



# Priory School

## Respiratory illness season including Critical staff absence procedures

Version	Authorised	Approval Date	Effective Date	Review Date
1	FGB	23.3.26	23.3.26	Spring term 2028

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

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Date:

## Contents:

Statement of Intent 3

1	Legal Framework	4
2	Roles and responsibilities	4
3	Remaining open with high staff absences	4
4	School closure	5
5	Continuation of education	5
6	Monitoring and review	6

## Statement of Intent

It is the aim of Priory School to ensure that the school and its community are well prepared for the winter illness season. It is the intention to keep the school open during times of significant staff shortages due to illness. However, considering the pandemic, and the increased likelihood of new viruses on staff absence we need to ensure that we have a robust plan to cope with severe staff shortages.

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Make the appropriate procedures clear, in relation to operating the school during severe staff shortages.
- Make clear the grounds for a school closure due to severe staff shortages.
- Advise and inform staff and parents of the systems and procedures in place in the event of a school closure due to severe staff shortages

## 1. Legal Framework

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974
- The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999
- The Education (School Premises) Regulations 1999
- DFE emergency planning and response for education, childcare and children's social care settings

## 2. Roles and responsibilities

The headteacher is responsible for:

- Deciding whether the school will close or partially close.
- Informing parents and staff of any closure.
- Completing the infection readiness checklist
- Ensuring the school is fully stocked of cleaning equipment.
- Reviewing this policy on an **annual** basis.
- Ensuring that staff teach children respiratory hygiene, using e-bug resources.
- Communicate to parents the importance of respiratory hygiene.

The site manager is responsible for:

- Ensuring all cleaning equipment is maintained and stored properly, notifying the headteacher of any damages.
- Ensuring well stocked cleaning products in line with the check list.
- Ensuring that the cleaning of site is well managed.

Staff members are responsible for:

- Adhering to the requirements of this policy.
- Reporting any concerns relevant to this policy to the headteacher.
- The safety of pupils, colleagues, and themselves.
- Teaching children about respiratory health and hand hygiene

Parents are responsible for:

- Parents are responsible for supporting infection control systems
- Helping their children understand respiratory hygiene and hand hygiene
- Keep children off school if they have symptoms and a high temperature
- Collecting their children when the school needs to close.
- Keeping all their contact and medical information up-to-date.

Pupils are responsible for:

- Following infection control measures – hand washing, catch it, kill it, bin it.
- Following the Behaviour Policy at all times.

### 3. Remaining open with high staff absences

When deciding whether the school will remain open, risks will be assessed in line with the appropriate risk assessment.

Where the school is facing a severe shortage of staff the headteacher and governing board will consider the following options in the first instance:

- Temporarily mixing groups of pupils who would otherwise be educated separately.
- Temporarily relaxing staff:pupil ratios to allow for classes to be merged.
- Special leave requests will be put on hold and any already agreed will be reviewed.
- Having teaching staff educate on-site to enable key worker and vulnerable groups to remain in school.
- Short term partial or whole school closures will result in home learning being added to the school website for children to access at home.
- Where staffing capacity allows, the school may use remote platforms such as Microsoft Teams to support learning.
- Making use of agency workers and other temporary staff where it is possible and where supply staff are available as well as within our budget requirements.
- Working with the LA, where possible, to identify appropriate alternate provision.

Where severe staff shortages prevent the safe continuation of extracurricular activities, the activities will be postponed until further notice. Where severe staff shortages are present the school will generally not cover extracurricular activities with other staff.

During periods of staff shortage, the headteacher and governing body will consider implementing adjustments to working arrangements, e.g. changing the way staff are deployed, to reduce the impact on the workload of individual staff members.

All decisions taken during periods of significant staff absence will prioritise safeguarding and pupil welfare. Where staffing levels fall, risk assessments will be reviewed dynamically, and any adjustments to groupings, ratios, or routines will only be implemented where the school is satisfied that pupils can be supervised safely and their needs met appropriately

### 4. School closure

Where control measures to cover staff absence, e.g. those outlined within the 'Workforce' section of this policy, are not possible, or are not sufficient to manage the levels of staff absence, the school will move to partial closure, where vulnerable pupils and children of critical workers will be educated on site by remaining staff – other pupils will be sent home and their education managed in line with the remote learning policy.

### 5 Continuation of education

The school is committed to ensuring the continuation of education even in the event that the school must close, either partially or fully, and remote education will be provided for pupils where such closure occurs in line with the Remote Education Policy.

When considering school closure, the headteacher and governing body will consider whether it is possible to continue educating vulnerable pupils and children of critical

workers on site. These pupils will **be given priority** whenever restrictions to attendance are implemented in response to an emergency situation.

We will hold on record a list for each year group of all children whose parents are critical workers and those who have an EHCP or are vulnerable. The list will be ranked so that the most in need of continuation of education are at the top of the list to give senior staff quick and clear guidance on who will be invited to school.

## 5. Monitoring and Review

This policy will be reviewed at least annually by the governing board. The next scheduled review date for this policy January 2028.

### Appendix: Planning for cover – use as a guide only, will depend on numbers of children in school, types of need.

Any temporary relaxation of supervision ratios will be informed by risk assessment, pupil need, and staff experience. Ratios will only be relaxed where the Headteacher is satisfied that supervision remains safe and appropriate, and such arrangements will be kept under continual review.

#### Lunch time cover

Where possible we will cover lunch duties through using all available staff, inclusion team, SLT, admin, site, lunch time volunteers and catering. Where we cannot cover, we will close areas of the playground to reduce the number of supervision requirements. The adventure playground must be the first area to close when staffing is an issue.

To safely supervise pupils on the playground our ratios will need to be relaxed but must not exceed:

Reception: relaxed to 1:30

KS1: relaxed to 1:45 (3 members of staff on KS1 playground)

KS2: relaxed to 1:45 (8 members of staff supervising lunch time)

#### Teaching and Learning Assistants to be covered

Reception TLAs – minimum TLA requirement is 2

Year 1 TLAs – minimum TLA requirement is 2

Year 2 TLAs – Minimum TLA requirements is 2

KS2 –

Year 3 – 1 TLA

Year 4 – 2 TLAs

Year 5 – 1 TLA

Year 6 – 1 TLA

#### Orchard

All pupils will stay in Orchard to reduce the need for additional supervision around the school and in the canteen. Lunch to be brought over.

Minimum TLA requirements: 8