



Peninsula Dental Social Enterprise (PDSE)

Special Measures to Support Safe Working Practice

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Contents

Section	Topic	Page No
1	Introduction	3
2	Definitions	3
3	Risk Management	3
4	Preventative Measures	4
5	Covid-19 Screening	4
6	Asymptomatic Routine Testing	8
7	Handwashing and Sanitization	9
8	Social Distancing	10
9	Building Ingress and Changing Facilities	11
10	Communal Areas and Lunch Facilities	12
11	Toilet Facilities	12
12	Non-Clinical Office Areas	13
13	Clinical Areas	13
14	Cleaning	15
15	Student Induction	15
16	Conclusion	15

Special Measures to Support Safe Working Practice

Covid-19 Phased Recovery

1. Introduction

This document outlines the special measures put in place by PDSE in line with current Government guidelines during the COVID-19 pandemic. This is not designed to replace current PDSE policies and procedures with relation to the management of health and safety; it will serve to provide additional advice and guidance specifically targeted at minimising the spread of the coronavirus throughout the Dental Education Facilities (DEFs) and is aimed at ensuring a safe environment for staff, students and patients.

Updates to this document will be highlighted in yellow and will remain highlighted until the next updated version.

2. Definitions

Definitions referenced from *Preventing and managing Covid-19 outbreaks in primary dental care - South West England (PHE NHSE March 2021)*

Suspected case: A symptomatic individual.

Confirmed case: A laboratory confirmed case of COVID-19 with or without symptoms.

Cluster: Two or more confirmed cases of COVID-19 among individuals associated with the workplace with onset dates within 14 days, with no epidemiological link.

Outbreak: Two or more confirmed cases of COVID-19 among individuals associated with a workplace with onset dates within 14 days, with an epidemiological link between cases.

Incident: Term used by NHSE/I to describe the occurrence of any of the above in a healthcare context.

3. Risk Management

Organisational Risk Assessment

PDSE has a duty to its employees, contractors, students and patients affected by its undertaking, to reduce workplace risk to the lowest reasonably practicable level by taking preventative measures.

We have created an organisational assessment of the risks posed by COVID-19 and the preventative measures we have implemented to reduce these risks, which is continually under review.

Although this assessment can be used to inform local risk assessments, it is stressed that these generic preventative measures are the minimum required. This does not remove the requirement for specific risk assessment of local workplace activities and processes which may require enhanced / additional preventative measures specific to those hazards and risks.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following documents, all updated versions are available at <http://peninsuladental.org.uk/covid-19/>

- COVID-19 Organisational Risk Assessment
- Standard Operating Procedure Resumption of Clinical Activity
- Qualitative Face Fit Testing Standard Operating Procedure Policy
- Decontamination, storage and maintenance of reusable respirators
- Infection prevention and control policy

Individual Risk Assessments

It is important that PDSE is aware of any risk factors that may put individuals at an increased risk if exposed to COVID-19.

Staff, Supervisors and Students must inform PDSE if they are **clinically extremely vulnerable (high risk)**. This may include staff who are pregnant, over 70 years of age, or staff who have a health condition that defines them as clinically vulnerable according to NHS guidelines. Further information on who is at higher risk can be found on the [NHS website](#).

All PDSE staff are required to complete an individual risk assessment on returning to the workplace. This should be submitted to their line manager and reviewed regularly. If a member of staff is identified as at risk, they may be referred to Occupational Health. Staff must notify PDSE of any changes to their circumstances that may affect the risk assessment or their ability to continue working.

All Supervisors are required to complete an individual risk assessment prior to working on clinic, which must be submitted via the Clinical Liaison Team. Supervisors identified as being in a high risk category will be referred to Occupational Health for further assessment.

Individual student risk assessments will remain the responsibility of the University of Plymouth, with any necessary preventative measures required being relayed to PDSE. Students should inform PDSE if they have received special advice following their University risk assessment.

4. Preventative Measures

PDSE has a duty to reduce workplace risk to the lowest reasonably practicable level by taking preventative measures. Preventative measures will always be determined through risk assessment and will be in place for all staff, students and patients to ensure the opportunity of further viral spread is limited.

To further reduce the risk of viral spread, staff groups will remain segregated as much as practicably possible. Staff groups will be split into clinical and non-clinical groups. During periods of clinical activity, clinical staff will take priority for use of communal facilities.

Preventative measures are subject to continual review and updates will be cascaded accordingly. All site specific processes will be extensively covered during student induction to ensure comprehensive understanding is achieved.

5. COVID-19 Screening

Screening of Staff and Students

In order to reduce the risk of transmission of COVID-19 between staff, students and patients and to ensure that the DEFs remain COVID-19 secure, staff and students will be required to complete a COVID-19 screening check prior to entering the clinic.

If a staff member or student confirms any of the symptoms of COVID-19 they must isolate in accordance with NHS guidance.

Screening of Patients

All patients will be sent an appointment confirmation letter outlining the additional precautions and control measures that are in place relating to COVID-19. Patients will be contacted no more than 24 hours prior to their appointment to confirm that they are not displaying any symptoms of COVID-19. All patients and chaperones will be asked to self-declare that they are free of COVID-19 symptoms and temperature checked prior to being allowed access to the building.

Screening of Visitors

Prior to entry all visitors must be COVID-19 screened prior to entering any site, including taking of temperatures.

Screening of Contractors

COVID-19 screening will be completed prior to entry, including the taking of temperatures.

Symptoms of COVID-19

Symptoms of COVID-19 include:

- Temperature over 37.8C
- A new, continuous cough
- Loss or change to your sense of smell or taste

Staff, Supervisors or students who develop symptoms of COVID-19 should stay at home and self-isolate in accordance with NHS guidelines. Anyone with symptoms is advised to get tested for COVID-19 as per NHS advice [here](#).

When self-isolation may be required

Self-isolation is when you do not leave your home because you have or might have coronavirus (COVID-19). Staff, Supervisors and students who are self-isolating must stay at home and must not attend the DEFs.

Regardless of vaccination status Staff, Supervisors and students should self-isolate immediately if:

- They have symptoms of COVID-19
- They have tested positive for COVID-19
- They live with someone who has symptoms or who has tested positive
- They are told by NHS Test and Trace that they have been in contact with a person who has tested positive for COVID-19, **unless the below exclusion is applicable.**

Details of the durations of isolation periods are available on the [NHS website](#). Staff, Supervisors and students must self-isolate for the correct duration dependent on the reason for the isolation <https://www.plymouth.ac.uk/about-us/covid-19/students/self-isolation>

Staff and students are advised to seek a test per NHS guidance. Gaining a negative test result **in the event of self isolating due to a member of the household testing positive or experiencing symptoms of COVID-19** will not necessarily enable you to return to work/clinic before the end of a period of self-isolation. If the reason for your self-isolation was that you had symptoms, a negative test result will mean that you can end your self-isolation. Dental Admin (students) and PDSE (Staff) should be informed.

If any staff, Supervisor or students develop any symptoms at any point after ending their first period of self-isolation, they must follow NHS guidance and self-isolate again for the appropriate time depending on their circumstances.

Students should follow guidance on the University webpages:

<https://www.plymouth.ac.uk/about-us/covid-19/students>

When self-isolation may not be required

******You must contact your Line Manager (staff) or Dental Admin (students) before deciding that self-isolation is not required******

Staff, students and supervisors may not need to self-isolate if they have had close contact with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19 if any of the following apply:

- you're fully vaccinated – this means 14 days have passed since your final dose of a COVID-19 vaccine given by the NHS
- you're taking part or have taken part in a COVID-19 vaccine trial
- you're not able to get vaccinated for medical reasons

Under these circumstances, staff, students and supervisors must:

- Get a PCR test to check if they have COVID-19 (you must not attend the DEF whilst awaiting the results of the PCR test).
- follow advice on [how to avoid catching and spreading COVID-19](#)
- consider limiting contact with [people who are at higher risk from COVID-19](#)

If a negative PCR result is received, the individual will be able to return to work provided that the following process is followed:

- Evidence of the negative PCR result must be provided (for PDSE staff this should be sent to the line manager and PDSE HR)
- Evidence of receiving two doses of an approved COVID-19 vaccination, and you are at least two weeks (14 days) post double vaccination at the point of exposure
- Daily negative LFT tests prior to attending at the DEF for at least 10 days. Test results must be recorded via the online portal
- All infection prevention control measures are adhered to
- A risk assessment is completed with the line manager and a copy sent to PDSE HR.

If the individual develops symptoms or receives a positive test result PCR test result, they must self-isolate immediately and follow the guidance for self-isolation.

If the individual receives a positive LFT result, they must seek a PCR test as soon as possible and self-isolate until they receive a negative result.

If a member of staff's household has tested positive for COVID-19, NHS England and the Office of the CDO have confirmed that those working in NHS dentistry will be asked not to come to work if they are living directly (in the same household) with a positive COVID-19 case.

Developing symptoms during the working day

If a member of staff, supervisor or student become unwell during the working day or develop symptoms of COVID-19 they should:

- Inform their line manager or the Clinic Team Leader immediately and go home. Students should also contact Dental Admin.
- Avoid touching anything
- Cough or sneeze into a tissue and dispose of this (or use their sleeve if they do not have a tissue)
- Use a separate bathroom to others
- Use their own phone or computer if they need to contact NHS 111 or a Doctor

A period of self-isolation must then be completed in accordance with NHS guidelines.

Test & Trace

Staff, supervisors and students should note that if they are contacted by NHS Test and Trace and told to self-isolate, it is a legal requirement that you do so for ten days starting with the day after the last day you came into close contact with the positive person.

However, this is not the case if you are pinged by the NHS app and told to isolate. The app is advisory and there is no legal requirement for you to isolate, but [the Government strongly recommends that you do](#).

A test can be arranged by visiting [Gov.uk](#) or by contacting 119 via telephone for those without internet access. Evidence of the test result may be requested by PDSE/Dental Admin.

If you receive a negative test result, you should follow the NHS guidance on whether or not you need to self-isolate still. This guidance can be found on the [NHS website](#). If you are no longer required to self-isolate, for example, if you have received two doses of an approved COVID-19 vaccination, you should contact your line manager to discuss your return to work.

If staff, supervisors or students are still experiencing a temperature, they must continue to self-isolate until their temperature returns to normal and should seek medical advice.

Further information on what to do if you have been tested for COVID-19, including what to do if you receive an unclear, void, borderline or inconclusive test result can be found on the [NHS website](#).

Determining contact

A 'contact' is a person who has been close to someone **who has tested positive for COVID-19** anytime from 2 days before the person was symptomatic up to 10 days from onset of symptoms (this is when they are infectious to others). For example, a contact can be:

- People who spend significant time in the same household as a person who has tested positive for COVID-19
- Sexual partners
- A person who has had face-to-face contact (within one metre), with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19, including:
 - Being coughed on
 - Having a face-to-face conversation within one metre
 - Having skin-to-skin physical contact, or
 - Contact within one metre for one minute or longer without face-to-face contact
- A person who has been within 2 metres of someone who has tested positive for COVID-19 for more than 15 minutes
- A person who has travelled in a small vehicle with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19 or in a large vehicle or plane near someone who has tested positive for COVID-19

If all interactions have taken place through a Perspex screen or whilst wearing a Fluid Resistant Face Mask (FRFM), this may be a sufficient risk mitigation.

Reporting of absences

All absences from clinic should be reported via the normal absence reporting procedure. All student absences should be reported directly to Dental Admin.

Students who are self-isolating, please also view the [COVID-19 reporting: self-isolation, symptoms and test results web page](#) which has recently been updated with lots of advice and guidance.

Returning after an absence

PDSE staff may contact their line manager to discuss their return to work if they feel better and no longer have symptoms. Staff must complete the period of isolation as specified by the NHS before returning to work.

Supervisors must discuss their return to work with the Clinic Lead.

Student must liaise with Dental Admin about their return to studies, and Dental admin will inform the clinical teams.

If symptoms persist, staff, supervisors and students should remain off work and seek medical advice from NHS111 using the online service (or call NHS111 if unable to access the online service).

Confirmed cases of COVID-19

If a PDSE member of staff receives a positive test result for COVID-19 they must inform their line manager and PDSEHR@plymouth.ac.uk

Students with COVID symptoms or who have received a positive test, should [tell the University via the confidential COVID-reporting form](#) and a member of the COVID Advice team will make contact, and can offer support ranging from food delivery through to mental health. Students should also inform Dental Admin.

Students must contact the COVID reporting team themselves if they are symptomatic or have tested positive. This cannot be done for them by staff, colleagues or friends.

If a Clinical Supervisor is symptomatic or has tested positive, this should be logged on iTrent and emailed to healthandsafetyoffice@plymouth.ac.uk

6. Asymptomatic Routine Testing of Staff & Students

As part of the NHS primary care infection control risk reduction strategy, PDSE will be offering COVID-19 testing to all asymptomatic staff and students. This will be facilitated using the lateral flow antigen device and will take place twice weekly, using self-administered nasal swabbing. This initiative will be dependent on the level of supply chain availability and will follow the pathway adopted by NHS England and NHS Improvement rollout of lateral flow devices for asymptomatic staff testing for COVID-19 in primary care.

The procedure for testing is set out in the Novel Coronavirus COVID-19 Standard Operating Procedure which can be accessed by clicking [here](#).

Asymptomatic staff undertaking routine testing are advised to watch the [training video](#) and to carefully read the [written instructions](#) prior to beginning the testing regime to assist them with the self-testing processes and the interpretation of results.

- Staff / students should conduct the test at home and not on work / clinic premises, twice a week, to fit with their working patterns.
- Staff / students should conduct the test before the start of work / clinic, leaving enough time to report absent, should their lateral flow test be positive.
- Recording of all results (positive, negative, invalid) from lateral flow device is a statutory requirement and therefore staff are responsible for reporting every test result via the NHS [Digital Platform](#)
- Staff / students that receive a positive test result must report absent via the normal absent reporting system.
- If you receive a positive result you and your household will need to self-isolate following Government guidance until you have confirmed your result by a qRT PCR tests, which must be obtained independently.
- You do not usually need to self-isolate if you get a negative result. You may still need to self-isolate after a negative test if:
 - someone you live with has tested positive or has symptoms and has not had a test yet – find out how long to self-isolate
 - you've been told you've been in contact with someone who tested positive – find out what to do if you're told to self-isolate by NHS Test and Trace
 - you've recently travelled to England from abroad
 - If you still feel unwell after a negative test, stay at home until you're feeling better. Contact a GP if your symptoms get worse or do not go away.
- If the qRT PCR test is positive and you or your household are experiencing symptoms you must continue to with your self-isolation.
- Lateral flow antigen testing is not suitable for symptomatic staff, who should instead access qRT PCR testing through the normal access routes for testing and self-isolate, together with their household, in line with government guidelines.
- You should not do the LFD test if you have had a positive COVID-19 PCR in the last 90 days. The LFD may give a false positive result if you have recently had Covid-19.

- If however you tested PCR positive for COVID-19 more than 90 days ago, then you are encouraged to be involved in the testing, since re-infection after 3 months has been described, although sporadically.

7. Handwashing and Sanitization

Hand sanitizer stations placed at the entrance of every building, must be utilized by staff and students prior to entering the clinic.

Staff and students should be reminded to [wash their hands](#) regularly using soap and water for 20 seconds and particularly after blowing their nose, sneezing or coughing.

Handwashing facilities with soap, water and paper towels are widely available throughout all buildings and frequent handwashing must be continued at regular intervals throughout the day. The use of hand dryers is prohibited and drying with paper towels should be utilized instead.

8. Social Distancing

Social distancing involves reducing day-to-day contact with other people as much as possible, in order to reduce the spread of coronavirus (COVID-19). The current Government guidance for social distancing states a distance of at least 2 metres, or 1 metre with 'additional risk mitigation' (1m+) where 2m is not viable between individuals wherever possible.

The Government advice regarding 'additional risk mitigation' for 1 metre plus (1m+) social distancing is as follows:

Where the social distancing guidelines cannot be followed in full, in relation to a particular activity, businesses should firstly consider whether that activity needs to continue for the business to operate, and, if so, take all the mitigating actions possible to reduce the risk of transmission between their staff (and students).

All staff and students must adhere to social distancing guideline. Measures have been implemented to assist this including:

- Visible signage is situated around the building prompting social distancing.
- Screens have been erected at all reception desks.
- In both clinical and non-clinical settings where staff and students are unable to maintain the recommended 2m social distancing, a medical grade mask or visor must be worn. Where possible, one way systems have been established for movement around the buildings, with a 'keep left' system in place in stairwells and corridors.

- Designated passing areas are identified with signage in all longer stairwells and back to back passing should be adopted where required.

Low density occupation levels have been calculated for all areas and are indicated by signage attached to entrances. This should be adhered to where possible, however it is recognised that there will be times throughout the day when this will not be achievable. Throughout these periods other measures will be implemented in order to mitigate risks, including:

- Issuing fluid resistant face masks to students on entry to the building,
- Staggering processes to allow groups to access areas in phases,
- Limiting the activity to as short as time as possible.

9. Building Ingress & Changing Facilities

Access for Staff and Supervisors

Staff and Supervisors can access the building using their swipe card during usual access hours. Any staff who experience issues with accessing the building should report this to their line manager immediately.

Staff should ensure that social distancing is observed when arriving at work. This includes when using the car park and on entry and exiting the building.

Access for Students

In order to prevent unauthorised access to the buildings, reduce high volumes of people in one area at the same time and to allow for phased access to the buildings, students will be unable to swipe into any main entrances. Student swipe access will be enabled for all internal swipe doors; however, students will not be permitted to digress around the building and must remain in their allocated areas.

Each site has been allocated a specific student entrance and will follow the procedure detailed in the student ingress process.

PDSE staff will allow student access from 8.30, students will be phased into the building and issued with a fluid resistant facemask. In order to ensure all students are on bay in a timely manner, this process is required to be as swift as possible.

Access for Patients

Access for patients is by appointment only. Patients should attend alone where possible.

Access for Visitors

Only essential visitors should visit any sites during the COVID-19 period, all main entrances will remain locked to prevent unauthorised access. All visitors should pre-arrange their visit prior to attending, unauthorised or unannounced visitors may not be permitted entry.

Visitors must be informed of the special measures that have been implemented due to COVID-19 and must adhere to these whilst in the facilities.

Access for Contractors

Contractors are only permitted to attend site by prior arrangement, booked via the PDSE Maintenance Team. This allows the Maintenance Team to issue pre-site attendance information to all contractors prior to any visit, advising that they should not attend if they have, or have been in contact with anyone who has symptoms.

10. Communal Areas & Lunch Facilities

The capacity for student communal areas varies across sites. Where possible, additional space will be provided through the use of the training and seminar rooms, which will be available for break times. Clinical staff groups will have priority access to communal areas and non-clinical staff will be expected to stagger their break times accordingly.

Throughout the day students and clinical staff groups will be required to either remain on bay or leave the building. When not on bay, all students should maintain social distancing as specified above, where this is not possible students will be required to wear a fluid resistant face mask.

PDSE will allocate staff to monitor student breaks to ensure compliance with measures is achieved. Whilst facilities such as microwaves and hot water boilers will remain in use, access will be limited to ensure social distancing and to allow routine cleaning to be undertaken following use of items. Communal areas will require cleaning after each use, this will be facilitated by PDSE staff on a rotational basis.

Students who are on site for the duration of the day, should be encouraged to:

- Bring a cold pack lunch
- Utilize outside space, weather permitting
- Eat off site, where possible.

Immediately after heavy use, all communal areas and lunch facilities will be taken out of use and will be subject to cleaning before being utilised by other staff groups.

11. Toilet Facilities

In all sites designated toilets have been assigned for use by staff, students and patients. This designation is identified by signage placed clearly on the front of toilet doors.

All toilets have visible hand washing reminder posters and are equipped with soap and paper towels.

Toilets are required to be cleaned on an increased basis & visible signage has been placed in every toilet emphasising the cleaning processes required. In order to facilitate this every toilet will be equipped with the necessary cleaning aides and disposal guidance.

Patient toilets will be cleaned in between use by PDSE staff on a regular basis throughout the day. Whilst cleaning on a scheduled basis, all staff must wear the standard PPE of:

- Disposable apron
- Fluid resistant surgical mask
- Eyewear/visor
- Gloves

Staff and students will be required to assume personal responsibility for toilet cleaning following use.

12. Non-Clinical Office Areas

The main offices at each DEF have been identified as non-clinical areas and as such, clinical staff and students must not enter without seeking prior authorisation.

Staffing levels will be monitored within all offices to ensure social distancing can be maintained. Due to the higher capacity of staff between Plymouth sites, an office schedule is to be used between to ensure that numbers remain reasonable to allow for social distancing.

Staff must wear a FRFM or visor in the DEFs when working in non-clinical areas where 2m cannot be maintained or when they are not shielded by a Perspex screen.

Most office-based staff have an allocated workspace so the requirement for hot-desking should be minimal. However, where hot-desking is required the desk space including all equipment within that area must be [wiped down](#) before use (e.g. telephone, mouse, keyboard etc.). Desks must always be kept clear.

13. Clinical Areas

Clinical activity is restricted to either the bay area or the single surgery space, dependent on the type of treatment being carried out, further restrictions may apply. Further information can be found in the PDSE Standard Operating Procedure which should be read in conjunction with this policy and prior to carrying out any clinical activity at any site.

Non-clinical staff will not be permitted to enter the bay without seeking prior authorisation.

Staff and students working in the clinical environment are not permitted to take any personal belongings onto the clinic.

Mobile Devices:

Personal mobile devices are not permitted in any clinical area. PHE guidance has stated that mobile devices are “*breeding ground for microorganisms.*” The use of mobile devices should be limited to non-clinical areas and hands should be washed and devices wiped after use. The contract tracing app should also be disabled when working in a healthcare setting.

Record Cards:

It is not possible to eliminate the requirement for paper record cards to enter the clinic.

In order to mitigate the risk of COVID-19 transmission the following steps should be followed:

- Paper record cards are not permitted into any AGP area i.e. single surgery or pods.
- Paper record cards required on a non-AGP bay should remain a sealed plastic box until the point of use.
- Record cards allocated to a student for use on bay should be used as minimally as possible and for as short a time frame as reasonably practicable e.g. to facilitate signing of a consent form or treatment plan.
- When not in use, record cards must not be left out in the open clinic. They must either be stored in a closed cupboard or in a sealed plastic box.

Patient Appointment Booking and Referral Process:

The process for booking further patient appointments; referring a patient to another student; or requesting a patient be transferred to a PDSE Clinician was previously paper based.

In order to mitigate the risk of Covid-19 transmission the following amendments to process have been implemented.

Booking Form	Procedure	New Process
Blue	Appointment booking	Student confirms appointment details with patient at the chairside. Student completes laminated Blue form using wipe-able marker. Patient exits the DEF, student takes form to reception and relays the agreed appointments (normal admin processes)

		apply) Student returns form to clinic for disinfection.
Green	Student to student referral	All student to student referrals to be completed electronically using the R4 template.
Pink	Request for referral to PDSE Dentist or Clinical Supervisor	Clinical Supervisor to submit form electronically using the email detailed above in the green form process.

14. Cleaning

In every work area, the frequency of handwashing and surface cleaning will need to be increased. Busy / communal areas (stairwells, entrances, exits, toilets, corridors etc.) and frequently touched items (doors and door furniture, bannisters etc.) will require increased frequency of cleaning and the provision of hand sanitiser, tissues and waste receptacles. This will be achieved through an hourly cleaning rotation, facilitated by PDSE staff on a rotational basis.

Staff and students should increase the frequency of cleaning of their own and shared work areas which they use including shared laboratory or process equipment, IT equipment, telephones, workstations and other touch points. Local cleaning stations will be provided for [general self-cleaning](#).

15. Student Induction

Student induction has always played a fundamental role in ensuring that students are safe and fully prepared to return to clinic. The significant number of measures and amendments that have subsequently been introduced, in order to ensure that the clinic is a safe environment during COVID-19, has increased the importance of a comprehensive student induction. All students must complete all parts of their induction before starting on clinic.

16. Conclusion

This document provides the overall framework of special measures to support safe working practice, however site-specific protocols will apply.

This document will be reviewed regularly and updated as national guidance changes. If you have a query regarding this guidance, please refer to the [Raising Concerns at Work Policy](#).