of income</li> <li>• Review policy and procedures related to fraud (see <a href="#">Fraud Control in Emergency Management: COVID-19 UK government guide</a>)</li> </ul> | <p>COVID –19 expenditure identified by Senior Office manager and Trust Finance officer</p> <p>Trust Finance officer SJH to share</p> |
| <b>Educational impacts</b>    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Keep educational impacts under review – ensure a trust-wide plan is in place to assess educational impacts, specifically gaps in learning, and that the plans address these in the short and medium term (see curriculum section above)</li> </ul>  | <p>Vulnerability Indicator Tool</p>  |
| <b>Regulatory environment</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review the new regulatory requirements in the <a href="#">Academies Financial Handbook</a> which comes into place in September 2020 (summarised in <b>annex B</b> below)</li> <li>• Agree a plan for internal scrutiny (CST will offer further advice on this)</li> </ul>   | <p>This has been shared with Trustees</p> <p>This is being reviewed by Trustees</p>  |



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|                                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Agree the arrangements for external audit and associated returns - ESFA has confirmed that the current timetable should remain</li> <li>• Keep under review the statutory timescales for returns that have been paused or deferred - ESFA published <a href="#">guidance</a> on reducing burdens which includes a full list of returns that have been cancelled, paused or deferred</li> </ul>  | <p>Already agreed with Accountants</p> <p>S Hall to monitor and advise</p> |
| <b>Accountability environment</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review the arrangements for school and trust accountability and the performance management policy in the light of DfE <a href="#">guidance</a> on how school and trust external accountability will be handled this year. (Schools and trusts will not be held to account based on exams and assessment data from summer 2020 and data will not be used by others, such as Ofsted and local authorities, to hold schools and trusts to account). We await clarification on 2021.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> </ul>                        |

## Annex A: The Public Health System of Controls

*The system of nine controls is the set of actions schools MUST take, grouped into ‘prevention’ and ‘response to any infection.’*

*There is a lot of detailed guidance about the system of controls including how to group children, measures within the classroom, measures elsewhere and measures for arriving at and leaving school. Schools must work through the system of controls, adopting measures in a way that addresses the risk identified in their assessment, works for their school, and allows you to deliver a broad and balanced curriculum. If you follow the guidance set out here, you will effectively reduce risks in the school or groups of schools and create an inherently safer environment.*

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| <p><b>A.<br/>Prevention</b></p>                | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>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 school</li> <li>2) clean hands thoroughly more often than usual</li> <li>3) ensure good respiratory hygiene by promoting the ‘catch it, bin it, kill it’ approach</li> <li>4) introduce enhanced cleaning, including cleaning frequently touched surfaces often, using standard products such as detergents and bleach</li> <li>5) minimise contact between individuals and maintain social distancing wherever possible</li> <li>6) where necessary, wear appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE)</li> </ol> <p>Numbers 1 to 4 must be in place in all schools, all the time.<br/>           Number 5 must be properly considered and schools must put in place measures that suit their particular circumstances (see further detail in the guidance)<br/>           Number 6 applies in specific circumstances</p> |
| <p><b>B.<br/>Response to any infection</b></p> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>7) engage with the NHS Test and Trace process</li> <li>8) manage confirmed cases of coronavirus (COVID-19) amongst the school community</li> <li>9) contain any outbreak by following local health protection team advice</li> </ol> <p>Numbers 7 to 9 must be followed in every case where they are relevant</p>   |

## Annex B: Main Changes to the Academies Financial Handbook 2020

The main changes to the Academies Financial Handbook 2020, are:

- **Governance:** Further information on governance arrangements including trustees' responsibility to maintain the trust as a going concern [1.14, 2.5 and 2.8], confirmation that members must not be employees or occupy unpaid staff roles [1.4], that members must remain informed about trust business [1.8] and that trusts must appoint a clerk to the board [1.40]. Also clarifying that trusts must keep their register of interests up to date [5.46].
- **Executive team:** Confirmation that both the accounting officer and chief financial officer (CFO) should be employees, and a requirement for ESFA approval if, exceptionally, they are not [1.26 and 1.36]. Also encouraging larger trusts to consider relevant accountancy qualifications for their CFO, and for all CFOs to maintain professional development [1.37 and 1.38].
- **General controls and transparency:** Updated clarifications including maintenance of a fixed asset register [2.7], termly review of pupil number projections [2.12], use of integrated curriculum and financial planning [2.13], avoidance of overdrafts [2.24], publication of information about high pay [2.32] and whistleblowing [2.44], confirmation that the trust's funds must not be used to purchase alcohol [2.35], board and committee responsibilities for risk management [2.38, and 3.6 to 3.8] and completion of the School resource management self-assessment tool [6.8].
- **Internal scrutiny:** Updated text including clarification that internal scrutiny covers both financial and non-financial controls [3.1], removal of the option for internal audit to be performed by the external auditor [3.17 and 3.20] and confirmation that trusts can use additional individuals or organisations to support internal scrutiny where specialist nonfinancial knowledge is required [3.18 and 3.23].
- **Annual accounts:** More on the audit and risk committee's role in relation to external audit [4.17].