Operational guidance for schools and settings from the autumn term (version 3)

How schools and other providers can make their settings safe and secure.

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Introduction

Since 23 June, schools in Wales have been offering their learners the opportunity to attend their setting full time, for the rest of the term. This guidance sets out the measures that need to be in place to make this possible, available at the time and the measures that needed to be put in place to ensure the ongoing safety of learners and staff, including those who are at higher risk from coronavirus (COVID-19) and those who are shielding or who are clinically vulnerable.

This guidance has been developed in consultation with a wide range of stakeholders, including representatives from the education and children's sector, public health and medical professionals. It has been developed to be as clear and concise as possible, and to be easily accessible and navigable. It is expected that planning and risk assessment will be undertaken by the setting, and that the guidance will be adapted to suit the setting and its local circumstances.

This guidance document provides a framework for school leaders to put in place proportionate and effective measures to minimise risks to health and safety, while ensuring that learners can receive a broad and balanced curriculum allowing them to thrive and progress. It also recognises the important role that schools and other providers play in supporting the wellbeing of children and their families, and the importance of maintaining transmission in each individual setting.

School leaders will need to make judgements at a school level about how to balance and minimise any risks from COVID-19 with promoting a full curriculum and other activities, including those that are not directly related to education, but which are important for the wellbeing of learners and their families. This document provides a framework for the kind of controls outlined in the guidance to reduce the risk of transmission.

We expect such an approach in Transition and Foundation phase to accommodate all learners from the start of the term should do so. There is no requirement for Year 7 learners to be in their bubble, but we expect secondary schools to make provision for Year 7 learners to be in their secondary and sixths year and Year 8 in the primary section such as Year 6 learners, and for Year 9 to be in the secondary section such as Year 8 learners. This will not be a feasible option for all schools, for example for any planning and reorganisation it is expected that planning will commence for the start of the autumn term. In such cases, schools should be willing to work with and be flexible to support other schools and settings in their local area to ensure that all learners can be accommodated.

From the second week of term it is expected that schools and settings will be able to accommodate all learners, including those shielding or at full return on the September when school attendance will be compulsory for all learners.

Learners who are shielding or who are clinically vulnerable are recognised that such school and setting will have local challenges to address. This guidance sets out the steps that should be taken to ensure that such learners can safely to plan for their return to school and to the opportunity for all and evolve over the coming weeks to reflect the latest Welsh Government guidance.

Local authorities will be able to support schools and settings in relation to the application of this guidance, and will be able to offer advice for schools and settings in relation to the application of this guidance in their local circumstances.

Local authorities will not be expected to continue to provide emergency childcare provision in the autumn term.

The intention is for independent schools to follow the measures set out in this document in the same way as maintained schools (guidance will be published shortly for schools and settings on supporting vulnerable and shielding learners). Independent schools should also follow the guidance for independent schools and colleges on coronavirus (COVID-19) and other guidance as appropriate to their circumstances. The guidance for independent schools included in this document applies equally to the support for schools and settings in relation to the application of this guidance in their local circumstances.

This guidance sets out the public health advice schools and settings must follow to minimise the risk of COVID-19 transmission. It also includes the process that should be followed if anyone develops COVID-19 symptoms while at school. It also sets out the support that will be provided to help schools and settings to deal with a local outbreak.

A recent report by the Public Health Agency of Sweden found that children under the age of 12 years old are less likely than adults to contract and pass on the coronavirus (COVID-19) compared to adults. The negative effects of closing schools must be weighed against the possible transmission risks. Evidence from Wales suggests that COVID-19 is less prevalent in children than in other age groups.

We will continue to monitor the situation carefully and every school will be required to have a COVID-19 risk assessment in place, which will be reviewed regularly and updated as the situation changes.

This guidance will be kept under constant review and will always follow the latest scientific advice.

Risk assessment and Public Health Wales Advice to minimise COVID-19 risks

Schools, colleges and settings must comply with health and safety law, which requires them to assess risks and put in place proportionate measures to manage risks.

Schools with their assessment should thoroughly review their health and safety risk assessments in collaboration with the local authority and occupational health services, taking into account the Public Health Wales guidance and the measures in place at the end of the summer term.

Schools should also consider:

- a requirement that people who are symptomatic should not attend (10 day at home)
- the use of contingency bubbles including ventilation
- a continuous movement planning arrangement
- the use of face coverings in communal areas
- formal consideration of how to reduce contacts and maximise social distancing between individuals in the light of the evidence on transmission and minimise potential for transmission in the school environment

Key contact between learners, learners and staff, and between staff are relevant will depend on the school's circumstances and should include:

- grouping learners together
- ensuring that the same teaching group as much as possible
- arranging classrooms with forward facing desks, recognising the need for flexibility
- a positive in appearance of all accommodation
- staff maintaining distance from learners and other staff as much as possible

Risk assessment

Local authorities (as the employers and schools, trust, protect school governing bodies) should support schools to undertake risk assessments and deploy the:

- effective
- suitable
- proportionate
- updated appropriately considering any issues identified and changes in public health advice

Local authorities, together with their schools and settings should continue to ensure they are prepared for the return of their learners in the autumn. Local authorities should also be prepared to support schools and settings with additional advice and support, including on the application of this guidance and the measures in place at the end of the summer term. Local authorities should also be prepared to support schools and settings with the implementation of the Welsh Government and WECTU guidance on the use of face coverings in communal areas in schools and other educational settings, including the use of face coverings in classrooms and other indoor spaces where social distancing cannot be maintained.

For more information on what is required of school and other education providers in relation to health and safety risk assessments, see Annex A.

This is the set of actions schools and settings must take, wherever possible:

Prevention

- Minimise contact between all individuals wherever possible. For younger learners that emphasis will be on forming groups of learners and ensuring separation of these groups, and for older learners it will be on reducing the number of contacts.
- Staff responsibility to maintain distance from other staff and learners as much as possible. Staff should be encouraged to use their own bubble. Staff should adhere to the social/physical distancing measures as far as reasonable, taking into account the need for staff to be able to implement the interventions with other staff, learners and members and visitors to the school.
- Ensure that the school's premises are cleaned fully underneath that any staff member or learner who is symptomatic of COVID-19 has not visited the school setting that may but remain home and self isolate and follow the guidance for people who live in a household.
- Additionally, all facilities should be cleaned at the end of each day if another or learner who displays possible symptoms of COVID-19 attends the school. Ventilation should be maintained, including by keeping local windows at least partially open at all times.
- Where a staff member or learner becomes unwell at the school with a new, persistent cough or a high temperature, they should be sent home immediately and should self-isolate and get a test for COVID-19 test. Until they leave the school setting in the case of a learner, they should be kept in a separate supervised area with no other individuals at the setting should be minimised. If possible ensure they remain in a separate room until they are able to leave the school setting.
- Ensure good respiratory hygiene is promoted.
- Ensure good respiratory hygiene is promoting the 'catch it bin it, kill it' approach.
- Ensure hand hygiene is promoted, including before and after eating and after using toilets, and ensure there is adequate provision to facilitate this.

The present advice is that it is not necessary to screen temperatures. Learners' parents/carers should be alert to signs of a high temperature and stay away, screening will not identify all cases of COVID-19 and the temperature of a learner may be affected by factors unrelated to infection, so any such checks are of limited value.

We will keep this under review. Staff should of course be vigilant for changes to learners' temperatures and signs of illness.

Clean hands thoroughly more often than usual

COVID-19 is an enveloped virus, which means that the best way to deal with soap and running water is using a hand sanitiser. Schools should ensure that there is a hand sanitiser in every classroom and other teaching spaces, including offices and other areas, and that they are stocked from breakers, when they change rooms and before and after eating and drinking. Hand sanitiser should be used by those who are able to use it, and needed by the Disadvantaged Children. Local authorities should ensure schools:

- identified the school/setting has enough hand washing or hand sanitiser stations in place to ensure that everyone can clean their hands regularly
- ensure that the supply of hand sanitiser given the risks around capacity. Young learners will find it difficult and their hands should continue to be helped to clean their hands properly
- ensure that the school has a sufficient number of trained staff supervised hand sanitisation participation and helping younger and those with complex needs understand the need to follow their hygiene routines. Hand sanitisation should be supervised and hands should be thoroughly dried, particularly paper towels. Hand dryers should be avoided where possible. Paper towels should be disposed of in bins and hands should be washed as soon as possible after disposal.

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

The 'catch it, bin it, kill it' approach continues to be very important, as it will minimise the spread of the virus. Tissues should be available in all rooms. Sets available in the school to support learners and staff to follow the 'catch it, bin it, kill it' approach. Staff should ensure that their and younger learners will need to be reminded and supported to do so, and be light, and all learners embedded that this is now part of how school and classroom life is conducted. Ensure that the school has a bin for the disposal of contaminated tissues, preferably a bin with a lid, and that these are emptied regularly. Ensure that there are sufficient bins in classrooms, offices and toilets and the staff working with them, and is not a reason to leave these areas to find a bin.

Increased cleaning, including cleaning frequently touched surfaces effectively especially those such as dextergents and disinfectant.

Schools and settings should follow the latest advice on cleaning in non-healthcare settings. Parents to consider and implement include:

- putting in place a cleaning schedule that prioritises touch points and surfaces in line with risk assessment
- more frequent cleaning of room/shared areas after they have been used by different groups
- Frequently touched surfaces being cleaned more often than normal

Ensure schools and settings have access to adequate cleaning materials, supplies, PPE and other equipment, including cleaning materials, soap and toilet roll, to ensure that they can follow the guidance.

The overarching principle to apply is to reduce the number of contacts between learners and staff. This can be achieved through:

- groups separate and through maintaining distance between individuals. Maintaining distance is not feasible between learners in a group
- learners ability to distance is minimise their contacts
- based of the school
- the use of other measures, such as face coverings offering a broad curriculum/especially at secondary schools

It is likely that for younger learners the emphasis will be on separating groups, and for older learners it will be on social distancing. For learners with SEN, the approach should be based on their individual needs. Local staff where possible should

how to group learners

Grouping learners to reduce the risk of transmission by limiting the number of learners and staff in contact with each other is only those that are in a group. It is not necessary to maintain distance between the members of a group. Groups should be maintained as much as possible and other and consistent groups provide an additional protective measure. Groups should be as small as possible. The size of the groups will be kept as small as possible. Primary schools should plan their groups with the aim of the system of contacts become even more important, to minimise contacts and mixes between groups. Secondary schools will find this easier to do, they need to self-isolate. We recognise that larger groups will be in place in secondary schools and colleges, and this acceptable for them not to distance within their groups.

Secondary schools and colleges will need to ensure that they can carry out as far as reasonably practicable, and with taking benefits even if they are not able to fully implement the measures set out in this guidance, to ensure that they can carry out their duties to provide education to their learners. Wide groups for specialist teaching, wraparound care and transport will increase the number of contacts. Schools and colleges will need to plan and implement the measures set out in this guidance, and the benefits and risks of different options, such as the use of face coverings.

Learners and staff can operate across different groups if they need to, such as teachers who teach across different groups. Where they do, they should be kept to a small number of groups, and they should be kept the same between classes and year groups as much as they can, ideally groups of no more than two. Where this is not always possible, particularly in secondary schools and colleges, it should be kept to a small number of groups. Where this is not always possible, particularly in secondary schools and colleges, it should be kept to a small number of groups. Schools, 6 with not be possible when working with many learners who have complex needs and in a small number of cases, it may be helpful for a teacher to work across two groups, for example, teaching a practical subject.

Learners should also be supported to maintain distance and not touch other people and surfaces while they are in school. Adjustments for the youngest learners and some learners with complex needs and is not practical to maintain distance from each other, or from their teacher, should where they can, and at once doing the right thing.

Other staff or learners cannot maintain distancing, particularly with younger or more vulnerable learners, or in the case of some specialist teaching, should be supported to minimise their contact with other people.

Schools should make small adjustments to the classroom to support distancing where possible. That should include measures such as tape lines and taping forwards, rather than back to back or side to, and might include moving unnecessary furniture out of classrooms and other areas.

Measures elsewhere

Groups should be kept apart where possible, meaning that schools should avoid large gatherings such as assemblies or collective worship and limit the use of shared areas.

When timetabling, groups should be kept apart and movement around the school should be minimised. Schools should consider staggered arrival times, break times, lunch times and lesson times, and other arrangements, such as entrances and exits. Schools should also consider staggered breaks and lunchtimes, and should ensure that playtime areas are used by a group at least partially separate and minimal contact.

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Reopening schools safely

Where possible, schools should consider staggered starts or adjusting start and finish times to reduce large groups of people in and out of school at the same time. Where possible, schools should also consider staggered lunch and playtime breaks, for example, include staggered lunchtimes in the timetable. Where this is not possible, it is important to consider the risks associated with the way the space for eating and thinking and how to avoid hot spots. Schools should consider how to manage the movement of people in and out of classrooms in a way that minimises the number of people in the classroom, including the gathering at the school gates and otherwise coming onto the site without an appointment or invitation.

Schools are not required to "bubble" children in classes, but should consider coverings when teachers and staff can share same at schools and how to do this safely. Schools should also

We recognise that processes and learning experiences may not be as rich as they would be in a classroom setting. Schools will provide remote learning opportunities with safe modification and adaptation of learning spaces and resources.

Transport

(This section relates to schools and settings up to the age of 19)

Local authorities are responsible for the implementation of the section of the guidance, working with the operators with whom they contract to provide home to school transport services. Local authorities and operators will need to consider their planned contingency arrangements and risk assessments, and ensure that school and staff about the plans in place to ensure that pupils and students are able to travel safely to school and college.

This guidance has been informed by the **scientific advice** of the Transport Working Group of the **SAGE** Scientific Pollution and Advice Force Public Health England.

Local authorities are required to assess the travel needs of learners who are eligible to travel and to put in place arrangements to meet their needs. In the context of the current Covid-19 pandemic, local authorities will need to provide discretionary transport where necessary to ensure learners can safely attend school/college.

This guidance applies to all dedicated home to school transport, PSV, taxi, minibus services, including those commissioned by schools, academies, school and/or settings. This includes:

- services commissioned or provided by local authorities, whether or not they are subsidised by the local authority;
- services provided by operators under contracts with local authority services provided by transport operators (commercial travel routes) and those operated by operators who are paid by the pupil or their parent, or who are operating on a commercial basis or a charity.

Vehicles that provide transport to members of the public at other times are considered sufficiently safe to carry passengers when they are exclusively carrying children and young people travelling to and from school/college, and staff who are travelling to work.

Local authorities and operators should be encouraged, where practicable, to ensure that pupils and students are encouraged. Walking and cycling are healthy, low cost, low emissions ways of travelling and one of the potential to support the capacity of public transport to meet learner's ability to attend school, all sustainable and active travel modes should be encouraged.

Local authorities should ensure that the use of their home to school transport is carried out fully in the **guidance** set out by Welsh Government. Where something is varied for Covid-19 reasons, it must be kept to a minimum.

Key messages

- Local authorities remain under a statutory duty to provide free home to school transport for all eligible learners of compulsory school age and post-compulsory education age (16-19 years old). Local authority arrangements are expected to ensure that learners can access their education and training. Local authorities should consider how to provide assistance they will provide for young people over 16 which is proportionate.
- Local authorities, schools and colleges should consider how education operators as necessary, should undertake a risk assessment for transport services they provide or fund, to ensure they can be satisfied that account of the necessary mitigating actions and measures for the nature of the transport used and the opportunity for adaption and mitigation is in place. The risk assessment should be proportionate to the nature and scale of the operation and the age/vulnerability of the pupils/students. They must liaise with through the transport operator, local authority, school and/or college to ensure they are fully aware of the arrangements in place to support safe travel.
- There is no requirement to wear a face covering on dedicated home to school transport services. Wearing a face covering is in line with Coronavirus (Restrictions) (Wales) (No.2) 2020 Regulations. However, it will ease the ease of all learners to wear a face covering on school transport services. Under the Coronavirus (Restrictions) (No.2) 2020 Regulations, the requirement is for approximately two metres.
- the overall risk to learners from COVID-19 is very low.
- the risk to those who are in the clinically shielded group is very low and they should be able to travel safely to school/college and other learners on a regular basis.
- the risk to those who live with a transport driver does not differ in the same way, and allow the transport driver to continue to work and support their pupils.
- the absence of evidence of any substantial benefit from the use of face coverings outweighs the potential risk of harm and cost of the proposed intervention.

Wherever capacity allows social distancing should be implemented between those who do not live in the same household. Where physical/spatial separation, distance is not possible, other precautions, for example, cleaning and ventilation, should be taken to manage the risk.

There is no requirement to maintain controlled cohorts on school transport services. Learners should be encouraged to maintain their usual seating plan, but equally they should be able to sit next to different people, particularly if they are from different school year groups.

Learners, drivers and passenger assistants should clean their hands, thoroughly and frequently, using hand sanitiser and when arriving at school/college and when they board and leave the vehicle. Drivers and passenger assistants should ensure this message is communicated to all those travelling on their vehicle. Drivers and passenger assistants should enable this and ensure adequate ventilation on their vehicle.

Drivers and passenger assistants may wish to use hand sanitiser or antiseptic wipes throughout the day. Drivers and passenger assistants may also perform/help learners with hand sanitiser, wipes and/or gloves, if they wish to do so.

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Local authorities, in consultation with school transport providers should consider the provision of hand sanitiser and antiseptic wipes for learners to use on their journey, personal protection and hygiene while travelling.

2. Clean hands throughout and more often than usual

COVID-19 is an easy virus to remove when it is on skin. Where soap and water is not available hand sanitiser can be used instead to kill the virus.

Learners, drivers and passenger assistants should clean their hands, thoroughly and frequently, using hand sanitiser and when arriving at school/college and when they board and leave the vehicle. Drivers and passenger assistants should ensure this message is communicated to all those travelling on their vehicle. Drivers and passenger assistants should enable this and ensure adequate ventilation on their vehicle.

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Local authorities, in consultation with school transport providers should consider the provision of hand sanitiser or antiseptic wipes for learners to use on their journey, personal protection and hygiene while travelling.

3. Enhance cleaning regimes by providing enough time for tasks to be fully completed

The task is to be fully completed as every transport. Schoolmasters should ensure that the transport provider has enough time to carry out the task and help to consider switching to it their communication with families and their transport providers to the transport.

Learners should be encouraged to carry tissues on home to school transport services. Learners should be encouraged to dispose of used tissues and hand sanitiser collection in carrying collection and also dispose of used tissues and hand sanitiser collection.

Local authorities should work with transport providers to agree the arrangements for cleaning vehicles for dedicated school transport. PHW recommends that vehicles should be cleaned at least twice a day, specified provision after the end of journey – and that school cleaning takes place at the end of each day.

4. Minimising contact and mixing

In the guidance it is recommended that schools/colleges should minimise contact and mixing between pupils. It is the responsibility to determine how they will do this but, in practice, this will be easier in some circumstances than others. For example, it may be easier for secondary schools and colleges to put in place measures such as the wearer of a class.

Schools, the guidance for further education and skills providers, recommends that schools and colleges should minimise contact and mixing between groups or cohorts of learners that remain separate from each other during the school day.

The guidance for schools and settings acknowledges that implementing these measures may be more difficult in primary schools and settings and that it may not be practical for primary school pupils to wear masks or face coverings. Schools, the guidance for further education and skills providers, recommends that schools and colleges should minimise contact and mixing between groups or cohorts of learners that remain separate from each other during the school day.

Avoid the use of face coverings in the home to school transport.

Provide clear information for parents/carers and learners about the arrangements for home to school transport services, including the use of face coverings. Ensure schools have arrangements in place to manage queuing when waiting to board the bus.

5. Face coverings

As part of the risk assessment process Local authorities, working with schools, settings and transport providers, should consider the use of face coverings using others set out in the latest published report from the Technical Advisory Group (TAG).

If face coverings are adopted local authorities should ensure that appropriate PPE is provided for the safe and hygienic use of face coverings, putting in and removing them. Local authorities should also ensure that appropriate training is provided to those who are required to use them in this guidance.

Face coverings should not be worn by those who may not be able to handle them as directed (for example, young children, or those with disabilities or those who have difficulty with dexterity). Local authorities should consider the use of transparent "visor" or clear face coverings as a requirement to use face coverings on public transport. The following exemptions are recommended:

- Some children and young people will not be able to wear a face cover for a variety of reasons, including those with educational needs, or disabilities. Local authorities should ensure that arrangements are in place to manage queuing when waiting to board the bus.
- Face coverings are not a substitute for other protective measures such as social distance, hand hygiene and good respiratory hygiene practices.

Specific considerations

A range of specific considerations and control measures may be required to ensure the safety of those using school transport services. These will be for local consideration and adoption following a risk assessment.

Taxis and private hire vehicles

Some learners, including those with additional support needs, may on occasion or private hire vehicles to get to and from school/college. Where taxis are used solely for the purpose of transporting children and young people to school/college, they are considered sufficiently safe to carry passengers, and staff travelling exclusively to and from school/college, or recommended that in taxis and private hire vehicles learners travel in the back seat, if possible.

Taxis should be used sparingly and only for those who can not walk or cycle to school/college. Where taxis are used, bespoke transport arrangements. This should be considered sufficiently safe to carry passengers, and staff travelling exclusively to and from school/college

Extremely vulnerable or 'shielding staff or learners'

The Chief Medical Officer (CMO) for Wales has sent letters to people who are at high risk from coronavirus (COVID-19) advising them to shield because the chances for them to be very ill from Staff and learners who are at high risk from coronavirus (COVID-19) are very small. Most of the environments are not assessed to be 'COVID secure'. Also taken into account is the fact that it is difficult to keep a 2 metre distance although adults and children are able to follow the rules of guidance. Staff who have been shielding should talk to their employer as early as possible about their concerns. Staff who have been shielding and are not feeling ready to return to work should contact their occupational health service in addition to what other safety measures are put in place for their safety. Staff who have been shielding should follow the **Increased risk** group.

The DATA Unit, working with the CMO, developed the COVID Risk Assessment published by Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health (RCPCH) to assist employers and employees. The RCPCH COVID Risk Assessment is the majority of clinical consensus by the Royal College of Paediatrics, no longer need to shield. Over the summer paediatricians and GPs will be reviewing the clinical risk of children who have been shielding because of underlying health conditions. Children who are shielding should continue to follow the GPs' advice. Children who are not shielding should follow the guidance for the general population. As we continue to seek definitive however, this group of children should continue to follow the guidance for the general population and hand sanitisation regularly.

Pregnant women after 28 weeks are specifically advised to work from home and to follow the guidance for the general population. Pregnant women in medical physical distancing, and hand sanitisation regularly. The College of Obstetric Gynaecologists (RCOG) have updated their advice, based on the evidence, to say that pregnant women, after 28 weeks gestation, should follow the guidance for the general population. RCOG advising those who are at 28 weeks gestation or above, still should

As the advice to shielding is being reviewed, it is important that people who have been shielding do not feel pressured into returning to work before they are ready to work from home if they can. Those that do choose to return to work should follow the guidance for the general population. Those who are pregnant and have been shielding should follow the guidance for the general population. Those who are pregnant and have been shielding should continue to carry out a risk assessment and discuss it with their employer. All Wales COVID risk assessments are assessment tool and in point of contact with occupational health

Although the intention is for all learners to return to school in the autumn, every school will also need to plan for the possibility of a further local lockdown.

Given our uncertainty over future transmission levels, for the foreseeable future, it is essential that we prepare for a range of possible circumstances.

Welsh Government will work closely to monitor health conditions working closely with Public Health Wales and local authorities, in particular in the case of potential localised outbreaks.

Policies and procedures

Schools and settings, working closely with the local authority may wish to revisit their policies and procedures in light of this guidance, including fire evacuation, behaviour and security.

Annex A: Approach to risk estimation and management

Annex A: Approach to risk estimation and management[10]

This hierarchy of controls is a way to prioritise risk control measures based on how effective different types of control are in reducing risks. Risk reduction measures should be assessed in order of the priority given in the hierarchy; it is not a case of simply jumping to the easiest control measure to implement. Types of control higher up the hierarchy are more effective at reducing risks than those lower down.

Controls should be practical to be implemented and, ideally, should be able to be maintained easily over time.

It is critical to remember that it will only rarely be feasible to eliminate the risk completely. The combination of controls introduced should aim to reduce the risk to as low as reasonably practicable prioritising structural, environmental interventions over individual level ones.

This of course does not simply mean considering risks of transmission, but also balancing these against risks to wider health and well-being and learning. Ultimately schools need the flexibility to respond to these risks as they are able to.

When considering contact between contact groups, we would advise schools to consider:

1. Elimination: Redesign the activity such that the risk is removed or eliminated.
2. Substitution: Replace the activity with an activity that reduces the risk. Care is
required to avoid introducing new hazards from the substitution.
3. Engineering controls: Design measures that help control or mitigate risk.
4. Administrative controls: Identifying and implementing the procedures to
improve safety.
5. Having gone through this process, PPE should be used where the guidance
states recommends this.

Annex B: Health and safety risk assessment

Coronavirus (COVID-19) specific

Everyone needs to assess and manage the risks from coronavirus (COVID-19). This means school employers and leaders are required by law to think about the risks the staff and learners face and do everything reasonably practicable to minimise them, recognising they cannot completely eliminate the risk of coronavirus (COVID-19). School 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 and make the school COVID-secure. General information on how to make a workplace COVID-secure, including how to approach a coronavirus (COVID-19) risk assessment, is provided by the **HSE guidance on working safely**.

Local authorities will continue to support schools and settings undertake a 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 local authorities, schools and settings and employers decide whether they have done everything they need to. Local authorities and schools as employers have a legal duty to consult their employees on health and safety in good time. It also makes good sense to involve pupils (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 COVID-19 and make the school COVID-secure. 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 and settings 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 learners (HSE would expect all employers with over 50 staff to do so).

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.

Schools must appoint a competent person to ensure they meet their health and
safety duties.

The relevant duties under health and safety legislation fall to the employer. While in many cases the day-to-day running of the school may be delegated to the headteacher and the school management team. In most cases, the employer is responsible for ensuring that risks are managed effectively. This includes health and safety matters.

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) provides more information on the role of local authorities and schools as employers in the guidance **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 many learners have already attended school earlier in the year, the employer is likely to have gone through a lot of this thinking already. We recommend that 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 school 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
- learners
- 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, provision of food and beverages 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.

Leaders are encouraged to ensure that consultation on any changes to risk assessments that will be in place for the start of the autumn term commence with staff before the summer break, to ensure that those that are on term-time only contracts have adequate time to contribute.

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.

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