Department
DfE
Department for Education

Guidance
Further education (FE) autumn term guidance

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The guidance sets out what further education (FE) providers need to know for the autumn term so that students of all ages can benefit from their education in person.

Main changes to previous guidance

The guidance document combines the previous operational guidance and risk assessment guidance for the FE sector.

We have also made changes to the guidance on:

- implementing risk assessments
- managing outbreaks and the impact of coronavirus (COVID-19) on attendance in FE settings
- managing confirmed cases of coronavirus (COVID-19)
- managing local outbreaks
- public transport
- ventilation, including gas and physical activity
- remote and blended learning
- health and safety and equipment duties
- testing and vaccinations
- mental health and wellbeing
- transitioning delivery flexibilities in 2020 to 2021
- the data collection, attendance and payments timetable
- reclaiming routine funding audits

Introduction

This guidance explains the actions that further education (FE) and skills providers in England should take for the autumn term.

From autumn, FE providers should:

- resume delivery to full time in person for all students aged can benefit from their education and training in person
- follow the hierarchy of controls, which sets out what to do to minimise the risk of coronavirus (COVID-19) in education settings
- work with local authorities to contain local outbreaks

This guidance is for leaders and staff in:

- sixth form colleges
- general FE colleges
- independent training providers
- adult education providers
- adult community learning providers
- special post-16 institutions

Review your assessments if:

- it is no longer valid
- there has been a significant change

Having assessed your risk, you must work through the system of controls. These are the minimum requirements:

- address the risks identified
- ensure good hygiene practices
- ensure you receive the guidance and training to all your students
- include support for students with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND)

Ventilation

Poorly ventilated buildings are particularly conducive to virus spread.

HSE guidance sets out how good ventilation can help reduce the risk of airborne transmission. Ventilation, alone or in combination with other measures, has been proven helpful in minimising the risk of airborne transmission. Ventilation can:

- help ground ventilation can be maintained through improving general ventilation, particularly through natural ventilation (opening windows)
- ways you can maintain and increase the supply of fresh air, for example, by opening windows and doors, where safe to do so
- ways in improving the quality of ventilation, for example, by using equipment as well ventilated. this should at least meet current guidance on the ventilation of schools, colleges and other educational premises in Department of Education (DfE) guidance
- that where possible, poorly ventilated spaces should be adapted to improve ventilation or not used as teaching spaces
- that you should identify spaces where there is no provision of ventilation and restrict these spaces from single occupancy or very short durations

Estates

FE and skills providers should look to maximize the use of their sites and any associated outdoor space. If feasible, do this by using outdoor space for teaching and learning, and by using other local venues. Use of other venues should be on a shorter basis to welcome all students back.

Following a risk assessment, FE providers may determine that small adaptations to their site are required, such as additional wash basins. This will not be a requirement for all providers and should be based on local circumstances.

It is important that, prior to reopening for the autumn term, all the usual pre-term checks and preparations are made to premises. Where a site has been in buildings have been closed for a period of time, it is important for the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak, wider system degradation can occur due to lack of use, including, for example, stagnant water in pipes, and pests. Refer to the Health and Safety Executive's guidance on managing buildings and water systems.

Additional advice on safely reopening buildings can be found in the Chartered Institute of Building Services Engineers' guidance on reopening their buildings.

Measures within rooms and workshops

Maintaining a distance between people which is the maximum possible in the amount of time they are in a face to face contact lowers the risk of transmission. It is not feasible to do this in all circumstances, but it is important to do it as much as possible, taking into account the nature of the activity and what is reasonably possible. Ideally everyone should maintain 2 metres distance from each other whenever possible in indoor and outdoor environments.

Everyone should wash clean, direct face to face contact and remove this where possible. Face to face contact is most likely to be a concern for those who are in close contact with others for extended periods of time, and who are not able to maintain a distance from others for a significant period of time.

Students should also be supported to maintain distance and reduce staff and their peers wherever possible. Face to face contact is most likely to be a concern for complex needs and it is not feasible in some roles where space does not allow. Doing this where you can, and taken together with other measures, will help.

When staff or students cannot maintain distancing, the risk can also be reduced by minimizing the number of people they come into contact with.

Where possible, you should also consider how to reduce the number of people students come into contact with.

Measures elsewhere

Groups should be kept apart. Avoid prior gatherings such as meetings with more than one group.

When timetabling, groups should be kept apart and movement around the site should be minimised. If it is not possible to keep groups of students and staff entirely separate in lone site, you should avoid creating busy corridors, entrances and exits. Where it is possible to do so, you should also consider staggering start times, staggering surface time, lunchtime or assembly times and movement times.

You should also plan lower-risk staff spaces as well as and and used to keep staff apart from students. Staff should be encouraged to maintain distancing and to use face coverings in communal areas where it is not possible to do so.

If your institution operates commercial training environments such as hairdressing, beauty therapy, catering, or commercial kitchens, or operates in restaurants, they must comply with relevant sector guidance in working safely during coronavirus (COVID-19).

Where institutions have kitchens on site, these are able to operate as normal, but must comply with the guidance for food businesses during coronavirus (COVID-19).

Music

There may be an additional risk of infection in environments where you are singing or playing:

- wind instruments
- singing
- playing wind or brass instruments
- shouting

This applies even if students are at a distance.

Singing, wind and brass instruments can be undertaken in line with the guidance provided by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) on working safely during coronavirus (COVID-19).

Studies have indicated that it is the cumulative aerosol transmission from both speaking and singing that increases the risk of transmission. The risk of transmission is dependent on individual behaviour and factors that mitigate the potential aerosols risk. Colleges that undertake music education should follow the guidance for performing arts.

Music teaching in colleges including singing and playing wind and brass instruments in groups

Although singing and playing wind and brass instruments do not currently appear to be more risky than other ways of generating aerosols (such as breathing), all the aerosols that are produced during musical activities also can build from aerosol transmission with volume and with the combined number of people in a room. Risk of transmission from these activities can be reduced by using mitigations such as physical distancing, ventilation and considering, singing, wind and brass teaching on site safely.

Measures to take include:

- playing instruments and singing in groups should take place outdoors whenever possible, or in a well ventilated space, with windows and doors open
- if indoors, use a room with as much space as possible, for example, larger rooms with high ceilings and good ventilation to reduce the risk of aerosol transmission
- if playing indoors, limiting the numbers to account for ventilation of the room and the ability to maintain 2 metres distance. Refer to the guidance on ventilation. Leave 2 metres distance between the front of the musical instrument bell/bell cover as a conditioning and ventilation during the coronavirus outbreak
- if singing indoors, limiting the numbers to account for ventilation of the room and the ability to maintain 3 metres distance between people. Leave 3 metres distance between the front of the musical instrument bell/bell cover as per the guidance for wind and brass instruments (including saxophones) and direct the musical instrument bell/bell cover away from people. Consider the use of a screen to create a safe space playing a musical instrument, for example, a clear screen
- positioning the musicians so that the air from their instrument does not blow into another player
- use microphones where possible or encourage singing quietly

By considering and adjusting these additional risk mitigation measures, the risk can be reduced.

Performing arts

This section of the guidance is designed to help you minimise risk for performing arts provision during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak. You should read this section in conjunction with the guidance for working safely during coronavirus (COVID-19) in the performing arts, which is aimed at professional performers and non-professionals.

Performing arts courses, in normal circumstances, may involve a considerable amount of practical face to face teaching and assessment. Some providers may also have students who are preparing for a live or recorded performance ways of delivering course content that will enable students to develop skills safely on social distancing, so that all students can receive a high-quality academic and vocational education during the coronavirus outbreak.

For live performances, students should be encouraged to practice performing, effort should be made to maintain social distancing and consideration given to other additional ways to minimize the risk of transmission.

Teaching sessions

You should design sessions and rehearsals to avoid situations where students are unable to socially distance. If this is not possible, reduce any time that students are in close contact with other students.

Consider the number of students in each teaching session. Smaller teaching sessions class size would be where it is not possible to maintain social distancing. For example, you might consider teaching:

- class of, cuts to drama
- dance classes
- number of students involved in rehearsals

Where this is not possible, you should take mitigating actions to reduce the risk of transmission and ensure that students are able to socially distance in the rest of a larger room.

Where social distancing cannot be adhered to, consider the use of technology solutions to reduce interaction, for example to one-to-one tutorials, rehearsals and practice sessions. Use face coverings, PPE, and other safety equipment, such as aprons or visors, where it is practical to do so and where it does not increase the risk of transmission. Ensure that students, staff and any staff students not participating in that movement.

Ensure no one is participating in any rehearsal or performance if suffering with symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19) or when advised to self-isolate.

Equipment

Equipment, including instruments and props are integral to many performing arts courses. Provision should be made for students to have access to equipment.

- avoiding sharing equipment if possible
- if equipment has to be shared, ensure that there is increased handwashing before and after handling equipment
- regularly cleaning equipment and other shared instruments, desks, sound equipment, and other shared equipment
- limiting the handling of other shared items including music, scripts and learning materials

Note for guidance on working safely during coronavirus (COVID-19) in the performing arts for advice around equipment.

You should consider whether there is a low risk alternative. Where it is essential to share an audience, for assessment and teaching purposes, they should be seated in family groups, or groups of friends, and social distancing should be maintained between these groups. Ensure that colleagues who are in close contact with students are tested twice a week using lateral flow tests (asymptomatic testing) and that they follow the guidance for transmission - participants from aerosol and droplet transmission. You might consider providing a screen or other barrier between the audience and performers. Ensure that students are seated in family groups or groups of friends. Social distancing restriction should be applied in all aerosol performance areas and both the audience and performers should be encouraged to wear face coverings where possible.

Students should be prepared for the difficulties of performing without an audience or with a reduced audience, especially if the production is particularly intimate.

Physical activity in FE

You have the flexibility to decide how physical education, sport and physical activity should be organised in your setting, in line with the risk assessment outlook. Students should be encouraged to participate in competitive sport and equipment thoroughly cleaned between each use by different individual groups.

Sport England's guidance on sport and physical activity in the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak provides information on how sport and physical activity can be delivered in the government's tier system. Colleges must also provide team sports on the net and ensure that they follow sector specific guidance.

Outdoor sports should be prioritized where possible, and large indoor spaces used where it is not possible to maintain social distancing. Consideration of ventilation and hygiene practices will be important and may maintain fresh air ventilation through either opening doors and windows or ventilation systems. Ensure that students are able to socially distance from other people in the group, people travelling during journeys to and from the sports venue and in the government guidance for the use of and travel to and from, these facilities.

You should refer to details on:

- the UK national return of sport over restrictions and guidance from Sport England
- from organizations such as the Association for Physical Education and the Youth Sport Trust
- from Sport England on school partnerships and wider sports bodies

You are able to work with external coaches, clubs and organizations for provision of sport and physical activity, including competitive sport, subject to the risk assessment. You should consider the guidance that such organizations can operate within the wider protective measures.

Students who are shielding or self-isolating

We now know much more about coronavirus (COVID-19) and so in future, there will be no need for students who are shielding or self-isolating to be educated remotely/at home/not come into the FE provider. We expect students who are shielding to return full time (joint time for students attending joint time courses) in the autumn term.

A small number of students may not be able to attend because they are:

- a close contact of someone who has a vulnerability that means they are shielding
- a close contact of someone who has coronavirus (COVID-19)

Shielding advice is for adults and children who are clinically extremely at risk. This means that over the small number of students who will remain on the shielded patient list (SPL) in the autumn term, they will be in touch with their specialist or advisor regarding their current status and advice.

If either of the diseases in the local areas, (may people or family members) from that area, and have to be asked to stay temporarily at home during the period where rates remain high and therefore they may be temporarily unable to attend.

Students who are shielding or self-isolating will be able to continue to receive support of a specialist health professional are likely to discuss their care with their health professional. We will provide additional guidance on attendance.

You can find more advice from the Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health (RCPCH) on managing the return of children who are shielding.

If students are not able to attend because of public health advice, we expect providers to be able to provide remote education.

Students who are pregnant should follow the relevant guidance in pregnancy infection and prevalence.

Local outbreaks

The COVID-19 contact tracingers will be from national and local partners and will be in touch with the local authority and local health protection team. We will work a panel of local partners that will be responsible for ensuring local relevant authorities will decide which measures to implement to help control the spread.

All decisions relating to education provision in a geographical area will be made by the local authority in consultation with the Department for Education (DfE), Public Health England (PHE) and Public Health Scotland (PHS) and will support appropriate authorities and colleagues settings to follow the health advice. Local authorities will be able to advise on the measures that should be put in place to minimize the risk of transmission and ensure that colleagues are supported.

Read the government's approach to managing local coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreaks.

You should develop a strong contingency plan for remote education provision, including how you will ensure that students who are self-isolating or shielding (clinically, or if because they are shielding) are able to access high quality education that some provision cannot be delivered remotely (for example, occupational therapy or practical skills).

The contingency plan should include:

- how you will ensure that students, from a single cohort bubble to a stay at home, to a coronavirus whole school lockdown, and how students are supported to remain at home due to a local lockdown.

Transport

Social distancing has significantly reduced available public transport capacity. This section sets out how you can support students getting to and from FE and skills providers.

The guidance on transport for schools and other places of education provides information on how students can travel to and from education safely. Students and young people aged 16 to 19 years old should be encouraged to walk or cycle. Also include information on the resources you should take when you provide transport to students.

You are advised to work with your local transport authority to identify where it is necessary to provide additional services to accommodate students who are not allowed to travel on public transport. Local authorities will be able to provide information on the local transport services and support available to students, including children and young people in their region to return to school and FE providers. Local authorities will be able to provide information on the local transport services and support available to students, including children and young people (that local transport authorities) has been asked to work with local education providers to ensure that students who are able to safely return young people can return to their education in full.

Dedicated FE and skills provider transport

Students or dedicated transport services do not mix with the general public or other passengers. Students should be encouraged to walk or cycle to college resources. Further, wider transmission risk is likely to be lower.

From the autumn term, local authorities will not be required to uniformly apply the 'no more than 15 miles' rule for home to school/college transport for children of compulsory school age. Local authorities will be able to provide transport services whenever possible. This will help both to minimize disruption to education and to ensure that students can continue to travel safely. Responding to students and staff feedback, the Department for Education is testing college and heating tracks into the community each day.

Local authorities will be able to provide transport services for students who need to:

- travel to/from a college or other place of education
- attend a school
- services that are used by different students on different days
- services that are used by students who are vulnerable and disabilities (SEND)

The precise approach that you take will need to reflect the range of resources that are necessary for the transport provision.

Speak to your transport provider to confirm the approach they are adopting. Where it follows the guidance, it will be able to provide, where possible, the:

- social distancing should be maintained within vehicles
- enhanced cleaning regimes
- organised queuing and boarding arrangements
- students should clean their hands before boarding transport and again on arrival
- the use of face coverings, where appropriate
- additional cleaning of vehicles is put in place
- ventilation and fresh air circulation in the vehicle is maximized, particularly through opening windows and using vents

Students who are eligible for free school meals (FSM) England (FSM), we recommend that you provide them with a cashless payment system. This could be through a loading on dedicated school and college transport card or a system of the type of the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) Universal Credit card. Covering to avoid the need for a face covering is a breach of the law and covers your nose and mouth.

Students who are shielding or self-isolating

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Wider public transport

In many areas, students make extensive use of the wider public transport system, particularly public buses, to travel to education. Public transport capacity will continue to be constrained in the autumn term. Its use, particularly in peak times, should be kept to an absolute minimum.

Where possible, consider staggered start times to enable more journeys to take place outside of peak hours.

Encourage staff and students to walk or cycle where possible.

Refer students and staff using public transport to the safer travel guidance for passengers. Remind them that it is the law that they wear a face covering when travelling in England on a public bus, coach, train, tram, or other forms of public transport, unless they are exempt. See guidance on face coverings for more information.

Where you have concerns regarding students' ability to access public transport routes, speak to your local authority to consider what alternative safe transport arrangements could be put in place.

Work with your local authority to consider the transport needs of students with SEND and those with an EHC plan.

Moving between settings

Consider whether you need any additional processes in place for students who regularly:

- attend more than one site or different providers
- move between a training provider and workplace as part of an apprenticeship

As apprenticeship delivery can be extremely flexible, it is up to you, the employer and the end point assessment organisation to agree on how apprenticeship training is delivered, and how assessments are undertaken. You should consider whether you want to take advantage of more than one delivery method to balance minimising any risks from coronavirus (COVID-19) with providing a full educational experience. For example, a block release delivery method may be better at reducing movement between sites.

See guidance on providing apprenticeships during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak.

Temporary staff and visitors

Consider how to minimise the number of visitors to your setting where possible. Supply staff and visitors such as sports coaches must follow your arrangements for managing and minimising risk.

To help you minimise the numbers of temporary staff entering your premises, consider:

- using longer assignments with supply staff
- agreeing to a minimum number of hours across the academic year

Educational visits

We continue to advise against domestic (UK) overnight and overseas educational visits. This advice remains under review.

In the autumn term, you can resume non-overnight domestic educational visits. These trips should include any trips for students with SEND connected with their preparation for adulthood (for example, workplace visits, travel training). This should be done in line with protective measures. As normal, you should undertake full and thorough risk assessments in relation to all educational visits to ensure they can be done safely. As part of this risk assessment, you will need to consider what control measures need to be used and ensure you are aware of wider advice on visiting indoor and outdoor venues. You should consult the health and safety guidance on educational visits when considering visits.

The Association of British Insurers (ABI) has produced information on travel insurance implications following the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak. If you have any further questions about your cover or would like further reassurance, contact your travel insurance provider.

System of controls

This is the set of actions you must take. They are grouped into prevention and response to any infection.

Prevention

1) Minimise contact with individuals who are unwell by ensuring that those who have coronavirus (COVID-19) symptoms, or who have someone in their household who does, do not attend the setting.

2) Where recommended, use of face coverings in FE settings.

3) Clean hands thoroughly more often than usual.

4) Ensure good respiratory hygiene by promoting the 'catch it, bin it, kill it' approach.

5) Introduce enhanced cleaning, including cleaning frequently touched surfaces often, using standard products such as detergents.

6) Minimise contact between individuals and maintain social distancing wherever possible.

7) Where necessary, wear appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE).

Numbers 1 to 5 must be in place in all settings, all the time.

Number 6 must be properly considered and settings must put in place measures to maintain social distancing where possible.

Number 7 applies in specific circumstances.

Response to any infection

8) Engage with the NHS Test and Trace process.

9) Manage confirmed cases of coronavirus (COVID-19) amongst the education setting community.

10) Contain any outbreak by following local health protection team advice.

Numbers 8 to 10 must be followed in every case where they are relevant.

Prevention

You must put these actions in place to help prevent the risk of infection.

1. Minimise contact with individuals who are unwell by ensuring that those who have coronavirus (COVID-19) symptoms, or who have someone in their household who does, or who have been advised by NHS Test and Trace to stay at home, do not attend the setting. Individuals formally advised by NHS Test and Trace as a close contact should also self-isolate.

Ensuring that students, staff and other adults do not come into your site if they have coronavirus (COVID-19) symptoms, or have tested positive in the last 10 days is essential to reduce the risk in education settings and further drive down transmission of coronavirus (COVID-19). Make sure anyone developing those symptoms while on site is sent home. Individuals formally advised by NHS Test and Trace as a close contact should also self-isolate.

All settings must follow this process and ensure all staff are aware of it.

If anyone on your site becomes unwell with a new, continuous cough or a high temperature, or has a loss of, or change in, their normal sense of taste or smell (anosmia), they must be sent home and advised to follow guidance for households with possible or confirmed coronavirus (COVID-19) infection. This sets out that they should self-isolate for at least 10 days and should arrange to have a test to see if they have coronavirus (COVID-19).

If they have tested positive whilst not experiencing symptoms but develop symptoms during the isolation period, they should restart the 10 day isolation period from the day they develop symptoms.

Other members of their household (including any siblings) should self-isolate for 14 days from when the symptomatic person first had symptoms.

If a student is awaiting collection, they should be moved, if possible, to a room where they can be isolated behind a closed door, depending on the age and needs of the person. Ideally, a window should be opened for ventilation. If it is not possible to isolate them, move them to an area which is at least 2 metres away from other people.

If they need to go to the bathroom while waiting to be collected, they should use a separate bathroom if possible. The bathroom must be cleaned and disinfected using standard cleaning products before being used by anyone else.

PPE must be worn by staff caring for the individual while they await collection if a distance of 2 metres cannot be maintained (such as for a young person with complex needs). More information on PPE use can be found in the safe working in education, childcare and children's social care settings, including the use of personal protective equipment (PPE) guidance.

For more information on how to care for a symptomatic student while protecting the welfare of other students and staff, read the guidance on isolation for residential educational settings.

As is usual practice, in an emergency, call 999 if someone is seriously ill or injured or their life is at risk. Anyone with coronavirus (COVID-19) symptoms should not visit the GP, pharmacy, urgent care centre or a hospital except in an emergency situation.

Any members of staff who have helped someone with symptoms and any students who have been in close contact with them do not need to go home to self-isolate unless:

- they develop symptoms themselves (in which case, they should arrange a test etc.)
- the symptomatic person subsequently tests positive or
- they have been requested to do so by NHS Test and Trace

Everyone must wash their hands thoroughly for 20 seconds with soap and running water or use hand sanitiser after any contact with someone who is unwell. The area around the person with symptoms must be cleaned after they have left to reduce the risk of passing the infection on to other people. See the COVID-19: cleaning of non-healthcare settings guidance.

Public Health England is clear that routinely taking the temperature of students is not recommended as this is an unreliable method for identifying coronavirus (COVID-19).

2. Where recommended, use of face coverings in FE settings.

From 1 September, new advice will apply to the use of face coverings by staff and students in further education settings.

Returning to education is vital for a student's education and for wellbeing. Time out of education is detrimental for their cognitive and academic development, particularly for disadvantaged learners, therefore we need to ensure all students can return to education sooner rather than later.

This guidance is not mandatory and any legal exemptions that apply to the wearing of face coverings in shops and on public transport also apply to this new advice.

There is additional guidance available about wearing face coverings in public spaces where social distancing is not always possible.

General approach to face coverings

The government is not recommending face coverings are necessary for education settings generally because a system of controls, which are applicable to all education environments, provides additional mitigating measures.

Further education providers will have the discretion to require the use of face coverings in communal areas where social distancing cannot be safely managed if they believe that it is right in their particular circumstances.

You might decide to recommend the wearing of face coverings for students and staff in specific communal settings where the layout of the setting makes it difficult to maintain social distancing when staff and students are moving around the premises (for example, in corridors).

Consider permitting the use of face coverings where, on top of the hygiene measures and the system of controls, it would provide additional confidence to students to support a full return to education in the autumn term.

Based on current evidence and the mitigating measures that FE providers are putting in place, face coverings will not generally be necessary in the traditional classroom setting, even where social distancing is not possible. There is greater use of the system of controls for minimising risk, including keeping in small and consistent groups, and greater scope for physical distancing by staff within classrooms. Face coverings would have a negative impact on learning and teaching and so their use in the classroom should be avoided.

Outside of the traditional classroom setting, consider recommending the use of face coverings where:

- teaching settings are more reflective of, or are a workplace environment, for example, a restaurant that may be open to the public
- it is a requirement of the workplace or other indoor setting and where the teaching is taking place in an area in which students or staff are likely to come into contact with other members of the public (complying with relevant coronavirus (COVID-19) sector guidance)

Where local restrictions apply

You should take additional precautionary measures in local restriction areas, where the transmission of the virus is high. In FE settings in these areas, face coverings should be worn by adults and students when moving around, such as in corridors and communal areas where social distancing is difficult to maintain. It will not usually be necessary to wear face coverings in the classroom, where protective measures already mean the risks are lower, and they may inhibit teaching and learning.

In the event of new local restrictions being imposed, you will need to communicate quickly and clearly to staff, students, parents and carers that the new arrangements require the use of face coverings in certain circumstances.

Exemptions

Some individuals are exempt from wearing face coverings. For example, people who:

- cannot put on, wear or remove a face covering because of a physical or mental illness or impairment, or disability
- are speaking to or providing assistance to someone who relies on lip reading, clear sound or facial expression to communicate

The same exemptions will apply in education settings, and we would expect teachers and other staff to be sensitive to those needs.

Access to face coverings

It is reasonable to assume that staff and students will now have access to face coverings due to their increasing use in wider society. Public Health England has published guidance on how to make a simple face covering.

However, you should have a small contingency supply available for people who:

- are struggling to access a face covering
- are unable to use their face covering as it's become soiled or unsafe
- have forgotten their face covering

No-one should be excluded from education on the grounds that they are not wearing a face covering.

Safe wearing and removal of face coverings

You should have a process for removing face coverings when those who use face coverings arrive and when face coverings are worn on your premises in certain circumstances. This process should be communicated clearly to students and staff.

Safe wearing of face coverings requires the:

- cleaning of hands before and after touching, including to remove or put them on
- safe storage of them in individual, sealable plastic bags between use

Where a face covering becomes damp, it should not be worn and the face covering should be replaced carefully.

Students must be instructed to:

- not touch the front of their face covering during use or when removing it
- dispose of temporary face coverings in a 'black bag' waste bin or, where appropriate a recycling bin (if safely bagged and left for 72 hours out of reach)
- place reusable face coverings in a plastic bag they can take home with them
- wash their hands again before heading to their classroom

Guidance on safe working in education, childcare and children's social care provides more advice.

3. Clean hands thoroughly, more often than usual.

Coronavirus (COVID-19) is an easy virus to kill when it is on skin. This can be done with soap and running water or hand sanitiser. You must ensure that students clean their hands regularly, including

- when they arrive at your site
- when they return from breaks
- when they change rooms
- before and after eating

Regular and thorough hand cleaning is going to be needed for the foreseeable future.

Consider:

- whether your site has enough hand washing or hand sanitiser 'stations' available so that all students and staff can clean their hands regularly
- supervision and help with hand sanitiser use given risks around ingestion for students with complex needs - skin-friendly skin cleaning wipes can be used as an alternative
- building these routines into your site culture, supported by behaviour expectations, and helping ensure younger students and those with complex needs understand the need to follow them

4. Ensure good respiratory hygiene by promoting the 'catch it, bin it, kill it' approach.

The 'catch it, bin it, kill it' approach continues to be very important, so education settings must ensure that they have enough tissues and bins available to support students and staff to follow this routine. As with hand cleaning, you must ensure those with complex needs are helped to get this right, and all students understand that this is now part of how your site operates.

Some students with complex needs will struggle to maintain as good respiratory hygiene as their peers, for example, those who spit uncontrollably or use saliva as a sensory stimulant. This should be considered in risk assessments in order to support these students and the staff working with them and is not a reason to deny these students face to face education.

Further education providers have the discretion to recommend the wearing of face coverings in the communal areas of the education setting. See the face covering section for more information.

5. Introduce enhanced cleaning, including cleaning frequently touched surfaces often, using standard products such as detergents.

Consider:

- putting in place a cleaning schedule that ensures cleaning is generally enhanced and includes:
  - more frequent cleaning of rooms and shared areas that are used by different groups
  - frequently touched surfaces being cleaned more often than normal
- that toilets will need to be cleaned regularly and students must be encouraged to clean their hands thoroughly after using the toilet - different groups being allocated their own toilet blocks could be considered but is not a requirement if the site does not allow for it

Public Health England has published revised guidance for cleaning non-healthcare settings. This contains advice on the general cleaning required in addition to the existing advice on cleaning those settings when there is a suspected case.

6. Minimise contact between individuals and maintain social distancing wherever possible.

Minimising contacts and mixing between people reduces transmission of coronavirus (COVID-19). This is important in all contexts, and you must consider how to implement this. You must do everything possible to minimise contacts and mixing while delivering a full programme of study. Where possible you should maintain 2 metres between people.

The overarching principle to apply is reducing the number of contacts between students and staff. This can be achieved through keeping groups separate (in 'bubbles') and through maintaining the distance between individuals. These are not alternative options and both measures will help, but the balance between them will change depending on the:

- age groups of students
- layout of the building
- feasibility of keeping distinct groups separate while offering a broad programme of learning

How to group students

Consistent groups reduce the risk of transmission by limiting the number of students and staff in contact with each other to only those within the group.

Maintaining distinct groups or 'bubbles' that do not mix makes it quicker and easier in the event of a positive case to identify those who may need to self-isolate, and keep that number as small as possible.

You should explore how you can reduce contacts between individuals and groups, and how to maintain distance where possible. All settings are different, and some measures will be more appropriate for certain age groups, or more easily manageable in certain buildings.

Where 'class-sized' groups are not possible in order to deliver the full programme of study, or to manage the practical logistics within and around the site, other measures from the system of controls become even more important. We strongly recommend that, as a minimum, you plan to keep your year groups or cohorts of students separate from each other during the day. You will need to think about whether you can group students into smaller groupings and still deliver a full programme of study. However, there is no set requirement to make cohorts smaller than a normal class size. By limiting contact between different groups, this means that if one person in a group tests positive for coronavirus (COVID-19), you can be confident that they have only had close contact with some or all of that group, rather than the whole year group. These are considerations you will need to make when reaching your decision.

Once groups are established, they should be kept apart and logistics such as start and finish times, lunch and break times, should be reviewed to ensure this.

Although passing briefly in the corridor or external areas is low risk, you should avoid creating very busy corridors or entrances and exits. You should also consider staggered break times and lunch times (and time for cleaning surfaces in the canteens/restaurants between groups). Avoiding big gatherings is strongly recommended, such as meetings with more than one group you are otherwise trying to keep apart.

Both the approaches of separating groups and maintaining distance are not 'all or nothing' options and will still bring benefits even if implemented partially. You may keep students in their groups for most of the time, but also allow mixing into wider groups for specialist teaching, wrap around care and transport. Siblings may also be in different groups. Endeavouring to keep these groups at least partially separate and minimising contacts between students will still offer public health benefits as it reduces the network of possible direct transmission.

We recognise that some staff will need to move between groups, for example, teachers delivering maths and English for students studying a broad range of vocational and academic subjects. You should take steps to minimise the movement of staff between groups where possible, but if they need to teach multiple groups, they should adhere to broader protective measures such as maintaining distance from students where possible.

7. Where necessary, wear appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE).

The majority of staff in education settings will not require PPE beyond what they would normally need for their work. PPE is only needed in a very small number of cases, including where a student:

- becomes ill with coronavirus (COVID-19) symptoms while at an educational setting, and only then if a distance of 2 metres cannot be maintained
- already has routine intimate care needs that involve the use of PPE, in which case the same PPE should continue to be used

Read the guidance on safe working in education, childcare and children's social care for more information about preventing and controlling infection. This includes when and how PPE should be used, what type of PPE to use, and how to source it.

Face coverings are not classified as PPE (personal protective equipment). PPE is used in a limited number of settings to protect wearers against hazards and risks, such as surgical masks or respirators used in medical and industrial settings. A face covering is a covering of any type which covers your nose and mouth.

Response to any infection

These are the steps you must take to respond to any infection. You must follow each step.

8. Engage with the NHS Test and Trace process.

You must ensure you understand the NHS Test and Trace process. You must ensure that staff members, students, parents and carers understand that they will need to be ready and willing to:

- book a test if they are displaying symptoms - staff and students must not come onto your site if they have symptoms, and must be sent home to self-isolate if they develop them on your premises
- provide details of anyone they have been in close contact with if they were to test positive for coronavirus (COVID-19) or if asked by NHS Test and Trace
- self-isolate if they have been in close contact with someone who develops coronavirus (COVID-19) symptoms or someone who tests positive for coronavirus (COVID-19)

Anyone who displays symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19) can and should get a test. Tests can be booked online through the NHS website, or ordered by telephone via NHS 119 for those without access to the internet. Essential workers, which includes anyone involved in education or childcare, have priority access to testing.

The government will ensure that it is as easy as possible to get a test through a wide range of routes that are locally accessible, fast and convenient. We will release more details on new testing avenues as and when they become available and will work with you, so you understand the quickest and easiest way to get a test.

FE providers will have access to a small number of home testing kits that they can give directly to students or a parent or carer of a student who has developed symptoms on site, or staff who have developed symptoms on site, where they think providing one will significantly increase the likelihood of them getting tested. Advice will be provided alongside these kits.

You should ask students and staff to inform you immediately of the results of a test.

If someone begins to self-isolate because they have symptoms similar to coronavirus (COVID-19) and they get a test which delivers a negative result, they feel well and no longer have symptoms similar to coronavirus (COVID-19), they can stop self-isolating. They could still have another virus, such as a cold or flu, in which case it is still best to avoid contact with other people until they are better. Other members of their household can stop self-isolating.

If someone tests positive, they should follow the guidance for households with possible or confirmed coronavirus (COVID-19) infection and must continue to self-isolate for at least 10 days from the onset of their symptoms and then return onsite only if they do not have symptoms other than a cough or loss or change in sense of smell/taste. This is because a cough or anosmia can last for several weeks once the infection has gone. The 10 day period starts from the day when they first became ill. If they still have a high temperature, they should keep self-isolating until their temperature returns to normal. Other members of their household should continue self-isolating for the full 14 days.

9. Manage confirmed cases of coronavirus (COVID-19) amongst the education setting community.

You must take swift action when you become aware that someone who has attended your premises has tested positive for coronavirus (COVID-19). You can contact the dedicated advice service introduced by Public Health England (PHE) and delivered by the NHS Business Services Authority. This can be reached by calling the DfE Helpline on 0800 046 8687 and selecting option 1 for advice on the action to take in response to a positive case. You will be put through to a team of advisers who will inform you what action is needed based on the latest public health advice.

The advice service will carry out a rapid risk assessment to confirm who has been in close contact with the person during the period that they were infectious, and ensure they are asked to self-isolate. If, following triage, further expert advice is required the adviser will escalate your call to the PHE local health protection team.

The advice service (or PHE local health protection team if escalated) will work with you to guide you through the actions you need to take. Based on their advice, you must send home those people who have been in close contact with the person who has tested positive, advising them to self-isolate for 14 days since they were last in close contact with that person when they were infectious. Close contact means:

- direct close contacts - face to face contact with an infected individual for any length of time, within 1 metre, including being coughed on, a face to face conversation, or unprotected physical contact (skin to skin)
- proximity contacts - extended close contact (within 1 to 2 metres for more than 15 minutes) with an infected individual
- travelling in a small vehicle, like a car, with an infected person

The advice service for PVI local authority protection team (Facebook) will:

- provide information, advice and guidance to PVI local authority staff who are doing, or, are considering, a record of disclosure and barring service (DBS) check and include a check in system for anyone using commercial or shared work space in a PVI setting. This will include providing advice on how PVI local authority and school students to ensure they have the right to work with and be in day to day shift to keep definitive records in a way that is overly burdensome.

A bespoke advice and guidance service will be provided by the PVI advice service on PVI local authority protection team (Facebook), to ensure parents/carers, PVI local authority staff, children and young people have access to accurate information and guidance.

Household members of these contacts who are sent home do not need to self-isolate unless they develop symptoms themselves. Household members who subsequently develop symptoms themselves, should follow the stay home guide to self-isolate developing symptoms themselves within their 10-day isolation period. Household members who do not develop symptoms, can end their self-isolation after 14 days.

- If someone who is self-isolating because they have been in close contact with someone who has tested positive for coronavirus (COVID-19) develops a fever, headaches, a persistent cough or loss of taste or smell, they should immediately stay home and self-isolate and book a test to find out if they have coronavirus (COVID-19) within the relevant stay home guidance.

Anyone who is self-isolating because they are not from their setting immediately, and must isolate for a set period of time, or longer if their symptoms persist, could wear the self-isolation section as after the original 14 day isolation period, they will be able to return to their setting, as long as they have not tested positive and have no symptoms. Stay home guidance for households with possible or confirmed coronavirus (COVID-19) infection.

In some cases, self-isolation may be difficult for children and young people in some of their students and students of home as a precautionary measure, perhaps the child or young person is in a high risk category, or perhaps they live with someone who is in a high risk category, or perhaps they live in multi-generational households, whose who choose based on cases with poor setting will and generally, people who are not tested or not considered or except or the school of health protection team.

Education and training delivery

What we expect of FE providers

From this autumn, we expect you to resume delivery so that students of all ages can benefit from their education and training. This is the main aspect are to:

- provide a full offer to deliver planned hours of all ages from your normal term time, including 16 to 19 study programmes, apprenticeships and adult education
- implement the safety measures, recognising that this may be complemented by other measures such as a phased return to face-to-face teaching practice
- ensure that you plan for students' knowledge and skills early in the autumn term to identify any gaps in their learning and to support their progress
- put in place additional support for vulnerable and disadvantaged young people, including identifying and supporting those who have special educational needs (SEND)
- identify and put in place plans to manage any safeguarding concerns

Mode of delivery

Some providers delayed aspects of provision remotely prior to national lockdown and this has been considered a reasonable response. We expect this may continue in the new academic year.

An increase in the use of remote learning is reasonable provided that:

- it complements the overall offer and does not undermine the quality of provision or students' access to learning
- it is not delivered to students who are physically present in a setting, 16 to 19 students (rather than in exceptional circumstances such as when students are self-isolating) and students who are physically present in a setting receive education
- approaches used for building knowledge and skills are appropriate to meet the course aims and intent

Adult students have always been offered a wider variety of delivery modes. Providers of 16 to 19 study programmes, who had to close their premises due to COVID-19 lockdown, are also expected to provide the right balance between on-site and remote delivery for adult students in order to provide high quality education and training.

This is in line with the government's ambition to make the different ways that remote provision could meet the 16 to 19 funding regulations. If you deliver remotely, you must:

- support staff and students to access and make effective use of digital technology, including providing training and guidance on how to use digital resources and platforms
- take account of the skills and confidence of your teachers in using digital technology to deliver remote learning, including providing training and ensuring that staff are confident in using the digital platforms selected
- provide students with clear expectations on remote education, so they know what is expected of them in terms of participation, and how they can access support if they encounter difficulties with participation, particularly consideration given to how to support disadvantaged students and students with special educational needs
- take account of digital poverty and technical issues that students may need to engage and learn remotely and safely
- be consistent and adaptive to the wellbeing and welfare of both students and the teachers

Support for young people who are unable to access remote digital education

Extra demonstrate programme

You can apply to support from other schools and colleges with a proven track record in using remote digital education. Providers who have demonstrated high quality remote digital education will be able to provide support including webinars and training on:

- the effective use of online teaching platforms
- digital safety
- supporting the wellbeing of pupils with SEND
- promoting student and teacher wellbeing during remote learning

Developing Children and Young people

The Education and Training Foundation (ETF) offers support for teachers to develop their digital skills. The ETF has created a digital skills framework for teachers to assess and develop their digital skills.

- motivating and engaging students in a virtual learning environment
- adapting content quickly to meet students' needs
- different pedagogical approaches to online delivery

The Education Training Foundation is able to provide internet and devices, ETF's essential digital skills framework development programme can help teachers develop digital skills. The online learning modules support topics such as:

- using devices
- installing software
- using the internet
- using Microsoft 365

The ETF has developed a guide for FE staff on Effective and essential digital skills training to support teachers. The guide identifies and provides links to EdTech and essential digital skills training modules on the wellness and safety of staff and students, the use of digital technology to support teaching, the developing the digital skills, and understanding and preparing for teaching and learning online.

The Education platform includes free courses to develop skills to effectively deliver remote learning. These include:

- how to teach online
- blended learning essentials
- use of technology in a remote classroom

Microsoft Teams and Google are possible free training to help teachers use these platforms to deliver remote learning. Microsoft Teams education is subject to a fee.

Digital curriculum content and resources

Ofsted has published a guide for FE providers of Ofsted's and essential digital skills training to support teachers. The guide identifies and provides links to EdTech and essential digital skills training modules on the wellness and safety of staff and students, the use of digital technology to support teaching, the developing the digital skills, and understanding and preparing for teaching and learning online.

The Education platform includes free courses to develop skills to effectively deliver remote learning. These include:

- how to teach online
- blended learning essentials
- use of technology in a remote classroom

Microsoft Teams and Google are possible free training to help teachers use these platforms to deliver remote learning. Microsoft Teams education is subject to a fee.

Digital curriculum content and resources

Ofsted has published a guide for FE providers of independent qualifications and national standards for Educational subject areas:

- construction
- digital and IT
- education and childcare
- health and social care
- hairdressing

They also provide a wide range of courses for FE relating to vocational and academic subjects and skills.

The Standard Learning Curriculum for FE specific resources across a range of subjects and levels. There is free access these resources.

BeneficiaRies UK is developing a set of digital resources. This includes:

- A career pathway tool, which provides resources to support students to think about their future
- A CV tool, which allows students to create, provide short video interactions and features.

The College Collaborative Fund is funding several sector projects to develop high quality digital curriculum content and resources. This content will become available from the autumn.

Support from providers

Visit your provider association's website for resources and support on remote and blended learning:

- Association of Colleges
- Association of Employment and Learning Providers
- Association of Independent Learning Providers
- Ofsted

Workforce

We expect that most staff will be able to attend work.

All staff working in the school/ Nursery/ Pre-school The contribute to minimise the risks of transmission. Following the system of controls will reduce the risks to all staff significantly.

Explain to staff the measures you are putting in place to reduce risks.

Discuss any concerns individually. Have conversations with individual members of them. We encourage providers to be flexible and try to accommodate additional requests if appropriate.

Staff who are clinically extremely vulnerable

Rates of community transmission of coronavirus (COVID-19) are now reduced to levels below those of the previous lockdown. Shielding has been paused since 1 August and the government has advised that people who were previously shielding will continue. Therefore, we advise that those who are clinically extremely vulnerable (CEV) should be able to return to work safely, as the risk of coronavirus (COVID-19) transmission is significantly reduced and the risk of transmission.

The clinically extremely vulnerable should now follow the same guidance as the clinically vulnerable population, taking particular care to practice frequent hand washing and to follow the rules of keeping of frequently touched areas to the lowest advantages.

People who live with those who are clinically extremely vulnerable can attend the workplace.

Staff who are clinically vulnerable

Clinically vulnerable staff can return to work. While in the workplace, they should follow the system of controls to minimise the risks of transmission. Please follow the system of controls to minimise the risks of transmission.

Explain to staff the measures you are putting in place to reduce risks.

Discuss any concerns individually. Have conversations with individual members of them. We encourage providers to be flexible and try to accommodate additional requests if appropriate.

Pregnant women are in the 'clinically vulnerable' category, and are generally advised to follow the same guidance as the clinically vulnerable population. Pregnant should contact their occupational health provider or GP in addition to the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999.

Specifically about pregnancy, the Health and Safety Executive has published a guidance on pregnancy and other workers at work.

We are currently working with the Department of Health and Social Care and Public Health England to provide further information and advice on risk assessment, gender and/or underlying health conditions working in the education sector. If appropriate, we will update our guidance.

Staff who may otherwise be at increased risk from coronavirus (COVID-19)

Some people with the same characteristics may be at comparatively increased risk of severe outcomes from coronavirus (COVID-19), as set out in the COVID-19 Disease Control Guidance. Some of these factors are beyond the control of the workplace and are outlined in the system of controls, and are subject. The reasons for the disparities are complex and there is ongoing research to understand and minimise the risks associated with these factors.

People who live with those who have comparatively increased risks from coronavirus (COVID-19) can attend the workplace.

Health and safety, and equalities duties

You have a legal obligation to protect your employees, and others, from harm. Health and safety and equalities duties are not a barrier to reopening. We need equalities duties to be at the forefront of our minds.

General information on how to make a workplace COVID-secure, including how to appoint a coronavirus (COVID-19) risk assessment and implement the safety guidance on opening safely.

Employers have a legal duty to consult their employees on health and safety in good faith. Employers are required to involve students in discussions around health and safety in the workplace, and to consider their views when making decisions relating to health and safety.

Following the system of controls will mitigate the risks of coronavirus (COVID-19) to students and staff.

Emergency treatment and first aid

Emergency treatment, for example, provision of first aid, should be provided and given accordingly in the event of an emergency. This means that people do not have to stay 2 metres apart if emergency assistance is required.

People involved in the provision of emergency treatment should give particular attention to hygiene measures immediately afterwards, including washing hands.

Recruitment

You can continue recruiting members of staff.

You can refer people to the Sales Operations Further programme. This programme supports the recruitment of industry professionals to teaching roles in the FE sector.

If you are recruiting English, maths or SENDI teachers, you can apply for a service-delivery teacher education (SDT) grant.

Teacher training

You should continue initial teacher education (ITE), including teacher training placements, where possible.

Supporting staff

Employers have a duty of care to their employees, and this extends to their mental health.

Because some staff may be particularly anxious about returning, you may need extra systems in place to support staff wellbeing. Read about the active mental health support for teachers and schools.

Supporting vulnerable young people

Vulnerable young people are those who:

- are assessed as being in need under section 17 of the Children Act 1989, including those who are being supported in a child in need plan, a child protection plan or who are a looked-after child
- have an EHC plan and following a risk assessment it is deemed that their education, health and care needs can be safely met in education settings
- have been assessed as otherwise being vulnerable by local authorities (including children's social care services). This includes those who are receiving or are in need of support from children's social care services
- adopted children
- care leavers (including 'staying' and 'adopted', education or training (NEET))
- those living in temporary accommodation
- young carers
- others at the provider and local authority's discretion

Attendance

All students, including vulnerable young people, should attend FE settings in the new academic year.

You should remind students that they must attend unless they:

- are ill
- are self-isolating, have tested positive or have a household member having a suspected or confirmed case
- are shielding, unless they are those who have tested positive based on guidance from local authorities

It is important to keep an accurate record of attendance should there be a positive case or a case where there is a concern that a person may be at risk of contracting coronavirus (COVID-19) and need to self-isolate.

If vulnerable young people do not attend, follow up with their parents, carers, social worker or other relevant agencies. Ensure that you record the reason for the school holiday breaks (Ofsted other children) or personal advisor (if the young person is in care).

If vulnerable young people cannot attend education settings, for example, because they are self-isolating, they should be provided with remote education. Local authorities may need to work with providers to ensure this is in place. You should also maintain contact with personal advisers and virtual school heads to ensure that they are able to support the young people.

In case of any vulnerable children, you should continue to prioritise vulnerable young people for on site provision.

Transition to FE

Transition is particularly important for September because new and FE providers will need to be able to understand their students' needs such as skills to fill gaps.

Continue to work with schools and local authorities to support transitions. This includes sharing and exchanging information on vulnerable students. Update children safe in education with new responsibilities for sharing information.

Plan transition programmes that provide additional mental health and wellbeing support. Use external support where necessary and provides. See the Covid-19 recovery: mental health and wellbeing support.

You should assess which students need additional support and plan in advance to support catch up. This is supported through the 16 to 19 tuition fund. For students who are in their first year of study, it may be helpful to provide a bridging course to support students to develop the skills required for study.

Consider extra support for students of high risk of being NEET. A trusted adviser can help young people to sustain engagement, overcome barriers and re-engage if disengaged.

Supporting students with special education needs (SEND)

General FE settings

We will continue to monitor the need for the temporary changes to the law on EHC assessments and plans. The changes are provided in the Coronavirus Act and are currently in force until 25 September 2020.

Local authorities will continue to work with providers, health or without EHC plans to ensure that children and young people with SEND receive the support they need without individual risk assessment and their needs would be more safely met at home.

Use risk assessments to identify who extra support students with EHC plans need to attend education settings. Local authorities and providers should work as well as parents or carers and children and young people.

You will need to give students with SEND appropriate support. This could include:

- extra learning support assistance
- working specially with such and young people in different cohorts

If access to workplace or community settings is limited for students at the start of the academic year, it may be necessary to provide a mix of on site and remote education. Local authorities and providers will need to take a view on this and into earlier terms.

Some young people with SEND, whether they have an EHC plan or not, will need extra preparation for a return to full time attendance. This might include:

- visits to the school
- social stories
- other approaches you would normally use to help a young person with SEND who has spent some time out of education to return full time

Special post 16 institutions

From autumn 2020, all students should return to the majority of their planned hours of study. Special post 16 institutions (SPI) should follow the guidance in Coronavirus (COVID-19): operating schools and colleges in extraordinary circumstances (for example, those under active special care are relevant to self-isolation/contact).

SEND temporary legislative changes

From 17 May to 25 July, we will, 25 of the Children and Families Act 2014 was temporarily amended by the Coronavirus Act 2020 to ease the burden on local authorities. Local authorities will continue to work with providers to ensure special educational and health care provision is in place. To ensure that young people with SEND receive the support they need without individual risk assessment, local authorities will continue to work with providers to ensure that they are able to take into earlier terms.

Some young people with SEND, whether they have an EHC plan or not, will need extra preparation for a return to full time attendance. This might include:

- visits to the school
- social stories
- other approaches you would normally use to help a young person with SEND who has spent some time out of education to return full time

Supporting pupil mental health and wellbeing

Your staff should be particularly aware about how and additional safeguarding concerns, and how to support students who may be affected by the loss of friends. They have access to support in dealing with bereavement, PTSD and PTG immediately or any safeguarding concerns.

Ofsted's guidance on the return to school in September you hold on all students to be able to support students who have been affected by the disruption to their health and wellbeing before the student returns.

Nursery Government Wellbeing Service provides a free service that allows them to support staff and students with new safeguarding and welfare concerns in relation to Covid-19.

Nursery Government Wellbeing Service provides a free service that allows them to support staff and students with new safeguarding and welfare concerns in relation to Covid-19.

Continue to delivery and support.

- young people's mental health
- the local authority virtual lead for looked after and previously looked after children
- personal advisers for care leavers
- any other relevant safeguarding and welfare partners

You have a statutory duty under section 10 to 31 of the Children Act 2004 to promote cooperation between relevant partners and to make arrangements to contract with these young people. This will help local authorities to identify young people who are in need of support and to ensure that they receive the support they need in a timely way.

Continue following statutory guidance on inter-agency working, set out in working together to safeguard children and statutory guidance on children safe in education.

External resources that support the safeguarding of young people include:

- Safer25, which offers support to victims of exploitation, young people who are at risk of being exploited, and their families, in Greater Manchester
- the Take Time, Respect campaign promoted by Barnardo's to help young people who are at risk of being exploited to understand healthy relationships and behaviours
- Victims Codes and the National Association for Managers of Student Services in Criminal Justice (NAMSCJ) to ensure that victims of crime receive care and signposting to care to any activity under 18s

Mental health and wellbeing

Many students and staff experience adverse feeling, anxiety and stress at this time. Providers should be aware of the mental health and wellbeing support necessary for young people to manage.

Providers should consider how their wellbeing offer and staff who may need additional support and ensure they have appropriate mental health and wellbeing support in place. Providers should also consider how they will provide needed additional support for those who are transitioning back. The guidance on mental health and behaviour in schools might be helpful with this.

We have also provided guidance to local authorities and mental health services to ensure that support is in place. Contact your local authority to see if they have set up a hub or other arrangements for providing this support.

Support can be given:

- over the phone for students with vulnerabilities
- face-to-face support for vulnerable students

NHS children and young people's mental health services (CYPMHS) may be able to provide support remotely for children and young people and young people, including teachers, special educational needs co-ordinators, pastoral support staff and other school staff members who are concerned about children or young people's mental health. Children and young people's mental health services (CYPMHS) offers medical, half-medical options as well as psychological therapies. Contact your local authority to see if they have set up a hub or other arrangements for providing this support.

NHS trusts have also established 24-hour urgent mental health helplines in each region to provide advice and support to children and young people and their a young person. Find your local helpline to discuss your concerns with a mental health professional. Find your local helpline on the NHS website. Alternatively, Public Health England has produced a guide to mental health services and source people's mental health and wellbeing.

We have also provided guidance to local authorities and schools' grant. This consists of training endowments for teachers and staff in mental health and wellbeing, and a mental health support team in every cluster of primary and secondary schools (COVID-19).

The training will be available to all state funded schools and FE providers for primary and children in care.

Local authorities have received funding to employ school staff to deliver the training and support to schools in their area. Local authorities will support the school through Public Health England.

Education settings can prepare for opening a nominated lead who will review the training and support they need. Local authorities will contact schools and practice to staff and students within the nominated lead. Local authorities will also provide support to schools in their area.

The Department for Education, Public Health England and Ofsted have jointly agreed a webinar for school and FE providers staff on 9 July 2020 to set out the training and support available. Ofsted will also use this webinar to discuss inspection. Contact your local authority to see if the offer of online discussion for help young people to learn at home.

Other resources include:

- Hub4U, which includes e-learning modules about young people's mental health
- the Every Mind Matters platform, which has specific advice for adults and parents/carers on how to support children and young people with coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak
- the Association of College's (AoC) coronavirus (COVID-19) resources hub, which includes mental health and wellbeing
- Education and Training Foundation's (ETF) coronavirus (COVID-19) guidance and webinars
- the Anna Freud Centre's mental health and wellbeing support services to all education staff
- free apps available on the NHS App Store for mental health and wellbeing support
- Charities Responding to Coronavirus (COVID-19) has collated a list of resources and guides
- Child health is a concern in supporting children safe in education, and their principles continue to apply

Consider supporting students with their mental health and wellbeing through:

- remote one to one counselling
- encouraging students to identify their own self-care strategies during the period of remote learning and virtual lessons
- completing welfare checks at the start of each lesson to ensure that all students are engaged and participating
- delivering personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) lessons focused on mental health and wellbeing, including the impact of social media and bullying
- encouraging participation in extra-curricular AoC Sport activities and support sports in further education

Residential providers

We have provided guidance on guidance for residential educational settings and guidance for FE providers. Residential educational settings can remain open. Colleges, training providers and sixth form colleges will establish in such settings in the part of a protective bubble.

Providers will need to consider the risk of infection in a residential setting, and to establish and implement the control measures in their risk assessment.

In the case of any localised outbreaks, we expect you to keep your residential provision open where possible. Decisions will be made on a case by case basis.

You will need to remain open to those who:

- have particular needs that cannot be accommodated safely at home
- do not have suitable alternative provision

Funding

We have issued the funding rates and guidance for 2020 to 2021. Given the unprecedented circumstances, we will continue to review the guidance and will notify you of changes.

16 to 19 tuition fund

We will provide extra funding for one year for the 2020 to 2021. This is to mitigate the disruption to learning and to support those most affected (COVID-19). You will need agree to review an allocation on 16 to 19 tuition funding.

16 to 19 funding arrangements (grant-funded providers)

Where appropriate, we will use alternative data sources to calculate allocations for 2020 to 2021. This should reduce the impact on funding due to the lack of data for the 2019 to 2020 academic year because of coronavirus (COVID-19).

Retention factor

We will calculate 16 to 19 funding allocations for 2021 to 2022 using an average retention factor for each provider.

We will calculate this by establishing the 2017 to 2018 and 2018 to 2019 retention factors for each provider. We will then take the average and should be known factor. 16 to 19 education is a learning concern.

This is intended to provide a retention factor for 2019 to 2020 that represents the impact that year also had on the academic year not been affected by the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak.

In-year growth

We recognise the uncertainty that many providers are facing around enrolment and retention for 2020 to 2021 academic year. We know that this year should be known factor. 16 to 19 education is a learning concern.

We will continue to work with the sector and remind providers that we do have a growth fund for 16 to 19 provision. We will use this fund to support scenarios and delivery falling in the year. Providers should contact us to understand trends in student numbers as the position develops.

If provider solvency is at risk, emergency funding works as a last resort to ensure that students are protected.

In-year recruitment of students

We currently use the profile of recruitment throughout the year to determine funding allocations for providers in the 16 to 19 sector.

If you recruit students in the year that they are not in the usual intake cycle for the academic year, and provision of the students in the summer term will be delivered in the following academic year, we will take into account the profile of recruitment when calculating allocations. For example, we could apply the current approach of identifying what proportion of student numbers we would expect to be in the relevant academic year for the relevant full year data from 2018 to 2019.

Student prior attainment in English and/or maths GCSEs

The 16 to 19 funding formula uses students' prior attainment in English and/or maths in calculations for:

- the condition of funding
- the disadvantage uplift, grade 3
- level 3 programme aims and length uplifts

We will calculate these elements using the 16 to 19 funding formula and the grades awarded in summer 2020 because of GCSE exams this summer.

This means that you will not be allocated additional funding for young people with low prior attainment in GCSE English or maths.

Funding support for independent learning providers delivering 16 to 19 study programmes

ESFA provides support to independent learning providers (ILPs) that are facing cash flow pressures due to the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak.

ILPs can request:

- Part of a pre-payment for the support
- advances for delivery in future months

Return your completed template through the online enquiry form, between 23 September 2020 and 30 September 2020.

Funding for remote delivery to 16 to 19 students

The 16 to 19 funding formula uses an allocation for students who have to travel to school/college/work. This is 16 to 19 funding is allocated based on planned hours of provision and the distance students travel. We recognise that this is a combine time in the classroom or workshop and travel to school, this will affect the funding plus review.

Where it is not practicable for students, you must make sure what is discussed with students and parents/carers, and that students are fully supervised and organised. This could include remote delivery and learning, or supervised study in a classroom or workshop, or a combination of both. Students and individual tutors. You must be able to give evidence of this to funding auditors.

Examples of remote delivery

Remote delivery and attendance, by school funding, you should plan, develop and oversee remote and online learning. Ensure that appropriate plans have developed and are overseeing. This could include lessons delivered online through live streaming or pre-recorded sessions.

Students are unable to attend school because of reasons beyond control, such as caring responsibilities or not having access to a device or connectivity. Students are unable to attend school because they are self-isolating or have a recent working pattern. You can use your discretion to make a decision and you can support and supervise time shifted delivery appropriately.

You currently the number of hours you plan to deliver remotely and which is planned hours subject to organising and supervising it. For example, you could plan to deliver remotely for 10 hours a week, but you may decide to use your judgment or refuse to provide remote delivery for students who are in the classroom and access support and review required feedback on their progress or they may.

Where it is reasonable to do so, you should make sure students are supervised and organised. Students should be able to access support and review their progress and a supervised. Other types of remote delivery will be eligible if they meet the principles. Such as independent study and tutorials.

Planned hours timetabled outside your normal working pattern cannot be included in your funding claim. Students who are unable to attend school because of need to attend or observe of their treatment plan could not count towards planned hours.

Evidence

During a funding audit, we want you to be able to provide evidence that:

- students have engaged and participated in learning
- you have been delivering classes and other teaches but actively to a regular timetable
- you can deliver provision remotely
- students are meeting their learning aims

There can you have evidence that the planned hours you recorded on data returns are timetabled and exist. This could include timetables and learning plans, and evidence of students' attendance, participation, and engagement and participation. This could include:

- records showing that both students and tutors have been logged on when learning is being delivered
- meeting notes for students to join online learning sessions
- records of students' attendance, participation and engagement delivery details on the timetable
- communications between students and tutors such as feedback or reflections on remote

If students are accessing pre-recorded lessons, you should be able to demonstrate that students have been supervised and that there is evidence of engagement with remote learning, such as a record of tests to check a student's understanding of the material covered.

T Levels

Allocations have been made to providers that will be delivering the first wave of T Levels in 2020 to 2021 academic year. We have published the 16 to 19 publication the approach to taking a decision to ensure the T Levels provision remains on T Levels is under the present.

Read more about the T Levels and technical qualifications in 2020 to 2021.

We will monitor this approach and communicate any revision for 2021 to 2022.

T Level industry placements

We are closely monitoring the situation regarding the impact of coronavirus (COVID-19) on industry placements.

We are working with providers and delivery partners to establish whether further support is needed.

See the industry placements delivery guidance for information about delivering high quality industry placements.

Free meals in further education

You should continue to support students who are eligible, and are usually receive, free meals. This includes students in further education, who are newly eligible.

You should provide support even if students are studying remotely due to coronavirus (COVID-19).

Read further guidance on free meals in further education funded institutions for 2020.

High needs funding for students with SEND

You must follow the normal assessment and planning process for young people. Local authorities should continue to pay high needs top-up funding for the academic year 2020 to 2021 in the usual way. Local authorities should be following a review of their high needs provision and commissioning arrangements.

For autumn term placements and top-up funding that has not been confirmed before the start of the term, we expect local authorities to be completing out authorities to see if you can be paid in accurate, with late reconciliation of top-up funding for the autumn term to be completed by the end of November. This will ensure staff can remain focused on supporting students to attend the special provision is needed.

Local authorities should confirm the funding associated with high needs placements as soon as possible after the placement(s) are agreed.

2019 to 2020 pre and for grant-funded providers with adult education budget delivery

Following helpful feedback from the sector, we continue to consider the 20% cap on the amount of adult education budget (AEB) funding that providers can use to fund shortage of adult education budget (AEB) provision.

We recognise 2019 to 2020 has been a challenging year and our primary concern is ensuring that providers can deliver the 2019 to 2020 AEB allocations ensuring the proper use of public funds through an approach that will be fair, open and transparent.

To ensure fairness we need to be confident that the data we hold and can use is accurate. We will be contacting providers.

We know that many providers are using returns 2019 to identify an expected threshold to recognise the lower delivery across the programme for identifying significant underspend. We will be contacting providers to ensure needed more accurate across the provider base.

Advanced learner loans

The Student Loans Company (SLC) continue to make scheduled fee payments to all providers with an advanced learner loan facility.

Contact SLC if student is circumstances change.

Adult education budget (AEB) funding (grant funded providers)

Currently, approximately 10% of the AEB is devolved to 7 mayoral combined authorities and London. We have agreed with the mayors that we will work through the Greater London Authority and Greater Manchester that we responsible for providing AEB funded adult education for their residents and devolving the AEB to provider.

ESFA will continue to be responsible for the remaining AEB in non-devolved areas.

Traineeship delivery from September 2020

There will be flexibilities for traineeships in 2020 to 2021. The main changes are:

- extended eligibility criteria for 16 to 24 year olds (or 24 with an EHC plan) who have been in care or care leavers, who are unemployed, or who are qualified up to level 2
- extended maximum duration to 12 months for those students who need additional time to achieve their learning goals, including those who have been trained with disabilities
- a new government-funded employer payment of £1,000 per trainee for employers who offer a work placement of at least 6 consecutive weeks. This is in addition to the existing payment for employers of £1,000 for those who hire and those expanding an existing offer, up to a maximum of 10 trainees
- a new 16 to 19 bursary fund to support the most vulnerable students. This is 16 to 19 bursary. It can take place with the whole participants, as required

See the traineeships guidance for more information.

Supported internships

Where the core aim of a student's supported internship has not been met due to the impact of coronavirus (COVID-19), students will be able to complete their internship in the 2020 to 2021 academic year.

For those returning after completing a supported internship programme in the 2019 to 2020 academic year you should assess each student to agree on the support they need to succeed.

Number of placements

You will need to enrol the student onto a new study programme. We do not expect that all students will need to do a full study programme.

The new study programme will be funded through the usual funding rules. Providers will be entitled to the 16 to 19 disadvantage uplift for 2020. The allocations under the 16 to 19 funding formula to be issued for the academic year 2020 to 2021.

Access to Work and supported internships

Access to Work can provide a flexible payment for work-related activities such as:

- a job coach leads the activity
- the activities required are reasonable costs
- the intern has been subject to attend their planned work placements due to coronavirus (COVID-19)

Let students know they can claim Access to Work if they need support at work. Access to Work is a grant to help people with a disability or health condition available to support academic learning activities such as English and maths.

Contact the Access to Work helpline on 0800 121 7479 for more information.

Recording students in the school census and individualised learner record (ILR)

Collect using the current timetable for data collection, attendance and recording in the school census and ILR.

We are conscious that there will be pressure on you to complete your enrolments processes. We will be contacting providers to request your data for for period 14 (P14) for the 2019 to 2020 academic year by October. P14 will be the last period for 2019 to 2020 academic year. We will be using data collection window as it would delay those providers who are experiencing difficulties.

High needs funding

Discuss any requirements for high needs funding with your local authority. Local authorities should continue to pay high needs top-up funding for the 2019 to 2020 academic year in the usual way. Consider the high needs operational guide for funding for students requiring educational places.

Local authorities should follow the process for agreeing high needs placements. Local authorities should be supportive of students who have been trained with disabilities.

Regulation, accountability and audit

Qualification achievement rates

Ofsted will not use the data in 2020 to 2021 to inform and colleges in England in summer 2020 and calculated. We will not publish any school or college level data. We will publish national and local level data for academic year 2019 to 2020. The indicators for 2019 to 2020 will be:

See guidance on school and college performance measures and qualification achievement rates for more information.

Inspection

For FE and skills providers, Ofsted routine inspections remain suspended.

During the autumn term, inspectors will visit a sample of colleges and FE providers to talk about their education and training provision.

These visits will not result in a graded judgement. Ofsted will publish a report following the visit. The insights that inspectors gather will be aggregated nationally to share learning with the sector, the government and the wider public.

Ofsted will also carry out new provider monitoring visits to some providers. These monitoring visits will result in a published report with progress judgements. Ofsted also has the power to inspect in response to any significant concerns, such as safeguarding.

Ofsted intends to restart routine inspections from January 2021.

Audit

Prior to the Prime Minister's announcement of the new coronavirus (COVID-19) lockdown measures on 23 March 2020, we made the decision to pause the start of any new routine funding audits for all post-16 providers, as result of the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak.

We are now planning to restart routine funding audits on a remote basis for independent training providers from September 2020 and for colleges from November 2020.

We are also carrying out a risk assessment on restarting site visits for audits and investigations so that we have the ability to do so, should we need to. We recognise the challenges providers face as a result of coronavirus (COVID-19) and will be sensitive to these in agreeing arrangements for both remote funding audits and site visits with providers.

Where funding audits and investigations were already in progress prior to the lockdown, we have sought to complete the work, taking into account providers' capacity to resolve any issues.

It may be necessary for ESFA to contact providers during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak to continue to maintain effective oversight and protection of public funds. Where such contact is necessary, we will continue to be sensitive to the challenges providers face as a result of coronavirus (COVID-19).

Is this page useful? Yes No Is there anything wrong with this page?

Coronavirus (COVID-19)

Coronavirus (COVID-19): guidance and support

The UK has left the EU

Check the new rules for January 2021

Services and information

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