

**Ambitious About Autism**  
**Risk Assessment – Coronavirus (2019-NCov)**  
**Risk Assessment for PNC / TreeHouse School**  
**The Pears National Centre for Autism Education, Woodside Ave, London N10 3JA**

## **Definitions**

“AaA” means Ambitious About Autism and Ambitious About Autism Schools Trust.

## **Clarifications**

The purpose of this Risk Assessment is to outline risks associated with the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as the actions AaA is taking to manage these risks. This risk assessment covers a specific AaA setting – Pears National Centre / TreeHouse School - and any person entering that setting, regardless of whether they are a pupil, parent or guardian, member of staff, volunteer, partner, visitor or contractor.

Separate risk assessments have been drawn up for specific groups of staff and pupils. This risk assessment is different in the sense that it is intended to cover the access to and generally understood activities within a particular setting or location.

AaA recognises that some staff are classified as particularly vulnerable. Where appropriate and in accordance with government guidance, separate, individual risk assessment and subsequent adjustments will be made for these staff.

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**THIS RISK ASSESSMENT MUST BE READ IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE GENERIC ‘SCHOOL AND COLLEGE STAFF’ RISK ASSESSMENT**

**(\*Please see footnote on final page of this document)**

**THIS RISK ASSESSMENT IS REVIEWED ON A MONTHLY BASIS AND WILL CAPTURE ANY ADDITIONAL CONTROL MEASURES DEEMED NECESSARY AS THEY ARISE.**

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## 1.0 Background

A coronavirus is a type of virus. As a group, coronaviruses are common across the world. Typical symptoms include fever and a cough that may progress to a severe pneumonia causing shortness of breath and breathing difficulties.

Generally, coronavirus can cause more severe symptoms in people with weakened immune systems, older people, and those with long-term conditions like diabetes, cancer, and chronic lung disease.

Viruses constantly change through mutation, and so the emergence of new variants is an expected occurrence and not in itself a cause for concern; SARS-CoV-2 is no exception. A diversification of SARS-CoV-2 due to evolution and adaptation processes has been observed globally.

While most emerging mutations will not have a significant impact on the spread of the virus, some mutations or combinations of mutations may provide the virus with a selective advantage, such as increased transmissibility or the ability to evade the host immune response. In such cases, these variants could increase the risk to human health and are variants of concern. AaA will continue to monitor and react to all new variants of the coronavirus and implement specific controls measures where necessary.

Routine lateral flow testing is carried out at home by any staff working in our settings and continues as per government guidelines. A [separate risk assessment](#) is in place for testing.

On 26 November 2021, WHO designated the variant B.1.1.529 (Omicron) a variant of concern on the advice of WHO's Technical Advisory Group. This decision was based on the evidence presented to the TAG-VE that Omicron has several mutations that may have an impact on how it behaves, for example, on how easily it spreads or the severity of illness it causes.

EU's public health agency warned that Omicron could cause more than half of all new COVID-19 infections in Europe within the next few months, evidence was emerging, however, that vaccines still appear to offer protection against serious illness.

From Monday 17 January 2022, people with COVID-19 in England can end their self-isolation after 5 full days, as long as they test negative on day 5 and day 6.

It is crucial that people isolating with COVID-19 wait until they have received 2 negative rapid lateral flow tests on 2 consecutive days to reduce the chance of still being infectious.

The first test must be taken no earlier than day 5 of the self-isolation period, and the second must be taken the following day. If an individual is positive on day 5, then a negative test is required on day 6 and day 7 to release from isolation.

It is essential that 2 negative rapid lateral flow tests are taken on consecutive days and reported before individuals return to their job or education, if leaving self-isolation earlier than the full 10-day period.

You will be contacted directly and told to isolate by the Track and Trace service and must inform the relevant Head or ELT member immediately if you are in this situation.

All eligible staff and students aged 12 and over are strongly encouraged to take up the offer of the vaccine, including boosters, if they have not already done so. Vaccines are the best way we can protect our pupils/learners and each other against COVID-19. They help protect young people and adults, and benefit those around them.

Face coverings must now be worn again in communal areas in all settings by staff, visitors and pupils/learners aged 11 and above, unless they are exempt.

## **2.0 Latest Information**

### **General NHS / PHE / GOV COVID-19 Guidance**

[GOV.UK COVID-19 List of Guidance](#)

[NHS England – About COVID-19](#)

### **NHS COVID-19 Symptoms**

[List of COVID-19 Symptoms](#)

### **NHS COVID-19 Home testing guidance**

[Report a COVID-19 rapid lateral flow test result - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

[COVID-19 home test: step-by-step guide \(adults and children\) - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

[Get a free PCR test to check if you have coronavirus \(COVID-19\) - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

## Risk Assessment

Activity / Area Hazard Description	Risk Identified	Persons at Risk	Control Measures (Mitigating actions and measures taken by AaA)
Main Entrance	Risk of contracting COVID-19 - Overcrowding in entrance area	Staff, pupils, visitors	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Primary pupils to use primary entrance and exit.</li> <li>2) Staff to monitor the pupils' arrival and meet them at the bus if possible.</li> <li>3) Pupils and staff to wash or sanitise their hands as soon as they enter the school.</li> <li>4) All charity staff must use the front entrance only for entering and leaving the building.</li> <li>5) Non-school staff should avoid walking through the school and where possible avoid arriving and leaving at the same times as pupils.</li> <li>6) Pupils, parents, carers or any other visitors may not enter the education or childcare setting if they are displaying any symptoms of COVID-19 (following the <a href="#">COVID-19: guidance for households with possible coronavirus infection</a>).</li> <li>7) Only one parent may accompany their child into the education or childcare setting.</li> <li>8) Parents and pupils to be informed of their allocated drop-off and collection times and the process for doing so, including protocols for minimising adult to adult contact (for example, which entrance to use).</li> <li>9) Make clear to parents that they cannot gather at entrance gates, doors, or enter the site (unless they have a pre-arranged appointment, which should be conducted safely).</li> <li>10) Face coverings must be worn in communal areas in all settings by staff, visitors and pupils/learner in year 7 and above, unless they are exempt</li> </ol>
Reception Area	Risk of contracting COVID-19 - overcrowding	Staff, pupils, visitors	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Posters to remind visitors not to enter the building if have any symptoms of COVID-19.</li> <li>2) Hand Sanitiser dispensers to be used by all entering the area.</li> <li>3) All chairs removed from this area.</li> <li>4) Staff of our Schools and colleges to always wear face coverings in communal areas.</li> </ol>
Visitor Waiting Area	Risk of contracting COVID-19 - overcrowding	Staff, pupils, visitors	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Visitors are restricted to those that are critical and agreed by a Senior Manager and must be able to produce evidence of a negative LFT result taken within 48 hours of the visit.</li> </ol>

Office Based Work	Risk of contracting COVID-19 from staff or others within the office environment	<p>Staff, volunteers, visitors, pupils</p> <p><i>*Pupils included because they do sometimes enter the charity office space.</i></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Ensure that all staff actively subscribe to the principles of handwashing / cleanliness / appropriate use and application of PPE / use of common resources / use of office accommodation.</li> <li>2) AaA have developed compulsory training resources for staff to communicate and make clear these principles and expectations.</li> <li>3) Display up-to-date posters encouraging regular and proper handwashing.</li> <li>4) Hand sanitiser, antibacterial wipes and disinfectant spray located in each room in use.</li> <li>5) All staff are being issued with laptops to enable them to work from home where at all possible. Staff should only carry out work-related computer-based work on these computers for the purposes of GDPR.</li> <li>6) Cleaners are based on site and follow a strict cleaning regime, with attention to frequently touched surfaces.</li> <li>7) Regular communication from ELT / senior management to remind staff and to reinforce the importance of good practice.</li> <li>8) Strongly encourage the continued policy of working from home where possible and to avoid coming into the office environment unless strictly necessary.</li> <li>9) Windows will be left open during the day to provide good ventilation</li> <li>10) Visitors are restricted to those that are critical and agreed by a Senior Manager and must be able to produce evidence of a negative LFT result taken within 48 hours of the visit.</li> <li>11) Staff of our Schools and colleges to wear face coverings in communal areas such as corridors, toilets, etc. Please refer to the Coronavirus information hub, face coverings information for staff page for further information.</li> </ol>
Pupils entering first floor office area	Risk of contracting COVID-19 from staff or others within the office environment	<p>Pupils</p> <p><i>*Pupils included because they do sometimes enter the charity office space.</i></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Strongly encourage and support school staff to not allow pupils to enter the space if possible.</li> <li>2) Pupils will be told they cannot wander around school</li> </ol>

Meeting Rooms	Risk of contracting COVID-19 from staff or others within the office environment	Staff	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Hand sanitiser, antibacterial wipes and disinfectant spray located in each room in use.</li> <li>2) Staff should not share resources including headsets, phones, stationary, where possible.</li> </ol>
Training Rooms	Risk of contracting COVID-19 from staff or others within our training rooms	Staff, visitors	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Meetings to be held via MS Teams where possible.</li> <li>2) Hand sanitiser, antibacterial wipes and disinfectant spray located in each room.</li> </ol>
THS Shop	Risk of contracting COVID-19 - number of staff and pupils	Teaching staff, pupils, Facilities & Estates staff	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) The THS Shop will be closed, and this will be reviewed during the new academic year</li> </ol>
Primary Classrooms	Risk of contracting COVID-19 - number of staff and pupils	Teaching staff, pupils, Facilities & Estates staff	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Staff to carry wipes and gloves to clean toys following use</li> <li>2) Discourage sharing of toys and equipment</li> <li>3) Cover interactive area in shared space</li> <li>4) Hand washing part of timetable</li> <li>5) Staff to use PPE if doing personal care with a pupil</li> <li>6) Staff to wear optional face covering if working with pupil who requires close contact</li> <li>7) Primary Pupils with underlying health conditions must be individually risk-assessed and should only be in school if the risk assessment deems it safe for them to be in school.</li> <li>8) Extremely vulnerable pupils should shield at home until such time as government guidance advises their return to school.</li> <li>9) Use of walkies to get support when required.</li> <li>10) Pupils will have all lessons in one classroom and eat their packed lunch within the same room</li> <li>11) Face coverings are no longer required to be worn by staff &amp; pupils in classrooms.</li> <li>12) CO2 detectors have been installed in all classrooms.</li> </ol>

Primary toilets	Risk of contracting COVID-19 - Overcrowding Contamination	Teaching staff, pupils, Facilities & Estates staff	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Pupils to be given staggered breaks.</li> <li>2) Specify a max user limit for toilets.</li> <li>3) Encourage hand washing</li> <li>4) Cleaning in all toilets to be increased by employing a day-cleaner across all settings to monitor all toilets / bathrooms on an ongoing basis in order to maintain at a very high level of cleanliness.</li> <li>5) Staff to monitor cleaning rota</li> </ol>
Secondary Classrooms	Risk of contracting COVID-19 - number of staff and pupils	Teaching staff, pupils, Facilities & Estates staff	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Ensure that the same teacher(s) and other staff are assigned to each group and, as far as possible, these stay the same during the day and on subsequent days, but only where possible.</li> <li>2) Ensure that wherever possible pupils use the same classroom or area of a setting throughout the day, with a thorough cleaning of the rooms at the end of the day, you may want to consider seating students at the same desk each day if they attend on consecutive days where possible.</li> <li>3) Use social stories to explain to pupils</li> <li>4) Removal of furniture not required</li> <li>5) Furniture to be spaced out</li> <li>6) Discourage sharing of stationery and equipment (especially keyboards)</li> <li>7) Incorporate hand washing and wiping of desk as part of timetable</li> <li>8) Staff to wear PPE (gloves and apron) if doing personal care</li> <li>9) Secondary Pupils with underlying health conditions must be individually risk-assessed and should only be in school if the risk assessment deems it safe.</li> <li>10) <a href="#">Guidance on shielding and protecting people who are clinically extremely vulnerable from COVID-19</a></li> <li>11) Use of walkies to get support when required.</li> <li>12) Pupils will have all lessons in one classroom and eat their packed lunch within the same room</li> <li>13) The school will align itself with the roll-out of CO2 detectors as per government guidance, and will arrange their installation as they arrive.</li> </ol>
Secondary toilets	Risk of contracting COVID-19 - Overcrowding Contamination	Teaching staff, pupils, Facilities &	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Pupils to be given staggered breaks.</li> <li>2) Specify a max user limit for toilets.</li> <li>3) Cleaning in all toilets to be increased by employing a day-cleaner across all settings to monitor all toilets / bathrooms on an ongoing basis in order to maintain at a very high level of cleanliness.</li> </ol>

		Estates staff	4) Cleaning rota to be monitored by staff.
Quiet rooms	Risk of contracting COVID-19 - Contamination	Teaching staff, pupils, Facilities & Estates staff	1) Quiet rooms will be cleaned after use by a pupil.
Primary Playground	Risk of contracting COVID-19 - Contamination	Teaching staff, pupils, Facilities & Estates staff	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Stagger breaks.</li> <li>2) Sandpit to be closed.</li> <li>2) Staff to carry wipes and gloves to clean equipment if necessary.</li> <li>3) Playgrounds to be cleaned at the end of every day. Focus to be on handles as well as metal &amp; plastic surfaces being cleaned with anti-bacterial spray.</li> </ol>
Secondary Playground	Risk of contracting COVID-19 – number of pupils Contamination	Teaching staff, pupils, Facilities & Estates staff	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) These areas can be shared as long as different groups do not mix (and especially do not play sports or games together) and adequate cleaning between groups is in place, following the <a href="#">COVID-19: cleaning of non-healthcare settings guidance</a>.</li> <li>2) Stagger breaks.</li> <li>3) Staff to carry wipes and gloves to clean equipment if necessary.</li> <li>4) Playgrounds to be cleaned at the end of every day. Focus to be on handles as well as metal &amp; plastic surfaces being cleaned with anti-bacterial spray.</li> </ol>
Staff toilets and bathrooms	Risk of contracting COVID-19 from surfaces within toilet and bathroom facilities	All staff, volunteers, visitors	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Ensure strict and regular bathroom cleaning regime, with particular attention to frequently touched areas.</li> <li>2) Specify a max user limit for toilets.</li> <li>3) Ensure ample supply of bathroom and cleaning consumables.</li> <li>4) Ensure very regular emptying and replacement of sanitary-related disposal units.</li> <li>5) Ensure very good supplies of soap and hand-sanitiser to support an encourage good handwashing practice.</li> <li>6) Ensure that posters, specifically promoting handwashing are displayed prominently in all toilets and bathrooms.</li> </ol>



			7) From 1 September, additional staff toilets and showers will be available to meet the welfare requirements of staff.
Staff kitchen and canteen	Risk of contracting COVID-19 from surfaces within the kitchen / canteen facilities	All staff, volunteers, visitors	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Ensure strict and regular kitchen cleaning regime, with particular attention to surfaces and equipment people can touch.</li> <li>2) Ensure support staff servicing the kitchen / canteen are supplied with adequate and appropriate PPE and wash their hands regularly.</li> <li>3) Microwaves will all be thoroughly cleaned after each lunch period as well as at the end of the day.</li> <li>4) Use disposable cutlery / crockery in staff eating areas across all bubbles and dining locations.</li> <li>5) Physically, remove chairs to ensure adequate space is allowed between tables.</li> <li>6) Ensure that food is not left out and / or exposed. Unfinished food should be promptly discarded.</li> <li>7) No sharing of food.</li> <li>8) From 1 September 2020, additional space and new furniture has been allocated to the canteen area, to ensure social distancing can be observed whilst meeting the welfare requirements of staff.</li> <li>9) Staff to always wear face coverings in communal areas (not classrooms). Except when eating</li> </ol>
Pupil Canteen	Risk of contracting COVID-19 from pupils and surfaces within the kitchen / canteen facilities.	Pupils, Teaching Staff, Facilities & Estates Staff	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Stagger lunch times.</li> <li>2) Ensure strict and regular kitchen cleaning regime, with particular attention to surfaces and equipment people can touch.</li> <li>3) Use disposable cutlery / crockery in pupil eating areas across all settings.</li> <li>4) Ensure that kitchen staff are supplied with adequate PPE.</li> <li>5) Pupils to remain behind the serving hatch.</li> <li>6) No sharing of food or equipment.</li> <li>7) Microwaves, ovens and fridges will be cleaned daily.</li> <li>8) Ensure that leftover food is not left out and / or exposed. Unfinished food should be promptly discarded.</li> </ol>
Pupil staircase/corridors	Risk of contracting COVID-19 - over crowding	Pupils, Teaching Staff, Facilities &	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) 'Stand and wait' introduced.</li> <li>2) Staff to remind pupils to wait until stairs clear.</li> <li>3) Where possible staff to use back staircase</li> </ol>

		Estates Staff	
Visitors & Contractors	Risk of contracting COVID-19/	Staff, pupils, visitors	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Restrict external visitors from entering the education settings. Only those with a critical reason may attend.</li> <li>2) Visitors are restricted to those that are critical and agreed by a Senior Manager and must be able to produce evidence of a negative LFT result taken within 48 hours of the visit.</li> <li>3) Restrict contractor attendance to critical and compliance-related work only, ensuring that work is undertaken out of hours or when pupils have left site.</li> <li>4) Contractors are only able to work on site if they have the required PPE. Gloves and face coverings will be provided.</li> <li>5) Permits to Work now require contact details for track &amp; trace.</li> <li>6) Contractors to wear face coverings in communal areas such as corridors, toilets.</li> </ol>
Development of symptoms or contracting COVID-19	Risk of infecting staff and others with COVID-19	Staff, volunteers, visitors	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Guidance and procedures in place within AaA for staff to manage the onset of suspected symptoms or contracting COVID-19. <a href="https://ambitiousaboutautism.sharepoint.com/sites/CoronaVirus/">https://ambitiousaboutautism.sharepoint.com/sites/CoronaVirus/</a></li> <li>2) School must follow the <a href="#">COVID-19: cleaning of non-healthcare settings guidance</a>.</li> </ol>
Development of negative mental health symptoms.	Risk of developing negative mental health symptoms associated with the COVID-19 pandemic.	All staff working with pupils or learners.	<p><b><u><a href="#">PLEASE REFER TO THE GENERIC 'SCHOOL AND COLLEGE STAFF' RISK ASSESSMENT</a></u></b></p> <p><b>Pupils' mental health issues are risk assessed under their individual risk assessments.</b></p>
Staff may have questions around COVID-19 or AaA Management or procedures around COVID	Risk of staff not being able to find the information they require.	All staff working with pupils or learners.	<p><b><u><a href="#">PLEASE REFER TO THE GENERIC 'SCHOOL AND COLLEGE STAFF' RISK ASSESSMENT</a></u></b></p>
New strain of COVID-19, identified in December 2021, a	At risk of catching the new strain of COVID-19	All Staff, Pupils & learners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• introduction of twice weekly testing in schools and colleges from January 2021, AaA are following the new guidance, which is set out in the guidance below</li> <li>• <a href="#">asymptomatic-testing-in-schools-and-colleges/coronavirus-covid-19-asymptomatic-testing-in-schools-and-colleges</a></li> </ul>

<p>new faster transmissible strain of COVID-19 called omicron</p>			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A separate risk assessment is in place for this activity and can be found at <a href="#">COVID19 Testing PNC.doc (sharepoint.com)</a></li> <li>• All CEV Staff in will have had their personal risk assessments reviewed before returning to the school after easter term.</li> <li>• All CV staff will have their RA updated and shared with them before returning to working in the School.</li> <li>• Staff have been told to not (where possible) enter the building until 8.30 and to leave as soon as all pupils are off site - this will give additional cleaning time.</li> <li>• AaA implemented a roll out of vaccinations for staff in Feb 2021, 2<sup>nd</sup> Jabs are planned for late April/early May</li> <li>• AaA have implemented twice weekly home testing programme, specific plan can be found here <a href="#">THS HOME TESTING- 8th March.docx (sharepoint.com)</a></li> </ul>
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**Additional, related Risk Assessments.**

Should parties outside of Ambitious About Autism or Ambitious About Autism School Trust require copies of additional Risk Assessments to which this Risk Assessment relates, please request this from Justin Davies, Health and Safety Manager, [jdavies@ambitiousaboutautism.org.uk](mailto:jdavies@ambitiousaboutautism.org.uk).

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**Justin Davies**

Health & Safety Manager

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