

2023  
V3

# COVID Policy

## Introduction

This company policy includes the measures we are actively taking to mitigate the spread of coronavirus. Staff, learners, visitors and any others accessing Debut premises are kindly requested to follow all these rules diligently, to sustain a healthy and safe workplace and training center in this unique environment. It's important that we all respond responsibly and transparently to these health precautions.

We assure everyone that we will always treat their private health and personal data with high confidentiality and sensitivity. This coronavirus (COVID-19) company policy is susceptible to changes with the introduction of additional Governmental, Awarding Body, Dfe guidelines. If so, we will revise this policy and contact everyone who accesses our premises.

## Scope

This coronavirus policy applies to all of our employees who physically work in our Academy, including visitors and learners to our premises. We strongly recommend to our remote working personnel to read through this policy as well, to ensure we collectively and uniformly respond to this challenge.

## Policy elements

Here, we outline the required actions employees, learners and visitors should take to protect themselves and others from a potential coronavirus infection.

## COVID Symptoms

The main symptoms of Coronavirus (COVID-19) are:

- A new, continuous cough
- A high temperature
- Shortage of breath
- Loss of or change to your sense of smell or taste

These symptoms do not necessarily mean you have the illness. The Coronavirus Symptoms are similar to other illnesses that are much more common, such as cold and flu. Current guidance indicates that among those who become infected will exhibit no symptoms (be a carrier of the disease). Of those who do develop symptoms and the illness will have a mild to moderate illness similar to seasonal flu. A minority will develop complications severe enough to require hospital care, most often pneumonia and in a small number of these the illness may be severe enough to lead to death.

## What to do if you have Coronavirus symptoms

At work (as an employee) or during your scheduled lesson (as a learner)

- If you become ill at work, please speak to your line manager/tutor as quickly as possible. You should go to an area that is at least two meters away from other people and, if possible, find a room or area where you can be isolated behind a closed door, such as a staff office. If you can, please open a window for ventilation. Please try to avoid unnecessarily touching surface

- If you have internet access please use the NHS 111 online service and follow the advice you receive. If you don't have internet access please call NHS 111, or 999 in an emergency. If you are advised to go home and self isolate, please tell your line manager and then make your way home as safely as possible. If you travel on public transport, please follow any instructions given to you by the NHS staff.
- If you need to go to the bathroom whilst waiting for medical assistance, please ensure you make sure you tell a Manager who will ensure that the area is deep cleaned between uses.
- If you become ill at home, please do not come into work or for your lesson. You'll need to telephone us in accordance with our usual absence policy. If you have internet access please use the NHS 111 online service and follow the advice you receive. If you don't have internet access, please call NHS 111. You need to tell us if you are advised to self-isolate and if you have tested for coronavirus and what the outcome result was.

### **What to do if you test positive for Coronavirus**

- Please advise us immediately if you test positive for Coronavirus, even if your symptoms are mild. You will not be able to return to the premises until you are considered fit by Public Health England or any other competent authority. It is Debut's policy to ask for evidence of two consecutive negative tests prior to attending Debut premises.
- You don't need to obtain a fit note from your doctor, but please send to us anything you do receive which confirms your diagnosis and/or fitness to return to work.
- If you feel well enough to work, and your role is currently being carried out at home, you can continue to do so. However, you must update us if your symptoms worsen and you are unable to carry on working.
- We will not inform anyone else about your condition unless it's necessary to do so and we are legally able to. Our overriding obligation is to protect the health and safety of our staff and learners, and we may therefore have to speak to your colleagues and other people with whom you've been in close contact in order to protect them. Any information we disclose will be limited to what is necessary for that protection.

Public Health England are responsible for 'contact tracing' (tracing anyone you have been in close contact with) and we will cooperate with them as appropriate.

### **What to do if you are advised by a medical professional to self-isolate**

- Strict rules about social distancing are no longer applies in law.
- In addition to this, Government advice is that people do not need to stay at home if they are tested positive but should act responsibly and try to stay at home to prevent further spread of the disease.

The government has up to date information for individuals who have travelled overseas and returned to the UK. If you have been abroad recently, please consult this and inform us if you are required to self-isolate.

Currently there are no Government UK restrictions, however, it is advisable to always check for any updates and changes at: [www.gov.uk/coronavirus](http://www.gov.uk/coronavirus)

### **General hygiene rules:**

- Sanitize when you enter the building and regularly throughout the day whilst on premises.
- Wash your hands after using the toilet, before eating, and if you cough/sneeze into your hands (follow the 20 second hand washing rule). You can also use the sanitizers you'll find around the building.
- Cough/sneeze into your sleeve, preferably into your elbow. If you use a tissue, discard it properly and clean/sanitize your hands immediately.
- Open the windows regularly to ensure open ventilation.
- Avoid touching your face, particularly eyes, nose, and mouth with your hands to prevent from getting infected.
- If you find yourself coughing/sneezing on a regular basis, avoid close physical contact with your coworkers and take extra precautionary measures (such as requesting sick leave).
- Debut Academy will provide visual notices in toilet, kitchen and other key areas on handwashing guidelines and our safe COVID practices.

### **Additional precautions:**

- All Debut Academy staff, learners and visitors no longer have their body temperature checked on arrival. Any individuals that exhibit a temperature over the recommended constraint limit will not be allowed to stay on premises.

- Debut Academy will provide PPE and other items such as disposable gloves and aprons for learners and staff, ensuring they have training on use of these items for any practical treatments (as required).
- Face masks are provided free by Debut but are no longer a mandatory requirement. Staff and learners may wear face masks if they want to as this is a personal choice.
- Debut Academy will ensure that areas are regularly cleaned and sanitised, including deep cleaning. Cleansing equipment truggs will be available in each training room for learners to use to carry out the clean down duties after lessons.
- Debut Academy will ensure that anyone leaving the premises for short lesson breaks sanitises their hands on return to the premises.
- Equipment that is used by more than one person will be sanitised between uses (eg., ICT equipment).
- Debut Academy will aim to stagger class leaving/break times to minimise the numbers of learners along corridors and maintain appropriate distancing.

### **Government Guidelines**

Guideline changes will be notified to all learners and staff as they are notified by the Government and specific protocols will be complied with by Debut.

### **Training**

Safety training is an indispensable part of an effective COVID safety and we will ensure that staff are aware of local or Government guidelines/laws. Staff training will be refreshed or updated as new procedures are notified to us or restrictions are reinstated.

### **Work-based Environments**

Debut will ensure that any Government or local guidelines are passed onto our Apprentice Employers promptly so they are compliant in the workplace.

### **Sick Pay**

If you are diagnosed with Coronavirus or have Coronavirus-like symptoms and are awaiting results of a COVID test and you are too unwell to work from home, statutory sick pay will be

paid provided you meet the qualifying conditions, with a medical certificate from your GP. Please refer to our staff handbook regarding statutory, contractual sick pay or discretionary sick pay. Sick pay may be withheld if someone has travelled to a place or country that is against Government guidance and they have subsequently contracted the virus.

### **Risk Assessments**

Debut no longer carry out full risk assessments for COVID measures as these have now been relaxed by the Government. However, the Center Manager will carry out spot checks throughout the center to ensure compliance to sanitisation so that the safety of all continues to be upheld.

### **COVID Log**

The Center Manager will keep a comprehensive COVID log which will record all incidents of suspected and actual COVID cases that relate to staff, visitors and learners. Each entry is followed up to conclusion. Details regarding isolation, covid test results, contacting any at risk individuals etc is all recorded. Covid results are uploaded to the staff/learner files. If a learner has to isolate (whether has COVID or not) and is well enough, Debut will put in place remote learning and send work across to the learner for the period they are absent.

### **Remote Learning**

Debut Academy has stringent provisions in place to ensure learning continues to be delivered remotely (especially a priority for the 16-19 age group). Provision includes scheduled online tutorials for NVQ, English, Maths and any enrichment subjects. Reviews and learner support is also conducted remotely over Zoom. We have developed a learner agreement covering online learning so learners are aware what expectations they must meet. We also vigilantly monitor learner participation in all lessons so that learner welfare is regularly checked for safeguarding reasons. Our managers will also join online lessons to ensure integrity and quality of learning is upheld at all times.

Please refer to our safeguarding policy for further information.

### **Vulnerable or Learners at Risk during COVID**

We do not want any of our learners to be at a disadvantage. Whether they are in the vulnerable category or do not have access to resources from home to continue learning, Debut will evaluate each learner's situation and put in place any necessary measures so that their learning can continue. This may include separate 1:1 tutorials (whether teaching remotely or on site) and providing learners with loan kits, laptops etc.



## Lock Down

On the 23rd March 2020, the Prime Minister announced a lock-down of the UK in an attempt to slow the spread of Coronavirus. This was initially put in place for a period of 3 weeks. The Government are continually monitoring Coronavirus outbreaks and levels and then implemented 'local' lockdowns. Should lockdowns be reinstated for any length of time in the local region/county, Government guidance must be adhered to and Debut will send out any necessary communications regarding working/studying from home.

The designated COVID Health & Safety personnel are:

Carla Hales  
Director of Tuition & Health & Safety Lead  
01268 560552  
[carla@debutacademy.com](mailto:carla@debutacademy.com)

Linda Edwards  
Centre Manager & Health & Safety Deputy  
01268 560552  
[linda@debutacademy.com](mailto:linda@debutacademy.com)

## At Risk groups

Current advice is that the risk of severe illness increases amongst people aged 70 and over and those with underlying health risks, such as diabetes, heart disease and lung disease and those with weakened immune systems. Pregnant women are also included in the "at risk" group. Please tell us if you think you are at risk:

- Because you are in one of the high risk groups or you or you care for someone who is considered to be high risk; or
- You have been in contact with, or live in the same household as, someone who is being tested for, has tested positive for Coronavirus or has been advised to self isolate because they have Coronavirus symptoms.
- We will conduct an individual risk assessment for anyone we believe to be in a high risk group and will put in place appropriate safeguards.

## Sick leave arrangements

- If you have cold symptoms, such as cough/sneezing/fever, or feel poorly, it is advisable that you take a COVID test as a precaution. Please refer to the paragraph on sick pay above.
- If you have a positive COVID-19 diagnosis, you can return to the premises only after you've fully recovered, with two consecutive negative tests results as evidence - which should be sent to [linda@debutacademy.com](mailto:linda@debutacademy.com).
- Work/Study from home requests:
- If you are feeling ill, but you are able to work, you can request to work from home (this will only be approved depending on your job role and if this is suitable). If you have been provided with a medical certificate by your GP you cannot perform work duties.
- If you have recently returned from areas with a high number of COVID-19 cases (based on CDC announcements), we'll ask you to stay at home for 14 calendar days, and return to the office only if you are fully asymptomatic. You will also be asked not to come into physical contact with any colleagues or other learners during this time.

- If you've been in close contact with someone infected by COVID-19, with high chances of being infected yourself, you can request to work from home (this will only be approved depending on your job role and if this is suitable). You will also be asked not to come into physical contact with any colleagues or learners during this time.
- If you're a parent and you have to stay at home with your children, you can request work from home (this will only be approved depending on your job role and if this is suitable). Follow up with your manager or departmental leader to make arrangements and set expectations.
- If you need to provide care to a family member infected by COVID-19, you can request work from home (this will only be approved depending on your job role and if this is suitable). You'll only be permitted to return to the office 14 calendar days after your family member has fully recovered, provided that you're asymptomatic or you have a doctor's note confirming you don't have the virus. You will also be asked not to come into physical contact with any colleagues/learners during this time.

**Traveling/commuting measures:**

- If you normally commute to the office by public transportation and do not have other alternatives, you should follow government guidelines on wearing a mask and distancing if measures are re-introduced.
- Debut will try to stagger start times for lessons (for learners) for travelling outside peak travel hours if social distancing measures are re-introduced.

**Linked Policies**

Please refer to Debut's linked policies below for additional information regarding Admissions and Application Standards:

- Apprenticeship Expectation Policy
- Code of Conduct – Learner Policy
- Code of Conduct – Staff Policy
- Confidentiality & Disclosure Policy
- Communication Policy
- Contingency and Change of Circumstances Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- Equal Opportunities & Inclusion Policy
- Freedom of Information Policy
- Guidance Policy
- Health & Safety Policy
- Health & Wellbeing Policy
- Learner Safeguarding & Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults Policy
- Risk Management Policy
- Teaching & Learning Policy



*Disclaimer: This policy template is meant to provide general guidelines and should be used as a reference. It may not take into account all relevant local or government laws and is not a legal document. Neither the author nor Workable will assume any legal liability that may arise from the use of this policy.*

**Policy Revision**

Issue 05 - Updated July 2023

Revision Date – July 2024