

EMERGENCY PLANNING AND COVID-19 RESPONSE POLICY

1. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that as a further education establishment, JTM has measures in place to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic and Government announcements and guidelines, so that our learners continue to receive a high-quality education and ongoing support.

COVID-19 continues to be a virus that we learn to live with and the imperative to reduce the disruption to children, young people and adult education remains. The government's priority is for FE establishments to continue to deliver face-to-face, high-quality education to all learners. The evidence is clear that being out of education causes significant harm to educational attainment, life chances, mental and physical health.

Therefore, in order to be able to do this, it is vital that we have contingency plans in place for all eventualities so that our stakeholders are not affected by the ongoing pandemic.

2. SCOPE

This policy is aimed at all stakeholders i.e. JTM staff, learners, employers, parents/carers where necessary.

3. POLICY STATEMENT

JTM is committed to providing a safe and healthy workplace for all of our stakeholders who include employees, learners, employers, and visitors and have developed a COVID-19 Response Policy to do so.

JTM will:

- Continue to monitor our COVID-19 response and amend this plan where and when necessary
- Provide up to date information via email and newsletter bulletins to our employees on the latest public health advice issues.
- Display information on the signs and symptoms of COVID-19 and correct hand washing techniques
- Inform employees of essential hygiene and respiratory etiquette and physical distancing
- Develop a process that must be followed in the event of someone showing symptoms of COVID-19 in the workplace or in training.
- Intensify cleaning in line with government advice
- Have risk assessments in place to manage all risks associated with COVID-19
- Have a thorough business continuity plan in place to manage necessary changes within JTM operations.

4. SYMPTOMS OF COVID-19

Infection with the virus that causes COVID-19 can cause illness, ranging from mild to severe, and, in some cases, can be fatal. It can take anything from 2 days up to 14 days for symptoms of coronavirus to appear.

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They can be similar to the symptoms of cold and flu.

- a fever (high temperature - 38 degrees Celsius or above)
- a cough - this can be any kind of cough, not just dry
- shortness of breath or breathing difficulties.

For the complete list of symptoms, please refer to the HSE Website -
<https://www2.hse.ie/conditions/covid19/symptoms/overview/>

It is important to understand that some people infected with the virus, so called asymptomatic cases, have experienced no symptoms at all.

5. HOW COVID-19 SPREADS

Current evidence suggests that the virus spreads mainly between people who are in close contact with each other, for example at a conversational distance. The virus can spread from an infected person's mouth or nose in small liquid particles when they cough, sneeze, speak, sing or breathe.

Another person can then contract the virus when infectious particles that pass through the air are inhaled at short range (this is often called short-range aerosol or short-range airborne transmission) or if infectious particles come into direct contact with the eyes, nose, or mouth (droplet transmission).

The virus can also spread in poorly ventilated and/or crowded indoor settings, where people tend to spend longer periods of time. This is because aerosols can remain suspended in the air or travel farther than conversational distance (this is often called long-range aerosol or long-range airborne transmission).

People may also become infected when touching their eyes, nose or mouth after touching surfaces or objects that have been contaminated by the virus.

Any situation in which people are in close proximity to one another for long periods of time increases the risk of transmission. Indoor locations, especially settings where there is poor ventilation, are riskier than outdoor locations. Activities where more particles are expelled from the mouth, such as singing or breathing heavily during exercise, also increase the risk of transmission.

The "Three C's" are a useful way to think about this. They describe settings where transmission of the COVID-19 virus spreads more easily:

- Crowded places;
- Close-contact settings, especially where people have conversations very near each other;
- Confined and enclosed spaces with poor ventilation.

The risk of COVID-19 spreading is especially high in places where these "3Cs" overlap.

<https://www.who.int/news-room/questions-and-answers/item/coronavirus-disease-covid-19-how-is-it-transmitted>

6. MAINTAINING GOOD HYGIENE AND FOLLOWING GOOD PRACTICE GUIDELINES

- Staff must ensure that they regularly wash their hands to ensure good hygiene is maintained.

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- Staff will be encouraged to protect their skin by applying cream/moisturiser regularly throughout their shift to reduce skin irritation from regularly sanitizing/washing.
- If a member of staff is in contact with a learner for training purposes, staff must encourage the learners' to regularly wash and sanitize their hands as well.
- Staff must not share equipment i.e. telephones, stationary etc.
- Staff to ensure that when visiting employers / learners, they take minimal personal belongings into the environment to reduce the risk of spreading germs.

7. TRAINING AND ASSESSMENT INCLUDING REMOTE DELIVERY

During COVID-19, JTM adapted delivery methods to ensure that all learners and apprentices continued to learn and develop their knowledge and skills within their chosen career. Remote delivery was introduced and systems such as Microsoft Teams and Zoom were utilised for live teaching sessions, along with the use of JTM's online e-portfolio system, electronic resources such as online webinars, video conferencing, e-learning etc.

With the Government outlining guidance on how we must live with COVID-19 from 1st April 2022, it is vital that we have contingency plans in place for our learners and employers in the event that COVID-19 infection rates start to increase again and measures need to be implemented efficiently and effectively.

1. Remote learning will recommence in full if:

- The Government identifies a requirement for educational setting to close and therefore COVID-19 regulations will be followed
- A learner is required to self-isolate
- An employer setting is required to lockdown
- A member of staff is required to self-isolate

Digital solutions continue to be a safe option and currently we are utilising a blended delivery approach with face to face teaching and learning as well as online remote delivery where it benefits the learner within their learning journey. By incorporating a blended learning approach, learners are not being disadvantaged from developing their skills and progressing within their careers if face to face visits are unable to take place.

2. What remote education will be made available:

- All learning resources are accessible via E-Track
- All 121 teaching and learning sessions will be conducted via Zoom
- Assessors and Safeguarding Team including Pastoral Support will be available to support learners welfare and wellbeing and resources will be shared with Assessors to distribute to learners and employers, as well as resources being uploaded to JTM's website and blog for access.

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- Learners will have access to recorded sessions which will be available on their E-Track account.

3. Delivery arrangements:

- Assessors will plan online remote sessions with learners in agreeance with learners and employers.
- 121 teaching and learning sessions will continue via Zoom. Only learners who are over 18 or those who are 16-18 who have written consent from parents will be asked to use video conferencing facilities.
- Assessors will adapt assessments in line with changing employer circumstances and awarding organisational requirements and any adaptations that have been introduced.

4. Expectations of Learners

Learners are asked by their Assessors to communicate any requirements or changes to circumstances with their Assessor(s).

I. COVID-19 QUESTIONNAIRES

If the risk returns of increased cases within areas in which JTM operate within the North West, staff must proceed to request confirmation off the visitor/learner and/or employer regarding their current situation with COVID-19. Before staff visit learners and/or employers in the workplace, they must send the 'QF_555 COVID-19 QUESTIONNAIRE' (**appendix 1**) to who they are planning on being in contact with, so that they can complete the form. The form must be returned to the member of staff prior to the meeting to ensure the safety of staff. The form may need to be reviewed and additional questions asked to ensure that any risks are mitigated.

5. Support for learners without suitable equipment / environment

Assessors and Pastoral Support will liaise with employers to identify suitable learning environments and equipment to ensure learners can attend online training sessions when required.

6. Support for learners with SEND

Assessors and Pastoral staff continue to liaise with SEN/EHCP needs to identify and discuss any additional support required. Where particular needs are identified, support arrangements are focused for the learner on an individual basis. They may include: additional teaching and learning resources, additional teaching sessions from sector specialist Assessors, more frequent pastoral support communications i.e. face to face visits/online zooms, phone calls etc. adaptations to assessment methods.

Increased safe working practices have been implemented throughout JTM premises. Hand sanitizing stations, temperature taking, increased cleaning

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schedules, access to face coverings, and sneeze screens have been positioned on the desks in JTM's head office to ensure safe working and safe distancing is in place.

If remote working was required to resume, there is still a safe place for vulnerable learners or learners who require face to face visits with staff to take place under safe working practices to protect learners and staff during this time.

7. SAFEGUARDING

Safeguarding remains a priority at all times at JTM. JTM have a robust safeguarding team in place with a Designated Safeguarding Lead and 2 Deputy Leads, who are also Pastoral Support and Prevent Leads.

Ongoing support will continue regardless of whether restrictions are reintroduced and 121 support with pastoral will continue either face to face or remotely via Zoom / phone call, and safeguarding concerns will continue to be logged effectively and external agencies contacted if support is required.

a) Online Safety

It is extremely important that all learners are aware of how to keep themselves safe online.

Learners complete the Education and Training Foundation 'Side by Side' training as part of their induction process which covers the following:

- Radicalisation and Extremism
- Staying Safe Online
- What Can You Trust?
- British Values

As part of their induction into JTM, learners are issued with JTM's Safeguarding Activity Handbook and British Values Handbook. The main aim of the safeguarding booklets is to ensure that learners are aware, have a good understanding, are engaged and vigilant about safeguarding concerns, this includes issues and risks associated with radicalisation and online risks that may be posed when using digital platforms. The booklets are embedded into the personal learning plan of each learner, ensuring that safeguarding remains a priority throughout their learner journey.

Monthly support visits and quarterly progress reviews will continue to focus on Safeguarding and Prevent to continue to develop the learners' knowledge and awareness of risks associated in their everyday lives and know how to keep themselves safe, even more so if remote visits are taking place.

b) JTM's expectations when using digital technology for teaching and learning sessions

Within JTM, the online platform, Zoom, is used with learners to conduct distance learning and online training.

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When learners and staff are using online platforms such as 'Zoom' they must ensure that:

- Learners and Assessors turn up on time for the call, similarly if it was a face to face meeting.
- Wear suitable clothing, as should anyone else in the household.
- Any computers used should be in appropriate areas, for example, not in bedrooms; and where possible be against a neutral background.
- Learners to be respectful when talking with their Assessor and any other members of staff.
- Language must be professional and appropriate, including any family members in the background.
- Understand that all zoom training sessions are recorded for safeguarding monitoring purposes.

8. RISK ASSESSMENTS

Risk assessments are reviewed on a monthly basis by JTM's Senior Management Team and updated accordingly, for the main office and training rooms to ensure safe working practices are adhered to and all possible risks are identified and managed effectively.

Risk assessments will be communicated with staff to ensure staff are clear on the actions to follow and what to do if a risk arises.

a) Employer Risk Assessments

All employers must have an up to date risk assessment and copies of insurance documents must be emailed to JTM's Administration Department. **(Appendix 2)**

If a further lockdown is instructed, a further risk assessment must be received detailing the additional measures that are in place to protect Apprentices within the workplace and any staff who may visit when the lockdown is lifted.

9. STAFF WORKING REMOTELY / LONE WORKING

Delivery staff for apprentices are classed as lone workers and work from the apprentices' place of work or their home address. If a further lockdown or restrictions were put in place by the Government or Local Authority, remote working would continue for our delivery staff.

Advanced learner loan staff work face to face in group settings at the centres to conduct workshops. If this is not safe to do so, remote teaching and learning would resume and if allowed, smaller numbers of learners attending the session to ensure safe distancing whilst learning would be considered.

JTM office staff would resume working from home. All staff undertake 121s on a bi-monthly basis with their Line Manager, where wellbeing, workload, performance and safeguarding along with actions agreed are discussed. Wellness Action Plans are completed on a quarterly basis as a minimum to ensure staff are coping well and whether they require any further support from JTM in relation to their mental health and wellbeing.

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Safeguarding Bulletins are issued on a monthly basis to inform staff, learners, employers and parents/carers on how they can look after their mental health and understand what they can do to keep themselves safe in relation to varying risks that they could come into contact with.

JTM internal newsletter is also issued out on a monthly basis, raising awareness of any business updates, changes to Government guidance, methods of working and any important announcements to be circulated to all staff.

Appendix 1 :

- QF_555B COVID-19 QUESTIONNAIRE

APPENDIX 2 :

- QF_045 HEALTH & SAFETY ASSESSMENT

Related Documents :

- QF_147B RISK ASSESSMENT
- QM_431 H&S POLICY
- QP_014 SAFEGUARDING