

**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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## Background

A coronavirus is a type of virus. As a group, coronaviruses are common across the world. Typical symptoms of coronavirus may include a fever and a cough that may progress to a severe pneumonia causing shortness of breath and breathing difficulties. The UK government is updating the official symptoms periodically, as more is learned about the disease.

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. Novel coronavirus (COVID-19) is a new strain of coronavirus first identified in Wuhan City, China.

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 considered to be variants of concern. AaA will continue to monitor and react to all new variants of the coronavirus and implement specific controls measures where necessary.

In mid-September of this year, epidemiologists identified new coronavirus variants (or strains) that was markedly different from all the others. The Kent & South African strains have appeared throughout the U.K. By December, British health officials were concerned by how quickly it had spread, and a series of stringent lockdown and travel bans were put into effect. These lockdown measures (tier 4) effect all the venues with AaA.

A vaccination programme for all staff was introduced in February 2021, all front-line staff will be given the opportunity to have the first COVID vaccination by the end of FEB 21

In January 2021 all AaA Schools & Colleges have introduced twice weekly lateral flow testing of staff & some pupils. A separate risk assessment is in place to cover this activity.

### 1.0 Latest Information

The links below provides the very latest information from the NHS and UK government websites.

**NHS General COVID-19 Guidance** - <https://www.england.nhs.uk/coronavirus/primary-care/about-covid-19/>

**NHS COVID-19 Symptoms** - <https://www.england.nhs.uk/coronavirus/community-social-care-ambulance/symptoms-of-covid-19-and-medical-advice/>

## 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) Attempt to stagger pupils' arrivals where practicably possible.</li> <li>4) Posters on doors to remind pupils to keep distance.</li> <li>5) Marking on floor to show distance at entrance.</li> <li>6) Pupils and staff to wash or sanitise their hands as soon as they enter the school.</li> <li>7) All charity staff must use the front entrance only for entering and leaving the building.</li> <li>8) Non-school staff should avoid walking through the school and where possible avoid arriving and leaving at the same times as pupils.</li> <li>9) 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>10) Only one parent may accompany their child into the education or childcare setting.</li> <li>11) 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>12) 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> </ol>
Reception Area	Risk of contracting COVID-19 - overcrowding	Staff, pupils, visitors	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Markings on floor to ensure social distancing.</li> <li>2) Posters to remind visitors to keep distance and to not enter the building if have any symptoms of COVID-19.</li> <li>3) Hand Sanitiser dispensers to be used by all entering the area.</li> <li>4) No visitors are allowed into the School during the lockdown while restrictions are in place.</li> <li>5) All chairs removed from this area.</li> <li>6) 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	1) No visitors are allowed into the School during the lockdown and while restrictions are in place. This will be reviewed monthly.
Office Based Work	Risk of contracting COVID-19 from staff or others within the office environment	Staff, volunteers, visitors, pupils  <i>*Pupils included because they do sometimes enter the charity office space.</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Ensure that all staff actively subscribe to the principles of social distancing / 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) Ensure general social distancing (maintaining 1m+ distance between people as per government guidelines).</li> <li>4) Display up-to-date posters encouraging social distancing.</li> <li>5) Display up-to-date posters encouraging regular and proper handwashing.</li> <li>6) Use tape where appropriate to demarcate office zones to encourage and reinforce social distancing.</li> <li>7) Use tape to demarcate copying facilities. One person at a time.</li> <li>8) Remove chairs to ensure adequate space is allowed between desks.</li> <li>9) Implement zoning of desk spaces to discourage colleagues using multiple desks.</li> <li>10) Hand sanitiser, antibacterial wipes and disinfectant spray located in each room in use.</li> <li>11) Restrict access to and use of office spaces to one person at a time.</li> <li>12) Use signage and stickers near and in entrances to the office space to reinforce the importance of social distancing.</li> <li>13) Staff 'bubbles' have been created within office spaces to avoid members of staff sitting in multiple locations to help in avoiding spreading infection. These have been clearly signed.</li> <li>14) 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>15) Cleaners are based on site and follow a strict cleaning regime, with attention to frequently touched surfaces.</li> <li>16) Regular communication from ELT / senior management to remind staff and to reinforce the importance of good practice.</li> <li>17) Strongly encourage the continued policy of working from home where possible and to avoid coming into the office environment unless strictly necessary.</li> <li>18) Windows will be left open during the day to provide good ventilation.</li> </ol>

			<p>19) All hand-driers to be switched off or disconnected.</p> <p>20) No external visitors allowed in the School settings.</p> <p>21) 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.</p>
Pupils entering first floor office area	Risk of contracting COVID-19 from staff or others within the office environment	Pupils <i>*Pupils included because they do sometimes enter the charity office space.</i>	<p>1) Strongly encourage and support school staff to not allow pupils to enter the space if possible.</p> <p>2) Pupils will be told they cannot wander around school</p>
Meeting Rooms	Risk of contracting COVID-19 from staff or others within the office environment	Staff	<p>1) Meeting rooms may only be used by one person at a time.</p> <p>2) Hand sanitiser, antibacterial wipes and disinfectant spray located in each room in use.</p> <p>3) Staff should not share resources including headsets, phones, stationary, where possible.</p>
Training Rooms	Risk of contracting COVID-19 from staff or others within our training rooms	Staff, visitors	<p>1) Training rooms may be used only if it is possible to maintain social distancing.</p> <p>2) Meetings to be held via MS Teams where possible.</p> <p>3) Hand sanitiser, antibacterial wipes and disinfectant spray located in each room.</p>
THS Shop	Risk of contracting COVID-19 - number of staff and pupils	Teaching staff, pupils, Facilities & Estates staff	<p>1) The THS Shop will be closed, and this will be reviewed on 5<sup>TH</sup> April 2021.</p>

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) Posters on walls to remind pupils and staff to keep distance</li> <li>2) Use social stories to explain to pupils</li> <li>3) Removal of furniture not required</li> <li>4) Removal of soft toys to be at the discretion of the Head Of School</li> <li>5) Furniture to be spaced out</li> <li>6) Staff to carry wipes and gloves to clean toys following use</li> <li>7) Discourage sharing of toys and equipment</li> <li>8) Cover interactive area in shared space</li> <li>9) Hand washing part of timetable</li> <li>10) Staff to use PPE if doing personal care with a pupil</li> <li>11) Staff to wear optional face covering if working with pupil who requires close contact</li> <li>12) 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>13) Extremely vulnerable pupils should shield at home until such time as government guidance advises their return to school.</li> <li>14) Use of walkies to get support when required.</li> <li>15) Pupils will have all lessons in one classroom and eat their packed lunch within the same room</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) Tape on floor where possible to show area</li> </ol>

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5) Removal of furniture not required</li> <li>6) Furniture to be spaced out</li> <li>7) Discourage sharing of stationery and equipment (especially keyboards)</li> <li>8) Incorporate hand washing and wiping of desk as part of timetable</li> <li>9) Staff to wear PPE (gloves/mask and apron) if doing personal care</li> <li>10) 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>11) Extremely vulnerable pupils should shield at home until such time as government guidance advises their return to school.</li> <li>12) Use of walkies to get support when required.</li> <li>13) Pupils will have all lessons in one classroom and eat their packed lunch within the same room</li> </ul>
Secondary toilets	Risk of contracting COVID-19 - Overcrowding Contamination	Teaching staff, pupils, Facilities & Estates staff	<ul 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) Use of posters and signage to encourage social distancing.</li> <li>4) Social stories to encourage social distancing.</li> <li>5) 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>6) Cleaning rota to be monitored by staff.</li> </ul>
Quiet rooms	Risk of contracting COVID-19 - Contamination	Teaching staff, pupils, Facilities & Estates staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Quiet rooms will be cleaned after use by a pupil.</li> <li>2) The quiet rooms will be closed / locked if a deep clean is required, until this clean can be completed.</li> </ul>
Primary Playground	Risk of contracting COVID-19 - Contamination	Teaching staff, pupils, Facilities & Estates staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Social distancing to be strictly observed when playgrounds are in use.</li> <li>2) Stagger breaks.</li> <li>3) Sandpit to be closed.</li> <li>4) Staff to carry wipes and gloves to clean equipment if necessary.</li> <li>5) 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> </ul>

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) Social distancing to be strictly observed when playgrounds are in use.</li> <li>3) Stagger breaks.</li> <li>4) Staff to carry wipes and gloves to clean equipment if necessary.</li> <li>5) 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> <li>7) From 1 September, additional staff toilets and showers will be available to meet the welfare requirements of staff.</li> </ol>
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) Use tape to demarcate coffee making and microwave zones to encourage and reinforce social distancing. One person at a time within these zones.</li> <li>4) Microwaves will all be thoroughly cleaned after each lunch period as well as at the end of the day.</li> <li>5) Use disposable cutlery / crockery in staff eating areas across all bubbles and dining locations.</li> <li>6) Physically, remove chairs to ensure adequate space is allowed between tables.</li> <li>7) Use signage and stickers near and in entrances to the kitchen / canteen space to reinforce the importance of social distancing.</li> </ol>



			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>8) Ensure that food is not left out and / or exposed. Unfinished food should be promptly discarded.</li> <li>9) No sharing of food.</li> <li>10) 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>11) Staff to always wear face coverings. Except when eating</li> </ul>
Pupil Canteen	Risk of contracting COVID-19 from pupils and surfaces within the kitchen / canteen facilities.	Pupils, Teaching Staff, Facilities & Estates Staff	<ul 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) Ensure that kitchen staff follow hygiene and social distancing.</li> <li>6) Pupils to remain behind the serving hatch.</li> <li>7) No sharing of food or equipment.</li> <li>8) Microwaves, ovens and fridges will be cleaned daily.</li> <li>9) Ensure that leftover food is not left out and / or exposed. Unfinished food should be promptly discarded.</li> </ul>
Pupil staircase/corridors	Risk of contracting COVID-19 - over crowding	Pupils, Teaching Staff, Facilities & Estates Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) 'Stand and wait' introduced</li> <li>2) Footprints of stairs to encourage pupils to walk up one side and down the other side</li> <li>3) Staff to remind pupils to wait until stairs clear</li> <li>4) Where possible staff to use back staircase</li> </ul>
Visitors & Contractors	Risk of contracting COVID-19/	Staff, pupils, visitors	<ul 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) Visits to site will need to be agreed by a member of SLT.</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) No Visitors allowed into the School setting during lockdown restrictions.</li> <li>5) Contractors are expected to maintain social distancing measures wherever possible.</li> <li>6) Contractors are only able to work on site if they have the required PPE. Gloves and face coverings will be provided.</li> </ul>

			<p>7) Permits to Work now require contact details for track &amp; trace.</p> <p>8) Contractors to wear face coverings in communal areas such as corridors, toilets.</p>
Development of symptoms or contracting COVID-19	Risk of infecting staff and others with COVID-19	Staff, volunteers, visitors	<p>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></p> <p>2) School must follow the <a href="#">COVID-19: cleaning of non-healthcare settings guidance</a>.</p> <p>3) If an individual develops symptoms, they should be sent home and advised to self-isolate for 10 days. Household must self-isolate for 10 days.</p> <p>4) All staff and pupils will have access to testing and will be encouraged to do so.</p> <p>5) If an individual tests negative, they can return to school and their households can end self-isolation.</p> <p>6) If an individual tests positive, the class or bubble must be sent home to self-isolate for 10 days.</p> <p>7) As part of the national test and trace program, if other cases are detected within the cohort or in the wider setting, Public Health England's local health protection teams will conduct a rapid investigation and will advise the school and other settings on the most appropriate action. In some cases, a larger number of other children or young people may be asked to self-isolate at home as a precautionary measure – perhaps the whole class, site, or year group. Where settings are observing guidance on infection prevention and control, closure of the whole setting will not generally be necessary.</p>
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><a href="#">PLEASE REFER TO THE GENERIC 'SCHOOL AND COLLEGE STAFF' RISK ASSESSMENT</a></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><a href="#">PLEASE REFER TO THE GENERIC 'SCHOOL AND COLLEGE STAFF' RISK ASSESSMENT</a></p>

<p>New strain of COVID-19, identified in December 2020, a new faster transmissible strain of COVID-19</p>	<p>At risk of catching the new strain of COVID-19</p>	<p>All Staff, Pupils &amp; learners</p>	<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> <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 Tier 4 will be working at home until further notice.</li> <li>• All CV staff will have their RA updated in line with Tier 4 restrictions.</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 vaccination programme for staff starting in FEB 2021</li> <li>• AaA plan to implement twice weekly home testing for staff and some pupils/learners.</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 Mark Dixon, Head of Property & IT, [mdixon@ambitiousaboutautism.org.uk](mailto:mdixon@ambitiousaboutautism.org.uk).

**Mark Dixon / Tracey Capstick**

Head of Property & IT / TreeHouse Head of School

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