Coronavirus (COVID-19): Guidance on reducing the risks from COVID-19 in schools

Non-statutory guidance to ensure a low risk and supportive environment for learning and teaching.

Version 5.2

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VERSION CONTROL

Version	Date	Summary of changes
V1.0	30/7/2020	First version of document
V2.0	25/8/2020	Update to guidance on face coverings in Key Public Health Measures section and Dedicated School Transport section.
V3.0	11/9/2020	Various updates for clarification of key issues, including self-isolation, testing procedures, quarantine, outbreak and case management, and links to updated guidelines on Physical Education and Home Economics.
V4.3	30/10/2020	Shifting the emphasis of the guidance from "reopening schools" to "reducing risks in schools". Further changes resulting from feedback on the experience of implementing the guidance at local level. Key changes include updated guidance on: ventilation for autumn/winter; shielding and individual risk assessments and Additional Support Needs. Updates to versions 4.1, 4.2 and 4.3, to take account of comments from CERG members where possible, the latest advice from the sub-group, and to align with the levels approach within the Strategic Framework.
V5.1	24/03/2021	Separate supplementary guidance for schools was published before Christmas to support the move to remote learning for most children and young people in January 2021. Updated versions of that supplementary guidance were published on 21 January, 16 February and 8 March. A revised version of this guidance was published on 24 March.
V5.2	19/04/2021	Updated to take account of the return to a levels approach from 26 April and to make some minor updates and clarifications. Key changes include: Reference to dental/health checks and vaccination programmes in school (para 16) Link to updated college guidance (paras 20 and 220) Further comment from the Advisory Sub-group on ventilation (para 58) Updated text on shielding (paras 191-200 and Annex A) Updated text on national qualifications (paras 240-241) Link to revised school trips guidance (para 245 and Annex A) New Annex A which summarises changes as a result of the anticipated move to Level 3 from 26 April Revised Annex D on residential facilities

Contents

OVERVIEW

1. This guidance was developed to support a low risk return to school for all children, young people and staff in August 2020. It was regularly updated during the 2020 autumn term to support the return to school.

2. Given the developments in the path of the virus in December 2020 it was decided however that most children and young people should move to remote learning from the beginning of January 2021. Separate, supplementary guidance was published in December to help schools and local authorities support vulnerable children and young people and the children of key workers in school, while providing remote learning for all other learners. That supplementary guidance was updated on 21 January, 16 February and 8 March.

3. For the full-time return to school for all children and young people from 12 April 2021, the schools guidance has been brought together here to give schools and local authorities a single point of reference.

4. It is anticipated that local authorities across Scotland will move to Level 3 from 26 April 2021. The protective measure and mitigations set out in this guidance will remain in place for all schools at Level 3. The new Annex A sets out what will change for schools in Level 3, for example in relation to PE.

5. We know there remains anxiety among some staff about a return to school and, as with any interaction in society, we cannot eliminate risk entirely. The Scottish Government is clear, however, that the full-time re-opening of schools is a priority – it is hugely important for the educational and developmental wellbeing of children and young people.

6. It is imperative therefore that schools and local authorities continue to take a precautionary approach. Every step should be taken to ensure the safety and wellbeing of children, young people and staff in schools. The mitigations set out in this guidance should be strictly adhered to.

7. All school staff and secondary aged learners are encouraged to participate in the asymptomatic testing programme. Quick and decisive action should be taken when positive cases are identified among children, young people and staff.

8. The Education Recovery Group continues to monitor carefully the incidence and prevalence of COVID-19 in Scotland and in school communities and this guidance will be kept under review and updated when necessary.

Purpose of this guidance

9. The guidance applies to all local authorities and schools (primary/secondary/special/school hostels/residential) under their management. Local authorities should ensure that any external organisations involved in delivering services in schools (e.g. contracted facilities management services) are required to follow this guidance. It should also be used by grant-aided schools and independent schools to support their recovery efforts. Please read the supplementary guidance

for [residential children's house, residential schools, secure care facilities and residential respite/short break services for children and young people](), developed in partnership with relevant stakeholders. COVID-19 [guidance for universities, colleges and student accommodation providers]() may also be relevant to some.

10. Recognising its specific context, separate [guidance for the Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) and childcare sector]() has been developed. There is also specific [guidance for childminders]() and for [School-aged childcare](). [Guidance for the Community Learning and Development Sector]() is also available.

11. Nothing in this guidance affects the legal obligations of local authorities with regard to health and safety, public health and their responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010. Local authorities must continue to adhere to all such duties when implementing this guidance. Under the [Coronavirus Act 2020](), they must have regard to the advice relating to coronavirus from the Chief Medical Officer for Scotland.

12. Local authorities and schools should exercise their judgement when implementing this guidance, to ensure the safety and wellbeing of their children, young people and staff taking into account local circumstances. Where this guidance states that local authorities and schools:

- "should" do something, there is a clear expectation, agreed by all key partners, that it should be done.

- "may" or "may wish" to do something, the relevant sections have been included as examples of relevant practice that can be considered if appropriate. Local variations are likely.

13. In addition to the implementation of these mitigations, local authorities and schools will also need to be able to adapt to local issues, and specifically to local outbreaks. This will closely involve local authorities and local Public Health Teams.

14. There may be circumstances in which, based on clear evidence and public health considerations, or other relevant factors (e.g. minimum staffing requirements) specific schools require either to close, or to implement remote learning for some children and young people, for a defined period of time. All such decisions will continue to be made by local incident management teams working in partnership, and on the independent advice of local Directors of Public Health, who will take full account of school safety and wider public health considerations in line with their statutory duties. Similar decisions may require to be taken by local authorities in conjunction with schools where staffing constraints (e.g. due to self-isolation or shielding) or other matters make such a move unavoidable.

Arrangements for school opening from 12 April

15. Children and young people, other than those who are shielding, will have full-time, in-school learning after the Easter break. This will involve the removal of strict 2m physical distancing between pupils in secondary schools and these schools and local authorities should consider how, alongside this, they can strengthen other mitigations such as ventilation and the use of outdoor learning.

16. Attendance in schools will include teaching and support staff who, in the judgement of the local authority and schools, are required to attend in person, this could include student teachers undertaking placement practice; and possibly HEI tutors observing their practice. It may also include staff carrying out key health/dental checks and routine school vaccination programmes.

Learning in the outdoors

17. Outdoor activities and learning help to decrease the risk of transmission and improve the physical and mental health and wellbeing of young people. The recent report from the International Council of Education Advisors underlines this further. Education Scotland advice provides that learning outdoors can help learners to continue to connect with one another and the school environment and provide experiences which enhance learning.

18. Outdoor learning should be interpreted broadly, to encompass a wide range of experiences and activities including those focused on learner wellbeing as well as specific activities pertaining to curriculum areas and subjects. Schools should consider what activities will positively draw in their learners. More detailed advice can be found within the dedicated outdoor learning section of this document.

School age childcare

19. Regulated school age childcare services have been able to recommence fully since 15 March. Guidance has been published which applies to all providers of Care Inspectorate registered school age childcare services in all sectors – local authority, private and third sectors. This includes breakfast clubs, after-school care and holiday childcare. Organised children's activities guidance has been published for unregulated clubs and activities provision.

Senior phase school learners attending college

20. Temporary lockdown guidance for colleges has also been published. Colleges are now able to prioritise the return of further senior phase school pupils studying at college who require in-person provision now in order to complete or progress. In line with wider college guidance, pupils should only be on campus for the duration of the practical work and should continue to learn remotely for those course elements where this is possible.

KEY PUBLIC HEALTH MEASURES

21. This section of the guidance sets out the key public health measures that local authorities and schools should implement to minimise the risks of COVID-19 transmission and infection. These controls, when implemented alongside updated risk assessments, will help substantially mitigate the risks to children, young people and staff.

22. The guidance has been informed by advice from the COVID-19 Advisory Sub-group on Education and Children's Issues which has discussed the mitigations required to manage risks regarding the return to in-school learning for children, young people and staff at many of its meetings.

23. There are a number of mitigations in place to reduce transmission of COVID-19 in schools and ELC settings in Scotland, and these all continue to apply to the new variants. The NERVTAG advice on Mitigations to Reduce Transmission of the New Variant SARS-CoV-2 Virus concluded that a step change in the rigour of application of mitigations is required, given the increased transmission risk associated with the new variant.

24. Schools and ELC settings should therefore place a high priority on reinforcing the current mitigations designed to maximise safety and reduce risks for children, young people and staff as set out in this guidance and the equivalent guidance on ELC settings. All children, young people and staff should continue to implement and strictly observe these mitigations. This includes with regard to ventilation, face coverings and any additional mitigations that may be identified within updated risk assessments.

25. The Scottish Government is working with partners on the COVID-19 Education Recovery Group and more widely to develop key messaging for staff, parents and others about that return. From an adherence and compliance perspective, it is extremely important that schools remind staff, learners and parents of the need to follow all the relevant guidance, for example physical distancing, face coverings, hand hygiene etc.

26. Ensuring the right behaviours is key. For example, parents should avoid contacts with other parents, children and young people at the school gates, on the way to school and after school in order to try and reduce community spread/outbreaks. Schools can assist with this by, for example, having staggered start/finish times.

27. This guidance is designed to promote a consistent and equitable approach against the context of the nationwide health emergency and is aligned with the Strategic Framework. Every school and setting is different, however, and local authorities and schools will understand best how this guidance can be applied in their settings. They should do so in a way that prioritises the health, safety and wellbeing of children, young people and staff, and ensure that the risk mitigation measures set out in this guidance are implemented effectively.

Risk assessment

28. Employers must protect people from harm. This includes taking reasonable steps to protect children, young people, staff and others from COVID-19 within the education setting.

29. It is a legal requirement that local authorities and headteachers ensure that risk assessments are conducted and regularly reviewed and updated. Implementation of the mitigations set out in this section will also help manage risks effectively for children, young people and staff in school.

30. All aspects of school life should be considered, including transport to and from school and for learners attending college and work placement activities. Specific risk assessments should be completed regarding school cleaning and the use of school kitchens, including those used for home economics. This does not replace the need for other risk assessments required by law, such as under fire safety legislation. All risk assessments should be proportionate to the relevant protection level of the local area, and reviewed and updated as appropriate as circumstances change.

31. Schools should ensure that they implement reasonable and proportionate control measures which reduce risk to the lowest reasonably practical level. They should have active arrangements in place to monitor that the controls are:

   - effective;
   - working as planned;
   - aligned with the appropriate mitigations for their protection level; and
   - updated appropriately as per the above, including considering any issues identified or changes in public health advice.

32. In accordance with relevant legislation and guidance, all local trade unions should be consulted with and involved in the development and updating of risk assessments. School risk assessments should be shared with and be easily accessible to staff and trade unions, including catering and facilities management teams and contractors where appropriate.

33. Schools should communicate with all staff, including students on placement, children, young people and parents/carers regarding health and safety. It is imperative that all members of the school community understand what measures are being put in place and why, and can cooperate to make them work. Schools may wish to consult children, young people and parents/carers on these arrangements to help ensure that they feel safe and comfortable in school.

34. While intended for wider use, the Health and Safety Executive has produced helpful guidance on COVID-19 risk assessments.

35. For more information on what is required of employers in relation to health and safety risk assessments, see Annex C.

Public health measures to prevent and respond to infections

36. In order to address the risks identified in their risk assessments, local authorities and schools should adopt core public health measures in a way that is appropriate to their setting. Ensuring a positive learning environment for all children and young people, should include measures focused on preventing and responding to infections.

37. Essential public health measures include:

- enhanced hygiene and environmental cleaning arrangements;
- minimising contact with others (groupings, maintaining distancing where possible for children and young people in secondary schools and physical distancing for adults);
- wearing face coverings or appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) where necessary;
- staff completing asymptomatic tests and recording results twice weekly;
- symptom vigilance and a requirement that people who are ill stay at home; and
- active engagement with Test and Protect.

Enhanced hygiene and environmental cleaning

Personal hygiene

38. Schools should strongly encourage and support all children, young people, staff and any others for whom it is necessary to enter the school estate to maintain appropriate personal hygiene throughout the day.

39. The key personal hygiene measures that all children, young people and staff should follow to reduce the risk of COVID-19 infection are:

- frequent washing/sanitising of hands for 20 seconds and drying thoroughly, and always when entering/leaving the building, before/after eating and after using the toilet;
- encouraging children, young people and staff to avoid touching their faces including mouth, eyes and nose; and
- using a tissue or elbow to cough or sneeze, and use bins that are emptied regularly for tissue waste.

40. It will be the responsibility of every individual in the school to observe good hygiene practice to minimise the risk of infection. Schools should identify opportunities to reinforce for all children, young people and staff the importance of effective hygiene measures throughout the school day, as part of their work on responsible citizenship. Involving children and young people in discussions about how to manage mitigations will be critical to their success. Signage should be applied appropriately, including in toilets.

41. NHS Inform Covid-19 General Advice states that adequate facilities should be available for hand hygiene, including handwashing facilities that are adequately stocked or have alcohol-based hand rub at key areas. In consultation with their local authority, schools should make appropriate arrangements for the storage of alcohol-based hand rub. Outdoor hand basins or hand sanitisers should be available at entry/exit points, to allow all building users to wash/sanitise their hands as they enter/leave the building at pick up/drop off time and at break/lunch times. Help should be given to those children and young people who struggle to wash their hands independently. Over time it is possible that children and young people will become complacent about hand hygiene. Schools should involve them in making plans to ensure continued rigour.

42. School uniforms/clothing and staff clothing should be washed/cleaned as normal. Any arrangements in place to support washing of school uniform and clothing should be continued.

<u>Enhanced environmental cleaning</u>

43. The local authority/school should undertake regular health and safety checks of the school estate, including water quality sampling for legionella and other bacteria. The Health and Safety Executive has produced guidance on [Legionella risks during the coronavirus pandemic - HSE news](#).

44. Local authorities and schools should ensure that an enhanced environmental cleaning regime is in place. The regime put in place should be in line with [Health Protection Scotland Guidance for Non-Healthcare Settings](#). This specifies in particular:

- Ensuring regular detergent cleaning schedules and procedures are in place using a product which is active against bacteria and viruses; ensure adequate contact time for cleaning products is adhered to.
- Ensuring regular (<u>at least twice daily</u>) cleaning of commonly touched objects and surfaces (e.g. desks, handles, dining tables, shared technology surfaces etc.);
- Ensuring that where possible movement of individuals between work stations is minimised and where work spaces are shared there is cleaning between use (e.g. avoid hot desks and instead each individual, children, young people and staff, has a designated desk);
- Ensuring there are adequate disposal facilities;
- Wedging doors (other than fire doors) open, where appropriate, to increase fresh air and reduce touchpoints;
- Setting clear use and cleaning guidance for toilets to ensure they are kept clean and physical distancing is achieved as much as possible; and
- Cleaning work vehicles, between different passengers or shifts as appropriate.

45. There should also be more frequent cleaning of rooms/areas that must be used by different groups, including staff (e.g. classrooms, toilet blocks, changing rooms and staff areas).

46. Movement of children, young people and staff between classrooms should be minimised wherever possible. Where this cannot be avoided, the provision of appropriate cleaning supplies to enable them to wipe down their own desk/chair/surfaces before leaving and, especially, on entering the room should be considered as part of overall hygiene strategies for secondary schools.

47. Careful consideration should be given to the cleaning regime for specialist equipment (e.g. in practical subjects or for children with additional support needs), sensory rooms, practical subjects with specialist equipment and dining halls, etc. to ensure safe use. Staff can safely eat in the dining hall if they wish. They should use their own crockery/cutlery in staff areas and ensure these are cleaned with warm general purpose detergent and dried thoroughly before being stored for re-use.

48. It is recommended that younger children access toys and equipment that are easy to clean. Resources such as sand, water and playdough should be used only by consistent groupings of children and should be part of relevant risk assessments. Children and young people should wherever possible be encouraged not to bring toys from home to the setting or to share their personal belongings, although it is appreciated that for younger children and for some children and young people with additional support needs this may be difficult to prevent. Consideration

should be given to practical alternatives to provide comfort and reassurance, which is particularly important for younger children and children with additional needs. However, if a child brings their own book/bag/personal device that only they use then this should not increase the risk of indirect spread of the virus. Children, young people and staff should be instructed to keep bags on the floor and not on their desks or worktops.

49. Children, young people and staff can take books and other resources home, although unnecessary resource sharing including textbooks should be avoided, especially where this does not contribute to education and development. Cleaning between uses should be in accordance with the [Health Protection Scotland Guidance for Non-Healthcare Settings](#). Assist FM have also published complementary [guidance on cleaning for local authorities](#) with helpful practical advice on cleaning schedules.

Fomites (objects or materials which may carry infection – including text books and jotters, etc.)

50. Advice from the COVID-19 Advisory Sub-Group on Education and Children's Issues notes that [recent studies](#) suggest that environmental contamination leading to transmission of COVID-19 is unlikely to occur in real life conditions, provided that standard cleaning procedures and precautions are enforced. In schools, the Sub-group noted that this means following the general guidance on hand washing and respiratory hygiene, including cleaning and disinfecting frequently touched objects and surfaces, and careful hand-washing with soap and warm water and / or use of alcohol-based hand sanitiser before and after handling jotters, text books (or other pieces of equipment). This section of the guidance has been updated in light of this more recent evidence.

51. There are two potential approaches to mitigating risks from surface contamination of jotters, textbooks and library books. Schools should consider which of these approaches is most appropriate for their circumstances as part of appropriately updated risk assessments.

(i) quarantining books for 72 hours remains an effective measure to mitigate the risks of handling them. The amount of infectious virus on any contaminated surface is likely to have decreased significantly after this time. School libraries adopting this approach may wish to develop quarantine procedures for returned books and resources. Book drops and book trolleys can be used as they are easy for staff to wheel into a dedicated quarantine area and can be easily labelled. This approach may be best suited to reducing transmission during outbreak situations. In other circumstances it may be disproportionate to the risks involved, particularly if it has a significant impact on learning and teaching.

(ii) Careful hand washing with soap and warm water/use of alcohol-based hand sanitiser before and after handling text books, jotters (or other pieces of equipment) mitigates the need for quarantine for 72 hours before, and 72 hours after. As far as possible and in line with effective practice, staff should avoid touching their mouth, nose and eye area. Good hand hygiene should be sufficient to prevent transmission of infection from these items, even if they are contaminated, as long as the person handling the item does not touch their face between handling the item and decontaminating their hands. Good respiratory hygiene ("Catch it, kill it, bin it") is also required at all times.

Ventilation and heating

52. This section of the guidance was substantially updated on 12th October to take account of colder weather during autumn and winter. It was informed by the latest scientific and public health advice and research from the advisory sub-group on education and children's issues, Health Facilities Scotland, ARHAI Scotland and the SAGE Environmental and Modelling Group (EMG) which published updated guidance on 23rd October 2020. Cognisance has also been taken of UK and European building services industry guidance (CIBSE and REHVA). This guidance has been developed in consultation with HSE which has produced general guidance on Ventilation and air conditioning during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic (hse.gov.uk).

53. This section was reviewed throughout March 2021. As there is no new or emerging advice/evidence on heating and ventilation practices from SAGE EMG and based on user feedback from local authorities and the Scottish Heads of Property Services (SHoPS) network the guidance in this section remains largely unchanged since it was last updated. In its advice published on 3 March, the Advisory Sub-group did recommend however, that **greater emphasis should be placed on ventilation**, by keeping windows open as much as possible, and doors open when feasible and safe to do so. The World Health Organisation (WHO) has published a roadmap to improve and ensure good indoor ventilation in the context of COVID-19. The Scottish Government has also published ventilation guidance.

54. This section of the guidance is intended primarily for relevant local authority teams – it is not expected that headteachers or teachers should have the expertise to apply it independently.

55. The key requirement for local authorities is to work with schools to identify and implement local approaches that balance the need for fresh air in key parts of the school estate with the maintenance of adequate temperatures. The latest scientific advice identifies that ventilation is an important factor in mitigating against the risk of far-field (>2m) aerosol transmission. The importance of far-field aerosol transmission is not yet known, but evidence suggests it is a risk in poorly ventilated spaces.

56. There is therefore a need for an appropriate supply of fresh air to assist with minimising the risk of virus infection. There is also a need to maintain indoor temperatures for reasons including user comfort, health and wellbeing, and learning and teaching.

57. This guidance seeks to identify practical measures which may be incorporated to balance these issues. The precise balance to be struck, and the most effective ways of doing so, will depend heavily on local factors including building design, location and prevailing weather conditions. It is expected that average external temperatures will drop over the winter months, and also that average wind speeds will rise (c30-40%) compared to summer. The rise in wind speed will increase the need to reduce draughts by closing (or partially closing) windows. The increased speed may however provide some compensation in terms of maintaining overall ventilation rates.

58. While measures to improve ventilation should be viewed as just one part of the overall package of control measures in schools, they are being viewed by the Advisory sub-group as an increasingly important mitigation. Schools should continue to ensure a focus on implementation

and maintenance of wider controls including personal hygiene, symptom vigilance, enhanced cleaning and distancing.

59. Relevant local authority teams may already be in a position to provide the necessary expert advice to schools on appropriate local approaches to the assessment of current ventilation and the development of strategies to improve ventilation. Where any necessary expertise is not available within a local authority, they may wish to draw on expert external advice to inform their strategies - some local authorities have already done so, and are sharing this expertise through their national networks. In providing advice, local authorities may wish to consider grouping school buildings by common criteria (e.g. type of construction, primary/ secondary/ASN, window type, heating system, etc.) and should develop a package of viable options in consultation with trade unions and staff in those schools.

60. Schools should ensure that risk assessments are updated regularly, in consultation with local authorities, staff, trade unions and (where applicable) PFI/NPD providers, to consider issues around ventilation and heating/warmth that are relevant to their specific environments. Drawing on local authority advice, they should consider areas of the school where air flow (including pockets of stagnant air in occupied spaces) and/or temperature may be problematic, and the strategies that may be used to address these issues and mitigate risks appropriately. Some examples of potential approaches are provided below.

61. Schools should as a minimum ensure that adequate levels of ventilation and appropriate temperatures are maintained, with reference to the School Premises Regulations. While minimum requirements vary depending on the specific part of the school estate, for classrooms the regulations stipulate 2 air changes per hour and a temperature of 17°C. Reference should also be made to the Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992 minimum temperatures.

Natural ventilation and temperature

62. The primary effective method of increasing natural ventilation remains the opening of external doors, vents and windows. Wherever it is practical, safe and secure to do so, and appropriate internal temperatures can be maintained in line with statutory obligations, this approach should be adopted. Keeping doors open (again, with appropriate regard to safety and security) may also help to reduce contact with door handles.

63. However, internal fire doors should never be held open (unless assessed and provided with appropriate hold open and self-closing mechanisms which respond to the actuation of the fire alarm system). The Fire Safety Risk Assessment should always be reviewed before any internal doors are held open.

64. As noted above, schools are also required to maintain internal temperatures and conditions in line with statutory obligations (see the School Premises Regulations and the Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992). It is recognised that in the autumn and winter, schools are therefore unlikely to be able to keep external doors and windows open as often, or for as long, as in warmer weather periods.

65. Scientific and public health advice is that measures to introduce fresh air can have a beneficial impact on virus suppression. Schools should therefore be supported to adopt strategies that help balance requirements for ventilation with internal temperatures and conditions. Expert advice identifies that using reasonable approaches which recognise the importance of user comfort may help overall behavioural adherence to guidance in relation to ventilation.

66. Potential approaches, the suitability of which will depend on a range of local factors including weather conditions, may include:

Ventilation
- partially opening doors and windows to provide ventilation while reducing draughts
- opening high level windows in preference to low level to reduce draughts
- purging spaces by opening windows, vents and external doors (e.g. between classes, during break and lunch, when a room is unused, or at other suitable intervals if a space is occupied for long periods at a time)

Temperature
- providing flexibility in permissible clothing while indoors. Support for parents in relation to additional clothing may be available in some circumstances. Local authorities should ensure that, where individual children and young people cannot access warm clothing necessary for the local strategies adopted, appropriate support is provided on a case-by-case basis. Local authorities should also be aware of the needs of staff who may be unable to access clothing appropriate to local strategies adopted.
- designing seating plans to reflect individual student/staff temperature preferences. This is an approach which has been trialled in some schools and proven to be a useful measure when used in combination with other strategies.
- adjusting indoor heating to compensate for cold air flow from outside (e.g. higher system settings, increased duration)

Mechanical ventilation

67. Where it is not possible to keep doors and windows open while maintaining appropriate internal conditions in line with statutory obligations, and centralised or local mechanical ventilation is present, systems should wherever possible be adjusted to full fresh air. Air recirculation should be avoided or minimised. If this is not possible while maintaining appropriate internal conditions, systems should be operated to achieve statutory temperature and air change rate requirements as a minimum. Additional points to assist with the practical delivery of this approach include:

- Where ventilation units have filters present enhanced precautions should be taken when changing filters. Additional advice on filters can be located in the REHVA Covid guidance.
- Ventilation systems should be checked or adjusted to ensure they do not automatically adjust ventilation levels due to differing occupancy levels.
- Consider starting mechanical ventilation ahead of school day and allow it to continue after classes have finished.

Fans

68. Fan heaters, fan assisted heating systems or air conditioning within a single space may assist in maintaining appropriate temperatures, provided there is an adequate supply of fresh air into the space. This approach should only be used where the balance of adequate ventilation and appropriate temperature cannot be achieved otherwise. Filter maintenance should also be carefully undertaken as noted above. Care should be taken to avoid unregulated use of ad hoc devices which may cause increased risk in terms of electrical load, inappropriate installation, cable trip hazard and potential fire or electrocution risk.

<u>CO_2 monitors</u>

69. Local authorities should consider whether CO2 monitors may play a useful role in their overall ventilation monitoring strategies, particularly in areas of the school estate that are identified as higher risk or of concern. It is important that local authority advice is sought on the use of monitors to ensure their proper specification, installation, location, calibration and effective use. It should be noted that CO_2 monitors cannot monitor levels of virus, but by monitoring levels of CO_2, these can be used as a proxy measure.

70. CO2 monitors detect the amount of CO2 in a space, which will increase if adequate ventilation is not provided, thereby prompting user intervention such as opening a window or vent. Some schools will have these installed already while others may, in consultation with relevant local authority teams, choose to use portable devices for periodic or ongoing monitoring in areas where particular risks are identified. The most recent scientific advice and research is that an upper level of 1500 ppm should be used to identify and prioritise multi-occupancy, regularly-used areas for improvement.

71. This scientific advice and research also indicates that indoor spaces where there is likely to be an enhanced aerosol generation rate (e.g. loud singing/drama, indoor PE when permitted) should aim to ensure ventilation is sufficient to maintain CO2 concentrations at lower levels (a figure of 800ppm is provided), and should also include additional mitigations such as face coverings for audiences and restricting the size of groups and duration of activities. This advice will be factored into consideration of any wider advice on restart of these activities.

72. Local authorities should consider how to apply lessons learned from parts of the estate with CO2 detectors installed in other parts of the learning estate. This could be achieved both between schools within a local authority and also by sharing data between local authorities.

73. Relevant local authority teams should provide clear advice on the appropriate use of CO2 monitors, including procedures to be followed by staff in the event of inappropriate levels being indicated. These should be proportionate and reasonable, and help ensure both safety and continuity of education. They may include, for example, contact with relevant local authority teams to discuss approaches to improving ventilation in the event of concerns being identified.

74. School operators (e.g. local authorities, leisure trusts, third parties, etc.) should also be aware of [additional guidance in relation to ventilation of sports and leisure facilities](#) which may be applicable within school buildings e.g. community use of gyms, fitness rooms, sports halls etc.

<u>Implementation</u>

75. Local authorities and schools should, in consultation with staff and trade unions, ensure there are clear plans for effective implementation of local strategies. Key points to consider may include:

- Clarity on responsibility for implementing approaches, with due regard for workload;
- Provision of instruction or signage, etc. to support implementation (e.g. with clear instructions for window/door/vent opening and mechanical system operation);
- Pragmatic, proportionate procedures to be followed in the event of any concerns around ventilation or heating. Local authorities may wish to ensure that contact details are provided for relevant local authority teams or health and safety officers.

<u>Sharing of good practice</u>

76. Local authorities are committed to sharing good practice and expert advice across national networks, including the ADES Resources network and SHoPS. Local authorities are currently modelling practical approaches to implementation of the strategies in this guidance in order to achieve the regulatory requirement of 2 air changes per hour in classrooms, and the findings of this work will be shared across networks as soon as they are available.

77. This section of the guidance will be kept under careful review and updated in light of emerging science and practice.

Physical distancing between children in primary schools

78. On the basis of the scientific advice, and subject to all other risk mitigation measures set out in this advice being appropriately implemented, physical distancing requirements in primary schools remain unchanged. There is no requirement for physical distancing between children in primary schools. 2m distancing between adults not from the same household should be maintained. There should be 2m distancing between adults and children whenever possible.

Maintaining distance between young people – secondary schools

79. Most secondary schools can only support a full time return to school for all pupils when there is no requirement for physical distancing between pupils throughout the school day. From 12 April, secondary schools should operate on this basis, acting on the balance of known risks, feedback from public health teams, the effectiveness of a package of mitigations and the benefits to all young people of being able to attend school. School staff and other adults in the school must continue to apply strict 2m distancing when with other adults and with pupils.

80. It is important to understand that this arrangement has been developed in the specific context of schools. There are sound reasons for approaches to physical distancing to vary in different contexts, including the drawing of judgements about cumulative risk across the whole of society and the features of distinct environments.

81. The Advisory Sub-group has however emphasised, that without 2m distancing between young people in secondary schools, the additional mitigations such as effective ventilation must be strictly adhered to. Secondary schools should also encourage physical distancing between

young people wherever practicable and emphasize the importance of physical distancing in general as part of the FACTS for controlling the spread of the virus.

82. Distancing should be implemented in a proportionate way. Importantly, schools should ensure that the specific approaches adopted do not introduce capacity constraints and/or prevent full-time learning in school.

83. Mitigations that schools should consider include:

- Encourage young people to maintain distance where possible, particularly indoors – this does not have to be strict distancing of 2m if this is unachievable, but encouraging young people not to crowd together or touch their peers is recommended;
- Discourage social physical contact (hand to hand greeting/hugs);
- Use all the available space in classrooms, halls, libraries or social spaces to promote distancing where possible;
- Adjust class space if required, and where possible, to maintain spacing between desks or between individual young people;
- Seat young people side by side and facing forwards, rather than face to face;
- Avoid situations that require young people to sit or stand in direct physical contact with others;
- Where young people need to move about within the classroom to perform activities (for example to access a shared resource) this should be organised to minimise congregation around the point of access to the shared resource;
- Encouragement of set seating plans, even across different subject classes, is likely to reduce the number of close contacts needing to self-isolate if a young person tests positive;
- Where staffing within the school allows it, consider altering class sizes and composition to intensify support for young people and create more space. For example, where there are 3 maths sets in a year group (one set with 30 pupils, another with 20 pupils and another with 10 pupils) class size and composition may be altered to improve the spread of pupils and create 3 sets of 20 pupils;
- Young people in the senior phase may require to spend time in college environments. They should ensure that they follow the COVID-19 guidance for universities, colleges and student accommodation providers on the appropriate approach to these specific circumstances while on campus. This has now been included in updated guidance for colleges;
- In special schools and units, and where there are groupings of children with complex additional support needs, the balance of the staffing complement, the groupings of children and young people and their needs, and therefore the staffing and resources required, (PPE, cleaning of equipment), should be considered/assessed throughout the school day and adjusted where appropriate/necessary. Further guidance on meeting the needs of children with additional support needs is provided within continuity of learning guidance.

84. Secondary schools should consider which of these possible mitigations are achievable in their establishment and look to implement as many as is practicable.

85. In special schools and units, and where there are groupings of children with complex additional support needs, the need to maintain 2m distancing needs to be carefully considered. The balance of the staffing complement, the groupings of children and young people and their needs, and therefore the staffing and resources required, (PPE, cleaning of equipment), should be considered/assessed throughout the school day and adjusted where appropriate/necessary.

Further guidance on meeting the needs of children with additional support needs is provided within [Coronavirus (COVID-19): supporting children and young people with complex additional support needs - gov.scot (www.gov.scot)](www.gov.scot).

Minimising contacts (groupings)

86. In line with the scientific advice, in both primary and secondary settings, wherever possible, efforts should be made to keep children and young people within the same groups for the duration of the school day. Consistent groups reduce the likelihood of direct transmission, allow for quicker identification of those who need to self-isolate and may reduce the overall number of children, young people and staff who need to isolate in the event of a positive test or COVID-19.

87. Schools should make efforts to keep groups apart from other groups where possible. In open plan settings with large numbers of children or young people (for example multiple classes in one open plan space) consideration should be given to ensuring clear demarcation and separation between the areas in which different groups learn. Schools should consider how to reduce the movement of groups across different parts of the school estate where possible. In particular, schools should avoid assemblies and other types of large group gatherings.

88. Where it is necessary to bring groups together, alternative mitigating actions should be put in place, such as limiting the time spent together. When undertaking fire test drills or procedures where the whole school is evacuated, schools and local authorities should prioritise fire safety, but may consider muster points and whether these need to be altered to ensure a greater degree of separation.

89. The approach taken to configuring groups should be risk-based and adapted to the specific circumstances of the school. The general approach should be to keep groups consistent where practically possible, taking into account the feasibility of doing this while delivering as broad and meaningful a curriculum as is possible during the recovery period, and promoting children, young people and staff's health and wellbeing.

90. Examples that schools should draw on when considering the most appropriate approach for their setting include:

   - in primary schools it may be appropriate to have groups organised according to full-class sizes. Where staffing within the school allows it, schools may consider altering class sizes and composition to intensify support for children and create more space;
   - for young people in secondary schools within the BGE, consideration may be given to keeping pupils in the same groupings across the curriculum. Where possible, consideration may be given to teaching whole/half year group blocks in as close to tutor group sections as possible while the guidance on "minimising contacts" is in place; and
   - for those young people in the senior phase where consistent groups cannot reasonably be maintained, schools will wish to consider the most appropriate delivery and timetabling models to keep mixing of young people to the minimum necessary while ensuring a full range of subjects can be offered. One option which has demonstrated success may be working together in a group for extended blocks of time. Another may be for the senior phase to be considered as a group in and of itself, with senior pupils kept away from other age groups where possible. Where staffing within the school allows it, schools may consider

altering class sizes and composition to intensify support for young people and create more space. Schools may also wish to consider other ideas such as timetabling in double periods (or more) to minimise contacts if this is practical or achievable in their context.

91. In special schools and units, and where there are groupings of children with complex additional support needs, risk assessments should be conducted in full consultation with staff and their trade unions, aligned to the relevant protection level and reviewed on a regular basis, to consider:

    • the minimum space required to ensure the required 2m physical distancing between all adults who might be in a classroom at any time over the day;
    • the appropriate mitigations which may require to be adopted according to the nature of activity being undertaken and individual pupil needs;
    • the level and balance of risk in relation to infection control and pupils' needs, and the appropriate mitigations needed to address these risks and keep children, young people and staff safe;
    • the risk associated with planned learning activities which require adults to be in close contact with each other and with pupils in order to provide support. Appropriate risk mitigation measures should be identified, the resources needed to implement them should be made available, and mitigations should be adopted to reduce the risk identified;
    • the risks involved in and the mitigations required to be in place for situations where adults require to be in close contact with each other and/or with pupils in order to provide support and intervene, e.g. in de-escalation procedures;
    • the appropriate mitigation measures which should be adopted in situations where opaque face coverings may act as a barrier to communication. Transparent face coverings which may assist communication with someone who relies on lip reading, clear sound or facial expression to communicate can also be worn. Their use needs to be carefully assessed because they may not provide others with protection from the wearer;
    • Further guidance on meeting the needs of children with additional support needs is contained within Coronavirus (COVID-19): supporting children and young people with complex additional support needs - gov.scot (www.gov.scot).

92. The practical and timetabling challenges of these approaches, particularly in secondary schools, are recognised. The variation in size, context and physical structure across schools is also recognised. If groups cannot reasonably be maintained, or if groups require to be larger in size with some mixing permitted, the application of other risk mitigation measures becomes even more important.

93. These will require coordination of other services such as transport, catering and cleaning. Mitigations should be considered as part of risk assessments and may include:

    • ensuring access to hand washing stations or hand sanitiser whenever children and young people move between groups;
    • minimising frequency of change of groups for children and young people in a day;
    • arranging for staff to move to class groups (as opposed to vice versa); and
    • encouraging distancing where possible when in different groups (in secondary schools).

94. Risk assessments should consider the ways in which busy corridors, entrances and exits could be avoided, and could include one way and/or external circulation routes.

95. Break times will also require careful consideration – public health teams report examples of schools where large numbers of pupils have been isolated because of groups mixing at break times. Schools may wish to consider staggered break and lunch times, etc (although these will not be suitable for all schools, and staggering break and lunch times to an extent that they could reduce the overall amount of time children and young people can spend learning in school should be avoided). Localised solutions should be agreed and, as far as possible, children, young people and parents/carers should be involved in these discussions.

96. If children and young people go offsite for lunch, they should follow the rules in place for wider society, for example wearing a face covering when entering a shop. Risk assessments should consider procedures for when children and young people leave and return to school premises, including hand hygiene. Schools may wish to contact local shops in advance to alert them to plans.

97. For children and young people who attend multiple education settings, either in other educational establishments or the wider community, consideration should be given to their groupings and an appropriate risk assessment conducted. If sporadic or linked cases have occurred in one school, temporary suspension or reduction of attendance at other facilities should be part of this risk assessment, led by the local Health Protection Team.

98. School age childcare services are subject to sector specific guidance: [Coronavirus (COVID-19): school aged childcare services - gov.scot (www.gov.scot)](#)

Physical distancing and minimising contact for adults

99. Two metre physical distancing between adults, and between adults and learners who are not from the same household should be maintained.

100. This includes non-staff adult visitors to the school e.g. external educators, contractors, delivery people etc. Adult visitors to schools should be strictly limited only to those that are necessary to support children and young people or the running of the school and arrangements should be communicated clearly to staff and the wider school community.

101. Maintaining 2m distancing between adults and learners whenever possible will help mitigate risk, but it is acknowledged that this is not always possible, particularly when working with younger primary school children or children with additional support needs who may require personal or intimate care.

102. For the early stage (P1-P2), schools may consider making use of ELC models of managing children's interactions and other mitigations, where appropriate, particularly where adopting a play based approach. Detailed guidance on [reopening early learning and child care services](#) is available.

103. Other than where schools are using ELC models and guidance in the early stage (P1-2), where adults cannot keep 2m distance and are interacting face-to-face with other adults and/or children

and young people, face coverings (or, in certain specific circumstances, PPE - see section on PPE and other protective barrier measures, below) should be worn at all times. This applies to all staff including support staff and classroom assistants. Transparent face-coverings may be supplied by local authorities where appropriate and used where there is a risk of detriment to the child's health and wellbeing. See the section of the guidance on face coverings for further information.

104. Risk assessments should pay particular attention to the position of support assistants or other staff who may have to work in close contact with multiple children and young people throughout the day. In line with the advice above, distancing should be maintained by support assistants, and if that is not possible, face coverings should be worn (including transparent ones where appropriate). As part of risk assessment the need for PPE should be considered (see below) and PPE used accordingly. Where resources permit, if mitigations such as these cannot reasonably be implemented, schools might wish to consider timetabling/organising classes to limit the number of children and young people with whom a support assistant needs to come into close contact during the course of a day.

105. Movement between schools (e.g. of temporary/supply/peripatetic staff etc) should be kept to a minimum. As far as possible, attendance should be consolidated within one setting. Those providing essential services key to the delivery of children's care or educational plans, for example visiting teachers, psychologists, nurses, social workers, youthworkers, outdoor learning specialists and those providing therapeutic support, should be able to visit schools; however, appropriate mitigations to prevent transmission of the virus in and between settings should be undertaken. Mitigations should be determined via a risk assessment carried out by the school in co-operation with the service provider.

106. Schools and local authorities should, in partnership with related partners and local public health teams, pay very close attention to any evidence suggesting the potential for emerging bridges of transmission between settings. In the event that any such evidence is identified, they should consult immediately with local public health teams on any requirement to pause or further reduce such movement between schools. They should ensure that appropriate contingency measures are in place for any required period of time to e.g. protect the wellbeing of children and young people and staff.

107. As cleaning regimes will be enhanced, the extent to which cleaners will be able to move between locations may be constrained depending on local circumstances (see "Enhanced Hygiene and Environmental Cleaning", above).

108. Where movement across locations is necessary to deliver school operations the number of interactions should be minimised, the 2m distancing between adults should be adhered to wherever possible, and face coverings should be worn as set out in this guidance.

109. All staff can operate across different classes and year groups within a setting where this is necessary in order to facilitate the delivery of the school timetable. Where staff need to move between classes and year groups, they should try to keep 2m distancing from learners and other staff as well as wearing face coverings as appropriate.

110. With regard to movement of NCCT teachers between classes and across settings, this is permitted but should be minimised wherever possible. Schools should be encouraged to follow SNCT and LNCT guidance on how flexibility of time over a 2 or 4 week period may help to reduce movement of staff across classes.

111. The Strategic Framework notes that travel restrictions between areas of different prevalence will be set out in guidance. Exceptions will apply for essential travel including work and education.

112. Appropriate arrangements and places should be available to enable all school and ELC staff to take their breaks safely. Schools should plan how shared staff spaces, including kitchens, are set up and used to help staff to distance from each other. The number of people in staff rooms at any one time should be limited to ensure 2m distancing can be maintained and face coverings should also be worn. This includes at kettle stations and other gathering points.

113. Any facilities management work carried out within the school setting should adhere to the principles of physical distancing and be subject to risk assessment to put in place mitigating actions. Procedures should be put in place for deliveries to minimise person-to-person contact.

Drop off/pick up

114. The arrangements for parents/carers to drop off and collect children and young people require careful consideration, to ensure that large gatherings of people can be avoided and physical distancing between adults and children of different groupings is maintained. Schools should consult parents/carers on their plans and ensure that any arrangements put in place are communicated clearly to parents/carers.

115. Parents should not enter school buildings unless required. Some approaches that local authorities and schools should consider include the following:

- staggered drop off/pick up times or locations, so that not all children and young people arrive onsite at one time as long as this does not reduce the overall amount of learning time in school for children and young people;
- if the school has additional access points, consideration may be given to whether it would be beneficial to open these to reduce congestion;
- consideration may be given to where children and young people go as they arrive at the facility. This could include heading straight to their group's designated learning space/classroom, which could be indoors or outdoors;
- if parents/carers are dropping off children, they should be discouraged from gathering outside the school and should maintain distancing of 2m, as far as practicable, when dropping off their children. Appropriate markings may be introduced at the school gates;
- if parents/carers are dropping off children, they should wear face coverings;
- for those arriving by car, parents/carers may be encouraged to park further away from the school and then walk with their children to avoid congestion, or alternatively use active travel routes where feasible. Car-sharing with children and young people of other households should be discouraged – see advice on car-sharing;
- where learning spaces can be accessed directly from outside, this may be encouraged to decrease interactions between individuals in circulation spaces; and

- particular consideration should be given to the arrangements for parents/carers of children and young people with additional support needs or disabilities, who may normally drop their children off within the school building, and those who arrive at school using school transport, including taxis.

PPE and other protective barrier measures

PPE

116. For the majority of staff in schools, PPE is not required or necessary. Where it is required or necessary, the following arrangements will apply.

117. Where the use of PPE is being considered within an education and childcare setting the specific conditions of each individual setting must be taken into consideration and comply with all applicable legislation, including the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974, Personal Protective Equipment Regulations 1992 and the Management of Health and Safety Regulations 1999 which outlines the process of, and legal requirements for, risk assessment.

118. Schools and local authorities already have set risk assessment processes for the use of PPE. Following any risk assessment (individual or organisational), where the need for PPE has been identified using the HSE Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) at Work guide, appropriate PPE should be readily available and provided and staff should be trained on its use. The use of PPE by staff within schools, for example support staff, support assistants, staff with vulnerabilities, should be based on a clear assessment of risk and need for an individual child or young person, such as personal care, where staff come into contact with blood and body fluids or lift children and young people. Where the use of PPE is risk assessed as being required, staff should be trained in how to put on and take off PPE (as required by Health and Safety Regulations) and suitable waste facilities provided.

119. Risk assessments should already exist for children and young people with more complex needs, including those with emotional and behavioural needs. These risk assessments should be updated as a matter of priority in light of changes to provision such as environment and staffing. Risk assessments must be mindful of the additional distress children and young people may be experiencing due to measures introduced such as the use of face coverings or PPE, and the need for continued protection of staff. If for any reason, risk assessments are not in place, then they must be undertaken swiftly in accordance with this guidance and local risk assessment guidance. If there are any issues relating to risk assessment or staff wish to raise concerns they should in the first instance do so with their line manager in line with local procedures. Where concerns remain they can also contact their trade union representative and/or local HR or Health and Safety team. Employers should recognise those concerns and give them due consideration. If that does not resolve the concerns they can be raised directly with the HSE (see Annex C).

120. Local infection control procedures that outline safety and protocols should also be stringently followed and adequate training provided. This includes procedures for putting on and taking off PPE, the disposal of soiled items; laundering of any clothes including uniform and staff clothing, towels or linen; and cleaning equipment for children and young people, such as hoists and wheelchairs.

121. Specific guidance has been developed and published for first responders ([COVID-19: guidance for first responders](#)) who, as part of their normal roles, provide immediate assistance requiring close contact until further medical assistance arrives. This guidance sets out clearly what a first responder is required to do if they come into close contact with someone as part of their first responder duties. It covers the use of PPE and CPR.

122. The types of PPE required in specific circumstances are set out below:

- **Routine activities:** No PPE is required when undertaking routine educational activities in classroom or school settings.

- **Suspected COVID-19:** A fluid-resistant surgical mask should be worn by staff if they are looking after a child or young person who has become unwell with symptoms of COVID-19 and 2m distancing cannot be maintained while doing so.
- If the child or young person who has become unwell with symptoms of COVID-19 needs direct personal care, gloves, aprons and a fluid-resistant surgical mask should be worn by staff.
- Eye protection should also be worn if a risk assessment determines that there is a risk of splashing to the eyes such as from coughing, spitting, or vomiting.
- Gloves and aprons should be used when cleaning the areas where a person suspected of having COVID-19 has been.

- **Intimate care**: Gloves and aprons should continue to be used when providing intimate care to a child or young person. This can include personal, hands-on care such as washing, toileting, or first aid and certain clinical procedures such as assisted feeding.
- Fluid-resistant surgical masks should be used. Eye protection should also be worn if a risk assessment determines that there is a risk of splashing to the eyes such as from coughing, spitting, or vomiting.
- Gloves and aprons should be used when cleaning equipment or surfaces that might be contaminated with body fluids such as saliva or respiratory secretions.

- **Aerosol Generating Procedure (AGP):** There are a small number of medical procedures which increase the risk of transmission through aerosols (tiny droplets) being transferred from the patient to the care giver. These are known as aerosol generating procedures (AGPs). Within education settings, these are only undertaken for a very small number of children with complex medical needs, such as those receiving tracheostomy care.
- Staff performing AGPs in these settings should follow Scotland's National Prevention and Infection Control Manual (NSS and HPS) with personal protective equipment (PPE) guidance on aerosol generating procedures, and wear the correct PPE, which is:
  - a FFP2/3 respirator
  - gloves
  - a long-sleeved fluid repellent gown
  - eye protection
- Children and young people should be taken from the classroom or shared area for any AGP to be carried out in a designated room with the doors closed and any windows open. If this is not possible, for example in children and young people who require sporadic care, such as urgent tracheostomy tube suction, individual risk assessments should be carried out. In all instances, efforts should be made to:

- ensure that only staff who are needed to undertake the procedure are present and that no other children or young people are in the room
- minimise clutter to make the process of cleaning the room as straightforward as possible
- clean all surfaces and ventilate the room following a procedure and before anyone not wearing appropriate PPE enters. Clearance of infectious particles after an AGP is dependent on the ventilation and air change within the room. For a room without ventilation, this may take an hour

Face coverings

123. At its meeting on 9 February 2021, the Advisory Sub-group on Education and Children's Issues specifically considered whether advice on face coverings should be strengthened in order to require medical grade face masks to be worn in secondary schools. A definition of face coverings (which should not be confused with PPE) can be found in Covid19: staying safe and protecting others. The Sub-group view was that such a requirement was not commensurate with the risk in school settings, and that cloth face coverings, when combined with the other, more important, mitigations of physical distancing and hand hygiene, were considered appropriate in schools.

124. Further, at its meeting on 1 March, the Advisory Sub-group considered whether the wearing of type IIR face coverings should be advised for secondary school staff. In light of the absence of evidence that school staff are more likely to become infected or become seriously ill, and recognition that schools are relatively low risk environments as long as mitigations are applied and community transmission suppressed, the sub-group advises that standard face coverings, rather than type IIR, remain appropriate for secondary staff.

125. This is in line with the current World Health Organisation (WHO) checklist to support schools re-opening which suggests that medical masks are only required under certain conditions (e.g. for immunocompromised children or those with other diseases, in consultation with the child's medical provider).

126. For these reasons, the sub-group has concluded that its previous advice on face coverings in schools and ELC settings must be maintained. As an additional measure, face coverings should now be worn at all times by staff and young people in secondary schools; including S1-S3 learners (not just the senior phase) in classrooms, in communal areas and when moving about the school. Schools and ELC settings should also consider whether additional guidance, practical demonstrations, or communications for children, young people and staff to support the correct wearing, storage and disposal of face coverings, including the use of hygiene products when doing so, would support better efficacy of face coverings.

127. The Scottish Government will regularly review the policy position on face coverings in light of emerging scientific evidence and advice. It remains our judgement that face coverings provide adequate protection for use in the community and in most workplaces because they are worn in addition to taking other measures, such as physical distancing, hand hygiene, cleaning and symptom vigilance. The current face covering guidance on the Scottish Government website recommends:

- that face coverings are made of cloth or other textiles and should be two, and preferably three, layers thick and fit snugly while allowing you to breathe easily;
- that schools follow and endorse best practice on how to wash, store, wear and dispose of face coverings; and
- workplaces endorse and support staff to follow the best practice in the use of face coverings.

126. Any decision to use medical grade masks or PPE in schools (or any specific workplace settings) would need to be informed by an organisation risk assessment, undertaken with health and safety experts and public health advisers.

127. Unless otherwise stated, the approach to face coverings below should be applied across all primary and secondary school settings. However, as noted earlier in this guidance, schools may opt to apply ELC models in the early stages of primary school (P1-2), in which case the relevant guidance should be followed.

128. Anyone (whether child, young person or adult) wishing to wear a face covering in any part of the school should be permitted to do so.

129. Some individuals are exempt from wearing face coverings. Further information on exemptions can be found in wider Scottish Government guidance.

130. Face coverings should be worn by adults wherever they cannot keep 2m distance with other adults and/or children and young people.

131. Face coverings should also be worn in the following circumstances (except where an adult or child/young person is exempt from wearing a covering):

- at all times when adults in primary schools are moving around the school in corridors, office and admin areas, canteens (except when dining) and other confined communal areas, (including staff rooms and toilets);

- at all times for all staff and learners in secondary schools (including special schools and independent and grant aided schools); and

- in line with the current arrangements for public transport, where adults and children and young people aged 5 and over are travelling on dedicated school transport (see School Transport section).

132. Staff should use sensitivity and discretion with regard to the wearing of face coverings by children and young people observing Ramadan during April and May 2021.

133. Face coverings should be worn by parents and other visitors to all school sites (whether entering the building or otherwise), including parents at drop-off and pick-up.

134. Classroom assistants and those supporting children with Additional Support Needs, who may routinely have to work within two metres of primary, secondary or special school pupils, should wear face coverings as a general rule (see earlier section on physical distancing). However, the use of opaque face coverings should be balanced with the wellbeing and needs of the child, recognising that face coverings may limit communication and could cause distress to some

children – appropriate use of transparent face coverings may help in these circumstances. It is advised that these adults should be very alert to symptoms and follow closely the guidance on responding to COVID-19 symptoms.

135. Local Incident Management Teams, led by Health Protection Teams, may recommend a further strengthening of the use of face coverings in all classrooms (particularly in secondary schools) when dealing with local outbreaks (see Outbreak Management).

136. Where local decisions on the strengthened use of face coverings are made, it will remain vitally important to consider the potential impact on children and young people, including via the appropriate use of Equality Impact Assessments.

137. The impact of wearing a face covering for very young learners and/or learners with additional support needs, including any level of hearing loss, should be carefully considered. Communication for many of these learners (including hearing impaired young people) relies in part on being able to see someone's face clearly. This is also important for children and young people who are acquiring English and who rely on visual cues to enable them to be included in learning. Individuals who may not be able to handle and wear face coverings as directed (e.g. young learners, or those with additional support needs or disabilities) should not wear them as it may inadvertently increase the risk of transmission. Scottish Government guidance on "Helping Others" sets out supportive approaches when interacting with hearing impaired people. The National Deaf Children's Society has also suggested some ways in which communication with hearing impaired learners can be supported, in circumstances where face coverings are a barrier to communication.

138. In classes where any such impacts are anticipated and no alternative mitigations are reasonable, schools should consider the use of transparent/see-through face coverings. Some children and young people may need additional support/reassurance about the reasons for adults wearing face coverings. However, as face coverings have become more prevalent in wider society, this may be less of a concern.

139. It is vital that clear instructions are provided to staff and children and young people on how to put on, remove, store and dispose of face coverings in all of the circumstances above, to avoid inadvertently increasing the risks of transmission. The key points are as follows:

- Face coverings should not be shared with others.
- Before putting on or removing the face covering, hands should be cleaned by washing with soap and water or hand sanitiser.
- Make sure the face covering is the right size to cover the nose, mouth and chin. Children should be taught how to wear the face covering properly, including not touching the front and not pulling it under the chin or into their mouth.
- When temporarily storing a face covering (e.g. during classes), it should be placed in a washable, sealed bag or container. Avoid placing it on surfaces, due to the possibility of contamination.
- Re-usable face coverings should be washed after each day of use in school at 60 degrees centigrade or in boiling water.
- Disposable face coverings must be disposed of safely and hygienically. Children and young people should be encouraged not to litter and to place their face coverings in the general

waste bin. They are not considered to be clinical waste in the same way that used PPE may be.

140. Further general advice on face coverings is available in [Covid19: staying safe and protecting others](#).

141. There should be regular messaging from schools children, young people and staff about these instructions, with a clear expectation that face coverings are worn in the relevant areas except for those who are exempt.

142. Local authorities and schools should consider carefully how to address any equity concerns arising from the use of face coverings, including in respect of the impacts on certain groups of pupils and the costs of providing face coverings for staff and children and young people. It is reasonable to assume that most staff and young people will now have access to re-usable face coverings due to their increasing use in wider society, and the Scottish Government has made available a [video](#) on how to make a simple face covering. However, where anybody is struggling to access a face covering, or where they are unable to use their face covering due to having forgotten it or it having become soiled/unsafe, schools should take steps to have a contingency supply available to meet such needs.

143. As is usual, if there are any concerns about a child or young person behaving or acting in a way which doesn't align with school policy or procedure, their behaviour or actions should be discussed with them to resolve those concerns as quickly as possible, with any further action taken in line with usual school policy or procedure. If all approaches to resolve the concern with a child or young person in relation to health and safety measures have been exhausted then exclusion could be considered as an appropriate measure, but only as a last resort. "[Included, engaged and involved part 2: preventing and managing school exclusions](#)", provides national policy guidance on the use of early intervention and prevention to promote positive relationships and behaviour.

144. It is not recommended that face coverings are used in secure schools.

Testing (asymptomatic, symptomatic and close contact testing)

145. The asymptomatic testing offer is for all school staff and secondary pupils.

146. Confirmatory PCR tests will continue to be made available for all those who test positive using lateral flow devices (LFDs). It is very important that schools encourage all those participating to undertake these PCR follow-up tests, to mitigate against any risk of false positives and unnecessary self-isolation.

147. Step by step guidance about the asymptomatic testing programme has been shared with schools and ELC providers via Objective Connect. This guidance was developed in collaboration with NHS Test and Protect and the UK Department for Health and Social Care to support school and ELC providers in the delivery of the Schools/ELC Asymptomatic Testing Programme. Schools will provide staff and secondary pupils with Lateral Flow Device tests for twice-weekly, at-home rapid testing. Participants should then record all results (positive, negative or void) on the online digital reporting portal at www.gov.uk/report-covid19-result.

148. In the event of supply or delivery issues affecting the availability of LFD test kits in schools, staff can continue to access the pre-existing offer of asymptomatic at-home PCR test kits via www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test. There is no longer a requirement to go through employers to access these tests. Staff should follow instructions and, at the appropriate point in the process, select the option that states: "I'm in Scotland or Wales and I work in health or social care, education or in an emergency or prison service."

149. Asymptomatic testing is an additional measure and should not replace other mitigations set out in this guidance. Additionally, asymptomatic staff, student teachers and learners who receive negative LFD test results must not regard themselves or behave as if they are free from infection.

150. Symptomatic staff, student teachers and learners should not use lateral flow tests and must not attend work or school. They must access a PCR test as per their usual symptomatic testing channel. If a symptomatic staff member, student teacher or learner has used a LFD test and has returned a negative result, they must still self-isolate and arrange a PCR test.

151. When close contacts of any confirmed COVID case are identified through Test and Protect, they are now asked to get tested as soon as possible. Close contacts will be asked to book a PCR test through the UK booking portal, but can get help booking their test via NHS24. Staff and pupils participating in weekly LFD testing who are identified as close contacts of someone who has coronavirus will need to get a PCR test as instructed, and self-isolate for 10 days (even if they have tested negative in their weekly LFD testing). If they receive a negative PCR result they may continue with their weekly at-home LFD testing if they have LFD at home test kits in their home to continue testing with. Otherwise, they will have to complete their 10 days' isolation before picking up further kits. If they receive a positive PCR result then they and their household will have to start isolating for 10 days from the date of their PCR test. They will not be able to participate in weekly LFD testing for 90 days.

Staying vigilant and responding to COVID-19 symptoms

152. The whole school community should be vigilant for the symptoms of COVID-19, and to understand what actions they should take if someone develops them, either onsite or offsite. The most common symptoms are:

- new continuous cough
- fever/high temperature
- loss of, or change in, sense of smell or taste (anosmia).

153. All staff working in and with schools, along with the children and young people in their care, should be supported to follow up to date health protection advice on household or self- isolation and Test and Protect procedures if they or someone in their household exhibits COVID-19 symptoms, or if they have been identified by NHS contact tracers as a close contact of someone with the virus. Guidance on this is available from NHS Inform, Parent Club and gov.scot.

154. Some of the key points to ensure that children, young people and staff are aware of are as follows:

- It is essential that people do not attend school if symptomatic. Everyone who develops symptoms of COVID-19 – a new, continuous cough; fever or loss of, or change in, sense of smell or taste - should self- isolate straight away, stay at home and arrange a test via the appropriate method (see below).
- People who live in the same household as a person with symptoms must also self-isolate straight away and stay at home. Other members of the household do not require a test, unless they are also symptomatic. If the test result for the symptomatic person is negative, and they are not already isolating as a 'close contact' of a confirmed case, they can end isolation and return to work or school when they are well enough and have not had a fever for 48 hours assuming also that they are not quarantining for foreign travel reasons. The rest of their household can end isolation straight away. Ideally, testing should be undertaken in the first 3 days of symptoms appearing, although testing is effective until day 5.
- School staff who opt to undertake asymptomatic testing do not need to self-isolate while awaiting results, as long as no symptoms develop.
- If the test is positive, the symptomatic person must remain in isolation until 10 days from symptom onset, or longer if symptoms (e.g. fever or breathlessness) persist (with the exception of cough or loss of/change of sense of taste or smell, as these symptoms can persist for several weeks after the infectious period). They must otherwise be well and remain fever-free for 48 hours without medication. The rest of the household must remain in isolation for 10 days from symptom onset in the symptomatic person, even if they don't have symptoms themselves, as they may be incubating the infection.
- Everyone who tests positive for COVID-19 will be put in touch with the local contact tracing team so that other close contacts can be identified. All close contacts who are in the same household as confirmed cases must self-isolate immediately. They will usually be contacted by Test and Protect to reinforce self-isolation for 10 days from symptom onset in the symptomatic person. Contacts from outside the household of the confirmed case will be asked to self-isolate at home for 10 days from the date of last exposure to the case. Sometimes this advice is given locally via the school on the advice of the Health Protection Team.
- Everyone who needs to self-isolate as close contacts of confirmed cases must continue to do so for 10 days, even if they have a negative test result.
- Unless otherwise advised by Test and Protect or local Incident Management Teams, where children, young people or staff do not have symptoms but are self-isolating as a close contact of person who is a confirmed case, other people in their household will not be asked to self-isolate along with them.
- The Protect Scotland app from NHS Scotland's Test and Protect is designed to help people and reduce the spread of coronavirus. The app will alert an individual if they have been in close contact with another app user who has tested positive for coronavirus and can help in determining contacts that may have otherwise been missed while keeping people's information private and anonymous. Advice from Health Protection Teams may override advice from the app to self-isolate.

155. Schools are defined as complex settings for contact tracing purposes, meaning any positive case who has spent time in a school during the infectious period will be escalated to the local

Health Protection Team. If relevant, the school will be contacted directly by the Health Protection Team to help identify potential contacts and to ensure appropriate decontamination.

Testing of contacts

156. All contacts should be asked to get tested. This doesn't replace self-isolation and any contact who has a negative test during the isolation period must still complete the 10 day isolation period recommended for contacts, as they may still be incubating the COVID-19 virus. Contacts who test positive will be asked to self-isolate for an additional 10 days from the day of the test result. Any contact who has a positive test during their isolation period will be managed as a case and subject to contact tracing.

157. Guidance on booking testing through the UK Government test sites can be found on NHS inform and the Scottish Government website. Anyone unable to access these websites can call NHS24 free on 0800 028 2816 or NHS 111. Guidance on testing in health and care settings can be found in the Novel coronavirus (COVID-19) Guidance for Health Protection Teams.

158. Symptomatic children, young people and staff can book a test through www.nhsinform.scot, the employer referral portal (for staff only – see below) or, if they cannot get online, by calling 0800 028 2816.

159. Schools, other than in those authorities detailed in the following paragraph, will also be able to register their symptomatic staff as category 3 key workers under the employer referral portal, to ensure priority access to testing. The nature of this portal is to prioritise tests and appointments over the general public. This route directs individuals through to a Regional Test Centre or Mobile Testing Unit (whichever is nearer). For those who cannot access an RTC/MTU (if they do not have access to a car or live too far away), they can order a home test kit.

160. For schools in Orkney, Shetland and Comhairle nan Eilean Siar, there are different routes to accessing a test in these local areas. Education departments in these areas should liaise with their local Health Boards to ensure priority access to symptomatic testing for school staff.

161. All children, young people and staff must know that they must inform a member of staff or responsible person if they feel unwell with symptoms of COVID-19. Schools may need to ensure a responsible adult is there to support an affected individual where required. If the affected person has mild symptoms, and is over the age of 16 and is able to do so, they should go home as soon as they notice symptoms and follow the guidance for households with possible coronavirus infection including testing and self-isolation. If the individual affected is a child or young person below the age of 16 (or otherwise unable to travel by themselves), parents/carers should be contacted and asked to make arrangements to pick up the child or young person from school (preferably this should be another adult member of their household and not a grandparent) and follow the national guidance for households with possible COVID-19 infection including testing and self-isolation.

162. If a child or young person is awaiting collection try to find somewhere safe for them to sit which is at least 2 metres away from other people. If possible, and it is safe to do so, find a room or area where they can be isolated behind a closed door with appropriate adult supervision if required, depending on the age and needs of the child or young person. If it is possible to open a

window, do so for ventilation. Ensure that guidance on the use of PPE is followed. The individual should avoid touching people, surfaces and objects and be advised to cover their mouth and nose with a disposable tissue when they cough or sneeze, and then put the tissue in the bin. The symptomatic individual should also be asked to wear a face mask or face covering to reduce environmental contamination where this can be tolerated. If no bin is available, put the tissue in a bag or pocket for disposing in a bin later. If there are no tissues available, they should cough and sneeze into the crook of their elbow. Where possible, a separate bathroom should be designated for the individual to use.

163. Those with minor symptoms (staff and young people over the age of 16 and children under the age of 16 accompanied by a parent/carer), should, after leaving the school, minimise contact with others where possible, e.g. use a private vehicle to go home. If it is not possible to use private transport, then they should be advised to return home quickly and directly, and wear a face covering in line with Scottish Government guidance. If using public transport, they should try to keep away from other people and catch coughs and sneezes in a tissue. If they don't have any tissues available, they should cough and sneeze into the crook of the elbow. See the Health Protection Scotland Guidance for Non-Healthcare Settings for further advice on travel.

164. If an individual is so unwell that they require an ambulance, phone 999 and let the call handler know you are concerned about COVID-19. If it is safe and appropriate to do so, whilst you wait for advice or an ambulance to arrive, try to find somewhere safe for the unwell person to sit which is at least 2 metres away from other people. Ensure that guidance on the use of PPE is followed.

165. Advice on cleaning of premises after a person who potentially has COVID-19 has left the school premises can be found in the Health Protection Scotland Guidance for Non-Healthcare Settings. Assist FM have also produced complementary guidance on cleaning in schools.

166. Individuals should wash their hands thoroughly for at least 20 seconds after any contact with someone who is unwell (see personal hygiene section). Also see section on PPE.

167. Schools should manage single cases, clusters and outbreaks (i.e if schools have three or more confirmed linked cases of COVID-19 within 14 days) in line with the guidance on outbreak response (below), by contacting the local Health Protection Team.

168. Schools should also maintain an accurate register of absences of children, young people and staff and whether these are due to possible or confirmed COVID-19. Codes for this have been developed in SEEMiS.

Enhanced surveillance, testing and outbreak management

169. The public health measures set out above will go a long way to ensuring that schools are a safer environment for everyone.

170. There will also be, in parallel, a number of measures, involving testing, identifying close contacts and other steps, designed to monitor developments and allow for rapid response to any cases of COVID-19. This will include the following key elements.

(i) Enhanced surveillance programme

171. Scotland has an excellent programme of community surveillance. This allows us to monitor actively trends in the pandemic, both nationally and more locally.

172. There is also specific surveillance in respect of schools and children/young people. This draws on COVID-19 related information from a range of sources and covers all school ages and the ELC phase.

173. We have launched an additional surveillance programme (CASS), introducing antibody testing for substantial numbers of educational staff volunteers to identify the prevalence of COVID-19 antibodies over time. This will be alongside an infections survey, within a sample of schools, using repeated PCR/serology testing and survey data to establish symptoms and infections in the school population to inform the ongoing development of guidance. The principal focus of this at least initially will be young people and staff in S4, S5 and S6. Participation is voluntary and careful consideration is being given to ensuring acceptability in school populations.

174. A further surveillance study will look at risk in teachers which will improve our understanding of the likelihood of COVID-19 infection and illness within this education workforce, and the effectiveness of measures to reduce transmission.

175. Taken together, these sources will allow regular reporting on indicators such as: overall incidence and swab positivity for Scotland; incidence and swab positivity for school-age children; number and proportion of all cases that are among school workers; hot spots by local authority area; number of clusters or outbreaks that are under investigation within educational settings; levels and changes in antibodies in educational staff; risks in teachers; and asymptomatic transmission among older children and school workers.

176. These data will inform decision-makers at different levels as they consider any adjustments to make to arrangements – including this guidance – or any investigations to be conducted at certain localities to explore what local responses are required.

(ii) Test and Protect

177. The effective application of Test and Protect in the school environment will be an important means of preventing any spread of the virus and will be led by the local Health Protection Team. Schools should ensure that they understand the Test and Protect process and how to contact their local Health Protection Team (HPT). Further information on Test and Protect is available. All educational establishments are considered complex settings and cases will be prioritised and escalated to specialist HPTs.

178. The key initial step is the self-isolation and rapid testing of all symptomatic children, young people and staff (see above). Other children, young people and staff members may not be required to self-isolate unless they live with a confirmed case, a suspected case (pending testing of the suspected case), or are specifically advised by the school to do so or contacted by the contact tracing service. If a child, young person or staff member tests positive, they must continue self-isolation for at least 10 days. The HPT will assess what other action is needed,

taking into account the close contacts the person has had within the school and wider community and other factors such as the implementation of mitigating measures, eg cleaning, ventilation and PPE.

179. If a child, young person (or their parent/carer if under 16 years) or staff member is contacted by a contact tracer and told to self-isolate for ten days, the person should leave school to self-isolate at home and, if possible, wear a face covering en route (and avoid public transport if symptomatic). The Scottish Government has published advice for employers on how to support people who are asked to self-isolate.

(iii) Outbreak and case management

180. The management of single cases, clusters and outbreaks of COVID-19 is led by local health protection teams (HPTs) in health boards across all settings in society. For educational settings this occurs inclusively alongside local partners, such as schools and local authorities as well as Public Health Scotland, as required.

181. The procedures for incident and outbreak investigation and management are well established through Managing Public Health Incidents.

182. Schools should ensure that they know how to contact their local HPT and their designated person is for doing so is often the Head Teacher.

183. A cluster or outbreak of COVID-19 occurs when a school has three or more confirmed cases of COVID-19 within 14 days. If a plausible transmission link between three or more cases is identified within the school setting, this is indicative of an 'outbreak'; if not, it is referred to as a 'cluster'.

184. For educational settings, Public Health Scotland advise that schools contact their local HPT when a single confirmed (test positive) case of COVID-19 occurs in a pupil or staff or if there is suspicion of an outbreak of cases in a specific setting, e.g. an increase in the background rate of pupil absence due to suspected or confirmed cases of COVID-19. In this way, the HPT can provide quick advice to schools to support risk assessment of the situation and any further action required.

185. Schools and local authorities will be expected to work closely with their local HPT to resolve such situations. COSLA have developed a national toolkit for managing cases and outbreaks in schools with input from Public Health Scotland that summarises this. Actions that school and local authority management teams may need to be involved in when cases of COVID-19 arise in staff or pupils include (but are not restricted to):
- attendance at multi-agency incident management team meetings
- communications with children, parents/carers and staff – these are vital to provide reassurance to school communities
- providing records of seating plans / school layout / attendance / groups
- implementing enhanced infection, prevention and control measures
- media communications.

186. Schools remain settings of low risk for COVID-19. The HPT will lead the incident management team (IMT) that usually co-ordinates such activities and through its members will investigate the circumstances of each incident and agree control measures. The investigation will involve reviewing risk assessments and compliance with existing guidance. Control measures may include hand hygiene reviews, enhanced cleaning regimes, adequate ventilation, reinforcement of messages on physical distancing, reminders about symptom vigilance and self-isolation and advice on face coverings and testing of children and staff, when needed. Usually schools continue to operate throughout. On very rare occasions a move to remote learning approaches may be considered. In larger-scale clusters, it may be necessary to temporarily close a school to facilitate cleaning or when teaching staff capacity makes it unfeasible to remain open. Rarely do schools need to close on Public Health grounds. Any discussion of possible school closures will be determined through the multi-agency IMT.

187. Schools should maintain appropriate records to support outbreak control measures and information flow between participating agencies must be facilitated respecting the principles of confidentiality and Data Protection legislation. In order to protect pupils and staff and to maintain access to education, confirmation of pupil and staff COVID-19 case and close contact numbers (including those self-isolating) are shared in confidence between the agencies. To support this, Data Protection Impact Assessments should be in place for all partner organisations.

Special considerations for certain groups

People on the shielding list (highest clinical risk)

188. This guidance applies to those who are at the highest clinical risk from coronavirus (known as the shielding category). Information on who is considered to be at highest risk is available at [Coronavirus (COVID-19): shielding advice and support - gov.scot (www.gov.scot)](www.gov.scot) along with advice and support for this group, including advice on attending work and school. Everyone in this cohort will have received a letter from the Chief Medical Officer.

189. The approach to shielding is based on the following principles:

- advice must be proportionate to the level of infections in the local community;
- it should be set at a level which optimises the benefits of protection and minimises health, social and economic harms; and
- it should be practical, empower people to make decisions which are right for them, and be culturally appropriate and tailored to ensure reach and accessibility.

190. There is extra advice for people on the shielding list aligned to each level of the Strategic Framework setting out clearly how advice will change depending on the rates of infection in local areas. As the levels in a local area change, the protection advice for people on the shielding list in that area will change as well. People at highest risk (shielding) should still follow the advice for the general public as a minimum.

191. For staff, the current guidance at levels 0 - 3 includes that the majority of workplaces can be made safe, and following an individual workplace risk assessment, employers should make the necessary adjustments to the workplace to make sure protective measures are in place. Where people on the shielding list have a concern they should discuss this with their employer. It is the

employer's responsibility to make the workplace and duties safe. Employees also have a responsibility to comply with safe working practices. Any concerns can be discussed with managers or employers. Further advice is also available from:

- Occupational Health services provided by your employer, where available
- a Health and Safety representative in your workplace
- your workplace's Human Resources (HR) department
- your trade union or professional body

192. There is guidance for employers and employees on making the workplace safe at Coronavirus (COVID-19): guidance on individual risk assessment for the workplace - gov.scot (www.gov.scot). This includes an individual workplace risk assessment (COVID-Age) tool, which employees can use to show their employer their assessment of personal risk. This can help discussions with employers about any additional adjustments or arrangements needed to make the workplace and duties safe. Further sector specific guidance can be found at Coronavirus (COVID-19): creating and maintaining safer workplaces – gov.scot (www.gov.scot) and on the Parent Club website www.parentclub.scot/topics/coronavirus/returning-to-school-and-childcare-settings.

193. The Chief Medical Officer's current advice for people on the shielding list living or working in areas at level 4 is that if your employer cannot arrange for you to work from home, then you should not attend work. This advice remains, regardless of whether you have had 1 or 2 doses of the vaccination. The Chief Medical Officer's letter is valid as a Shielding Notification (similar to a Fit Note) up to the 30 June if an area is in level 4 at any time up until then. We will update this guidance if this advice changes as we learn more about the impact of the vaccination.

194. The Chief Medical Officer's advice for children and young people on the shielding list at level 4 is that children and young people who are on the shielding list should not attend school, college or regulated childcare services such as nurseries in areas at level 4.

195. However, parents can consult with their child's secondary care (hospital) clinical team who may advise that an individualised risk assessment could be undertaken with the school, college or nursery and arrangements put in place which may allow their child to return to school.

196. Arrangements for learning from home will be put in place for children and young people who cannot attend school or college in person due to shielding requirements. The local education service will provide advice on the support available for children who are being asked not to attend school, college or childcare under additional protective measures

197. Information in relation to pupils' attendance and absence is published by [Scottish Government Education Analytical Services](). This may assist individuals' and employers' understanding of case numbers in relation to schools, which may be helpful as part of risk assessment within the school setting.

198. It is important that appropriate arrangements for remote learning are in place for children and young people who cannot attend school in person due to shielding (or self-isolation) requirements.

199. At protection levels 0-3, children and young people on the shielding list are asked to follow the guidance for the general population, including attendance at school.

Household members of people on the shielding list and work

200. Children and young people who live with a person that is on the shielding list should attend school in line with arrangements for the return to school. All children and young people attending school should comply with the arrangements for the reduction of risks of transmission of the virus within schools, including hand hygiene and the use of face coverings where appropriate.

201. Family members of people on the shielding list can go to work if working from home is not possible in protection level 4. It is the employers responsibility to make sure the workplace and duties are as safe as possible. Household members of people that are shielding should discuss their concerns with their employer.

202. Employers can also, at their discretion, furlough people through the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme which has now been extended until September 2021. They may also be able to furlough people in the event that they have caring responsibilities resulting from COVID-19.

203. Parents/carers may wish to have a discussion with their child's healthcare team if they are unsure or have queries about returning to or attending school because of their own health condition.

Support for those who have underlying health conditions

204. Clinically vulnerable staff (including those who have underlying health conditions, but who would not be on the shielding list) can continue to work in schools, subject to a dynamic risk assessment confirming it is safe to do so. Arrangements should be made to enable appropriate physical distancing staying 2 metres away from others wherever possible, in line with current advice on the return to school. If they have to spend time within 2 metres of other people, settings must carefully assess and agree with them whether this involves an acceptable level of risk and face coverings should be worn.

205. Where any concerns do exist, guidance for people with underlying health conditions has been prepared and will continue to be updated. School staff who have underlying health conditions will wish to be aware of this advice in order to inform discussions with their employer, trade union and/or healthcare team.

Considerations related to pregnancy

206. Schools and local authorities should follow the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists advice to try and keep the risk of exposure as low as is practically possible to pregnant women, particularly in the third trimester. Normal pregnancy risk assessments should also be undertaken, and appropriate attention paid to mental health and wellbeing.

Support for children and young people with Additional Support Needs

207. Every child and young person will have different levels of required support. It will be important as part of the risk assessments carried out to consider the individual needs of a child or young person. Where there is a need to work in close proximity with adults and children and young people the safety measures to protect adults and children and young people alike should be followed. Staff should wear a face covering or PPE (where appropriate), and regularly wash their hands before and after contact. Guidance on [supporting children and young people with additional support needs](#) is published by the Scottish Government.

Support for anxious children, young people, families and staff

208. The past few months have been a time of considerable change and there will undoubtedly be moments of anxiety. It will be important to take gradual steps in terms of reintroduction to safe practices and intervention with others. It will be important for schools to support ongoing family interaction, particularly for children and young people with additional support needs. It will also be vital for relevant services to consider mental health awareness.

Support for minority ethnic staff

209. There is some wider evidence that people from a minority ethnic background who are infected with COVID-19 seem to be at higher risk of severe disease. Work is ongoing to build upon these data and to improve understanding.

210. The Scottish Government continues to work with experts from a range of fields, including our Ethnicity Expert Reference Group, to develop actions to help mitigate any disproportionate effects and implications experienced by minority ethnic groups and communities. There is cross organisational work being taken forward to fulfil the recommendations made by the Covid Ethnicity Expert Reference Group.

211. The concerns within minority ethnic communities must be recognised and individual requests for additional protections should be supported wherever possible. Responding to requests for additional protections may include offering access to support from occupational health services (OHS) and the provision of individual risk assessments. On 27 July 2020 Scottish Government published COVID-19 Occupational Risk Assessment [Guidance](#) which is applicable to the working age minority ethnic population staff and employers in all sectors can use this guidance to provide an individualised and evidence-based approach to understanding risks of COVID-19 in the workplace. This guidance is relevant to all staff and may of particular use for minority ethnic staff who have an underlying health condition, or are anxious about risks in the workplace.

212. The individual occupational risk assessment guidance is split into three parts which helps individuals and employers to understand risks of COVID-19 in the workplace - 1) information for employers on how to make the workplace safe 2) latest evidence on individual vulnerability factors and 3) the latest prevalence data and public health advice.

213. The guidance provides information for employers on their legal duty to make the workplace a safe working environment for all staff. Employers should be mindful of their duties under the Equality Act 2010 at all times. It highlights the employer's responsibility to regularly conduct a

workplace risk assessment and put in place measures to make the workplace as safe as is reasonably practicable to try and minimise the risk to staff from contracting COVID-19.

214. The guidance also provides individuals with the latest evidence on known vulnerability factors. This includes an easy to use, COVID age calculator that takes into account contributing risk factors like ethnicity, age, sex , BMI and health conditions to give an overall COVID-19 risk age. The tool allows the biggest factor in risk to COVID, age, to be viewed alongside these other contributing risk factors. This is based on the latest clinical and scientific evidence available and is updated regularly. It is recognised that the tool has its limitations and cannot address every eventuality, as such, it does not replace clinical advice. For pregnant workers, the UK Government Coronavirus (COVID-19): advice for pregnant employees should be followed.

215. The most important part of the process is the conversation that takes places between a manager and a member of staff. The conversation should take into consideration all three sections of the guidance, the workplace risks and steps taken to reduce the risk of infection, an individual's clinical risk to COVID-19, and the local prevalence to agree a course of action regarding work duties. It is essential that the outcome from these conversations is agreed by both parties. For more information please follow this link: Talking with your workers about preventing Corona Virus. **Employers cannot expect staff members to return to work if it is not as safe as is reasonably practicable.** There is a duty on employers, HR, OH professionals, and staff members to work in cooperation to make the workplace as safe as reasonably practicable.

216. If a staff member and their manager do not agree, or there is uncertainty about the impact of the staff member's health condition, then we would advise seeking further advice. This advice may be available from a GP, Occupational Health Services, Health and Safety Professionals, Trade Unions, Infection Prevention Services, or the Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service (ACAS).

217. The guidance and tool are based on the latest clinical and scientific advice on COVID-19 and are updated on a regular basis.

Young people in the senior phase who attend colleges

218. Young people in the senior phase may require to spend time in college environments. They should ensure that they follow the guidance on the appropriate approach to these specific circumstances while on campus. This has now been included in updated guidance for colleges.

219. Colleges are now able to prioritise the return of further senior phase school pupils studying at college who require in-person provision now in order to complete or progress. In line with wider college guidance, pupils should only be on campus for the duration of the practical work and should continue to learn remotely for those course elements where this is possible.

220. Evidence to date suggests there has not been significant transmission in the educational aspects of HE / FE settings, while it is clear that there would be significant disadvantage to young people in these circumstances were they not to be able to attend HE / FE to complete these courses. On this basis, the COVID-19 Advisory Sub-Group have maintained their previous

advice on attendance by these students, but noted the need for compliance with protective measures to be strongly reinforced.

221. As set out in the sectoral guidance, schools and college should work together to consider first whether remote or blended learning arrangements can be put in place for school pupils. Where students do attend in person, consideration should be given to maintaining them in consistent groupings (some colleges have put in place arrangements to segregate school students from the wider college cohort). All public health measures that apply in colleges should be strictly observed, including in circumstances where school students are being taught separately from the wider college population.

222. Schools and local authorities should, in partnership with FE/HE institutions and local public health teams, pay very close attention to any evidence suggesting the potential for emerging bridges of transmission between school and FE/HE settings. In the event that any such evidence is identified, they should consult immediately with local public health teams on any requirement to pause in-person attendance at FE/HE institutions by senior phase students. They should ensure that appropriate contingency measures for remote learning are in place for any required period of time.

Individual risk assessments

223. Local authorities will already have individual risk assessment processes in place to support individuals in the groups above. However, staff in all sectors can still use the Scottish Government individual risk assessment guidance if they remain concerned about their health condition, or are anxious about returning to work."

SCHOOL OPERATIONS

Promoting attendance and reducing absence

224. It is recognised that some parents and carers may be concerned about their child being in school, and consider withholding their child until reassurance is provided. In these circumstances, schools and local authorities should engage with those parents and carers to provide reassurance on any concerns, overcome any barriers to learning, and support attendance. National guidance on promoting attendance and managing absence makes clear the importance of relationships with families in promoting good attendance. The National Parent Forum has produced guidance for parents on the return to school.

225. Parents are required under the Education (Scotland) Act 1980 to provide education for their child. It is important that children and young people are able to benefit from their right to education; are able to see their friends and have social contact and benefit from the learning, care and support that schools provide. The ongoing need to reconnect to normal patterns and routines in children's lives will be important and reassuring to them.

226. National guidance is clear that measures of compulsion for attendance should only be used as a last resort once all other approaches to support attendance have been undertaken. Additional codes have been developed within SEEMiS to support the recording and monitoring of attendance and absence, including specific codes relating to COVID-19.

Curricular and assessment matters

Outdoor learning

227. Schools should consider the increased use of outdoor spaces. The Covid-19 Advisory Sub-Group on Education and Children's Issues has commented that there "is consistent evidence that the risk of transmission outdoors is low, and the benefits of outdoor activity are well recognised". The outdoors can provide extra space for distancing between consistent groups of learners, help to decrease the risk of transmission and improve the physical and mental health and wellbeing of young people.

228. Suitable facilities may include school playgrounds, local greenspaces and/or community areas. When enhancing existing outdoor space within their own grounds, schools may find it necessary to consider temporary shelters or the periodic use of established buildings for activities such as handwashing, regrouping or the relaying of instructions. An appropriate cleaning regime should be introduced along with appropriate bins for disposal of any rubbish and hand washing stations/sanitiser to ensure hygiene.

229. Schools should ensure that children and young people with additional support needs are not disadvantaged. In addition, if outdoor equipment is being used, schools should ensure that multiple groups do not use it simultaneously, as well as considering appropriate cleaning between groups of children using it. Appropriate clothing should be worn for the particular outdoor activity.

230. Education Scotland provides a summary of outdoor learning [resources](#) which can support schools and practitioners in taking more learning out of the classroom. The [Outdoor Learning Directory](#) provides links to a variety of resources that can be filtered by subject area and curriculum level and the [Teaching Learning Outdoors](#) and [Supporting Learning Outdoors](#) professional learning courses are available free to all teachers and support staff. Specialist outdoor educators from organisations supporting outdoor learning can also provide advice, training and information, and can work alongside school staff. A [map](#) of outdoor education providers is available as well as a [directory](#) of residential providers - some of whom may be able to provide advice and support to schools. Further support can be accessed through the [Scottish Advisory Panel for Outdoor Education](#) who will be able to put school staff in contact with their local authority outdoor learning lead.

231. Support and guidance on in relation to off-site outdoor learning (to be planned in reference to the most up-to-date Scottish Government school visits guidance) can be found on the [Going Out There framework](#).

232. In order to make the best use of outdoor learning opportunities, local authorities should draw on the expertise of their outdoor learning lead officers to share the outdoor learning advice within this guidance. This includes the benefits of learning in the outdoors in relation to reduced Covid-19 transmission, the benefits of outdoor learning on progression across curriculum areas and the health and wellbeing of young people and opportunities for professional development in relation to outdoor provision.

Practical activities, experiments and investigations

233. Practical, "hands-on" learning and activities, experiments and investigations are an important part of the curriculum across all subject areas. We recognise that practitioners may need to adapt their approaches to enable learners to carry out these activities in a safe way. Practitioners should consult Education Scotland's [practical activities guidelines](#) for further advice. In addition, SSERC has produced [guidance on carrying out practical work in Sciences and Technologies](#) for early, primary and secondary levels, including links to helpful resources.

Physical education, physical activity and sport

234. Opportunities to participate in physical activity and sport have the potential to enhance children and young people's mental and physical wellbeing and will support children and young people to lead healthy, active lifestyles now and in the future. Guidelines on [Practical Activities](#) have been prepared by Education Scotland to assist with decision-making and the safe implementation of timetabled physical education. School swimming pools should be closed in areas at Level 4.

235. The COVID-19 Advisory Sub-Group on Education and Children's issues has published [advice on PE, music and drama in schools](#), which has more recently been updated upon the latest evidence.

Guidelines on expressive arts

236.   The Coronavirus (COVID-19) Advisory Sub-Group on Education and Children's Issues published its advisory note on physical education, music and drama in schools on 10 September, and since updated it on 16 February 2021. Education Scotland has produced specific guidelines covering art and design and photography, music (including singing), dance, and drama. These documents set out the hierarchy of risk in terms of the different types of activities and the different kinds of mitigations which can be put in place, providing schools with guidance on how to facilitate these important learning elements as fully as they can while remaining safe within the confines of public health advice. Guidance has been updated to take account of the new Strategic Framework.

Home economics

237.   Guidelines on safe practice in home economics have been prepared by Education Scotland and were published on 16 February 2021 on the Education Scotland website.

Senior phase/SQA National Qualification Courses

238.   In acknowledgement of COVID-19 related disruption to young people's education this academic year, examinations for National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher courses in 2021 have been cancelled. On 8 December the Deputy First Minister outlined to Parliament that National Qualifications in 2020-2021 will be awarded based on teacher judgement of evidence of demonstrated attainment, supported by local and national quality assurance processes.

239.   The National Qualifications 2021 Group issued updated guidance on 16 February setting out the details of the Alternative Certification Model, which included confirming a delay to the submission date for provisional results to 25 June. Further clarification on the approach to assessment was issued on 13 April.

240.   With the full-time return of Senior Phase learners following the Easter break, the initial priority should be to maximise learning and teaching time to ensure that there is a secure foundation and sufficient course coverage. Schools should then begin to assess learner evidence to determine their demonstrated attainment, carrying out and recording decisions in line with internal quality assurance procedures. There is no requirement to replicate full formal exams or prelims this year. Classroom based assessments should be spread over the remaining weeks to help manage the marking and quality assurance activities as well as reduce pressure on learners. A flexible and consistent framework has been created, including detailed guidance, material and support, based on assessment standards that teachers are familiar with. This should enable schools to deliver the assessment evidence which suits their cohort's circumstances. The latest information from the National Qualifications 2021 Group can be found at: https://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/93778.html

Physical education and dance national qualifications assessments

241.   The Advisory Sub-Group considered the issue of physical education for the purpose of assessment to ensure certification in the senior phase. The view was that relaxing the

mitigations would not be appropriate in areas at Level 4, particularly as the science would suggest an increased risk of transmission among young people during physical exertion indoors. However, the sub-group was prepared to agree that in exceptional circumstances physical education for the purpose of assessment could be allowed indoors provided that all other appropriate mitigations were in place regarding strict 2 metre physical distancing, ventilation, and hand and respiratory hygiene etc.

242. The Sub-group recognised the importance of physical education for the health and wellbeing of young people, and would keep the issue under review.

The provision of activities or clubs outside the usual school timetable

243. These are important for wider health and development of children and can be conducted subject to following the guidance set out in this note, and guidance for the general public where applicable. Schools should consider the need for out of hours cleaning when scheduling activities.

School trips

244. Guidance on school visits is available at Coronavirus (COVID-19): guidance for school visits and trips - gov.scot (www.gov.scot). This This sets out a phased reintroduction of school visits subject to a further review of data in the week commencing 3 May 2021.

Improvement planning and reporting

245. The Director of Learning at the Scottish Government wrote to all Directors of Education on 2 June 2020 to set out the latest guidance on recovery and improvement planning. This made it clear that planning for 2020-21 should focus on recovery, and then continuity of provision under these changed circumstances. 2021/22 will also be a recovery year, and there will be a continued emphasis on issues such as: supporting student and staff health and wellbeing; transitions at all levels; the impact of tragedy in communities; identifying gaps in learning; and a renewed focus on closing the poverty related attainment gap. In particular, there should be a focus on what can be done to remedy any impact that there has been around the widening of inequalities of outcome experienced by children and young people.

246. Schools and local authorities should also complete annual reporting, as it is important to capture the impact of work which has been undertaken during this academic session.

247. The 2021 National Improvement Framework was published in December 2020 and reflects the school and local authority response to supporting children, families and school communities throughout the COVID-19 crisis and beyond. Effective school and local improvement plans remain essential for 2021/22 to ensure that the improvement activity which will be set out in in the 2022 National Improvement Framework is informed by local and school-level priorities.

School transport

248. This guidance is intended to inform local authority planning of school transport services. This includes transport which takes learners between home and school and between school and

other places where educational delivery is planned. Local authorities are responsible for implementation of this section of the guidance, working with the operators with whom they contract to ensure necessary measures are put in place in line with risk assessments (which should involve appropriate consultation with trade unions and staff).

249. Parents and school staff should all play a role in educating children and young people on acceptable behaviour on school and public transport and in emphasising the need to abide by the additional mitigations such as face coverings.

250. This guidance has been informed by the [scientific advice](#) of the COVID-19 Advisory Sub Group on Education and Children's issues, published on 30 October and by its discussions and advice during January to March 2021. The key messages from the scientific advice include:

- Dedicated school transport should be regarded as an extension of the school estate and it is not necessary to maintain distance between children and young people of all ages.
- Important mitigations include: hygiene, ventilation, improved cleaning regimes including regular and thorough cleaning of surfaces, and regular handwashing. Hand sanitising should be required for everyone prior to boarding dedicated school transport and schools should also consider a process for children and young people which enables them to wash their hands immediately on arrival (as is the case for all children and young people), dispose of temporary face coverings in a covered bin or place reusable face coverings in a plastic bag they can take home with them, and then wash their hands again. Face coverings should be worn on dedicated school transport (subject to exemptions), in line with public transport.
- Children, young people and adults must not board dedicated school or public transport if they, or a member of their household, have symptoms of COVID-19. If a child or young person develops symptoms while at school they will be sent home. They must not travel on regular home-to-school transport. The school should contact the parent/carer who should make appropriate and safe arrangements to collect the child or young person. In this situation, the wearing of a face covering by the child or young person on the journey home is strongly advised.
- Where public transport (including buses, taxi, trams, subway, trains, ferries and air) is required for school-aged children to attend school, the general [advice and guidance from the Scottish Government and Transport Scotland](#) should be followed. This includes the mandatory use of face coverings unless exemptions apply and physical distancing where possible.
- Drivers and staff on public transport, and to a lesser extent on school transport, are at relatively higher risk of exposure and particular attention should be paid to ensuring that they are protected from airborne and surface transmission.
- Compliance with the above should be strongly reinforced.

National transport guidance and local authority arrangements

251. Schools should be aware of the latest [guidance](#) on how to remain safe when walking, cycling and travelling in vehicles or on public transport as we transition through and out of the COVID-19 outbreak.

252. Local authorities should ensure that local arrangements and advice to staff, parents/carers and children and young people for travelling to and from their school are consistent with the latest national guidance. Schools should work with their local authority public transport teams to inform their local planning, particularly in respect of options to minimise and, where possible, stagger the use of public transport if necessary to address capacity constraints. As part of risk assessments, local authorities should work with schools, transport operators and trade unions as necessary to identify the risks arising from COVID-19 and work through the measures in this section of the guidance to minimise any risks to children, young people and staff travelling on transport to school.

253. Some general points for consideration are:

- local authorities and schools should ensure they maintain an appropriate understanding (e.g. through a survey of families or other engagement) of how children and young people travel to school, to aid in quantifying the potential public transport issues in local authority areas.
- ensure understanding is shown to children, young people, staff and parents/carers who may be delayed in getting to school due to transport issues.
- additional support should be available for vulnerable families for planning their journey to school.
- include colleges and other relevant partners in planning for school transport, as young people in the senior phase may also be doing some of their learning in colleges, on work placements, or through consortium arrangements.
- ensure that all children and young people travelling on dedicated or public transport have access to hand sanitiser. The precise arrangements for doing so are for local authorities to decide in consultation with operators and school communities. Options may include provision of personalised supplies to those travelling on school transport.

254. A strategy for communicating and disseminating clear information about school transport provision to parents/carers and children and young people, drivers and other staff should be developed.

Encouraging active travel

255. As far as it is safe to do so, the use of active travel routes by parents/carers, staff and children and young people should be encouraged. Walking and cycling, scooting, wheeling etc should be strongly encouraged. In view of the potential for capacity constraints on public transport to impact on children and young people's ability to attend school, all sustainable and active travel modes should be considered. If bikes are stored in bike sheds/racks consideration should be given to the cleaning of these areas and to reducing time spent at the bikes stores/shed.

Dedicated school transport

256. This section of the guidance applies to dedicated school transport – broadly, transport services which carry children and young people to and/or from their homes and any educational establishment where they receive school education. It is important to note that dedicated school bus vehicles may be used for other purposes before and after transporting children to school – effective implementation of the preventative measures set out below is particularly important in these circumstances.

257. This guidance also reflects the [scientific advice from the COVID-19 Advisory Sub-Group on Education and Children regarding the requirements for the safe travel of children and young people](#) to/from school published on 16 July and the [updated advice](#) published 30 October:

- Enhanced cleaning**:** Local authorities should work with transport operators to agree what supplementary arrangements are needed alongside operators' existing programmes for cleaning vehicles. It is recommended that frequently touched surfaces are cleaned appropriately after each journey wherever possible – especially important where vehicles are used for other purposes before and after transporting children to and from school – and that enhanced cleaning takes place at the end of each day. Ensuring an effective enhanced cleaning regime is in place will play an important role in suppressing transmission and building confidence among parents, children and young people in school transport services.

- Children and young people: face coverings should be worn by children aged 5 years and over on dedicated school transport (unless exemptions apply). See the section on Face Coverings for further information.

- Maintaining distance between young people on dedicated school transport is not necessary. However, where feasible and provided they do not introduce capacity constraints, the following precautionary approaches may help further minimise risk:

  o Where possible, arrangements should be put in place to allow family groups and children and young people from the same class groupings to travel together. This will reduce unnecessary mixing and is one way to further lower risk.
  o While logistics may prevent this in many cases, where possible, school-aged children and young people should be assigned seats which they use consistently, although this is not essential. This could be allocating specific seats or having rules such as sitting in ascending year groups: front to back, youngest to oldest. Queuing arrangements for picking up children and young people may be important considerations in this regard.
  o Wherever vehicle capacity allows, distancing between individual passengers, or groups of passengers, is helpful. In particular, local authorities should consider whether distancing is possible for secondary pupils or those in the senior phase, in circumstances where children attending different schools travel on the same vehicle, and for certain children and young people with complex needs e.g. those that spit uncontrollably.
  o Where possible, avoid the use of face-to-face seating on dedicated school transport.

- The consumption and sharing of food and drink should not be allowed.

- Drivers are unable to monitor and enforce seating arrangements. It is important that schools, working with parents and carers, challenge poor behaviour among pupils relating to school transport, as part of the wider behaviour management, and as part of their work to help pupils develop as responsible citizens.

- Transport operators should be asked to keep windows on dedicated school transport open, where possible, and to ensure that mechanical ventilation uses fresh rather than recirculated air; or use air conditioning with attention paid to the appropriate frequency for changes of filters.

- Drivers, staff and other adults: particular attention should be paid to ensuring drivers, staff and other adults are protected from the risks of COVID-19 in vehicles. Risk assessments should consider whether changes within a vehicle are required, with changes made on that basis. This may include leaving seats behind/beside the driver empty or fitting a physical barrier or screen. Any adults travelling by dedicated school transport should conform with the requirements for public transport (1 metre distancing with appropriate mitigation measures in place and the wearing of face coverings, at the time of writing). Drivers and passenger assistants may wish to use alcohol hand rub or sanitiser at intervals throughout the journey, and should always do so after performing tasks such as helping a child into the vehicle or handling a child's belongings. Drivers of school transport services may also have other driving tasks as part of their job role, for example delivering meals to care homes, day centres and sometimes transporting others who may be vulnerable. Local authorities should pay particular attention to effective implementation of the preventative measures set out in this guidance in these circumstances to prevent the spread of infection. As far as possible, windows should be opened.

- Adults travelling with children and young people with Additional Support Needs: Adults travelling with children and young people with Additional Support Needs should be very alert to them displaying symptoms. As a general rule, these adults should wear face coverings. However, this requires to be balanced with the wellbeing and needs of the child: face coverings may limit communication and could cause distress to some children and young people. Advice should be provided to parents/carers to support the effective cleaning of specialist equipment for children and young people with additional support needs who are using school transport. Local authorities should consider the support available for children and young people with complex Additional Support Needs using school transport, and take appropriate actions to reduce risk if adherence to hygiene rules and physical distancing for adults are not possible. As far as possible, windows should be opened.

- All (children, young people, drivers, other adults) travelling on dedicated school transport: All passengers and staff should sanitise their hands prior to boarding dedicated school transport. Schools should regularly reinforce the importance of this key message with all children and young people. Hand washing/hand sanitising should be done regularly throughout the day including on each and every entry to the school building and prior to boarding the school bus. Good respiratory hygiene should be encouraged ("Catch it, kill it, bin it") and children and young people should be encouraged to carry tissues on home to school transport. It is crucial that someone with symptoms does not enter a bus and travel. Drivers and adult passengers must self-isolate and book a test if they display coronavirus (COVID-19) symptoms. Families must get a test for children and young people displaying symptoms.

Public transport

258. Children and young people travelling to and from school normally form a significant proportion of the journeys on public transport during peak times, particularly in city schools and by secondary school children and young people. While physical distancing remains in place on public transport, it will not be practicable for those to resume in the same numbers or mode as previously. Journeys by public transport may take longer and timetables may change. Children, young people and staff who have no alternative to public transport should therefore be advised to plan their journey in advance and leave additional time where possible. Information on public

transport services can be found at www.travelinescotland.com. Local authorities may wish to engage with bus operators to identify routes where capacity constraints may be particularly severe and to work with them to agree measures to improve capacity for school pupils.

259. To help address capacity constraints on public transport, local authorities may wish to work with operators and schools to consider the following approaches:

- consider making additional dedicated school transport available in such circumstances. Transport Scotland intelligence suggests there is significant spare capacity in the coach sector currently, due to reduced demand from the tourism sector.

- where consistent with children being in school full time, consider options which could reduce or spread the number of staff and children and young people travelling at peak times, for example by adjusting traditional start and finish times to avoid the morning and evening rush hours. This would, however, have knock-on impacts for staff and parents/carers. Feedback from some operators is that, in view of the shift in travel to work patterns occasioned by COVID-19, usual school timings may be achievable.

- consider introducing dedicated zones (e.g. seating or carriages) for school-aged children and young people on public transport at peak school journey times. The scientific advice from the COVID-19 Advisory Sub-Group on Education and Children's Issues includes this recommendation. Discussions with local authorities and operators indicate this approach is likely to be suitable only for services that primarily carry children and young people to school, with limited numbers of adult passengers (i.e. a similar composition as for dedicated school transport). The following considerations apply:

    o In dedicated zones, on both local authority-contracted school bus services and all other public transport services, the same arrangements regarding physical distancing, hygiene, face coverings and cleaning, etc. should apply as for dedicated school transport (see above).
    o Ensure sufficient separation and clear demarcation between zones for the general public and zones for school-aged children and young people. For example, use the top deck of a double decker bus for school children where this is available, or a separate train carriage.
    o Where this is not possible, and zones are on the same level, ensure there is at least 1m distancing, where operators have deemed that acceptable through the introduction of appropriate mitigation measures, and clear demarcation between the zone for the general public and the zone for school-aged children and young people. There should be clear signage and communication to inform the general public of any such arrangements prior to boarding.

260. Where dedicated zones are not in use, the latest guidance on how to travel safely on public transport will apply.

261. Where children and young people have more complex public transport arrangements to and from their school, for example involving air, ferry or multiple transfers which may be operating on a reduced or different timetable, authorities should explore options with local operators, to inform what pattern and location for in-school learning may be practicable in the immediate term.

Taxis and private hire vehicles

262. Some children and young people, including those with additional support needs, rely on taxi transfers to get to school. Where taxis are used solely for the purpose of transporting children and young people to school, as with dedicated school bus and coach services, physical distancing requirements are not necessary. It is recommended that in private hire vehicles (which are typically saloon cars) children and young people travel on the back seat only and wear face coverings. As far as possible, windows should be opened.

263. There should be careful consideration of how children and young people with additional needs and adults supporting them can be provided with safe, bespoke transport arrangements. This could include the use of Perspex shields in taxis (taking into account relevant safety concerns) or finding larger vehicles for transportation. Local authorities and schools should liaise with their local private hire providers on the measures they are putting in place to protect passengers, including for the arrangements for carrying multiple passengers.

264. When travel by taxi or private hire vehicle is necessary, passengers should follow the advice of the driver, including sitting in the back-left hand seat of the car when travelling alone. Appropriate cleaning and sanitising measures will also be necessary.

Private cars

265. Routes to and from some schools may also be different as areas have made changes to enable physical distancing on pavements and on existing or pop-up cycle routes. While continuing to encourage walking or cycling where they can, parents or carers taking their children to school by car should be encouraged to plan their journey in advance and ensure that their chosen route is accessible. Local authorities may consider introducing park and stride for those children and young people who have to travel by car. Sustrans guidance on school streets provides advice. Where it is possible to do so, family groups should travel together.

Free school meals

266. Local authorities' duty to provide free school meals to children and young people who are eligible for them remains. The universal provision of free school meals to all children in P1-P3 who are attending school should continue and all food provided should comply with the School Food and Drink Nutritional Standards.

Access to drinking water

267. Local authorities remain under a duty to ensure that free drinking water is available to children and young people throughout the day and schools are expected to continue to meet this duty whilst taking account of the latest health protection advice.

Catering

268. Guidance from Food Standards Scotland (FSS), which includes a risk assessment tool and checklist should be followed. Any school or local authority wishing to provide a breakfast service

should follow this risk assessment tool and checklist. Further advice around mitigating any issues identified by the risk assessment can be requested from the local environmental health team. Additionally, this [Q&A from FSS](#) may be useful. Assist FM have also produced updated [catering advice.](#)

269. In the circumstances where a school has a breakfast club which is organised by the third sector, parents and carers or volunteers, rather than by the school itself, the [guidance on unregulated children's services](#) will apply. That guidance does not apply to breakfast clubs which are provided by a school or authority themselves (these are considered regulated services), and the arrangements set out in this guidance will apply.

Workforce planning and support

270. Additional workforce capacity will be needed to provide a range of additional support to help with recovery work. The Scottish Government has made additional funding available to local authorities for the recruitment of additional teachers and other staff to support COVID-19 recovery. Local authorities should ensure that these resources are used appropriately to bring additionality into the system to support young people to compensate for any loss of learning suffered since the start of the pandemic.

271. Local authorities and headteachers, working in close partnership with unions and staff, are best placed to make judgements about how to make best use of available workforce capacity safely and effectively. Many of these decisions will be based on agreements reached within Local Negotiation Committees for Teachers (LNCTs) or local Scottish Joint Council arrangements. This section sets out some high level expectations to ensure consistency, and some information on national initiatives to support local authorities in these efforts.

272. Schools may require additional staffing and the flexibility to deploy staff appropriately over the current school year to best support children and young people whose progress with learning has been impeded during lockdown, as well as to bring much needed resilience to the education system at this time (e.g. to cover for staff absence).

273. Additionally, depending on the protection level in place, there may be additional strain on workforce capacity, for example as a result of fit notes for those in the shielding group or increased requirements for self-isolation. The need for additional capacity in the teaching workforce should be considered in order to deal with such impacts.

Workforce capacity

274. Local authorities should consider carefully their requirements for additional wider workforce staff, such as cleaners and other facilities management staff to implement enhanced environmental cleaning regimes.

275. Local authorities should work through the following actions as part of any teaching/auxiliary education workforce planning activities for school premises:

- ensure that teachers who have not yet secured permanent employment are considered as an integral part of their planning;
- consider the potential for teachers with strong digital teaching skill sets to support remote learning. This may be an important aspect of maintaining educational continuity;
- ensure that supply lists are as up to date as possible and include the full pool of available staff. Supply staff are an important aspect of maintaining educational continuity and should be fully utilised in local planning around workforce capacity where needed;
- consider at a local level how all staff who are having to stay at home due to self-isolation can support educational continuity, for example by supporting remote learning;
- consider the availability of health and social care and other multi-agency partners as part of planning for support for children and young people; and
- consider any other opportunities to ensure existing qualified teaching staff and wider workforce capacity, such as classroom assistants, cleaners etc, can be effectively deployed.

276. Throughout this process potential workload issues should be carefully considered, and local authorities should be conscious of the wellbeing of all and the need to implement flexible working practices in a way that promotes good work-life balance for all staff.

277. [Covid-19 Guidance: Student Teacher Professional Placements in Scotland](#) has been developed by the Scottish Council of Deans, GTCS, SPMG and ADES on the management of student teacher professional placements. This is in recognition of the fact that schools are likely to face challenges in effectively supporting students on initial teacher education (ITE) programmes and students may not have accumulated sufficient direct classroom teaching experience in the current session to be recommended for the award of the Standard for Provisional Registration by GTCS. This guidance, issued on 19 February, sets out the arrangements to be adopted for student placement and observation of students from March until the end of the session. Implementation of this guidance is designed to maximise the opportunities for as many student teachers as possible to be awarded the Standard for Provisional Registration. GTCS has worked with ITE providers to ensure any adjustments to individual programmes align with their accreditation standards. To ensure that maximum flexibility is maintained, the guidance also confirms that ITE providers will develop contingency plans to allow student teachers to undertake some of their teaching practice through the use of remote learning, should opportunities for direct classroom experience be limited. This guidance clarifies expectations for university tutors, local authorities and schools.

278. Local authorities should ensure that capacity in the wider workforce in the school environment is sufficient to meet the challenges of full-time schooling and keep this under constant review. For example, depending on local circumstances, there may be a particular need to recruit additional classroom assistants to support learning or cleaning staff for enhanced hygiene arrangements.

Workforce support

279. The health and wellbeing of staff is a key principle of education recovery and support should be developed collegiately with staff. Local authorities and settings should ensure that appropriate support for professional learning and wellbeing is provided to all staff, some of whom will be working in unusual circumstances. Local authorities, employers and a range of national organisations already provide a wide range of support to the workforce. This includes a range of

employee assistance programmes and online professional learning and support that covers the health and wellbeing of the workforce, colleagues/staff and of children and young people.

280. Local authorities and settings may wish to access the summary of available resources, produced by partners working under the Education Recovery Group (Workforce Support workstream).

281. The Workforce Support Workstream of the Education Recovery Group has agreed and implemented a package of additional workforce support designed to aid school staff as they manage Covid-19 in establishments. The package is focused on staff wellbeing and includes new mental health support on reflective supervision from Place2Be and Barnardo's Scotland, greater access to coaching and mentoring and more professional learning for post-probation teachers. The package also confirms continued SG funding for values based leadership with Columba 1400. Further details of the package of support can be accessed here: https://education.gov.scot/improvement/learning-resources/strengthening-support-for-school-staff/

Vaccines for school staff

282. Vaccines are currently provided to people on a priority basis as set out by the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI). All those on the JCVI prioritisation list were offered a vaccination by the middle of April 2021. A proportion of school staff were included on the JCVI priority list and have been offered the vaccine in line with this. This includes specific staff working with children and young people with specific complex additional support needs.

283. The JCVI issued its issued its advice on phase 2 of the vaccination roll out on 26 February. The JCVI's advice is that an age-based approach remains the best way to address the risk of severe illness and mortality, and will ensure the quickest possible roll out of the programme to all. All four nations of the UK have agreed this approach.

284. The age cohorts which would follow the current 9 priority groups are:

- All those aged 40-49 years
- All those aged 30-39 years
- All those aged 18-29 years

285. Some people within these age groups may already have received invitations to have their vaccine due to clinical vulnerability, or their role working with those who are clinically vulnerable including NHS and social care staff, and unpaid carers.

286. The JCVI did consider an occupational approach, and recommended that an age-based approach would remain the most efficient and effective approach which targets those at highest risk. Within occupational groups, age remains a clear factor in susceptibility to the virus. An operationally simple vaccination programme is therefore the considered to ensure the quickest delivery of vaccines to all adults. We also understand that the JCVI considers the risk of infection in education staff to be in line with the general population, in keeping with the findings of recent studies.

287. It is important to note that vaccination does not change the need to continue all current COVID-19 mitigation measures (for both vaccinated and unvaccinated individuals) to protect staff and children and young people from transmission of the virus. A person's vaccine status does NOT change subsequent public health actions or interventions (including self-isolation) at this time. Vaccinated people should continue to comply with ALL testing regimes as per unvaccinated people, until guidance on this changes. Therefore those who work in close contact with children and young people, should continue to be assessed for the use of PPE and other protection measures.

Supporting the wellbeing of children and young people

288. Local authorities have continued to support vulnerable children and young throughout the period of children and young people whilst learning at home. Further information on the definition of vulnerable children and young people is provided at Annex E. Given the wider impact of the pandemic, the wellbeing of all children, young people and staff will continue to be the central focus for schools. The Getting it right for every child (GIRFEC) approach is key to that, ensuring that local services are co-ordinated, joined up and multi-disciplinary in order to respond to children and young people who require support, and everyone who works in those services has a role to play.

289. Guidance on support for continuity of learning and Curriculum for Excellence in the Recovery Phase both reinforce the importance of wellbeing as a critical focus in recovery. Balancing progress in learning with children and young people's social and emotional needs should be a priority. The guidance on support for continuity in learning also highlights the expected impacts on children and young people who have experienced domestic abuse, and those who are in need of care and protection as a result of lockdown, and an increased need for support for mental health and wellbeing. Children and young people may not immediately disclose these concerns, and therefore there is a need for a sustained approach.

290. Local authority and health board partners must be engaged in local planning to ensure that the health and wellbeing needs of children and young people in school can be met. This will be particularly important in GIRFEC planning, prevention activity including surveillance (vison screening) and immunisations, and health developmental interventions.

291. The psychological impact of the outbreak and the necessary public health control measures are likely to have had significant social, emotional and developmental effects on many children and young people and, consequently, achievement. Many children and young people may experience anxiety about returning to school, many of them will also have enjoyed the experience of spending more time at home. Children and young people may need additional time and support as they return again to the school environment. For some children and young people who were unable to access therapeutic support, the return to that support will have been welcome, but the changes within school environments, and routines, may continue to impact on their wellbeing.

292. It will be important for schools to be able to recognise that children, young people and staff may be affected by trauma and adversity, and to be capable of responding in ways that prevent further harm and which support recovery. The National Trauma Training framework and plan are designed to support the development of a trauma-informed workforce and may have relevance

to school plans. Schools should ensure that all staff, including catering and cleaning staff, are aware of safeguarding procedures.

293. As would be usual, if there are any concerns about a child or young person behaving or acting in a way which doesn't align with school policy or procedure, their behaviour or actions should be discussed with them to resolve those concerns as quickly as possible. If that does not resolve the concerns, then the usual school and authority policy and procedures for dealing with concerns should be implemented, within the context of positive relationships and behavioural approaches, including discussing the matter with the child or young person, parents and carers as appropriate.

Support for remote and blended learning and contingency planning for school closures

Guidance on remote and blended learning

294. Schools and local authorities will continue to require to plan for and arrange, remote learning for at least some of their pupils. Individual pupils, class groups or, in the event of a school closure, the entire pupil population may need to learn remotely on a temporary basis. All schools and local authorities should have plans in place for remote learning. These should be regularly reviewed to ensure they are current and appropriate, and updated as required. The following provides an indication of the key issues to consider as part of this ongoing process:

- Ensure that staff and pupils have access to the necessary digital devices and connectivity solutions. Digital infrastructure, both in the classroom and the home environments will need to be considered, including cameras, microphones, laptops, and access to data connectivity, as well as wider considerations around safeguarding and online safety;
- Consider how best to organise staff time and associated resources and arrangements to ensure that staff can access advice and professional development via the local authority, Regional Improvement Collaborative or Education Scotland;
- Communicate relevant updates and information to parents, carers and learners; and
- Continue to consider Education Scotland's guidance, advice and additional support relating to remote learning (see below).
- Continue to consider the findings of the National Overviews of Practice and exemplars of what is working. National overview of practice: reports | National overviews | Supporting remote learning | National Improvement Hub (education.gov.scot).

295. The Education Scotland website includes a single landing page for all guidance and practical support on remote learning.

296. Resources to support remote learning to complement arrangements and support in place via individual schools, local authorities and Regional Improvement Collaboratives have been developed via the National e-Learning Offer. This offer includes access to live, recorded and supported learning resources, as well as professional development support via Education Scotland's Digital Learning Community digilearn.scot.

297. The National Improvement Hub provides learning resources, webinars and links to Glow Connect, providing information, help and support for Glow. Regional Improvement

Collaboratives have further information and support on Curriculum and blended learning for teachers which can be accessed through Glow.

Contingency planning for the temporary closure of schools

298. In the event of a local outbreak of the virus, a school or a number of schools may be closed temporarily to help control transmission. This applies to schools and local authorities across all protection levels, and is not reserved only for those areas at the highest levels. Schools and local authorities should prepare and maintain clear, strong contingency plans for providing education remotely. Local authorities and schools should ensure that parents/carers are fully informed of the contingency plans in place. It is important to identify the essential items and information that would be needed in the event of a school closure, for example access to contact information, and the correspondence that would be used to inform parents and others of the arrangements for closure and subsequent re-opening.

299. Evidence from the Child Poverty Action Group showed that families entitled to free school meals valued having that support continue during lockdown. Should a school or schools be closed during term time local authorities should continue the provision of a free school meal or an alternative to all children who are eligible, this could include a direct cash payment, voucher, home delivery or collection from a specified hub.

300. Schools and authorities should also continue to plan and prepare for the logistical challenges of simultaneous remote learning for some learners at the same time as "in school" learning for others. This challenge can be further exacerbated if/when large numbers of staff, children and young people are required to resume previous shielding activity. Strategies for managing this scenario should continue to be in place. Relevant staff should be fully engaged in plans and preparations and there should be careful consideration of workload implications. Consideration should be given to the impact of such arrangements on all children, young people and parents/carers affected, especially those who are vulnerable. Reasonable adjustments may need to be made to ensure accessibility. In all instances, it is important that schools communicate quickly and clearly with parents/carers in order to develop how this will work, to come to arrangements which meet the pupil's needs as well as the school's capacity, and to agree appropriate arrangements for ongoing communication during any period self-isolation. This should include arrangements for pupils' additional support needs.

301. If the scientific advice were to be updated in the future to recommend that physical distancing should be introduced for children and young people in schools, or deemed necessary by a local Public Health Incident Management Team, then schools and local authorities must be prepared to enact contingency measures as outlined in their Local Phasing Delivery Plans. Local authorities should continue work to strengthen these and to plan for different future scenarios. e.g. a range of distancing requirements.

Special considerations for certain groups

Children, young people and staff who are clinically vulnerable and clinically extremely vulnerable (shielding)

302. Local authorities and schools should consider the arrangements for children, young people and staff who are clinically vulnerable, in the event of a localised outbreak of COVID-19. This should include consideration of the plans for communicating with families, the actions to be taken immediately on the emergence of a local outbreak, the arrangements for returning clinically vulnerable children, young people and staff to their homes, the arrangements to support children and young people's learning and care, and staff wellbeing. This may include seeking advice from the health protection team who are managing the response to the potential localised outbreak.

Support for children with Additional Support Needs

303. Local authorities and schools should consider the arrangements required to support children with additional support needs learning during any localised outbreaks of COVID-19 as part of contingency planning. For some children and young people with additional support needs the return to home learning may have a significant impact on them, due to further changes in their learning approach. Wherever possible, consistency in learning approaches and support should be maintained. It is recognised that this will be balanced against the need to ensure that any outbreak of COVID-19 is contained and managed.

Support for vulnerable children and young people

304. Local authorities and schools should consider the arrangements needed to support vulnerable children and young people. This should include ensuring continued support for children and young people through the Getting it right for every child framework. Further information on supporting vulnerable pupils is available from [Coronavirus (COVID-19): guidance on schools reopening - gov.scot (www.gov.scot)](www.gov.scot).

305. In ensuring the most appropriate arrangements are in place to support vulnerable children and young people, schools and local authorities should consider other professionals who support learning and curriculum delivery. This may include Community Learning and Development professionals such as youth workers, parental engagement workers, family learning/support workers, ESOL tutors, employability workers and homelink workers.

Communications

306. Communication and dialogue with trade unions, staff, parents/carers and children and young people should be carefully considered when implementing this guidance, to ensure confidence in the revised arrangements across all school users. Clarity on what and how the revised arrangements will work in practice and what is expected of all parties will be key to ensuring things run smoothly.

307. The channels of communication through which trade unions, children, young people, staff and parents/carers can raise concerns about the implementation of safety measures in individual settings should be made clear. In keeping with the intention to take a measured approach to children and young people's return to schools, the importance of adhering to mitigations should also be reinforced with all members of the school community.

308. A range of information for children, young people and their families about the phased return to full-time in-school learning is available (see details below). It aims to provide clarity for parents, school staff and children and young people on how the scientific evidence/clinical advice translates into Government decisions and help to reduce anxiety for children, young people, parents and school staff through positive messaging on what is in place (testing, vaccinations, other mitigations etc). The importance of compliance with all protection measures (in school and in the community) continues to be integral to this.

Parents and carers

309. The main concerns for parents and carers are likely to be the safety and wellbeing of their children in schools and a desire for timely and clear information on the current rules for their child's school and why those arrangements are in place. In line with requirements under the Scottish Schools (Parental Involvement) Act 2006, local authorities and settings should make arrangements to involve and communicate with all parents and carers (the "parent forum" for the school) as well as the Parent Council. Advice and support are available from those in the local authority who are responsible for parental involvement. Two-way communication is vital, as is ongoing dialogue and gathering of parental feedback.

310. Schools and authorities should consider how they continue to engage parents and families as part of the school community and in school decision making during the pandemic. As part of this, it will be important to consider the impact of parents not being able to go into the school buildings, and to ensure that this does not pose a barrier to open ongoing communication. There are a range of steps that can be taken to continue and support activities such as Parent Council meetings, parent's evenings and subject choice discussions. Equalities considerations remain key, and may be heightened due to coronavirus restrictions limiting parents' physical access to school buildings. Consideration should be given to matters such as the needs of separated parents (having regard to the appropriateness of both parents being provided with information), parents for whom English is an additional language and parents/carers with disabilities. Further [guidance](#) on communicating effectively with parents and families during Covid-19 is available from the Education Scotland website.

311. National information, Q&As and other material on Covid-19 arrangements, education recovery, parental communication and home learning can be used to complement any communications locally and at school level. This includes [Parent Club's](#) dedicated COVID-19 web pages, the [National Parent Forum](#) (website and newsletter), [Education Scotland's "Scotland Learns" micro site,](#) [Parentzone Scotland](#) website and other sources.

Children and young people

312. Schools and settings will wish to develop arrangements for good quality dialogue and communication with children and young people. A variety of methods can help to gather children and young people's views, questions and issues, and can help to clarify and address difficulties. Examples include Pupil Councils, pupil panels and broader pupil participation methods. [General advice on good principles and methods for learner participation](#) is available from Education Scotland as well as a range of third sector organisations.

313. Schools and local authorities will wish to consider the young person information available via [Young Scot's Covid-19 micro site](#) . This information is updated in line with all key updates to guidance. Young person survey work includes the joint work by [Young Scot](#), [Scottish Youth Parliament](#) and [YouthLink Scotland](#) . Further guidance and information is available from [Children's Parliament](#) and [Children in Scotland](#). Practical support on poverty-sensitive approaches is available via the [Child Poverty Action Group in Scotland's survey report](#) on the cost of learning in lockdown. Local community learning and development services, Parent Councils and local parent umbrella groups may be able to work with authorities and schools, to ensure that consistent information and advice reaches children and young people.

Headteachers, teachers and practitioners

314. Education Scotland have developed an [Education Recovery webpage](#) that provides a single point of access to information about education recovery for practitioners and education stakeholders. This resource continues to be developed to include examples of emerging good practice in COVID recovery, and highlights any published changes to guidance.

Changes to the guidance for those schools moving into Level 3 from 26 April

As indicated in the Coronavirus (COVID-19): timetable for easing restrictions (April 4 2021) it is anticipated that local authorities across Scotland will move to Level 3 from 26 April 2021.

The Scottish Government's Strategic Framework, last updated on 23 March, states that:

"In essence, the levels work by limiting members of different households from interacting in different settings and activities, where those settings and activities pose different risk factors for transmission of the virus. Decisions must be made about which activities and settings to restrict in order to achieve the required suppression of the virus. When different restrictions would have similar effects on transmission, difficult decisions must be made about which restrictions to apply. To help to make those difficult decisions, we consider the impacts on the four harms of the different options as well as impacts on particular groups in society, including those with protected characteristics. This is consistent with the principles and approach set out in our Framework for Decision Making in April 2020

In that context, and to help ensure that schools continue to play their part in suppressing transmission of the virus, the protective measures and mitigations set out in the main guidance will remain in place when schools move into Level 3. We will continue to follow clinician advice on when mitigations might be lifted. At this point, it is anticipated that there will be very little change during the rest of this school year.

In considering what changes to school arrangements can be made we have adopted a cautious approach and one which is designed to maintain consistency with other equivalent mitigations across society.

Shielding

At protection levels 0-3, children and young people on the shielding list are asked to follow the guidance for the general population, including attendance at school.

School visits

Guidance on school visits (available at Coronavirus (COVID-19): guidance for school visits and trips - gov.scot (www.gov.scot)) states that school residential visits to outdoor education centres can recommence from 31 May 2021 at the earliest. This is subject to a further review of Covid data on the week commencing 3 May 2021 and a number of other mitigating actions being put in place. One such mitigating action is that schools should only consider these visits if both their establishment and the outdoor education centres are located in level 0, 1 or 2 areas.

Consideration of local protection levels does not apply to any other types of school visit. However, the school visit guidance does set out other relevant considerations relating to day visits and outdoor expeditions.

Physical education and dance

The table below sets out the physical education and dance activity for children and young people in schools, which aligns with wider societal guidance on sport and activity. It is anticipated that local authorities across Scotland will move to Level 3 on 26 April and Level 2 on 17 May.

	Indoors	**Outdoors**
ELC and Primary	**5 April** Not permitted	**5 April** Children can participate in contact and non-contact physical activities
	26 April Children can participate in individual non-contact activities	**26 April** Children can participate in contact and non-contact physical activities
	17 May Children can participate in group non-contact activities	**17 May** Children can participate in contact and non-contact physical activities

	Indoors	**Outdoors**
Secondary	**5 April** Not permitted, except for the purpose of assessment to ensure certification in the senior phase	**5 April** Young people can participate in contact and non-contact physical activities
	26 April Young people can participate in individual non-contact activities.	**26 April** Young people can participate in contact and non-contact physical activities
	17 May Young people can participate in group non-contact activities	**17 May** Young people can participate in contact and non-contact physical activities

We will continue to review the impact and experience of the full return to school before any further decisions will be made about the safe resumption of indoor practical subjects such as singing, music, and drama. The protection levels in the Strategic Framework anticipate that performing arts will be able to restart outdoors at Level 2 (expected 17 May) and indoors at Level 1.

Related guidance/links

- [Coronavirus Act 2020](#)
- [Equality Act 2010](#)
- [Education (Scotland) Act 1980](#)
- Health Protection Scotland [COVID-19 workforce education information and resources](#)
- Health Protection Scotland [information and guidance for social or community care and residential facilities](#)
- Health Protection Scotland [non-healthcare settings guidance](#)
- Health Protection Scotland [procedures for outbreak management](#)
- Scottish Government [Coronavirus (COVID-19): framework for decision making](#)
- Scottish Government [guidance for residential children's houses, residential schools and secure care facilities on staffing, social distancing and self-isolation](#)
- Scottish Government [guidance for the Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) sector](#)
- Scottish Government [COVID-19 guidance for colleges](#)
- Scottish Government [guidance for childminders](#)
- Scottish Government [guidance on "Out of school care"](#)
- Scottish Government [guidance for youth work and the Community Learning and Development Sector](#)
- Scottish Government [guidance on organised outdoor sport for children and young people](#)
- [Scottish Government guidance on individual risk assessment for staff in the workplace](#).
- Scottish Government [initial summary of key scientific and public health advice](#)
- Scottish Government [Test and Protect advice for employers](#)
- Scottish Government [guidance on promoting attendance and managing absence](#)
- Scottish Government [guidance on support for continuity of learning](#)
- Scottish Government [Curriculum for Excellence in the Recovery Phase](#)
- Scottish Government [scientific advice from the COVID-19 Advisory Sub-Group on Education and Children's Issues regarding the requirements for the safe travel of children and young people](#)
- Scottish Government [scientific advice from the COVID-19 Advisory Sub-Group on Education and Children's Issues regarding physical distancing in schools](#)
- Scottish Government [scientific advice from the COVID-19 Advisory Sub-Group on Education and Children's Issues - advisory note on face coverings in schools](#)
- Scottish Government [scientific advice from the COVID-19 Advisory Sub-Group on Education and Children's Issues - advisory note on school trips which include an overnight stay](#)
- Scottish Government [scientific advice from the COVID-19 Advisory Sub-Group on Education and Children's Issues - advisory note on physical education, music and drama in schools](#)
- Scottish Government [scientific advice from the COVID-19 Advisory Sub-Group on Education and Children's Issues – advisory note on phased return to in-person learning in schools and ELC settings - next steps](#)
- Scottish Government [scientific advice from the COVID-19 Advisory Sub-Group on Education and Children's Issues – advice on mitigations to minimise transmission during phased return to in-person learning](#)
- Scottish Government [scientific advice from the COVID-19 Advisory Sub-Group on Education and Children's Issues – advice on phased return to in-person learning in schools and early learning and childcare (ELC) settings](#)
- Scottish Government [scientific advice from the COVID-19 Advisory Sub-Group on Education and Children's Issues regarding face coverings, physical distancing and related matters](#)

- Scottish Government guidance for the safe use of places of worship
- Scottish Government guidance for people with underlying health conditions
- Scottish Government guidance for children unable to attend school due to ill health
- Scottish Government guidance on unregulated children's services
- GTC Scotland/SCDE/ADES/SPMG Covid-19 Guidance: Student Teacher Professional Placements in Scotland
- GTC Scotland Teacher Wellbeing Resources
- National Transport Guidance portal
- www.travelinescotland.com
- Outdoor Learning Directory
- Going Out There framework
- Scottish Advisory Panel on Outdoor Education
- Assist FM Catering guidance
- Assist FM Cleaning guidance
- Health and Safety Executive guidance on COVID-19 risk assessments
- Health and Safety Executive PPE at work
- Health and Safety Executive coronavirus information
- Sustrans guidance on school streets
- School Food and Drink Nutritional Standards
- Guidance from Food Standards Scotland (FSS)
- National Parent Forum Scotland guidance for parents on the return to school
- SSERC guidance on carrying out practical work in Sciences and Technologies
- National Trauma Training framework and plan
- Parent Club's Coronavirus pages
- National Parent Forum
- National Improvement Hub
- National Improvement Hub - Physical Education guidelines
- Education Scotland's "Scotland Learns"
- Parentzone Scotland
- General advice on good principles and methods for learner participation
- Young Scot
- Scottish Youth Parliament
- YouthLink Scotland
- Children's Parliament
- Children in Scotland
- Child Poverty Action Group in Scotland's survey report
- Care Inspectorate coronavirus information
- UK Boarding Schools Association COVID-19 guidance
- Scottish Council of Independent Schools
- Independent Schools Council
- NHS Inform
- guidance about the latest self-isolation and quarantine requirements
- COVID-19: guidance for first responders

Health and safety risk assessment

Coronavirus (COVID-19) specific

Everyone needs to assess and manage the risks from coronavirus (COVID-19). This means employers and school leaders are required by law to think about the risks the staff and children and young people face and do everything reasonably practicable to minimise them, recognising they cannot completely eliminate the risk of coronavirus (COVID-19). Employers must therefore make sure that a risk assessment has been undertaken to identify the measures needed to reduce the risks from coronavirus (COVID-19) so far as is reasonably practicable. General information on how to make a workplace as safe as possibke, including how to approach a coronavirus (COVID-19) risk assessment, is provided by the HSE guidance on working safely.

Schools should undertake a coronavirus (COVID-19) risk assessment by considering the measures in this guidance to inform their decisions and control measures. A risk assessment is not about creating huge amounts of paperwork, but rather about identifying sensible measures to control the risks in the workplace, and the role of others in supporting that. The risk assessment will help school leaders and employers decide whether they have done everything they need to. Employers have a legal duty to consult their employees on health and safety in good time. It also makes good sense to involve children and young people (where applicable) and parents in discussions around health and safety decisions to help them understand the reasons for the measures being put in place. Employers can do this by listening and talking to them about how the school will manage risks from coronavirus (COVID-19) and make the school as safe as possible. The people who do the work are often the best people to understand the risks in the workplace and will have a view on how to work safely. Involving them in making decisions shows that the school takes their health and safety seriously.

Sharing your risk assessment

Schools should share the results of their risk assessment with their workforce. If possible, they should consider publishing it on their website to provide transparency of approach to parents, carers and children and young people.

Monitoring and review of risk controls

It is important that employers know how effective their risk controls are. They should monitor and review the preventive and protective measures regularly, to ensure the measures are working, and taking action to address any shortfalls.

Roles and responsibilities

All employers are required by law to protect their employees, and others, from harm. Under the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999, the minimum employers must do is:

- identify what could cause injury or illness in the organisation (hazards)
- decide how likely it is that someone could be harmed and how seriously (the risk)
- take action to eliminate the hazard, or if this isn't possible, control the risk

Given the employer landscape in schools is varied, we have set out here what the existing DfE Health and safety: responsibilities and duties for schools guidance states about the

roles and responsibilities for health and safety in schools: the employer is accountable for the health and safety of school staff and children and young people. The day-to-day running of the school is usually delegated to the headteacher and the school management team. In most cases, they are responsible for ensuring that risks are managed effectively. This includes health and safety matters. Schools must appoint a competent person to ensure they meet their health and safety duties.

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) provides more information on the role of headteachers and employers in its guidance on the role of school leaders - who does what and a simple guide to who the employer is in each type of school setting in its FAQs section, under 'Who is accountable for health and safety within a school?'. References to actions by employers in this guidance may in practice be carried out by headteachers in schools, but the employer will need to assure themselves that they have been carried out, as they retain the accountability for health and safety. If not already done, employers should ensure that a coronavirus (COVID-19) risk assessment for their school is undertaken as soon as possible. As part of planning for the return to school, the employer is likely to have gone through a lot of this thinking already. We recommend that those employers use this document to identify any further improvements they should make.

Wider guidance on the risk assessment process

Health and safety risk assessments identify measures to control risks during education and childcare setting activities. Health and safety law requires the employer to assess risks and put in place measures to reduce the risks so far as is reasonably practicable. The law also requires employers to record details of risk assessments, the measures taken to reduce these risks and expected outcomes. Schools need to record significant findings of the assessment by identifying:

- the hazards
- how people might be harmed by them
- what they have in place to control risk

Records of the assessment should be simple and focused on controls. Outcomes should explain to others what they are required to do and help staff with planning and monitoring.

Risk assessments consider what measures you need to protect the health and safety of all:

- staff (including volunteers)
- children and young people
- visitors
- contractors

Schools will need to think about the risks that may arise in the course of the day. This could include anything related to the premises or delivery of its curriculum or activities, whether on-site or in relation to activities offsite.

Consulting employees (general)

It is a legal requirement that employers must consult with the health and safety representative selected by a recognised trade union or, if there isn't one, a representative chosen by staff. As an employer, you cannot decide who the representative will be.

At its most effective, full involvement of staff creates a culture where relationships between employers and staff are based on collaboration, trust and joint problem solving. As is normal practice, staff should be involved in assessing workplace risks and the development and review of workplace health and safety policies in partnership with the employer. Consultation does not remove the employer's right to manage. They will still make the final decision but talking to employees is an important part of successfully managing health and safety.

Resolving issues and raising concerns

Employers and staff should always come together to resolve issues. As providers widen their opening, any concerns in respect of the controls should be raised initially with line management and trade union representatives, and employers should recognise those concerns and give them proper consideration. If that does not resolve the issues, the concern can be raised with [HSE](#). Where the HSE identify employers who are not taking action to comply with the relevant public health legislation and guidance to control public health risks, they will consider taking a range of actions to improve control of workplace risks. The actions the HSE can take include the provision of specific advice to employers through to issuing enforcement notices to help secure improvements.

Supplementary guidance for residential boarding/hostel accommodation in educational facilities

This guidance was developed in consultation with regulatory bodies, members of the Scottish Council of Independent Schools, local authority school residence providers, the Boarding Schools' Association and other key partners.

Establishments may also find the existing Scottish Government guidance for residential children's houses, residential schools and secure care facilities on staffing, social distancing and self-isolation useful. This guidance is updated regularly.

1.   Application

All schools, including residential boarding/hostel accommodation in educational facilities, should have regard to the measures set out in the main school guidance and apply them as appropriate in their specific settings.

This supplementary guidance is intended for school care accommodation services, provided for the purpose of pupils in attendance at a public, independent or grant-aided school, and consisting of the provision of residential accommodation. For clarity, this includes residential, special and secure accommodation.

These include independent boarding school facilities and residence halls provided by local authority secondary schools.

2.   Return of pupils

All children and young people will have full-time, in-school learning after the Easter break.

A common travel area (CTA) exists between the UK (including Northern Ireland), Republic of Ireland, Channel Islands or the Isle of Man.   There are specific considerations for the return of pupils from outside the Common Travel Area. These pupils are permitted to return to their school, but will need to comply with all existing travel restrictions. Please see the section on 'International Arrivals' below. Regular reviews of these arrangements will continue to be undertaken, taking into account the latest evidence about new variants and progress in reducing community transmission levels. Arrangements following reviews will be communicated at the earliest opportunity.

3.   Risk assessments

Where children and young people are in school, every setting should undertake and update regularly its own specific risk assessment, considering local circumstances, the domestic arrangements of pupils and staff, travel requirements, pupil wellbeing and public health and hygiene requirements.

The assessment should consider the overall number of pupils, staffing levels, the capacity of each residential hall or house including arrangements for the provision of meals, the mix of shared dormitories and bathrooms/toilets, individual bedroom facilities, and shared communal facilities including cleaning schedules, particularly for kitchens and bathrooms. These preparations will assist in determining whether boarding houses/residence halls can be considered discrete family units.

Risk assessments should also include contingency provision for symptomatic pupils or staff, those with underlying health conditions, and consideration of issues such as catering, external pastoral support, and the use of school and public transport.

Schools should inform the Care Inspectorate of any revisions to term dates, or if young people are required to remain at school over holiday periods, due to risk assessment outcomes.

5.   Wellbeing

Residential schools have a responsibility to ensure the overall wellbeing of children and young people, as well as for ensuring adherence to Covid-safe practices. Establishments should therefore make appropriate arrangements for children and young people who are in school to be active, creative and nurtured, much as they would be able to do if they were in a home family setting, whilst adhering to public health guidance and taking account of all other Scottish Government and relevant governing body guidance.

Where pupils require to leave the boarding facility/residential hall (for example for weekend leave or during half term), they can designate a host family to stay with in Scotland. These designated host families, or guardians, are seen to be the extended household for these young people, in the absence of being able to stay with their own family due to travel restrictions, or other barriers.

If schools are looking for alternative opportunities for educational pupil activity, if pupils are unable to leave the school accommodation, but are not self-isolating, they should follow the guidance on school visits that is currently applicable. Short local excursions which promote outdoor learning (such as a short visit to a local park or green space) are permitted for those learners in school, as long as these are appropriately risk assessed, and day visits are expected to be permitted from 10 May. This is subject to confirmation in early May.

Where pupils are permitted to leave the school premises for non-educational/social purposes e.g. during free time or at lunch time, appropriate care should be taken to minimise contact with others and pupils should follow the rules for wider society and rules on group sizes.

6.   Hand hygiene

For those children and young people in school, boarding facilities should provide appropriate hand hygiene facilities (e.g. hand sanitiser) in common spaces. Bathrooms should be fully supplied for handwashing and drying.

7.   Minimising contact between individuals and groups

In planning for the wider return of boarding pupils, schools should apply the guidance on minimising contact between individuals and groups as set out in the main school guidance. Schools should allocate pupils to residential "bubbles", as practiced in autumn 2020. These bubbles should be as small as practically possible and would endure through all activities which are not governed by the main guidance. Schools should continue to risk assess these arrangements as per the wider reducing risks in schools guidance, considering for example the arrangements for distancing as set out elsewhere in this guidance, and maintain contact with their local health protection team.

The following special considerations may apply:

- appropriate risk assessments should be undertaken for any new groupings or households formed within the facility.

- groups may include relevant members of residential staff.

- it may be necessary to keep boarding pupils in one group residentially and another during the school day. Staff may wish to seek ways to facilitate social contact with other households, whilst maintaining social distancing and appropriate hygiene. However, there should still be regular liaison with the local Health Protection Team to discuss this to ensure the contacts are within current national guidance regarding social contact and gatherings which is reviewed on a regular basis;

- each group should observe appropriate physical distancing between adults and children/young people as set out in the main schools guidance. These approaches should also be adopted with any pupil or member of staff outside their household.

- where possible, individual rooms with en suite washing and toilet facilities may be provided to reduce interactions.

- where pupils are permitted to leave the school premises (e.g. during free time or at lunch time, flexi-boarders, school residence pupils returning home at weekends, etc.) they should follow the rules in place for wider society, for example wearing a face covering when entering a shop and rules on group sizes. Risk assessments should consider procedures for when children and young people leave and return to school premises, including hand hygiene.

8.   Staying vigilant and responding to COVID-19 symptoms

Residential pupils showing symptoms will require to be isolated and tested. If a child in a boarding school/residence hall shows symptoms, they should initially self-isolate in their residential setting household. Most children will benefit from self-isolating in their boarding house so that their usual support can continue. Others will benefit more from self-isolating in their family home if travel can be arranged safely.

Students should not travel to the school if showing symptoms.

9.   Surveillance, testing and outbreak management

Schools should follow the procedures for testing, Test and Protect and outbreak management as set out in the main school guidance.

On surveillance, the overall reporting on incidence amongst school age children and staff will include data from these settings.

It is recommended that the relationship between the residential house/school and the local Health Protection Team is proactive and established as early as possible and regularised. This will enable working relationships to be continuous and possible future scenarios to be rehearsed.

10.   Quarantine and international arrivals

A common travel area (CTA) exists between the UK (including Northern Ireland), Republic of Ireland, Channel Islands or the Isle of Man. This guidance applies to students travelling to attend a boarding school in Scotland who meet the UK entry requirements and have travelled from outwith the CTA, including through a 'red list' country in the previous 10 days. These people are referred to as 'boarding school students' in this guide.

Arrangements and mitigations are set out below for all pupils, with some specific guidance in relation to those travelling from or through acute risk 'red-list' countries. Specific provision is

made below regarding formation of support bubbles for isolating pupils. Other pupils must be physically separated more generally.

Boarding school students must isolate within accommodation provided for or arranged by their boarding school. Anyone who is not a British or Irish national, or who does not have the right to reside in the UK, who has travelled from or through an acute risk 'red list' country in the previous 10 days, is not permitted to enter the UK and should be told not to travel.

Regular reviews of these arrangements will continue to be undertaken, taking into account the latest evidence about new variants and progress in reducing community transmission levels. Arrangements following reviews will be communicated at the earliest opportunity.

11.   The international travel regulations

International Travel Regulations contain the requirement to check into managed self-isolation for all international travellers (subject to exemptions) from (a) outside the Common Travel Area or (b) from the Republic of Ireland who have departed from or transited through an acute risk country who are travelling by air into Scotland. All such travellers are required to travel directly to managed self-isolation accommodation using designated transport and to remain in that accommodation for a minimum 10 day period. The Regulations also contain provisions requiring all travellers (subject to exemptions), who have been outside the Common Travel Area in the 10 days prior to arrival in Scotland, to book, pay for and undertake two tests for the detection of Coronavirus (Covid-19).

The Health Protection (Coronavirus) (International Travel) (Scotland) Regulations 2020 were amended on 27 March 2021 to provide that pupils travelling to boarding schools from outwith the CTA are able to isolate in their boarding accommodation on arrival in Scotland.

Specifically, the Regulations now allow that where a person arrives in Scotland for the purpose of receiving education at a boarding school from outside the CTA, or (ii) elsewhere within the CTA where they have departed from or transited through an amber-list or red-list country within the last 10 days, then that person will not be required to enter managed isolation in accordance with wider Regulations.

Instead, the amended Regulations require that such a person must travel without undue delay to specified premises, which must be the boarding school at which education and accommodation is due to be provided. The definition of a 'boarding school' is set out as a school which provides accommodation for its pupils on its own premises, or arranges accommodation for its pupils to be provided elsewhere (other than in connection with a residential trip away from school). 'School' has the meaning given by section 135(1) of the Education (Scotland) Act 1980.

12.   School regulation

As with all independent schools in Scotland, proprietors must ensure that the school they are responsible for does not become objectionable on any of the grounds listed in Section 99(1A) of the Education (Scotland) Act 1980 which includes the obligation to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people enrolled in the school.

Additionally, the proprietors of independent boarding schools must comply with the relevant legislation around the registration of their School Care Accommodation Service; such as the Health and Social Care Standards and the Social Care and Social Work Improvement Scotland (Requirements for Care Services) Regulations 2011. This includes, but is not limited to, the requirement to maintain an appropriate number of suitably qualified and experienced staff who are properly supervised.

This guidance on managed isolation should be considered alongside these requirements, and the main school guidance. To support these arrangements, the Care Inspectorate will consider carrying out additional short COVID-19 inspections of services who are supervising managed isolation of boarders. These will use a specially developed key question, which has been published in the [Quality framework](#) for mainstream boarding schools (p54-67).

13.   Before travelling

Before pupils travel, schools need to have travel plans in place, including arrangements for the collection and transfer of students to the boarding facilities where they will quarantine. These need to be fully explained to students and their parents before they travel, including the infection risks and policies that will be in place, and their consent confirmed.

All boarding pupils who arrive in Scotland from elsewhere in the CTA will be able to isolate in their boarding accommodation whether accompanied or unaccompanied on their flight. Any accompanying adult who is intending to stay in Scotland will be required to enter managed isolation, unless they are exempt. Guidance on international travel restrictions is available at: Coronavirus (COVID-19): international travel and managed isolation (quarantine).

Schools should send boarding school students the following:
- a copy of the Scottish Government letter confirming that boarding school students are covered by an exception
- a letter from their school to the boarding school student meeting the requirements as set out in this letter

Boarding school students should be ready to present both of these letters, and either a paper or electronic copy of the PLF (see below), to Border Force officials on arrival.

Before travelling, all boarding school students are encouraged to take a coronavirus (COVID-19) test and get a negative result during the 3 days before they travel.

Before travelling, all boarding school students, or persons with responsibility for them should:
- book and pay for a travel test package for pupils aged 11 or over, which will include coronavirus (COVID-19) tests to be taken on day 2 and day 8 of their quarantine
- complete a passenger locator form before arrival, with details of where they will quarantine, when they will arrive and the travel test package booking reference number

If a travel test package has not been booked and paid for, or a passenger locator form has not been completed, in relation to a boarding school student prior to the student's arrival in Scotland it will be the responsibility of the school to arrange the test package, or submit the passenger locator form, on behalf of the student.

Boarding school students should book a travel test package which costs £210. They must take a PCR coronavirus (COVID-19) test on or before day 2 and a test on or after day 8 following their arrival in Scotland.

Boarding school students should use the booking portal to book their travel test package (this is administered by CTM).

14.   Travel to boarding school

A boarding school student must travel directly to the school accommodation without undue delay.

Transport must meet the following conditions:
- it must be a motor vehicle,
- it cannot be public transport and it must be transport that has been pre-arranged by the school at which the student or pupil is due to attend as a student or pupil on their arrival in Scotland

There may be cases where the above requirements related to transportation cannot be met. In such cases, the Scottish Government will need to be contacted well in advance of the student or pupil travelling, in order for bespoke arrangements to be made.

In planning pupils' journeys to school, these should be kept as simple as possible, minimising transport changes and, if possible, arriving directly into Scotland. The Regulations described above only cover arrivals into Scotland for those due to return to Scottish boarding schools. If pupils are travelling to attend Scottish boarding schools, but wish to go through border controls at an airport elsewhere in the CTA, regulations for that part of the CTA would apply. We are working with the UK Government to seek to facilitate onward travel for Scottish boarding pupils arriving into airports in England from red-list countries.

All boarding school students arriving from outside the CTA should be met at their port of entry by representatives of their boarding school and be transported directly to their boarding facility to isolate. Schools will be expected to take immediate responsibility for boarding pupils on arrival, transferring them straight into a regulated school environment.

The boarding school representative should ensure they are at the port of entry in good time to pick up the arriving boarding school student(s) and carry proof of identity. They should have proof of identification with them. If the representative has issues getting to the port of entry on time they should phone and advise Border Force officials at the relevant airport.

This includes if there is a change in the school representative responsible for the student's pick up and transport after the school has issued its letter to the student. When they have arrived at the port of entry and are ready to pick up the pupil, they should go to the 'Managed Quarantine' collection point in the arrivals hall and once their identity has been confirmed the individual will be bought through to meet them.

The boarding school travel representative who is responsible for transport should ensure:

- appropriate physical distancing (at least 2 metres) is maintained at all times

- children should wear face coverings (unless aged under 5 or otherwise exempt), with appropriate arrangements for disposal of temporary face coverings or storage of reusable face coverings and handwashing.

- good hand hygiene is maintained by ensuring a plentiful supply of alcohol hand gel

- if more than one child is travelling and they are not part of the same family or other grouping, ensure the transport is of a size that will allow physical distancing, one person per row with mask on, with no-one immediately in front or behind, and ensure there is a seating plan with allocated seating.

- in coaches, three rows of seats must be allowed between students and the driver

- good ventilation within the vehicle through open windows or effective air conditioning

- that transport does not stop at any services (including at request of passenger), unless in an emergency such as fire

- where a long journey necessitates toilet breaks, these stops should be pre-arranged with facilities that should be exclusively for the use of the travelling boarding school student(s) for the duration of the stop and can be cleaned afterwards before being used again (schools may want to make arrangements with other schools to use facilities if needed on route)

- the destination school is notified around 20 minutes prior to arrival so they can prepare for the arrival
- children disembark in a physically distanced manner and are transferred to the care of school staff
- if more than one child has travelled pass the seating plan to the school for test and trace purposes
- ensure an appropriate cleaning regime for the school transport, for example, as provided in [Coronavirus (Covid-19): guidance on reducing the risks in schools](#)

On arrival at the school, a one-way system should be established along paths that take boarding school students to the household areas where they will quarantine. School staff facilitating arrival should wear personal protective equipment (PPE) at all times. A clear system should handle the arrival of multiple boarding school students at once and ensure strict physical distancing. Support bubble arrangements, if applicable, should already have been designated and students that are not in the same support bubble should be kept separate from other isolating students, and both groups should be kept separate from other students at all times.

15.   Isolation in school boarding facilities

Boarding school students arriving from outside the CTA, or from elsewhere within the CTA where they have departed from or transited through an amber-list or red-list country within the last 10 days, must isolate for at least 10 days on arrival in Scotland (this requirement may be extended under circumstances set out below). This isolation for boarding school pupils may take place in accommodation that comprises of residential facilities organised by the boarding school in Scotland that the pupil is due to attend as a pupil or student on their arrival in Scotland. The accommodation must constitute separate accommodation meaning it must be accommodation that is physically self-contained.

In the interests of pupil wellbeing, pupils that are isolating should, where possible, be allocated to a support bubble. Parents and pupils should fully understand the arrangements that are proposed and understand the infection risk inherent in any bubble arrangement.

Support bubbles should be kept small and of no more than 5 pupils at most, to limit transmission risk, should this occur.

Irrespective of a support bubble arrangement, isolation should, where possible, be undertaken in single rooms with private bathroom facilities. It is permissible, if necessary, for pupils in the same bubble to share a room or bathroom facilities, though single rooms are preferable.

Care should be taken in constructing bubbles, to ensure that areas of origin are drawn as narrowly as possible, for example a bubble of 5 may be formed where pupils have travelled from the same area. Any bubbles should look to be of similar age-range as far as possible, although an exception would be appropriate for siblings.

The support bubble (of a maximum of 5 pupils) should have access to limited common area(s) for social contact. Care should be taken to promote appropriate mitigations and hygiene within the bubble, for example, maintaining 2m distancing, as much as is practical. Each bubble should occupy part of the school site which is separated from the parts of the site used by other bubbles for isolation purposes and areas used by other staff and students. For example, bubbles may occupy separate buildings or parts of buildings.

In designating pupils to a support bubble, schools should consider:

- the importance to wellbeing of pupils having in-person support from another pupil(s), and take into account such factors as pupil age and gender;

- limiting transmission risk by:

    o keeping support bubbles to no more than 5 pupils;

    o grouping together pupils who have already mixed, for example siblings or those who have travelled together; and

    o grouping together pupils who have travelled from or through the same area.

16. Residential facilities used for quarantine

Schools should have regard to Section 3 of the COVID-19: guidance for non-healthcare settings for appropriate infection prevention and control.

Rooms should have individual ventilation systems (e.g. room or window fan coil units that do not recirculate to other parts of the building) or windows that open (safely) and ideally en suite.

Care should be taken to ensure that private rooms and common areas have appropriate ventilation that is not introducing risk into or out of the quarantining area. Opening windows at regular intervals is ideal.

The school should risk assess and put in place appropriate arrangements to bring meals and other essential commodities, such as toiletries, to the area where quarantine is occurring.

The school should risk assess and put in place appropriate arrangements for cleaning rooms, changing bedding, handling laundry and disposing of waste. Laundry belonging to the pupils should be handled and managed separately from laundry belonging to all other pupils.

Where there are no en-suite facilities, designate toilet and showering facilities to those within the 10 day isolation period and increased cleaning frequency within these. Ensure a system is in place to make sure isolation pupils are not crossing over with other pupils. If any shared facilities are used by different bubbles, enhanced cleaning will be required.

If pupil rooms do not have en-suite facilities or a hand wash sink in rooms then ensure alcohol based hand rub provided for pupils to use before and after meals etc., and before or after leaving their room for any reason.

All boarding school students should have their own individual towels, both for drying after bathing or showering and for hand-hygiene purposes.

17. Supervising and supporting boarding school students during quarantine

Schools should ensure that pupils isolating are in a regulated school environment and under full time supervision by staff. Schools should provide appropriate information to boarding school students about how they need to behave while in quarantine and how they will access services and can contact staff when help is required.

Schools should:

• ensure boarding school students follow the guidance on how to quarantine when they arrive in Scotland

• ensure boarding school students are supervised such that there is no opportunity to leave their accommodation, except where carefully supervised to ensure no contact with other individuals,

apart from others isolating as part of the same bubble and staff responsible for their supervision and care

- put in place arrangements for the oversight of boarding school students in isolation that protect the safety and welfare of all students and staff, minimising the school staff who interact with the boarding school students within reason and using COVID precautions (2m distancing, face coverings)

- provide boarding school students with clear rules (based on this guidance) as to what is expected and acceptable during their isolation period including a clear statement of the area that the boarding school students are allowed to occupy (e.g. an area including their room and toilet/bathroom facilities that are for their use only)

- provide boarding school students with as much information as will be helpful for them to understand the practicalities of being in isolation such as arrangements for meals, room cleaning, disposing of rubbish, laundry, process for requesting and enjoying outdoor exercise and emergency procedures. Rules and information should be provided verbally and in writing

- alcohol-based hand rub for each boarding school student, with advice on how to use these and the risk of ingestion and flammability

- have procedures in place, agreed in advance with parents, setting out what it will do in the case of an emergency

The school should also put in place appropriate arrangements for the collection and treatment of laundry and waste from each quarantining household. This should prevent unnecessary contact between staff and members of the household.

- staff should wear appropriate PPE (face coverings, aprons and gloves etc.) when handling laundry from quarantining boarding school students. Laundry should be treated as infectious and double bagged, should be tagged with the care area and date, and stored in a designated, safe lockable area while awaiting laundering. Hot wash at 60˚C.

- unless the pupil becomes positive for COVID-19, all consumable waste items that have been in contact with quarantining boarding school students, including used tissues, can be disposed of according to normal arrangements.

If a pupil is positive for COVID-19, all waste items should be put in a plastic rubbish bag, double bagged and tied. This should be disposed of with normal household rubbish after a wait of 24 hours.

18.	Staff PPE

Staff need not wear any PPE unless they are providing care for a symptomatic or confirmed positive COVID-19 student. At all other times, a face covering should be worn and physical distancing applied. If caring for a symptomatic student (within 2 metres), staff should wear a fluid resistant surgical mask, eye protection, apron and gloves. These items are single use and must be disposed of after the care task being provided is complete. Staff must never go between students in PPE or wear PPE moving around the school setting. Donning and doffing training/instruction should be provided to staff.

19.	Exercise and fresh air

All isolating boarding school students may leave the place in which they are isolating for exercise only under staff supervision. This must be within the school grounds. Regular opportunities for exercise and fresh air are recommended, and pupils in a support bubble can access this together. School staff should ensure that boarding school students remain in close proximity of their accommodation and do not come into contact with any individuals from outside

the boarding school students' bubble (if applicable) or staff supervising and providing their care. Students should wear face coverings.

20.   Testing boarding school students

Boarding school students arrive on day zero and testing must take place on day 2 and 8.

School staff should ensure test kits are stored appropriately (ensuring storage is at an appropriate temperature: 5°C to 22°C). Schools should have a plan setting out which boarding school student will receive test kits on which day.

When required, school staff should collect test kits from storage and deliver them to boarding school students within their household accommodation. After boarding school students have completed the test, school staff should collect the test kit and put it into a box which should be closed and sealed for transport. They should not handle the test kit further before collection when they should be passed to the courier.

Boarding school students should normally complete the test themselves, following the instructions. School staff should familiarise themselves with test-kit instructions so that they can provide appropriate support for boarding school students where necessary.

Results will need to be collected by supporting staff and any positive results discussed with the local Health Protection Team who will undertake contact tracing.

21.   Visitors to boarding school students in quarantine

Boarding school students in isolation should not receive visitors, except in exceptional circumstances. If it is necessary for social workers, other children's social care staff, medical staff or other professionals to engage with a child, they should consider in the first instance if this can be done so remotely.

22.   Leaving isolation under exceptional circumstances

Boarding school students must not leave the place where they are isolating until their isolation has ended (see below), except on any of the grounds set out in regulation 9(6) of the Health Protection (Coronavirus) (International Travel) (Scotland) Regulations 2020.

23.   Ending Isolation

Any members of a bubble that have isolated together should remain in isolation until all members have served 10 days quarantine.

If any member of a bubble tests positive during that time, the boarding school student's whole bubble will be required to isolate for a further ten days (with the day after the test was taken counting as day 1 of the additional quarantine).

If the result of a boarding school student's day 8 test is inconclusive, the bubble must stay in quarantine until they take an additional test and receive a negative result, or 14 days have elapsed with no symptoms in any members of the bubble. The local Health Protection Team can help interpret what to do when non-standard results are received.

Once isolation is over, boarding school students are no longer required to meet the restrictions set out in this guidance. However, schools should continue to manage all boarding school students in line with the Coronavirus (Covid-19): guidance on reducing the risks in schools.

24.   Risk assessments

Schools will need to undertake their own risk assessments about how to quarantine boarding school students safely. Schools should have regard to guidance on isolation for those showing symptoms of coronavirus in planning for the quarantine of arriving boarding school students. For example, fire safety risk assessments should be updated to consider the need for physical distancing on drill evacuations but this must not affect fire safety guidance, and risk assessments in completing emergency repairs and maintenance should consider the need for physical distancing. Schools are encouraged to make contact with their local public health teams in this regard.

25.   School staff

Where possible, residential settings should operate a consistent staff rota to minimise the risk of transmission. The rota should avoid individual staff having contact with multiple isolating bubbles, for example, it is advised that as an additional mitigation, consideration should be given to separate groups of staff supervising pupils from red list countries.

Staff, whether non-resident, visiting or partially or fully resident at the school, should follow careful infection control measures during and after visits, in the same way as any self-isolating household would if they had unavoidable visitors. As always, they will need to pay particular attention to careful infection prevention and control, including physical distancing, hand and respiratory hygiene.

Schools should follow the procedures for staff testing, test and protect, and outbreak management as set out in this guide. Any staff member who develops symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19), tests positive for COVID-19 through an asymptomatic test or has someone in their household who has developed symptoms, should cease working immediately, self-isolate and book a PCR test.

You should refer to the Scottish COVID-19 Community Health and Care Settings Infection Prevention and Control Addendum for guidance in relation to all engagement with students in quarantine. This includes arrangements where a child or young person showing symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19) requires staff contact for personal care.

26.   Outbreak Management

Should 2 or more linked cases of COVID-19 arise within 14 days, an outbreak may be declared, led by the local Health Protection Team. This will support any risk assessment of contacts and the setting, and help manage risk of onward transmission. In order to address this early, a single case should be reported to the HPT when received. The Test and Protect system will make contact with the case usually within 24-48 hours of the positive result to inform this risk assessment.

27.   Education

Where schools wish to commence the education of any isolating students, this may only be done where it would be consistent with the student maintaining their isolation (i.e. through remote learning).

Definition of vulnerable children and young people

Local authorities (including through joint working between Chief Social Work Officers and Directors of Education) should ensure and prioritise continued care and support for these learners during the period until secondary schools reopen more fully. The definition in place of vulnerable children and young people since the start of January continues to apply (see below). In doing so, they should consider how best to accommodate these children and young people safely, and in keeping with the mitigations set out below, alongside other learners now returning to school.

Vulnerable children and young people – definition

The definition in place since the start of January continues to apply. Children and young people may be vulnerable because of factors related to their personal development, features of their family life, or because of wider influences that impact on them within their community.

Those children and young people who were considered to be vulnerable prior to the pandemic should have been known to services, and are likely to have had a child's plan. The pandemic has brought others into this category, for example through loss of family income.

Where a child or young person requires co-ordinated support from more than one agency, this is likely to suggest greater vulnerability, and the plan would be co-ordinated by a lead professional. This would include a range of children and young people, such as those:

- at risk of significant harm, with a child protection plan;
- looked after at home, or away from home;
- 'on the edge of care', where families would benefit from additional support;
- with additional support needs, where there are one or more factors which require significant or co-ordinated support;
- affected by disability;
- where they and/or their parents are experiencing poor physical or mental health;
- experiencing adversities including domestic abuse and bereavement; and those
- requiring support when they are involved in making transitions at critical stages in their lives.

Children ,young people and families may also experience adversity because of the impact of poverty and disadvantage (including entitlement to free school meals), and many will be facing this because of the necessary measures to respond to the pandemic. This will include families with loss of income, experiencing social isolation, or otherwise struggling because of the lockdown.