

Morris Education Trust (MET)

Coronavirus Statement of Principles

Overview

C-19 poses the greatest health challenge to our generation; over the past few months we have seen the importance of schools and education in supporting our children, particularly those who have the least in life. As we begin to see the return of face-to-face schooling, the Morris Education Trust wants to ensure the safety and well-being of students and staff. Our abiding principle is 'safety first'. It is the trust and its trustees who have the legal liabilities and will therefore take all necessary decisions to ensure 'safety first'.

To this end we have introduced this statement of principles to sit over all our existing policies and to ensure we have temporarily adjusted our practices and procedures to create and sustain a new way of working that is 'safety first'.

Policies

- The trust will update its Health & Safety procedures and policies to ensure it complies with the HSE recommendations on keeping employees safe
- Detailed Risk Assessments (RAs) for each school will be maintained and used to identify and address risk; this document should be read in conjunction with those RAs
- Personnel policies already have recognition of the 'discretionary' and our Principals will follow the 'safety first' principle when making discretionary decisions; we will abandon the use of the Bradford Factor for the foreseeable future
- Our Safeguarding policy has an additional statement to reflect the new needs posed by this crisis and we will exert higher levels of vigilance to keep children safe
- Our Code of Conduct (including Safeguarding measures) and Acceptable Use of IT will be updated to reflect home-working and the need for student contact

Maintenance of Social Distancing

Schools are busy places where there is a lot of routine close-to-close contact. This has to change and must be eradicated whilst we adhere to 'social distancing'. Therefore:

- The trust will ensure its sites are reasonably adjusted and signposted to enable all users to follow 'social distancing'
- Classrooms will be altered so there are fewer desks and be capacity-capped (depending on size of room)
- Staff should continue to use online/virtual resources for routine meetings
- Smaller offices must not be used for meetings and larger ones must only be used in a way that allows 'social distancing' to be upheld
- If any individual feels that their safety has been threatened they must report this through the existing line management structures and use, if necessary, the trust's Whistleblowing Policy
- The above list is not exhaustive and responses will be contextualised in the school's Risk Assessment

Hygiene

The trust will ensure adequate supplies of all essential cleaning equipment that enables children and adults to maintain the necessary standards of hygiene (i.e. regular and thorough hand-washing for a minimum of 20 seconds). There will be additional cleaning of the buildings and classrooms to ensure higher standards of cleanliness. All members of the trust (children and adults alike) have a personal responsibility to maintain the new standards of hygiene and these will be promoted across the schools and sites.

PPE

The guidance from the Government is that PPE is not required in schools; however we have decided that in order to ensure the safety of staff, the trust will source adequate supplies of PPE and ensure these are with staff for whom it is necessary and recommended. There will be training for anyone who is required to use PPE.

Behaviour

Our Behaviour Policies already have the capacity to relate to any new behaviours that contravene our principle of 'safety first'. Any student who puts another student or member of staff at greater risk of infection will be dealt with severely. Our schools and staff will promote and train students on the new standards of social distancing and 'safety first'.

Visitors

Increasing face-to-face support and re-introducing students into school is not a return to normality. Until we identify, visitors will be actively discouraged from coming to school. Any parental meetings must take place online/virtually. If the parent is digitally-disadvantaged, we will make an exception and permit an onsite visit, but social-distancing and hygiene will be expected at all times.

Roles and responsibilities

It is the responsibility of all employees to uphold the principle of 'safety first' and play an active role in maintaining our standards and expectations during the return to schooling. Those with specific leadership or management responsibilities have an additional responsibility to ensure their specific areas or teams follow the expected principles and practices and to monitor and evaluate regularly.

Review

This statement will be subject to fortnightly review and amendment as required. The CEO will report on its maintenance at the monthly Trust Board meeting. Principals will provide weekly updates to the CEO and COO and ensure any breaches of 'safety first' are reported

immediately. The trust's own 'COBRA' will continue to meet virtually to review and assess the position of our schools and provision.