Part of
Education and childcare during coronavirus

Guidance
Guidance for full opening: special schools and other specialist settings

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From:
Department for Education

Contents
Main changes since this guidance was last updated
Overview
Welcoming children and young people back to education
Purpose of this guidance
SEND legislation
Risk assessments for children and young people with education, health and care plans
Risk assessments for children and young people not with education, health and care plans
SEND regulations
Section 1: public health advice to minimise coronavirus (COVID-19) risks
Section 2: the system of controls: protective measures
Section 3: contingency planning
Section 4: Assessment and monitoring
Section 5: contingency framework
Section 6: Annexes

Main changes since this guidance was last updated

The following amendments have been updated:

- changes to SEND legislation
- use of face coverings in settings
- the framework for supporting transport to and from settings
- the use of face coverings
- advice for educational and clinical authorities with regards to recording and reporting cases
- updated guidance on ventilation
- support available for schools with regard to supply teachers
- updated guidance on testing
- updated guidance on visitors
- music, dance and drama in schools
- updated guidance on extended curricular activity
- residential activities
- risk resources available for pupil wellbeing and support
- ventilation
- primary assessment
- updated risk assessments available for delivering remote education
- risk assessments for those with a clinical or shielding requirement

Overview

All children and young people, in all year groups and settings types, will return to full time education from the start of the autumn term.

This guidance is for leaders and staff of:

- special schools
- special post-16 institutions (SPI)
- other specialist education settings, such as hospital schools

It includes further information for leaders to consider how education and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) can return to full time education.

Separate guidance is available for:

- early years
- mainstream schools
- further education (FE) colleges and providers

The first section sets out the public health advice that leaders to minimise the risk of transmission of coronavirus (COVID-19) in their setting, highlighting additional risks that need to be considered in the context of the pandemic and its impacts. This is followed by a section on the system of controls (hierarchy of controls (PHE)), and is relevant for all specialist settings.

The last section sets out the framework for the Department for Education (DfE) capacity settings, including special schools, to operate in this new context. This includes:

- school operation
- school risk assessment and pastoral support
- assessment and monitoring of risk
- contingency planning in the case of a local outbreak

Who pupils return to in the general population is further to Living alongside FE colleges and providers.

We are grateful for the advice with input from school leaders, unions and sector organisations, including the Association of School and College Leaders (ASCL) (PDF). We will keep the guidance under review and update as necessary.

Welcoming children and young people back to education

Returning to education is critical for children and young people's educational and for their wellbeing. Time out of education arising in pandemic conditions has had a significant impact on children, young people and disadvantaged children and young people in particular. We know the impact of learning and children and young people's future ability to learn, and their life chances, can be affected by the time they spend not attending school rather than their age.

The risk to children and young people themselves of becoming severely ill from coronavirus (COVID-19) is very low. Children and young people have of ways to keep out of a threat or outrage. We know that education settings are a vital part of children and young people's lives and that being in school also delivers the wellbeing of children, young people and their families.

A child or young person's time spent in education is key to their preparation for adulthood. It is critical that they can return to full time education, to ensure they can fulfil their potential, and to prepare for life in modern Britain. The impact of education settings has also affected their ability to work. As the economy opens up, it is critical that children and young people can return to school to return to work.

In relation to learning in education settings, whilst it is not possible to ensure a hygiene-free environment, we have worked with Public Health England to commission COVID-19 rapid antigen lateral flow tests to supplement regular testing and ensure that we can identify cases in settings and prevent more than every other contact, ensuring that children and young people can be tested twice the distance any more than daily.

Although we are optimistic, the balance of risk is now overwhelmingly in favour of children and young people returning to education. The Chief Medical Officers and Deputy Chief Medical Officers of England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland have set out the balance of risk in their statement on 19 July 2021. As a result, we are now able to remove bubbles and start to reverse the enormous costs of missed education. This will be an important step in ensuring that children and young people can return to education and their lives.

We are therefore asking all education settings to prepare to welcome all children and young people back to their setting for full time education. This criterion is the expectation, to be making arrangements for all children and young people to attend face to face and minimise any risks from coronavirus (COVID-19) with the measures in place. Attendance is mandatory for children and young people of compulsory school age and for those in post-16 education and young people aged 5 to 16. There are no plans at present to reintroduce additional costs incurred as part of the process.

The measures set out in this guidance provide a framework for education settings to manage the risks from coronavirus (COVID-19) and to ensure children and young people can receive the education and disabled access. It has quality education that enables them to thrive and progress. In welcoming all children and young people back to education, we are also taking into account the number of contacts that education settings have with other people as part of implementing the system of controls to reduce the risk of transmission. If transmission of coronavirus (COVID-19) is high in the community, this is increasing risk effectively.

While our aim is to have all children and young people back to their education settings, we will continue to review the evidence and keep under review the possibility of school restrictions and how they will ensure continuity of education.

Purpose of this guidance

The first section of this guidance sets out the public health advice which education settings should follow to minimise the risk of coronavirus (COVID-19) transmission in their setting. It also sets out the additional risks that need to be considered if severe developing coronavirus (COVID-19) symptoms arise at their setting. The second section sets out the system of controls, which is the hierarchy of guidance for special schools and other specialist settings. It sets out how education settings face specific challenges, with social distancing and other measures, and how they can implement the system of controls to manage these risks to ensure.

This includes the PHE endorsed 'system of controls', building on the hierarchy of controls (the hierarchy of controls (PHE)) to manage the risks of coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. When implemented in line with a revised setting based risk assessment, the system of controls will ensure that children and young people, young people and staff are able to attend school and minimise the risk of coronavirus (COVID-19) transmission.

The third section sets out the DfE's expectations for the operation of these settings, including the expectation that they will implement the system of controls, as essential. All settings must open their doors, but the are expected to implement the system of controls, and to ensure that children and young people are able to attend school, as well as to PHE, we use the word 'must'. If there is a legal requirement, we have made that clear. This guidance sets out the legal requirements in full.

There cannot be a one-size-fits-all approach where the system of controls is concerned. Education settings will need to take into account the risks associated the needs of their children and young people, and to make informed judgements about how to balance delivering a broad and balanced curriculum, and the wellbeing of children and young people, with the need to ensure that all participants to keep their risks as low as reasonably practicable, and they effectively minimise risks.

The system of controls, trusts and local authorities to work closely with parents, staff and pupils, to ensure that they understand the rationale for the approaches for their circumstances and discuss any concerns. We want all children and young people, and their families, to be confident that the controls are right for this, but some people will understandably have worries that should be heard and addressed.

Risk assessments for children and young people with education, health and care plans

Following the partial closure of educational and childcare settings from 20 March 2020, education providers and local authorities (LA) have been working together to ensure that children and young people with education, health and care assessments may give practical how and the autumn term to help identify children and young people who need to attend education and to ensure that children and young people who need to attend education are able to attend. They will help ensure pupils, families, and staff that it is safe for the pupil to attend education, and for their setting, that they can provide the support they need.

Children and young people have to self-isolate.

Where a case is identified in a school setting.

Risk assessments should inform a plan of action which focuses on supporting attendance and engagement with education, and the support of the child or young person. Where a child or young person with an EHC plan has a social care plan, the local authority should ensure that the social care plan is reviewed and updated as part of the process. Local authorities and educational settings should decide together who is best placed to coordinate the EHC plan, and how this can be most effectively reviewed, reviews with the school or college.

Whether individual risk assessments are used to help plan for the autumn term for EHC plan holders, or other children and young people who need to attend education, it is important that they are completed as soon as practicable. They should also contain and review young people over 18 who have EHC plans, and who are being educated in post-16 provision. They should be approaches that support settings manage the risks to children and young people in person with SEND, who may spend some time out of education, to return to full education.

SEND legislation

From 5 May to 25 July, Section 42 of the Children and Families Act 2014 was modified by a temporary order (the Coronavirus Act 2020). Local authorities and health commissioners were required to use their 'reasonable endeavours' to secure the provision set out in children and young people's education, health and care (EHC) plans. This meant that children and young people received the support they need to return to school, will not be issuing further notices to parents, and will not be taking any enforcement action. The temporary order has lapsed and local authorities and health commissioners are now required to fully notice full provision for all children and young people with EHC plans.

The temporary changes to the statutory guidance for EHC needs assessments and plans, which gave local authorities and others who contribute to EHC needs assessments and plans more flexibility to carry out their duties, have also lapsed as of midnight on 25 September 2020. Further information on the temporary changes to the law in DfE, Health and Social Care Secretaries announce new measures to ease pressure on education, health and social care services during coronavirus (COVID-19) (archived).

We remain committed to listening to and working with local authorities, parent carer representatives and children and young people's families to ensure that the lifting of the temporary changes is managed in a way that supports the needs of children and young people with SEND.

Many children and young people will have found lockdown exceptionally challenging, for a number of reasons, including the lack of routine and structure, the lack of face-to-face contact with friends and peers and the disruption to routines.

As part of planning for a full return in the autumn term, it is a vital requirement that settings meet and update existing risk assessments (building on the assessments they will have made for children and young people who have been in attendance during the lockdown period) to ensure they continue to fulfill capacity. They should also review and update their wider risk assessments as well as those for individual children and young people, taking into account the risks arising from the pandemic, considering the impact on their children and young people's education settings should ensure that they implement transition arrangements that are sensitive to the needs of their children and young people, including, in relation to the return to school, any anxieties they may have.

Employers should have active arrangements in place to monitor whether the health and safety risks to their staff from exposure to coronavirus (COVID-19) in any issues are identified and if changes in public health advice are necessary.

The system of controls: protective measures

Having assessed risks, settings must work through this system of controls. They should adopt protective measures in a way that:

- addresses the risks identified in the assessment
- applies to the setting and the activities, relevant to the needs of the children and young people they live
- is based on the best available evidence and learned curriculum, including educational and non-supportive pupils and students

System of controls

This is the set of protective measures settings must take. They are grouped into 'prevention' and 'response' by intervention.

Prevention

Prevention contact with individuals who are unwell by ensuring that those who have coronavirus (COVID-19) symptoms, or who have tested positive for coronavirus (COVID-19), do not come into the setting.

Effective recommended, and mandatory, hygiene measures.

Cleaner hands thoroughly more often than usual.

Ensure good ventilation by opening windows for 'cracks' 5, 6m 3, HEPA approach.

Enhanced cleaning, including cleaning frequently touched surfaces often, using standard products such as detergents and bleaches.

Minimise contact between individuals and maintain social distancing measures.

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

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

Number 6 must be properly considered, and settings must put in place measures that suit their particular circumstances.

Number 7 applies in specific circumstances.

Response to any infection

- Engage with the NHS Test and Trace process.
- Manage confirmed cases of coronavirus (COVID-19) amongst the children and young people.
- Contact local health protection teams for advice and support for further advice.

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

Prevention

1. Minimise contact with individuals who are unwell by ensuring that those who have coronavirus (COVID-19) symptoms, or who have someone in their household or bubble who has tested positive

Ensuring that pupils, students, staff and other visitors do not come into the setting if they have coronavirus (COVID-19) symptoms, or have tested positive in the last 7 days, or are self-isolating as a household member of someone who has tested positive, is a key part of the system of controls to minimise the risk of coronavirus (COVID-19). We settings must follow the guidance on self-isolation and testing.

If anyone in the setting develops coronavirus (COVID-19) symptoms, even to a high temperature, or has a cough or a change in, their normal sense of taste or smell (anosmia), they should not come into the setting. Staff should follow the NHS advice on what to do if someone has coronavirus (COVID-19) symptoms, which sets out that they must self-isolate for at least 10 days and should arrange to have a test to find out if they have coronavirus (COVID-19).

If they have tested positive which not experiencing symptoms but develop symptoms, they should self-isolate for 10 days from the date of the test, and if symptoms from the day they develop symptoms.

Other members of their household (including any siblings) should self-isolate for 10 days from with any symptoms, and if they develop symptoms.

If a child is awaiting collection, they should be moved, if possible, to a room or area where they can be supervised by an adult who is not a member of the child, with appropriate PPE if a close contact is required. Ideally, a window should be opened for ventilation. It is not possible to isolate them, move them to an area where they can be safely supervised and ventilated.

If they need to go to the bathroom while waiting to be collected, they should use a separate bathroom if possible. The area they have been in should be cleaned and ventilated before being used by others.

PHE must be sent by staff caring for the child while they await collection if a distance of 2 metres cannot be maintained (such as when providing first aid or child with complex needs). More information on PPE use can be found in the guidance for the use of personal protective equipment (PPE) in education, childcare and children's social care.

If a child is expecting a third class children, symptoms, they should initially remain in their residential setting. Children who are in residential settings will benefit from withdrawing in their boarding house or their their usual residence. Children who are in day provision should be sent home. Children who are in residential settings should be kept in their bubble, and should only see the welfare of other pupils and staff. Read the guidance on isolation for residential special schools.

As a general rule for the whole school, if someone is not able to be tested in their life or at, Anyone with coronavirus (COVID-19) symptoms should not be in the setting, unless they are being tested.

Any members of staff who have helped someone with symptoms and any pupils who have been in close contact with the person with symptoms are not required to self-isolate. They are advised to keep their distance, for instance, avoiding passing the infection on to other people. See COVID-19: what to do if a pupil or student tests positive.

Public Health England's case chart routinely tracking the temporarily of pupils is also available as they are considered a vulnerable group. Contact the PHE COVID-19 team.

2. Where recommended, use of face coverings in settings

The government is no longer recommending the use of face coverings in all settings. Settings that teach children in years 7 and above, and which are in areas of high local transmission, may wish to continue to keep face coverings in communal areas where social distancing cannot easily be maintained. This could include, for example, some secondary schools, sixth form colleges and colleges. Face coverings may also be worn by visitors and parents if they wish to do so, and staff may wear a face covering, and, older children and young people in specialist settings may be exempt. Wearing face coverings.

In particular, settings that teach years 7 and above may decide to recommend face coverings be worn in communal areas, such as in corridors and toilets, where social distancing cannot easily be maintained. Settings may also wish to maintain social distancing between staff and pupils are moving around the classroom, for instance, in secondary schools.

In primary settings, where social distancing is not practicable, such as when at classroom between members of staff or visitors, for example in staffroom, consideration should be given to the use of face coverings. Face coverings should not be worn when outdoors or when seated at a table.

In the event of a new local restriction being imposed, settings will need to consider whether it is appropriate to continue to keep face coverings in arrangements beyond the use of face coverings in certain circumstances.

Exemptions

Children and young people are exempt from wearing face coverings. This applies to those who:

- cannot put on, wear or remove a face covering because of a physical impairment or disability, dexterity or mental health issue
- speak to or provide assistance to someone who relies on lip reading, clear speech or sign language to communicate

The same exemptions apply to face coverings as to face masks, which are set out in the guidance on the use of personal protective equipment (PPE) in education, childcare and children's social care.

Access to face coverings

It is reasonable to assume that staff and young people will now have access to face coverings. Schools have long been aware of pupils' needs. Public Health England has made assurances to ensure that sufficient supplies are available.

Secondary schools and colleges will be able to obtain face coverings if they become called in urgently. Education settings should take steps to have a small emergency supply in reserve for such cases.

Secrecy should be excluded from education on the grounds that they are wearing a face covering.

Safe wearing and removal of face coverings

Staff should be aware of the risks associated with face coverings when those who are wearing them touch their face or their face covering, and when they put on or take off. This process should be communicated clearly to pupils and staff.

Safe wearing of a face covering requires washing or sanitising hands before and after putting on and taking off a face covering, and avoiding touching the face or face covering in the interim, and ensuring the face covering fits snugly against the face without gaps between it and the face covering because this will reduce the effectiveness of the face covering.

Children and young people must be instructed not to touch the front of the face covering during the day or when taking it off. Face coverings should be put into a temporary face covering or a 'bag for used face covering bag' and washed or disposed of immediately upon return to the place of residence. Face coverings should not be worn around the neck or dangling from one ear.

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Face coverings and exemptions

Children and young people who are exempt from wearing face coverings should be supported to participate in education as much as possible. Children and young people who are exempt from wearing face coverings should be kept as safe as possible. Children and young people who are exempt from wearing face coverings should be supported to participate in education as much as possible. Children and young people who are exempt from wearing face coverings should be kept as safe as possible.

3. Where recommended, use of face masks in settings

The government is no longer recommending the use of face masks in all settings. Settings that teach children in years 7 and above, and which are in areas of high local transmission, may wish to continue to keep face masks in communal areas where social distancing cannot easily be maintained. This could include, for example, some secondary schools, sixth form colleges and colleges. Face masks may also be worn by visitors and parents if they wish to do so, and staff may wear a face covering, and, older children and young people in specialist settings may be exempt. Wearing face masks.

In particular, settings that teach years 7 and above may decide to recommend face masks be worn in communal areas, such as in corridors and toilets, where social distancing cannot easily be maintained. Settings may also wish to maintain social distancing between staff and pupils are moving around the classroom, for instance, in secondary schools.

In primary settings, where social distancing is not practicable, such as when at classroom between members of staff or visitors, for example in staffroom, consideration should be given to the use of face masks. Face masks should not be worn when outdoors or when seated at a table.

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Children and young people are exempt from wearing face masks. This applies to those who:

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The same exemptions apply to face masks as to face coverings, which are set out in the guidance on the use of personal protective equipment (PPE) in education, childcare and children's social care.

Access to face masks

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Secondary schools and colleges will be able to obtain face masks if they become called in urgently. Education settings should take steps to have a small emergency supply in reserve for such cases.

Secrecy should be excluded from education on the grounds that they are wearing a face masks.

Safe wearing and removal of face masks

Staff should be aware of the risks associated with face masks coverings when those who are wearing them touch their face or their face mask, and when they put on or take off. This process should be communicated clearly to pupils and staff.

Safe wearing of a face mask requires washing or sanitising hands before and after putting on and taking off a face mask, and avoiding touching the face or face mask in the interim, and ensuring the face mask fits snugly against the face without gaps between it and the face covering because this will reduce the effectiveness of the face mask.

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Face masks and exemptions

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4. Clean hands thoroughly more often than usual

Ensure good hand hygiene practice by encouraging children and young people to wash their hands thoroughly more often than usual, and ensuring that there is access to sufficient hand washing facilities. Hand washing is one of the most effective ways to clean hands. It should be done with soap and water for at least 20 seconds and followed by drying hands thoroughly. Hand sanitisers can be used as an alternative to washing with soap and water, but they are not as effective in killing some types of bacteria and viruses, and they do not remove pesticides from the hands.

Hand washing should be prioritised at the following times:

- on arrival at the setting
- before and after eating and drinking
- after using the toilet
- before and after outdoor activity
- before and after travelling in a vehicle
- before and after changing clothes
- after touching a frequently touched surface or item
- after coughing, sneezing or blowing nose

Hand washing should be encouraged as a regular activity, and children and young people should be supported to do so. Hand washing should be prioritised at the following times:

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5. Ensure good ventilation by opening windows for 'cracks' 5, 6m 3, HEPA approach

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

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10. Number 6 must be properly considered, and settings must put in place measures that suit their particular circumstances

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Response to any infection

12. Engage with the NHS Test and Trace process

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13. Manage confirmed cases of coronavirus (COVID-19) amongst the children and young people

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14. Contact local health protection teams for advice and support for further advice

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

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Section 1: public health advice to minimise coronavirus (COVID-19) risks

Set out in this section the public health advice to minimise the risk of coronavirus (COVID-19) transmission in your setting, highlighting additional risks that need to be considered in the context of the pandemic and its impacts. This is followed by a section on the system of controls (hierarchy of controls (PHE)), and is relevant for all specialist settings.

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There cannot be a one-size-fits-all approach where the system of controls is concerned. Education settings will need to take into account the risks associated the needs of their children and young people, and to make informed judgements about how to balance delivering a broad and balanced curriculum, and the wellbeing of children and young people, with the need to ensure that all participants to keep their risks as low as reasonably practicable, and they effectively minimise risks.

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We remain committed to listening to and working with local authorities, parent carer representatives and children and young people's families to ensure that the lifting of the temporary changes is managed in a way that supports the needs of children and young people with SEND.

Many children and young people will have found lockdown exceptionally challenging, for a number of reasons, including the lack of routine and structure, the lack of face-to-face contact with friends and peers and the disruption to routines.

As part of planning for a full return in the autumn term, it is a vital requirement that settings meet and update existing risk assessments (building on the assessments they will have made for children and young people who have been in attendance during the lockdown period) to ensure they continue to fulfill capacity. They should also review and update their wider risk assessments as well as those for individual children and young people, taking into account the risks arising from the pandemic, considering the impact on their children and young people's education settings should ensure that they implement transition arrangements that are sensitive to the needs of their children and young people, including, in relation to the return to school, any anxieties they may have.

Employers should have active arrangements in place to monitor whether the health and safety risks to their staff from exposure to coronavirus (COVID-19) in any issues are identified and if changes in public health advice are necessary.

The system of controls: protective measures

Having assessed risks, settings must work through this system of controls. They should adopt protective measures in a way that:

- addresses the risks identified in the assessment
- applies to the setting and the activities, relevant to the needs of the children and young people they live
- is based on the best available evidence and learned curriculum, including educational and non-supportive pupils and students

System of controls

This is the set of protective measures settings must take. They are grouped into 'prevention' and 'response' by intervention.

Prevention

Prevention contact with individuals who are unwell by ensuring that those who have coronavirus (COVID-19) symptoms, or who have someone in their household or bubble who has tested positive for coronavirus (COVID-19), do not come into the setting.

Effective recommended, and mandatory, hygiene measures.

Cleaner hands thoroughly more often than usual.

Ensure good ventilation by opening windows for 'cracks' 5, 6m 3, HEPA approach.

Enhanced cleaning, including cleaning frequently touched surfaces often, using standard products such as detergents and bleaches.

Minimise contact between individuals and maintain social distancing measures.

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

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

Number 6 must be properly considered, and settings must put in place measures that suit their particular circumstances.

Number 7 applies in specific circumstances.

Response to any infection

- Engage with the NHS Test and Trace process.
- Manage confirmed cases of coronavirus (COVID-19) amongst the children and young people.
- Contact local health protection teams for advice and support for further advice.

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

Prevention

1. Minimise contact with individuals who are unwell by ensuring that those who have coronavirus (COVID-19) symptoms, or who have someone in their household or bubble who has tested positive

Ensuring that pupils, students, staff and other visitors do not come into the setting if they have coronavirus (COVID-19) symptoms, or have tested positive in the last 7 days, or are self-isolating as a household member of someone who has tested positive, is a key part of the system of controls to minimise the risk of coronavirus (COVID-19). We settings must follow the guidance on self-isolation and testing.

If anyone in the setting develops coronavirus (COVID-19) symptoms, even to a high temperature, or has a cough or a change in, their normal sense of taste or smell (anosmia), they should not come into the setting. Staff should follow the NHS advice on what to do if someone has coronavirus (COVID-19) symptoms, which sets out that they must self-isolate for at least 10 days and should arrange to have a test to find out if they have coronavirus (COVID-19).

If they have tested positive which not experiencing symptoms but develop symptoms, they should self-isolate for 10 days from the date of the test, and if symptoms from the day they develop symptoms.

Other members of their household (including any siblings) should self-isolate for 10 days from with any symptoms, and if they develop symptoms.

If a child is awaiting collection, they should be moved, if possible, to a room or area where they can be supervised by an adult who is not a member of the child, with appropriate PPE if a close contact is required. Ideally, a window should be opened for ventilation. It is not possible to isolate them, move them to an area where they can be safely supervised and ventilated.

If they need to go to the bathroom while waiting to be collected, they should use a separate bathroom if possible. The area they have been in should be cleaned and ventilated before being used by others.

PHE must be sent by staff caring for the child while they await collection if a distance of 2 metres cannot be maintained (such as when providing first aid or child with complex needs). More information on PPE use can be found in the guidance for the use of personal protective equipment (PPE) in education, childcare and children's social care.

If a child is expecting a third class symptoms, they should initially remain in their residential setting. Children who are in residential settings will benefit from withdrawing in their boarding house or their their usual residence. Children who are in day provision should be sent home. Children who are in residential settings should be kept in their bubble, and should only see the welfare of other pupils and staff. Read the guidance on isolation for residential special schools.

As a general rule for the whole school, if someone is not able to be tested in their life or at, Anyone with coronavirus (COVID-19) symptoms should not be in the setting, unless they are being tested.

Any members of staff who have helped someone with symptoms and any pupils who have been in close contact with the person with symptoms are not required to self-isolate. They are advised to keep their distance, for instance, avoiding passing the infection on to other people. See COVID-19: what to do if a pupil or student tests positive.

Public Health England's case chart routinely tracking the temporarily of pupils is also available as they are considered a vulnerable group. Contact the PHE COVID-19 team.

2. Where recommended, use of face coverings in settings

The government is no longer recommending the use of face coverings in all settings. Settings that teach children in years 7 and above, and which are in areas of high local transmission, may wish to continue to keep face coverings in communal areas where social distancing cannot easily be maintained. This could include, for example, some secondary schools, sixth form colleges and colleges. Face coverings may also be worn by visitors and parents if they wish to do so, and staff may wear a face covering, and, older children and young people in specialist settings may be exempt. Wearing face coverings.

In particular, settings that teach years 7 and above may decide to recommend face coverings be worn in communal areas, such as in corridors and toilets, where social distancing cannot easily be maintained. Settings may also wish to maintain social distancing between staff and pupils are moving around the classroom, for instance, in secondary schools.

In primary settings, where social distancing is not practicable, such as when at classroom between members of staff or visitors, for example in staffroom, consideration should be given to the use of face coverings. Face coverings should not be worn when outdoors or when seated at a table.

In the event of a new local restriction being imposed, settings will need to consider whether it is appropriate to continue to keep face coverings in arrangements beyond the use of face coverings in certain circumstances.

Exemptions

Children and young people are exempt from wearing face coverings. This applies to those who:

- cannot put on, wear or remove a face covering because of a physical impairment or disability, dexterity or mental health issue
- speak to or provide assistance to someone who relies on lip reading, clear speech or sign language to communicate

The same exemptions apply to face coverings as to face masks, which are set out in the guidance on the use of personal protective equipment (PPE) in education, childcare and children's social care.

Access to face coverings

It is reasonable to assume that staff and young people will now have access to face coverings. Schools have long been aware of pupils' needs. Public Health England has made assurances to ensure that sufficient supplies are available.

Secondary schools and colleges will be able to obtain face coverings if they become called in urgently. Education settings should take steps to have a small emergency supply in reserve for such cases.

Secrecy should be excluded from education on the grounds that they are wearing a face covering.

Safe wearing and removal of face coverings

Staff should be aware of the risks associated with face coverings when those who are wearing them touch their face or their face covering, and when they put on or take off. This process should be communicated clearly to pupils and staff.

Safe wearing of a face covering requires washing or sanitising hands before and after putting on and taking off a face covering, and avoiding touching the face or face covering in the interim, and ensuring the face covering fits snugly against the face without gaps between it and the face covering because this will reduce the effectiveness of the face covering.

Children and young people must be instructed not to touch the front of the face covering during the day or when taking it off. Face coverings should be put into a temporary face covering or a 'bag for used face covering bag' and washed or disposed of immediately upon return to the place of residence. Face coverings should not be worn around the neck or dangling from one ear.

Secrecy should be excluded from education on the grounds that they are wearing a face covering.

Face coverings and exemptions

Children and young people who are exempt from wearing face coverings should be supported to participate in education as much as possible. Children and young people who are exempt from wearing face coverings should be kept as safe as possible. Children and young people who are exempt from wearing face coverings should be supported to participate in education as much as possible. Children and young people who are exempt from wearing face coverings should be kept as safe as possible.

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The same exemptions apply to face masks as to face coverings, which are set out in the guidance on the use of personal protective equipment (PPE) in education, childcare and children's social care.

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Face masks and exemptions

Children and young people who are exempt from wearing face masks should be supported to participate in education as much as possible. Children and young people who are exempt from wearing face masks should be kept as safe as possible.

Further guidance on face coverings

Separate guidance is available on:

- face coverings in education settings
- preventing and controlling infection, including the use of PPE, in education, childcare and children's social care settings

3. Clean hands thoroughly more often than usual

Coronavirus (COVID-19) is an easy virus to kill when it is on skin. This can be done with soap and water or hand sanitiser. Special settings must ensure that pupils clean their hands regularly, including when they arrive at the setting, when they return from breaks, when they change rooms and before and after eating.

Special education settings will want to consider what frequency of hand washing is best for which pupils, students and staff, and incorporate time for this in timetables or lesson plans. Staff working with children and young people who spit uncontrollably may want more opportunities to wash their hands than other staff, or, children and young people who use saliva as a sensory stimulant or who struggle with 'catch it, bin it, kill it' may need more opportunities to wash their hands than children and young people who do not. Specialist settings will typically have handwash basins in or adjacent to classrooms, so may be able to use these to maximise hand washing.

Regular and thorough hand cleaning is going to be needed for the foreseeable future. Points to consider and implement:

- whether the setting has enough hand washing or hand sanitiser 'stations' available so that all pupils and staff can clean their hands regularly
- supervision of hand sanitiser use given risks around ingestion. Small children and pupils with complex needs should continue to be helped to clean their hands properly. Skin friendly skin cleaning wipes can be used as an alternative
- building these routines into school culture, supported by behaviour expectations and helping ensure younger children and those with complex needs understand the need to follow them

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

The 'catch it, bin it, kill it' approach continues to be very important, so settings must ensure that they have enough tissues and bins available to support pupils and staff to follow this routine. As with hand cleaning, settings must ensure younger children and those with complex needs are helped to get this right, and all pupils understand that this is now part of how the setting operates. The e-Bug coronavirus (COVID-19) website contains free resources for schools, including materials to encourage good hand and respiratory hygiene.

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

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

Points to consider and implement:

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

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

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

Minimising contacts and mixing between people reduces transmission of coronavirus (COVID-19). This is important in all contexts, and education settings must consider how to implement this. Special settings must do everything possible to minimise contacts and mixing while delivering a broad and balanced curriculum.

The overarching principle to apply is reducing the number of contacts between children, young people and staff. This can be achieved through keeping groups separate (in 'bubbles') and through maintaining distance between individuals. These are not alternative options and both measures will help, but the balance between them will change depending on children's ability to distance, the layout of the setting, and the feasibility of keeping distinct groups separate while offering a broad curriculum.

We recognise that maintaining distance or forming bubbles could be particularly difficult in special settings, particularly given the need for staff to administer care support and provide therapies to the children and young people attending. However, the average number of pupils or students attending a special school or SPI is much lower than the average number in a mainstream school, and this in itself, will help to limit the number of contacts for any individual.

The points to consider and implement are set out in the following sections.

a. How to group children and young people

Consistent groups reduce the risk of transmission by limiting the number of children, young people and staff in contact with each other to only those within the group. They have been used in special settings in the summer term in recognition that children, and especially the youngest children and those with complex needs, cannot socially distance from staff or from each other and this provides an additional protective measure. Maintaining distinct groups or 'bubbles' that do not mix makes it quicker and easier in the event of a positive case to identify those who may need to self-isolate, and to keep that number as small as possible.

However, the use of small groups restricts the normal operation of education settings and presents both educational and logistical challenges, including the cleaning and use of shared spaces, such as the playgrounds, boarding houses, dining halls, and toilets, and the provision of specialist teaching and therapies. This is the case in both primary and secondary schools, but is particularly difficult in secondary schools, and special settings.

In this guidance for the autumn term, maintaining consistent groups remains important, but given the decrease in the prevalence of coronavirus (COVID-19) and the resumption of the full range of curriculum subjects, settings may need to change the emphasis on bubbles within their system of controls and increase the size of these groups.

Settings should assess their circumstances and look to implement 'bubbles' of an appropriate size, to achieve the greatest reduction in contact and mixing, without unduly limiting the quality or breadth of teaching, or access for support and specialist staff and therapists.

Whatever the size of the group, they should be kept apart from other groups where possible and children and young people that are able should be encouraged to keep their distance within groups. Settings with the capability to do it should take steps to limit interaction, sharing of rooms and social spaces between groups as much as possible.

When using larger groups, the other measures from the system of controls become even more important to minimise transmission risks and to minimise the numbers of pupils and staff who need to self-isolate. We recognise that younger children and those with complex needs will not be able to maintain social distancing and it is acceptable for them not to distance within their group.

Both the approaches of separating groups and maintaining distance are not 'all or nothing' options and will still bring benefits even if implemented partially. Some settings may keep children and young people in their class groups for the majority of the classroom time, but also allow mixing into wider groups for specialist teaching, wraparound care and transport, or for boarding pupils in one group residentially and another during the school day. Siblings may also be in different groups. Endeavouring to keep these groups at least partially separate and minimising contacts between children and young people will still offer public health benefits as it reduces the network of possible direct transmission.

All teachers and other staff can operate across different classes and year groups in order to facilitate the delivery of the timetable and specialist provision but should minimise the number of interactions or changes wherever possible.

b. Measures within the classroom

Maintaining a distance between people whilst inside and reducing the amount of time they are in face to face to contact lowers the risk of transmission. We know that this is not always possible, particularly when working with children and young people with complex needs, or those who need close contact care. Educational and care support should be provided for these children and young people as normal, with other increased hygiene protocols in place (as set out above) to minimise risk of transmission.

Where possible, for example with older children with less complex needs who are able to self-regulate their behaviours without distress, children and young people should also be supported to maintain distance and not touch staff and their peers. This will not be possible for the youngest children, and some children and young people with complex needs, and it is not feasible in some settings where space does not allow. Settings doing this where they can, and even doing this some of the time will help.

When staff, children or young people cannot maintain distancing, the risk can also be reduced by keeping pupils and students in the smaller, class-sized groups described above.

Settings should make small adaptations to the classroom to support distancing where possible. That should include seating pupils side by side and facing forwards, rather than face to face or side on, and might include moving unnecessary furniture out of classrooms to make more space.

c. Measures elsewhere

Groups should be kept apart, meaning that settings should avoid large gatherings such as assemblies or collective worship with more than one group.

When timetabling, groups should be kept apart and movement around the setting kept to a minimum. While passing briefly in the corridor or playground is low risk, settings should avoid creating busy corridors, entrances and exits. Settings should also consider staggered break times and lunch times (and time for cleaning surfaces in the dining hall between groups).

Settings should also plan how shared staff spaces are set up and used to help staff to distance from each other.

Use of staff rooms should be minimised, although staff must still have a break of a reasonable length during the day.

d. Measures for arriving at and leaving the setting

We know that travel patterns differ greatly between settings. If those patterns allow, settings should consider staggered starts or adjusting start and finish times to keep groups apart as they arrive and leave. Staggered start and finish times should not reduce the amount of overall teaching time. A staggered start may, for example, include condensing or staggering free periods or break time but retaining the same amount of teaching time, or keeping the length of the day the same but starting and finishing later to avoid rush hour. Settings should consider how to communicate this to parents and remind them about the process that has been agreed for drop off and collection, including that gathering at the gates and otherwise coming onto the site without an appointment is not allowed.

Settings should also have a process for removing face coverings when pupils, students and staff who use them arrive at the setting and communicate it clearly to them. Pupils and students must be instructed not to touch the front of their face covering during use or when removing them. They must wash their hands immediately on arrival (as is the case for all pupils and students), dispose of temporary face coverings in a 'black bag' bin (not recycling bin) or place reusable face coverings in a plastic bag they can take home with them, and then wash their hands again before heading to their classroom. Guidance on safe working in education, childcare and children's social care provides more advice.

e. Other considerations

Some children and young people with SEND (whether with EHC plans or on SEN support) will need specific help and preparation for the changes to routine that these measures will involve, so staff should plan to meet these needs, for example using social stories.

Specialists, therapists, clinicians and other support staff for pupils with SEND should provide interventions as usual. Supply teachers, peripatetic teachers or other temporary staff can move between settings. They should ensure they minimise contact and maintain as much distance as possible from other staff. Such specialists will be aware of the PPE most appropriate for their role. Settings should consider how to manage other visitors to the site, such as contractors, catering staff and deliveries, as well as cleaning staff on site who may be working throughout the setting and across different groups. This will require close cooperation between settings and the other relevant employers. Settings should have discussions with key contractors about the setting's control measures and ways of working as part of planning for the autumn term. Settings should ensure site guidance on physical distancing and hygiene is explained to visitors on or before arrival. Where visits can happen outside of school or college hours, they should. A record should be kept of all visitors.

As normal, schools should engage with their local immunisation providers to provide immunisation programmes on site, ensuring these will be delivered in keeping with the school's control measures. These programmes are essential for children's health and wellbeing and can also provide benefits for staff. Where a child or young person routinely attends more than one setting on a part time basis, for example because they are dual registered at a mainstream school and a special setting, the settings should work through the system of controls collaboratively, enabling them to address any risks identified and allowing them to jointly deliver a broad and balanced curriculum for the child or young person. Pupils should be able to continue attending both settings. While some adjustment to arrangements may be required, pupils in this situation should not be isolated as a solution to the risk of greater contact.

Equipment and resources are integral to education. During the summer term, their use was minimised, many were moved out of classrooms, and there was significant extra cleaning. That position has now changed for the autumn term, because prevalence of coronavirus (COVID-19) has decreased and because they are so important for the delivery of education. For individual and very frequently used equipment, such as pencils and pens, it is recommended that staff and pupils have their own items that are not shared. Classroom based resources, such as books and games, can be used and shared within the bubble; these should be cleaned regularly, along with all frequently touched surfaces. Resources that are shared between classes or bubbles, such as sports, arts, and science equipment should be cleaned frequently and meticulously and always when moved between bubbles, or rotated to allow them to be left unused for a period of 48 hours (72 hours for plastics) between use by different bubbles.

Settings will need to make an assessment of the cleanability of equipment used in the delivery of therapies (for example, physiotherapy equipment, sensory equipment), to determine whether this equipment can withstand cleaning and disinfecting between each use (and how easy or practical it would be to do so) before it is put back into general use. Where cleaning or disinfecting is not possible or practical, resources will have to be restricted to one user, or be left unused for a period of 48 hours (72 hours for plastics) between use by different individuals.

Outdoor playground equipment should be more frequently cleaned. This would also apply to resources used inside and outside by wraparound care providers. It is still recommended that children and young people limit the amount of equipment they bring into the setting each day, to essentials such as lunch boxes, hats, coats, books, stationery and mobile phones. Bags are allowed. Pupils and teachers can take books and other shared resources home, although unnecessary sharing should be avoided, especially where this does not contribute to pupil education and development. Similar rules on hand cleaning, cleaning of the resources and rotation should apply to these resources.

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

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

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

When working with children and young people who cough, spit or vomit but do not have coronavirus (COVID-19) symptoms, only any PPE that would be routinely worn, should be worn.

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

Response to any infection

8. Engage with the NHS Test and Trace process

Settings must ensure they understand the NHS Test and Trace process. This means ensuring that staff members and parents and carers understand that they will need to be ready and willing to:

- book a test if they are displaying symptoms - staff and pupils must not come into the setting if they have symptoms, and must be sent home to self-isolate if they develop them when at the setting - all children and young people can be tested, including children under 5, but children aged 11 and under will need to be helped by their parents/carers if using a home testing kit
- provide details of anyone they have been in close contact with if they were to test positive for coronavirus (COVID-19) or if asked by NHS Test and Trace
- self-isolate if they have been in close contact with someone who develops coronavirus (COVID-19) symptoms or someone who tests positive for coronavirus (COVID-19)

Anyone who displays symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19) can and should get a test. Tests can be booked online through the NHS testing and tracing for coronavirus website, or ordered by telephone via NHS 119 for those without access to the internet.

The government will ensure that it is as easy as possible to get a test through a wide range of routes that are locally accessible, fast and convenient. We will release more details on new testing avenues as and when they become available and will work with settings so they understand what the quickest and easiest way is to get a test. At the start of the autumn term, settings have been provided with a small number of coronavirus (COVID-19) home testing kits that they can give directly to parents/carers collecting a child or young person who has developed symptoms at their setting, or staff who have developed symptoms at work, where they think providing one will significantly increase the likelihood of them getting tested. Advice is provided alongside these kits.

Settings should ask parents and staff to inform them immediately of the results of a test and follow this guidance.

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

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

9. Manage confirmed cases of coronavirus (COVID-19) amongst the school and college community

You must take swift action when you become aware that someone who has attended your setting has tested positive for coronavirus (COVID-19). You should contact the DfE Helpline on 0800 046 8687 and select option 1 for advice on the action to take in response to a positive case. You will be put through to a team of advisers who will inform you what action is needed based on the latest public health advice. If, following triage, further expert advice is required the adviser will escalate your call to the local health protection team. The health protection team will also contact settings directly if they become aware that someone who has tested positive for coronavirus (COVID-19) attended the setting - as identified by NHS Test and Trace.

The health protection team will carry out a rapid risk assessment to confirm who has been in close contact with the person during the period that they were infectious, and ensure they are asked to self-isolate.

The health protection team will work with settings in this situation to guide them through the actions they need to take. Based on the advice from the health protection team, settings must send home those people who have been in close contact with the person who has tested positive, advising them to self-isolate for 14 days since they were last in close contact with that person when they were infectious. Close contact means:

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

The health protection team will provide definitive advice on who must be sent home. To support them in doing so, we recommend settings keep a record of pupils and staff in each group, and any close contact that takes place between children, young people and staff in different groups (see section 6 of the system of controls for more on grouping pupils). This should be a proportionate recording process. Settings do not need to ask pupils to record everyone they have spent time with each day or ask staff to keep definitive records in a way that is overly burdensome.

A template letter will be provided to settings, on the advice of the health protection team, to send to parents and staff if needed. Settings must not share the names of people with coronavirus (COVID-19) unless essential to protect others.

Household members of those contacts who are sent home do not need to self-isolate themselves unless the child, young person or staff member who is self-isolating subsequently develops symptoms. If someone in a class or group that has been asked to self-isolate develops symptoms themselves within their 14-day isolation period they should follow guidance for households with possible or confirmed coronavirus (COVID-19) infection. They should get a test, and:

- if the test delivers a negative result, they must remain in isolation for the remainder of the 14-day isolation period - this is because they could still develop the coronavirus (COVID-19) within the remaining days
- if the test result is positive, they should inform their setting immediately, and must isolate for at least 10 days from the onset of their symptoms (which could mean the self-isolation ends before or after the original 14-day isolation period) - their household should self-isolate for at least 14 days from when the symptomatic person first had symptoms, following guidance for households with possible or confirmed coronavirus (COVID-19) infection

Settings should not request evidence of negative test results or other medical evidence before admitting children and young people or welcoming them back after a period of self-isolation.

In the vast majority of cases, settings and parents will be in agreement that a child should not attend the setting, given the potential risk to others. In the event that a parent or guardian insists on a child attending the setting, you can take the decision to refuse the child if in your reasonable judgement it is necessary to protect your pupils and staff from possible infection with coronavirus (COVID-19). Any decision would need to be carefully considered in light of all the circumstances and the current public health advice.

Further guidance is available on testing and tracing for coronavirus (COVID-19).

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

If settings have 2 or more confirmed cases within 14 days, or an overall rise in sickness absence where coronavirus (COVID-19) is suspected, they may have an outbreak, and must continue to work with their local health protection team who will be able to advise if additional action is required.

In some cases, health protection teams may recommend that a larger number of other pupils self-isolate at home as a precautionary measure – perhaps the whole site or year group. If settings are implementing controls from this list, addressing the risks they have identified and therefore reducing transmission risks, whole setting closure based on cases within the setting will not generally be necessary, and should not be considered except on the advice of health protection teams.

In consultation with the local Director of Public Health, where an outbreak in a setting is confirmed, a mobile testing unit may be dispatched to test others who may have been in contact with the person who has tested positive. Testing will first focus on the person's class, followed by their year group, then the whole setting if necessary, in line with routine published health outbreak control practice.

Supporting children and young people in special residential settings

We have produced guidance on isolation for residential education settings. This applies to residential special schools and colleges. It contains advice on how to manage self-isolation in these settings in the event of a confirmed or possible case.

In the case of any localised outbreaks, we expect them to keep the residential provision open if necessary. Decisions will be made on a case-by-case basis. They will need to remain open to those who:

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

Supporting children and young people receiving hospital education on hospital sites

It is our intention that all pupils in hospital schools will return to their setting full time from the beginning of the autumn term:

- if it is safe and feasible
- in line with hospital infection prevention and control (IPC) measures

They should work with your local NHS trusts to deliver a broad and balanced curriculum for all patients as far as their health permits. We expect local NHS trusts to continue to work collaboratively with headteachers to enable students to receive their education, including through access to classrooms and space in which to teach.

Mainstream schools should continue to support their pupils in hospital, including through remote learning support, to minimise the impact of their hospital stay on their education.

Alternative provision

It is our intention that all pupils in alternative provision (AP) settings (including pupil referral units, AP academies and AP free schools) will return to school full-time from the start of the autumn term. To support this return, AP settings must comply with health and safety law which requires employers to assess risks and put in place proportionate control measures. They should work through the system of controls outlined above, adopting measures that help them meet each control to the fullest extent possible, in a way that addresses the risk identified in their assessment, works for their setting, and allows them to deliver a broad and balanced curriculum for pupils.

When working through the system of controls, APs should take steps to minimise social contact and mixing as far as is practicable. All APs, especially larger AP schools, should consider whether pupils can be placed into smaller groups and still receive a broad and balanced curriculum. Due to the smaller size of many AP settings, and because APs are not typically organised by year groups, APs may wish to adopt whole school bubbles as part of their system of control and in order to best meet the needs of their students.

Section 2: school operations

If you are a specialist post-16 provider, you can also read the FE guidance for information relating to the following school operations.

Transport

Social distancing has significantly reduced available transport capacity. This guidance sets out a new framework for supporting transport to and from schools from the autumn term. Further information is set out in the transport to school and other places of education: autumn term 2020 guidance.

We are making a distinction between dedicated school transport and wider public transport:

- by dedicated school transport, we mean services that are used only to carry pupils to school - this includes statutory home to school transport, but may also include some existing or new commercial travel routes, where they carry school pupils only
- by public transport services, we mean routes which are also used by the general public

Settings should encourage staff, parents and pupils to walk or cycle to school if at all possible. The government has announced a £2 billion package to promote cycling and walking, including to support pop-up bicycle lanes and widened pavements. For some families, driving children to school will also be an option.

Where children and young people rely on public transport to get to school or college, and cannot walk or cycle, the coronavirus (COVID-19): safer travel guidance for passengers will apply.

Children and young people must not board home to school transport if they, or a member of their household, has symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19).

Dedicated school transport, including statutory provision

Local authorities remain under a statutory duty to provide free home to school transport for all eligible children and young people. Local authorities will need to work with special settings to ensure that children and young people can get to their setting. If a child or young person needs transport to get to the setting named in his or her EHC plan, the local authority will normally have to pay for it.[1]

Although the provision of transport for pupils SEND is not a statutory duty, it may be part of a school's duty to make reasonable adjustments to ensure that disabled children are not substantially disadvantaged in accessing education compared with those who are not disabled. Schools should consider whether they have been doing so previously.

Schools and colleges will be concerned about school services do not mix with the general public on those journeys and need to be constituent. From the outset, they should consider how they will manage the risk of infection and how they will provide guidance for pupils and their families on how they can minimise transmission risk. However, distancing should also be put in place within vehicles wherever practicable. Schools and colleges should consider how they will manage the transport of their own pupils in accordance with the guidance provided by their local authority and staff participating at the event where they are leaving school and keeping local authorities informed of any issues that arise, including any impact on their home to school transport.

The approach to dedicated transport should align wherever possible with the approach being taken to the wider school or college. It may be that the school or college will want to stagger the start and finish times of pupils. It is important, wherever it is possible, that:

- vehicles should be maintained within vehicles
- children either with their bubble or in school transport, or with the same people as their household, should sit together
- children should be encouraged to wear face coverings if they are able to and are capable of doing so
- hand sanitisers and facilities to pull in place
- organised queuing and distancing at the collection and drop-off points
- ventilation of fresh air (from outside the vehicle) is maximised, particularly through opening windows and doors

Dedicated school services can take different forms and the precise approach will need to be considered in light of the local circumstances and the local circumstances. It could include, for example, dedicated school services, taxis, authorised minibus, and allowances. In particular, it is imperative that consideration is given to the provision of transport for those children who are most vulnerable, including those who are in the local authority's care, children with social transport problems to ensure appropriate arrangements are in place for their journeys to and from the provision.

Local authorities, working with education settings and transport operators, should ensure that, where possible, children who are entitled to a SEND/EHC plan and those who are vulnerable should be able to travel to their school or college in a way that addresses the identified risk, works in the local circumstances, and allows them to attend their school or college. Local authorities and their transport providers should take account of the needs of children who are vulnerable and those with SEND, when relevant, be informed by the views provided by the parents or carrying for children.

The transport guidance for schools acknowledges that implementing bubbles may be more challenging for those who are using dedicated school services. It may need to state increasing the number of vehicles, including, for example, minibuses, to transport, likewise, are times that reduce capacity and the complexity of some journeys. Local authorities and their transport providers should work with schools to which school services are provided, to ensure that, where it is possible, the measures in the system of contracts because seem more important.

In order to implement the measures in the system of contracts, local authorities and their transport providers may need to make use of exceptions and allowances to keep their child to their school or educational institution. This is particularly important for those who are most vulnerable, including those who are in local authority care and those who are in receipt of a social care assessment or plan or mirage allowances for a specified period of time, particularly in the case of those who are in receipt of a social care assessment or plan. Local authorities should take account of the needs of children who are vulnerable and those who are not home to school arrangements back in place for the child or young person mirage assessed.

Face coverings and PE and dedicated school transport

In accordance with the guidance, from the autumn term, the use of face coverings will be required on school services for those children who are able to wear a face covering when travelling on dedicated transport. This does not apply to children who are exempt from wearing a face covering, for example, those who have a medical condition or disability that means they cannot wear one, or for the purposes of PE, as the fact that it will not always be possible to apply the same social distancing measures as pupils in other settings.

A face covering is a covering of any type which covers the nose and mouth. It is not a mask, such as a medical or a surgical mask, which should be left for use in a clinical setting.

Face coverings should not be worn by those who may not be able to handle them as they could be dangerous, or who may have difficulty in using an educational tweak or disabilities) as it may inadvertently increase the risk of spread. Face coverings should be worn by those who are able to do so, such as by pupils in secondary schools, in other educational settings, where it is difficult to maintain social distancing.

Secondary schools and colleges will need to understand how to handle their face covering arrangements, including exemptions and allowances. Pupils who are identified.

Transport operators should conduct a risk assessment for all their operations including dedicated school transport services. This will determine the most appropriate measures to be put in place to manage the risk of transmission of the face coverings. The guidance for transport operators provides further advice on FCM.

Fluid resistant surgical masks, gloves, aprons and eye protection used by healthcare and other professionals in line with infection control guidance should continue to be worn as they have been prior to the outbreak of lower stars. Drivers and passenger assistants will not normally require PPE on home to school services, but may need to use it if they are in close contact with a child or children and provision of care, for example, in the event of a child having a tantrum interventions that a child or young person extremely receives to name or disability. Drivers and passenger assistants will need to be aware of the additional information in place.

- How should carers for children who requests such or require physical contact? Guidance on the carers' duty to provide care to children who are disabled and certain medical needs, such as tracheostomies (this includes aerosol generating procedures).

Attendance

Attendance expectations

Every September it is vital for all children and young people to return to their education setting. This is to minimise the long-term impact of the outbreak on children and young people's life chances.

Missing out on more time in the classroom risks pupils or students falling further behind their peers and increasing the attainment gap between disadvantaged the autumn term. To ensure this happens, the Department for Education is:

- parents' duty to ensure that their child attends the education setting where they are registered (subject to exemptions and the requirement for a child to be registered pupil at school and they are of compulsory school age)
- a robust, consistent and fair approach to enforcing school attendance

Sanctions, including fixed penalty notices, in line with local authorities' codes of practice on attendance.

Attendance

Pupils who are shielding or self-isolating, or who are clinically vulnerable or clinically extremely vulnerable

Now that we know more about coronavirus (COVID-19), fewer children and young people are being shielded or are clinically extremely vulnerable to coronavirus (COVID-19) and are advised to follow the same guidance as everyone else in their local area.

- a small number of pupils and students will still be unable to attend because they are shielding or are clinically extremely vulnerable and cannot attend safely because of coronavirus (COVID-19)
- a small number of pupils and students will be children paused on August 1, subject to continued advice from the chief medical officer and government advisers on coronavirus (COVID-19)
- the vast majority will be in a local area, children and young people or family members that live with someone who is clinically extremely vulnerable should be the period where video remain high and, therefore, they may be temporary unable to attend school
- some pupils and students who are clinically extremely vulnerable or who generally remain under care plan of a specialist health professional may need to be home educated for a period of time, in consultation with their specialist medical professional and their local authority. See the Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health

Specialists in paediatric medicine have reviewed the latest evidence on the level of risk posed to children and young people from coronavirus (COVID-19) and have concluded that, for the vast majority of children and young people, the risk of being severely ill with coronavirus (COVID-19) is very low and children and young people will be included in the shielded pool.

Patients can also be removed from the shielded pool (or not be listed for an initial period) if their specialist medical professional judges that their clinical circumstances where appropriate. If a child or young person is removed from the shielded pool, their school or college should be informed. Children who are shielding or coronavirus (COVID-19) clinically extremely vulnerable who are not in the shielded pool have previously advised that they were a clinically extremely vulnerable or shielding adult in their household. Children who are shielding or clinically extremely vulnerable are expected, in the vast majority of circumstances, to attend school or college, as long as they are where the implementation of social restrictions is ongoing, as set out in the guidance. Children who are shielding or clinically extremely vulnerable should be encouraged to attend school or college as normal. Where necessary, parents and carers of clinically vulnerable children should discuss this with their health professional.

Pupils or students are unable to attend their setting because they are self-isolating, or because they are shielding or are clinically extremely vulnerable, should follow the remote education provision. Settings should monitor their engagement with this. In these cases, their absence will not be recorded.

Actions for all settings and local authorities

Settings and local authorities should work with families to rise regular school attendance from the start of term as this will be essential to help pupils and students who have been disadvantaged by the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak to catch up and make progress.

We are asking settings and local authorities to:

1. Communicate clear and consistent messages about attendance to families (and any other professionals who work with the family where appropriate).
2. Identify pupils and students who are vulnerable or anxious about returning or who have been disadvantaged by the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak and ensure that appropriate support is put in place. Children who are shielding or clinically extremely vulnerable and those who are anxious about being in school or college should be encouraged and supported to attend. Pupils who were persistently absent before the outbreak and those who have not engaged with remote education should be a priority.
3. Use the attendance data and information to inform a targeted approach to attendance staff and resources and pupil premium funding to support the most vulnerable pupils and students who are not attending school or college as usual.
4. Work closely with other professionals, such as social workers, to ensure appropriate support is put in place for children who are vulnerable to the child's social worker if they have one, or other professionals.

There is a special school attendance code of practice that sets out how to record attendance and absence including in circumstances due to coronavirus (COVID-19) or other infectious diseases.

Workforce of settings

We have worked closely with the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) and PHE to develop guidance for the workforce in settings. The PHE and DHSC endorsed system of controls outlined in this document sets out how to manage the risk of coronavirus (COVID-19) transmission in the workplace by a factor of risk assessment.

Where settings implement the system of controls outlined in this document, in conjunction with the guidance for schools, PHE and DHSC believe that it will be sufficient to manage the risk of coronavirus (COVID-19) transmission to staff, pupils, people and staff where the risk of transmission of infection is substantially reduced.

As a result, on current evidence, PHE and DHSC advise that schools are not required to undertake a formal risk assessment in relation to coronavirus (COVID-19) transmission. Schools and colleges may choose to undertake a formal risk assessment if they wish, but this is not required. Schools and colleges should take into account the risk to those who are shielding or clinically extremely vulnerable, and those who are clinically vulnerable and are advised to follow the same guidance as everyone else in their local area. Schools and colleges should consider how they will manage the transport of their own pupils in accordance with the guidance provided by their local authority and staff participating at the event where they are leaving school and keeping local authorities and their transport providers informed of any issues that arise, including any impact on their home to school transport and other school staff to return to their school or college. Schools and colleges should also consider how they will manage the risk of transmission of infection in school or college and put appropriate and agreed measures in place.

All staffing in schools, the system of controls, the application of controls sections of the guidance for schools, the transport guidance and the guidance for parents should observe good hand and respiratory hygiene and maintaining social distancing in line with the principles set out in the wider school or college guidance.

Schools and colleges should also consider how they will manage the risk of transmission of infection in school or college and put appropriate measures in place. The measures in the system of controls are complex and there is ongoing work underway to provide further guidance and support to schools and colleges.

People who live with those who have compulsorily increased risk from coronavirus (COVID-19) and other the workplace.

Employer health and safety and equalities duties

Employers have a duty under health and safety legislation to protect their staff from harm. They should continue to assess health and safety risks and consider how to manage those risks in the workplace. Employers should also take into account their duties under the Equality Act 2010 and have regard to health and safety risks to staff from disabled, pregnant and others from harm.

Employers should follow the Government's guidance on working safely during coronavirus (COVID-19) and the HSE's workplace coronavirus (COVID-19) guidance for food others. It is clear that treating any casualty properly should be the first priority of any employer. Employers should also be aware of the potential for increased risk of injury or ill-health arising from disruption to normal working patterns in certain measures immediately afterwards including washing hands.

Supporting staff wellbeing

Employers should have regard to staff (including the headteacher) and the wellbeing of their staff. Employers should consider how they will manage the measures that may be proposing putting in place as part of their staff and staff that process.

Settings may need to change the way in which they deploy and use existing staff more flexibly to welcome back all pupils at the start of the autumn term. Staff may need to be deployed to teach or to support pupils in different ways.

We recognise that special settings will need to develop plans for the deployment of staff to return to the school.

Education and care for many children and young people with EHC plans often involves a range of different professionals. Special schools and other special settings provide therapeutic and other services to children and young people who may not be grouped together under the system of controls. Special schools and other special settings will need to develop plans for their settings. these interventions and services for children and young people to access and benefit from education.

Staff who deliver these interventions need to be particularly rigorous about hygiene and social distancing. Staff who are in close contact with children who are unexpectedly ill should be provided with appropriate PPE. Staff who are clinically extremely vulnerable or who are clinically vulnerable, for example, because they are pregnant or have a long term health condition, should be supported to work from home, for example in cases where only one member of staff is needed in a particular lesson or session. Staff who are clinically extremely vulnerable or who are clinically vulnerable should not be required to work in a school or college if they cannot work without the training into that role.

Settings and local authorities will need to bear discussions about these circumstances, for example, whether they could supply staff remotely or whether they need to make use of the furlough scheme. Settings and local authorities should work together to ensure that children are not disadvantaged.

It is important that planning builds on the need to avoid increases in workload and unnecessary bureaucracy. Ofsted will not be inspecting or otherwise evaluating schools and colleges in the autumn term. See the workload reduction toolkit.

Staff may be required to undertake staff mentoring, including to support remote education, and new settings staff workload. this includes cover duties on managing wellbeing.

Planning personal all the immediate options available; settings will have to decide about their staffing capacity they should talk to their local authority or trust.

Deploying support staff and accommodating visiting specialists

Settings should minimise the number of visitors where possible, however, specialist services will need to be able to deploy their staff to provide support to support staff to provide SEND provision and other specialist services to usual, including revising between settings as required. Such specialists will be aware of the system of controls in place in schools.

Transport staff are deployed to support the system of controls, for example:

- support catch-up provision or target interventions
- lead groups or classes with a teacher, for example, supervision of a quarter, or nationwide: teacher (under the Education (Specified Work) (England) Regulations 2012 (as amended) and support staff, for example, classes or groups, or supervision and support staff for example, provision the funding agreement for academies)

Settings leaders should be satisfied that the person has the appropriate skills and experience to carry out the work. Managers should discuss and agree a plan for deployment of the responsibility with the member of staff. This should include:

- safe ratios are met
- specific training is undertaken if needed
- any those with appropriate checks are allowed to engage in regulated activity with children, in accordance with the Safeguarding Children Guidance

The Education Employment Foundation 2021 has published guidance for settings ready for the start of the Spring term.

Recruitment

Recruitment should continue as usual. The government's teaching vacancies service can help schools and academies to find and recruit the best teaching staff quickly. The field national service for searching and filling teaching vacancies, including for supply teachers, supported by Teaching Recruitment for London.

We recommend that settings recruit internally over the summer period, and this may prove especially helpful in the current circumstances. The DfE teaching blog has information on the experience of middle leaders, including how to make the most of the opportunity to develop staff and current issues.

When recruiting, settings must continue to adhere to the legal requirements and guidance on safeguarding. Safer recruitment practice is vital. Schools and academies keeping children safe in education and the Department's DfE providers have worked flexibly to ensure this year's NQTs are ready and supported to take up their first roles in schools. The Teaching Schools Council has set up a dedicated NQT hub to provide information and resources to support them as they start their teaching career. Settings in the early school year should be aware that NQTs will be in their first term of teaching and may be able to benefit from the support and guidance available to them. Over 90% of NQTs from the autumn. In addition, around 3,000 NQTs will be offered a place on the Teach Primary or Teach Secondary programmes.

Supply teachers and other temporary or peripatetic teachers

Settings will continue to use supply staff during this period. We recommend that they consider using the Crown Commercial Service's agency supply pan-government agreement. This agreement ensures that the supply staff they hire are vetted to the required standard. The Crown Commercial Service on how to use the agency supply deal by emailing supplyteachers@crowncommercial.gov.uk or calling 0345 410 2235 and current issues.

Supply staff and other temporary workers can move between settings but should be accompanied by a risk assessment. The risk assessment should be based on the specific circumstances of the individual and the settings arrangements for managing risk. To minimise the numbers of temporary staff attending your setting, consider how you can make use of your own staff, for example, by using governors and parents who are willing to cover lessons.

This advice for supply teachers also applies to other temporary staff working in schools such as peripatetic music teachers, sports coaches, therapists, and such sports coaches, and those engaged to deliver before and after school clubs.

Expectation and deployment of initial teacher trainees

We strongly encourage settings to consider hosting ITT trainees. Demand for teacher training is high this year and while it is understandable that settings may be concerned about the impact on their staff, there are many benefits and opportunities. ITT trainees have demonstrated that they are well equipped to be supporting schools. Settings should consider how they could host ITT trainees, including those who are currently in other schools. Many ITT providers are innovating to help schools and trainees to make this work, and the Department discussions will need to take into account the skills and capacity of their workforce.

With the usual restrictions on:

- take responsibility for small groups of pupils, adapting resources, creating online learning and monitoring pupil progress
- engage in wider professional activity, such as addressing vulnerability, attendance and pastoral support
- develop and engage in professional dialogue, such as lesson study, evidence, commissioned and team working
- take on more responsibility, such as lessons with their mentors or other trainees

This is not intended to be exhaustive and ITT partnerships will need to ensure that trainees are supported to meet the Teachers' Standards. Further guidance including the Education Coronavirus Best Educational Resources (ECBER) and

Performance management and appraisals

Maintained schools must continue to adhere to the School Teachers' Pay and Conditions Document (STPCD), which includes the requirement to ensure that all pay progression for teachers is linked to performance management. We would expect schools to use their discretion and take pragmatic steps to adapt performance management and appraisal arrangements to take account of the current circumstances. Schools must ensure that teachers are not penalised during the appraisal process or in respect of any subsequent pay progression decisions as a result of the decision to restrict pupil attendance at schools and where this has impacted on the ability of the teacher to meet fully their objectives.

Appraisals and performance management for support staff should be carried out in accordance with the employee's contract of employment. DfE does not specify pay or terms and conditions of employment for support staff.

Staff taking leave

We recognise that staff have been working extremely hard throughout the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak and worked hard to prepare for all pupils to return from the start of the autumn term. Many staff members will have taken a holiday over the summer period, this may have involved travelling abroad and could result in disruptions to return travel arrangements. The government has set a requirement for people returning from some countries to quarantine for 14 days. See the latest guidance on quarantine.

Staff will need to be available to work in their settings from the start of the autumn term. There is currently the risk that, if staff travel abroad later in the academic year, their return travel arrangements could be disrupted due to coronavirus (COVID-19) such as the potential for reinstatement of lockdown measures in the place they are visiting. If a member of staff has to quarantine during term time, school leaders should consider whether they could temporarily amend working arrangements to enable them to work from home.

Other adults

Volunteers may be used to support the work of the setting, as would usually be the case. It is important that they are properly supported and given appropriate roles. Where settings are using volunteers, they should continue to follow the checking and risk assessment process as set out in the volunteer section in part 3 of keeping children safe in education. Under no circumstances should a volunteer who has not been checked be left unsupervised or allowed to work in regulated activity. Mixing of volunteers across groups should be kept to a minimum, and they should remain 2 metres from pupils and staff where possible.

Safeguarding

Settings should consider revising their child protection policy, led by their designated safeguarding lead, to reflect the return of more pupils. They must refer to the statutory safeguarding guidance, keeping children safe in education.

Designated safeguarding leads and deputies should have sufficient time, especially in the first few weeks of term to:

- provide additional support to staff, children and young people regarding any new safeguarding and welfare concerns
- handle referrals to children's social care and other agencies, if appropriate

Agencies and services should prepare to work together to actively look for signs of harms.

Communication with school nurses is important for safeguarding and supporting wellbeing, as they have continued virtual support to pupils who have not been in their setting.

Health and safety

Emergency treatment, for example, provision of first aid, should be prioritised and given promptly in the event of an emergency. This means that people do not have to stay 2 metres apart if emergency assistance is required. People involved in the provision of assistance of others should pay particular attention to hygiene measures immediately afterwards, including washing hands.

The guidance on safe working in education, childcare and children's social care settings explains the strategy for infection prevention and control, including the specific circumstances in which PPE should be used, to enable safe working during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. It applies to staff working in education, childcare and children's social care settings in England as well as the children and young people who attend these settings and their parents or carers.

It includes guidance on:

- how to work safely in specific situations, including where PPE may be required
- what care should be taken in residential settings
- specific steps needed to care for children and young people with complex medical needs, including aerosol generating procedures (AGPs)
- caring for children and young people who regularly spit or require physical contact
- disposal of PPE and face coverings

Catering

We expect kitchens to be fully open from the start of the autumn term. Normal legal requirements apply about the provision of food to all pupils who want it, including for those eligible for benefits-related free school meals or universal infant free school meals.

We expect catering providers to support pupils eligible for benefits-related free school meals who have to be at home for reasons relating to coronavirus (COVID-19) by providing food parcels. The guidance on providing school meals during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak explains what schools should do when providing school meals from September 2020.

Kitchens must comply with the guidance for food businesses on coronavirus (COVID-19).

Estates

Settings should look to maximise the use of their site and any associated available space, such as rooms in an associated place of worship for schools with a religious character, if feasible. We do not consider it necessary for settings to make significant adaptations to their site to enable them to welcome all children and young people back. We also do not think they will need to deliver any of their education on other sites because class sizes can return to normal and spaces used by more than one class or group can be cleaned between use. Following a risk assessment, some settings may decide to make small adaptations to their site, such as additional wash basins. This will be at the discretion of individual settings, based on their particular circumstances.

It is important that, before full opening for the autumn term, all the usual pre-term building checks are undertaken to make the school safe. If buildings have been closed or had reduced occupancy during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, water system stagnation can occur, increasing the risks of Legionnaires' disease. Advice on this can be found in the guidance on legionella risks during the coronavirus outbreak.

Additional advice on safely reoccupying buildings can be found in the Chartered Institute of Building Services Engineers' guidance on emerging from lockdown.

Once the setting is in operation, it is important to ensure good ventilation and maximising this wherever possible, for example, opening windows and propping open doors, as long as they are not fire doors, where safe to do so (bearing in mind safeguarding in particular). Advice on this can be found in Health and Safety Executive guidance on air conditioning and ventilation during the coronavirus outbreak.

Educational visits

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

In the autumn term, settings can resume non-overnight domestic educational visits. These should include any trips or placements connected with a pupil or student's preparation for adulthood, for example, workplace visits. This should be done in line with protective measures, such as keeping children and young people within their consistent group, and the coronavirus (COVID-19) secure measures in place at the destination.

Settings should make use of outdoor spaces in the local area to support the delivery of the curriculum. As normal, they should undertake full risk assessments in relation to all educational visits to ensure they can be done safely and as part of this risk assessment, they need to consider any necessary control measures. They should read the health and safety on educational visits guidance when considering visits.

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

Wraparound provision and extra-curricular activity

Settings should work to resume any breakfast and after-school provision, where possible, from the start of the autumn term. They should work closely with any external wraparound providers which their children and young people may use, to ensure that as far as possible they can be kept in a group with others from the same bubble they are in during the school day.

If it is not possible or practical to maintain the same bubbles being used during the school day (for example, if the number of bubbles in place during the school day prove impractical to adopt within the wraparound provision), then settings should maintain small, consistent groups. We recognise that they may need to respond flexibly and build this up over time. This provision will help to:

- ensure that pupils have opportunities to re-engage with their peers and with the setting
- ensure that vulnerable children and young people have a healthy breakfast and are ready to focus on their lessons
- provide enrichment activities
- support working parents

Settings can consult the guidance produced for providers who run community activities, holiday clubs, after-school clubs, tuition and other out-of-school provision for children when planning extra-curricular provision. This includes advising parents to limit the number of different wraparound providers they use as much as possible. Where parents use childcare providers or out of setting extra-curricular activities for their children, settings should encourage them to assure themselves that the providers are carefully considering their own protective measures, and only use those providers that can demonstrate this. DfE has also issued guidance for parents and carers, which they may want to circulate.

Where settings are satisfied that it would be safe to do so, they may choose to open up or hire out their premises for use by external bodies or organisations, such as external coaches or after-school / holiday clubs or activities. In doing so, they should ensure that they are considering carefully how such arrangements can operate within their wider protective measures and should have regard to any other relevant government guidance. For example, where opening up school leisure facilities for external use, ensuring that they do so in line with government guidance on working safely during coronavirus (COVID-19).

Section 3: curriculum, behaviour and pastoral support

Curriculum expectations

This section sets out the principles and expectations for curriculum planning to ensure that all pupils are given the catch-up support they need to make substantial progress by the end of the academic year. The key principles that underpin our advice on curriculum planning are:

- education is not optional - all pupils receive a high-quality education that promotes their development
- the curriculum remains broad and ambitious
- remote education, where needed, is high quality and aligns as closely as possible with in-school provision

Informed by these principles, DfE asks that special schools and other specialist settings meet the following key expectations if considering revisions to their school curriculum for the academic year 2020 to 2021.

Teach an ambitious and broad curriculum in all subjects from the start of the autumn term, but make use of existing flexibilities to create time to cover the most important missed content

Up to and including key stage 3, prioritising the most important components for pupils' progress within subjects is likely to be more effective than removing subjects that pupils may struggle to pick up again later. In particular, settings should consider how all subjects can contribute to filling gaps in core knowledge, for example through an emphasis on reading.

Aim to return to the normal curriculum in all subjects by summer term 2021

Substantial modification of the curriculum may be needed at the start of the year to address gaps in pupils' knowledge so teaching time should be prioritised to these. The aim should be to return to the normal curriculum content by no later than the summer term 2021.

Plan on the basis of the educational needs of pupils

Curriculum planning should be informed by an assessment of pupils' starting points and addressing the gaps in their knowledge. Avoid introducing unnecessary tracking systems and instead make effective use of regular formative assessment, such as quizzes, observing pupils in class, talking to pupils to assess understanding and scrutiny of pupils' work.

Integrate remote education into school curriculum planning

Remote education may be an essential component in the delivery of the school curriculum for some pupils alongside classroom teaching, or in the case of a local restrictions.

All settings are therefore expected to plan to ensure any pupils educated at home for some of the time are given the support they need to master the curriculum and so make good progress.

They may consider it appropriate to suspend some subjects for some pupils in exceptional circumstances. They should be able to show that this is in the best the interests of these pupils and this should be subject to discussion with parents during the autumn term. There should also be a coherent plan for returning to their normal curriculum for all pupils by the summer term 2021.

Relationships and health education (RHE) for primary aged pupils and relationships, sex and health education (RSHE) for secondary aged pupils become compulsory from September 2020. Settings are expected to start teaching them by at least the start of the summer term 2021.

Specific points for early years foundation stage to key stage 3

For children in nursery settings, teachers should focus on the prime areas of learning, including:

- communication and language
- personal, social and emotional development
- physical development

For pupils in reception, teachers should also address gaps in language, early reading, mathematics, phonics knowledge and vocabulary. Staff should follow updates to the early years foundation stage (EYFS) disapplication guidance.

For pupils in key stages 1 and 2, staff should prioritise identifying gaps and re-establishing good progress in the essentials (phonics and reading, increasing vocabulary, writing and mathematics), identifying opportunities across the curriculum so children read widely and develop their knowledge and vocabulary. The curriculum should remain broad so that most pupils are taught a full range of subjects over the year, including sciences, humanities, the arts, physical education, religious education and relationships and health education.

For pupils in key stage 3, the curriculum should also remain broad from year 7 to year 9 so that most pupils are taught a full range of subjects over the year, including sciences, languages, humanities, the arts, physical education, religious education and relationship, health and sex education.

Specific points for key stages 4 and 5

As with earlier key stages, it is likely that pupils in key stage 4 and 5 will need extra support to catch up on any content they have missed, but the school curriculum is less flexible because of the qualification specifications.

To ensure exams and assessments next summer are as fair as possible, and to take into account any public health requirements and the wellbeing of students, Ofqual has consulted on proposed adaptations to exams. Their decision is available at proposed changes to the assessment of GCSEs, AS and A levels in 2021.

We expect most pupils in years 10 and 11 to continue to study their examination subjects. In exceptional circumstances, it may be in the best interest of a year 11 pupil to discontinue an examined subject. Settings may decide that they would achieve better results in their remaining subjects, especially in English and mathematics.

School leaders should make these decisions in discussion with pupils and parents and informed by ongoing assessment of a pupil's progress and wellbeing, using the existing discretion that they already apply on these matters

Key stage 5 has less scope than key stage 4 to drop an examined subject because students take fewer qualifications. Discontinuing a subject is likely to limit choices for further study and employment, so we expect this to be rare.

Physical activity in schools

Settings have the flexibility to decide how to provide physical education while following the measures using their system of controls.

Sports whose national governing bodies have developed guidance under the principles of the government's guidance on team sport and been approved by the government are permitted. Schools must only provide team sports on the list available at return to recreational team sport framework.

Pupils and students should be kept in consistent groups, sports equipment thoroughly cleaned between each use by different individual groups.

Outdoor sports should be prioritised where possible, and large indoor spaces used where it is not, maximising natural ventilation flows (through opening windows and doors or using air conditioning systems wherever possible) distancing between pupils and paying scrupulous attention to cleaning and hygiene. This is particularly important in a sports setting because of the way in which people breathe during exercise. External facilities can also be used in line with government guidance for the use of, and travel to and from, those facilities.

Settings should refer to the following advice:

- guidance on the phased return of sport and recreation and guidance from Sport England for grassroot sport
- advice from organisations such as the Association for Physical Education and the Youth Sport Trust
- guidance from Swim England on school swimming and water safety lessons available at returning to pools guidance documents

Settings can work with external coaches, clubs and organisations for curricular and extra-curricular activities if they are satisfied that this is safe to do so within their wider protective measures. Where appropriate for children and young people they can support them to be physically active while maintaining physical distancing with activities such as active miles, making break times and lessons active and encouraging active travel.

Music, dance and drama

Music, dance and drama build confidence, help children and young people live happier, more enriched lives, and discover the joy of expressing themselves. There may, however, be an additional risk of infection in environments where singing, chanting, playing wind or brass instruments, dance and drama takes place.

Singing, wind and brass instrument playing can be undertaken in line with this and other guidance, in particular guidance provided by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) for professionals and non-professionals in the performing arts. It is the cumulative aerosol transmission from both those performing in and attending events is likely to create risk. DCMS is continuing to develop more detailed understanding of how to mitigate this potential aggregate risk, but in that context, organisations should follow the guidance set out below.

Minimising mixing groups and volume control

Settings must do everything possible to minimise contacts and mixing. The overarching objective should be to reduce the number of contacts between pupils/students and staff. This can be achieved through keeping groups separate (in bubbles) and through maintaining a social distance between individuals where possible. These are not alternative options. Both measures will help, but the balance between them will change depending on the age and needs of pupils, the layout of the building, and the feasibility of keeping groups separate from each other while offering a broad curriculum. If staff need to move between classes and year groups, they should try and keep their distance from pupils and other staff as much as they can, ideally 2 metres from other adults.

Additionally, they should aim to keep any background or accompanying music to levels which do not encourage teachers or other performers to raise their voices unduly. If possible, using microphones to reduce the need for shouting or prolonged periods of loud speaking or singing. If possible, do not share microphones. If they are shared, it should follow the guidance below on handling equipment.

Performances

If planning an indoor or outdoor face-to-face performance in front of a live audience, settings should follow the latest advice in the DCMS performing arts guidance, implementing events in the lowest risk order as described. If planning an outdoor performance they should also give particular consideration to the guidance on delivering outdoor events.

Peripatetic teachers

Settings can continue to engage peripatetic teachers during this period, including staff from Music Education Hubs.

Peripatetic teachers can move between settings, for instance, but they should consider how to minimise the number of visitors where possible. Staff will be expected to comply with arrangements for managing and minimising risk, including taking particular care to maintain distance from other staff and pupils where possible. To minimise the numbers of temporary staff entering the premises, and secure best value, consider using longer assignments with peripatetic teachers and agree a minimum number of hours across the academic year.

If a teacher is operating on a peripatetic basis, and operating across multiple groups or individuals, it is important that they do not attend a lesson if they are unwell or are having any symptoms associated with coronavirus (COVID-19) such as fever, a new and sustained cough, loss of sense of taste or smell. In addition, they should:

- maintain distancing requirements with each group they teach, where appropriate
- avoid situations where distancing requirements are broken where possible, for example, demonstrating partnering work in dancing
- make efforts to reduce the number of groups taught and locations worked in, to reduce the number of contacts made

Further information on the Music Education Hubs, including contact details for local hubs, can be found at the Arts Council England Music Education Hub page.

Music teaching in special schools and other specialist settings, including singing, and playing wind and brass instruments in groups

When planning music provision for the next academic year, settings should consider additional specific safety measures. Although singing and playing wind and brass instruments do not currently appear to represent a significantly higher risk than routine speaking and breathing at the same volume, there is now some evidence that additional risk can build from aerosol transmission with volume and with the combined numbers of individuals within a confined space. This is particularly evident for singing and shouting, but with appropriate safety mitigation and consideration, singing, wind and brass teaching can still take place.

Measures to take include:

- playing instruments and singing in groups should take place outdoors wherever possible - if indoors, consider limiting the numbers in relation to the space
- if indoors, use a room with as much space as possible, for example, larger rooms; rooms with high ceilings are expected to enable dilution of aerosol transmission
- if playing indoors, limiting the numbers to account for ventilation of the space and the ability to social distance. It is important to ensure good ventilation. Advice on this can be found in Health and Safety Executive guidance on air conditioning and ventilation during the coronavirus outbreak
- singing, wind and brass playing should not take place in larger groups such as choirs and ensembles, or assemblies unless significant space, natural airflow (at least 10l/s/person for all present, including audiences) and strict social distancing and mitigation as described below can be maintained.
- in the smaller groups where these activities can take place, settings should observe extended social distancing between each singer/player, and between singers/players and any other people such as conductors, other musicians, or accompanists - current guidance is that if the activity is face-to-face and without mitigating actions, 2 metres is appropriate
- pupils should be positioned back-to-back or side-to-side when playing or singing (rather than face-to-face) whenever possible
- position wind and brass players so that the air from their instrument does not blow into another player
- use microphones where possible or encourage singing quietly

By considering and adopting these additional risk mitigation measures, the overall risk will be reduced.

Handling equipment and instruments

Measures to take when handling equipment, including instruments, include:

- requiring increased handwashing before and after handling equipment, especially if being used by more than one person
- avoiding sharing instruments and equipment wherever possible - place name labels on equipment to help identify the designated user, for example, percussionists' own sticks and mallets
- if instruments and equipment have to be shared, disinfect regularly (including any packing cases, handles, props, chairs, microphones and music stands) and always between users, following government guidance on cleaning and handling equipment - instruments should be cleaned by the pupils playing them, where possible
- limit the handling of music scores, parts and scripts to the individual using them
- consider limiting the number of suppliers when hiring instruments and equipment. Settings should agree whose responsibility cleaning hired instruments is with the suppliers. Cleaning hire equipment, tools or other equipment on arrival and before first use. Store equipment and instruments in a clean location if you take delivery of them before they are needed. Clean them before first use and before returning the instrument
- create picking-up and dropping-off collection points where possible, rather than passing equipment such as props, scripts, scores and microphones hand-to-hand

Individual lessons and performance in groups

Individual lessons in music, dance and drama can resume in settings and organisations providing out of school childcare. This may mean teachers interacting with pupils from multiple groups, so they will need to take particular care, in line with the measures set out above on peripatetic teachers.

Specific safety measures for individual music lessons should include:

- extend social distancing between pupil and teacher (current guidance is that if the activity is face-to-face and without mitigations, 2 metres is appropriate), accounting for ventilation of the space being used. Pupil and teacher should be positioned side by side if possible
- avoid sharing instruments and equipment wherever possible and place name labels on equipment to help identify the designated user, for example, percussionists' own sticks and mallets
- if instruments and equipment have to be shared, regularly disinfect them (including any packing cases, handles, props, chairs, microphones and music stands) and always between users, following government guidance on cleaning and handling equipment - instruments should be cleaned by the individuals playing them, where possible
- limit the handling of music scores, parts and scripts to the person using them
- if there is no viable alternative, music lessons in private homes can resume, following the same guidelines, and additionally following the government guidance for working in homes, and the guidance for out-of-school provision

During individual lessons for music, dance and drama, social distancing should be maintained wherever possible.

Catch-up support

We have announced a package worth £1 billion for schools to have the resources they need to help all pupils make up for lost teaching time, with extra support for those who need it most.

£650 million of universal catch-up premium will be allocated to schools to

support all children and young people to catch up, with additional weighting for specialist settings, recognising the higher costs they face. It will be available for all state-funded mainstream and special schools, and alternative provision including maintained hospital schools and academies and independent special schools. Allocations will be calculated on a per pupil basis, providing each mainstream school with a total of £80 for each pupil in years reception through to year 11.

Special schools, AP schools and hospital schools will be provided with £240 for each place for the 2020 to 2021 academic year.

It will be up to school leaders to decide how to spend the money. The Education Endowment Foundation has published guidance on effective interventions to support schools.

For pupils with complex needs, we strongly encourage you to spend this funding on catch-up support to address their individual needs, including:

- speech and language therapy
- travel training
- education psychologist time
- other small group and individual interventions – this could be direct, with the specialist spending time with the pupil, or indirect, with the specialist spending time with school staff to design an intervention

This funding will be provided in 3 tranches. We will provide settings with an initial part payment in autumn 2020, based on the latest available data on pupils in mainstream schools and high needs place numbers in special schools, AP settings, hospital schools and special schools not maintained by a local authority. We will then distribute a second grant payment in early 2021, based on updated pupil and place data.

For specialist settings we will use:

- 2019 to 2020 academic year place numbers from the published local authority 2019 to 2020 financial year budget returns for local authority maintained schools
- the published high needs place numbers for the 2020 to 2021 academic year for academies and special schools not maintained by a local authority

The final payment will be in the summer term 2021.

Alongside this universal offer, we will roll out a National Tutoring Programme, worth £350 million, to provide additional, targeted support for those children and young people who need the most help which will increase access to high-quality tuition for disadvantaged and vulnerable children and young people, helping to accelerate their academic progress and tackling the attainment gap between them and their peers. It includes:

- a 5 to 16 programme that will make high-quality tuition available to 5 to 16-year olds in state-funded primary and secondary schools from the second half of autumn term 2020
- a 16 to 19 fund for school sixth forms, colleges and all other 16 to 19 providers to provide small group tutoring activity for disadvantaged 16 to 19 students whose studies have been disrupted as a result of coronavirus (COVID-19) - guidance setting out further detail of this element will be issued shortly
- a reception year early language programme that will make training and resources available at no-cost to schools where additional targeted support for oral language would be particularly beneficial

Extending provision set out in an EHC plan

We do not anticipate that children and young people will need to repeat a year of educational provision as a consequence of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. This also applies to those with EHC plans. Similarly, we do not anticipate that young people will need to remain in education any longer than originally set out in their EHC plan.

However, in a small number of individual cases, it may be appropriate for a child or young person to extend their current educational provision or have their EHC plan extended. In most cases, this would consist of an individualised programme for a term or half term.

In all circumstances, this would need to be decided by the local authority, following a review of the child or young person's needs and EHC plan.

Parents and young people can appeal to the First-tier Tribunal (Special Educational Needs and Disability) if they disagree with certain decisions made by their local authority in relation to education, health and care (EHC) needs assessments and plans.

Extending provision in a school setting for those aged 19 and over

School funding regulations do not allow for those aged over 19 to remain in a school setting unless given exceptional approval by the Secretary of State for Education.

In the exceptional circumstances that a local authority decides that a young person would be best served by remaining in a school setting after they have turned 19 years of age, the local authority must apply for a relaxation of the normal rules for continuing financial support to schools of all kinds for students aged 19 and over, under the established Education and Skills Funding Agency process.

Pupil wellbeing and support

Pupils may be experiencing a variety of emotions as a consequence of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic such as anxiety, stress or low mood. This may be particularly acute for vulnerable children and young people, including those with complex needs. It is important to contextualise these feelings as normal responses to an abnormal situation. Some may need support to re-adjust to their educational setting; others may have enjoyed being at home and be reluctant to return; a few may be showing signs of more severe anxiety or depression. Others will not be experiencing any challenges and will be keen and ready to return. The return to education settings allows social interaction with peers, carers and teachers, which benefits wellbeing.

The government has recently announced the wellbeing for education return, training andresources for teachers and staff in all state-funded schools to respond to the wellbeing and mental health needs of children and young people as a result of coronavirus (COVID-19). The training provides practical examples to support staff, children and young people within a school. Local authorities have received funding to employ skilled staff to deliver the training to schools and provide ongoing advice and support from the autumn until March 2021.

Settings can prepare by nominating a lead to receive the training, and who will then have the capability to disseminate the learning and practice to staff and pupils within your setting. The training will be available in the autumn term.

Additionally, DfE, PHE and NHS England hosted a free webinar for school and college staff in July to set out how to support returning pupils and students. This includes experts discussing the impacts of the pandemic on pupils' mental wellbeing and recovery techniques, and education leaders discussing the actions they have been taking.

Whole School SEND (WSS) have co-produced 2 leaflets, funded by the DfE, to support young people with SEND and their families to have conversations with schools about successful returns following a period of absence such as this one, and about transition planning for post-year 11 destinations.

WSS have also produced resources to support the schools' workforce to prepare for the return, such as the COVID-19 SEND review guide which settings can use to reflect on their provision, and a handbook to support teachers to take a whole school approach to supporting pupils following a traumatic event. They can access WSS resources on the Whole School SEND Resource page of the SEND Gateway and staff can sign up to the Community of Practice to be kept up to date with further information.

We have published the first of the relationships, sex and health education training modules to support teachers to deliver content on mental health and wellbeing. The training module on teaching about mental wellbeing, which has been developed with clinical experts and schools, will improve teacher confidence in talking and teaching about mental health and wellbeing in the classroom. It was published early given the importance of supporting pupils' mental health and wellbeing at this time.

Settings should design pastoral and extra-curricular activities to:

- support the rebuilding of friendships and social engagement
- equip pupils to respond to issues linked to coronavirus (COVID-19)
- help pupils with approaches to improve their physical and mental wellbeing

They should provide more focused pastoral support where issues are identified, drawing on external support if necessary. They should consider the support needs of particular groups where they are already aware they need additional help, like those in need, and any newly vulnerable groups. Teachers may wish to access the free MindEd learning platform for professionals, which contains materials on peer support, stress, fear and trauma, and bereavement. MindEd have also developed a coronavirus (COVID-19) staff resilience hub with advice and tips for frontline staff. Where there is a concern a child is in need or suffering or likely to suffer from harm the setting (generally led by the Designated Safeguard lead or deputy) should follow their child protection policy and part 1 of the statutory safeguarding guidance keeping children safe in education and consider any referral to statutory services (and the police) as appropriate.

Setiings should work with school nursing services to support the health and wellbeing of pupils and students. School nurses as leaders of the Healthy Child Programme can offer support for:

- resilience, mental health and wellbeing including anxiety, bereavement and sleep issues
- pupils with additional and complex health needs
- vulnerable children and young people and keeping them safe

Settings and school nurses need to work together to ensure the delivery of the healthy child programme, which includes immunisation, working together to identify health and wellbeing needs.

Behaviour expectations

Returning to education is vital for the education of all children and for their wellbeing – time out of school is detrimental for children's development, particularly for disadvantaged and vulnerable children. All children and young people value the structure and routine of regular attendance as well as the support and strong positive relationships provided by their school or college. It is critical that all children can once again benefit from a full-time, 5 day a week, on-site education.

We recognise, though, that the prolonged period of absence from schools and colleges may contribute to disengagement with education upon return to school, resulting in anxiety which could lead to an increased incidence in poor behaviour. School leaders should be mindful that disruptive behaviour might be the result of unmet educational or other needs and whether a multiagency assessment is necessary.

We know that some pupils and students will return to school having been exposed to a range of adversity and trauma including bereavement, anxiety and in some cases increased welfare and safeguarding risks. This may lead to an increase in social, emotional and mental health concerns and some children, particularly vulnerable groups such as children with a social worker, previously looked-after children who left care through adoption or special guardianship, and young carers, will need additional support and access to services such as educational psychologists, social workers and counsellors. Additionally, provision for children who have SEND may have been disrupted during partial school closure and there may be an impact on their behaviour. Settings will need to work with local services (such as health and the local authority) to ensure the services and support are in place for a smooth return.

Settings should consider updating their behaviour policies with any new rules or policies and consider how to communicate rules/policies clearly and consistently to staff, pupils and parents, setting clear, reasonable and proportionate expectations of pupil behaviour. Further details are available in the guidance on behaviour and discipline in schools. They should set out clearly at the earliest opportunity the consequences for poor behaviour and deliberately breaking the rules and how they will enforce those rules including any sanctions. This is particularly the case when considering restrictions on movement within the school and new hygiene rules. Settings will need to work with staff, pupils and parents to ensure that behaviour expectations are clearly understood and consistently supported, taking account of individual needs and should also consider how to build new expectations into their rewards system.

It is likely that adverse experiences or lack of routines of regular attendance and classroom discipline may contribute to disengagement with education upon return to school, resulting in an increased incidence of poor behaviour. Settings should work with those pupils who may struggle to reengage in school and are at risk of being absent or persistently disruptive, including providing support for overcoming barriers to attendance and behaviour and to help them reintegrate back into school life. Some children and young people, particularly vulnerable groups such as those with a social worker and young carers, will need additional support and access to services such as educational psychologists, social workers and counsellors.

In the event that a pupil's behaviour warrants disciplinary action, the normal rules apply and the disciplinary powers, including exclusion, that schools currently have, remain in place. Permanent exclusion should only be used as a last resort and must be lawful, reasonable, and fair. Where a child with a social worker is at risk of exclusion, their social worker should be informed and involved in relevant conversations. Any disciplinary exclusion of a pupil, even for short periods of time, must be consistent with the relevant legislation. Headteachers should, as far as possible, avoid permanently excluding any pupil with an education, health and care plan. Pre-empting that a pupil may commit a disciplinary offence, and thus not allowing a pupil to attend school is an unlawful exclusion.

Ofsted will continue to consider exclusions, including the rates, patterns and reasons for exclusion and to look for any evidence of off-rolling.

Off-rolling is never acceptable.

Ofsted is clear that schools placing pressure on parents to remove their child from the school (including to home educate their child) is a form of off-rolling. Elective home education should always be a positive choice taken following a discussion between parents the school, and the local authority about how the needs of the child might best be met. This is particularly important where vulnerable children, children in need, and those at greater risk of harm are involved.

Section 4: Assessment and accountability

Inspection

Routine Ofsted inspections of state-funded settings will remain suspended for the autumn term. However, during the autumn term, inspectors will visit a sample of settings to discuss how they are managing the return to education of all their pupils. These will be collaborative discussions, taking into account the curriculum and remote education expectations set out in this document. They will not result in a judgement. Ofsted will publish a brief letter following the visit. The insights that inspectors gather will also be aggregated nationally to share learning with the sector, the government and the wider public. In addition, Ofsted has the power to inspect a setting in response to any significant concerns, such as safeguarding or a breakdown in leadership and management.

Ofsted/the Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) standard inspections of independent schools also remain suspended. During the autumn term, Ofsted/ISI will undertake non-routine inspections, as commissioned by us, where appropriate. For example, this may be a pre-registration inspection or an inspection to follow up on significant safeguarding concerns. These inspections will result in a judgement and a report, as usual.

Routine Ofsted and ISI inspections are expected to restart from January 2021. The exact timing is being kept under review.

Primary assessment

We recognise that pupils will have missed a critical period of their education due to lockdown in the 2019 to 2020 academic year. Maintaining national curriculum assessments in the 2020 to 2021 academic year (without amendment to the scope of the assessments or the expected standard) will allow the department to measure the remaining impact of coronavirus (COVID-19) on this cohort of pupils nationally and help target support to local areas, settings and pupils that need it the most.

We are planning on the basis that statutory primary assessments will take place in summer 2021. The early years foundation stage profile and all existing statutory key stage 1 and 2 assessments should return in 2020 to 2021 in accordance with their usual timetables. This includes:

- the phonics screening check
- key stage 1 tests and teacher assessment
- the year 4 multiplication tables check
- key stage 2 tests and teacher assessment
- statutory trialling

The statutory rollout of the reception baseline assessment has been postponed until September 2021. Settings had the opportunity to sign up (during the summer term 2020) to our early adopter year in 2020 to 2021.

In light of the impact of coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, the 2020 to 2021 academic year will be a transitionary year (subject to the necessary legislation being made) to allow settings time to prepare for, and start embedding, the engagement model. The engagement model is the new attainment framework (replacing P scales 1 to 4) for pupils working below the standard of national curriculum assessments and not engaged in subject-specific study.

The 2020 to 2021 academic year will be a transitionary year where schools that have prepared to implement the engagement model will be able to report against it and schools that need more time to implement this change will have the option to assess against P scales 1 to 4, for one final year. The engagement model will become statutory from September 2021. Further information can be found in the engagement model guidance.

Exams

For the summer 2021 exams, we recognise that pupils in years 11 and 13 will have missed a critical period of their education due to lockdown in the 2019 to 2020 academic year. It is vital that these pupils are able to catch up and access exams that lead to the qualifications they need to progress. We are planning on the basis that GCSE and A level exams will take place in summer 2021 but with adaptations, including those which will free up teaching time. Ofqual has consulted on proposed adaptations to exams and published its decisions at proposed changes to the assessment of GCSEs, AS and A levels in 2021.

On Monday 17 August 2020, Ofqual and the government confirmed that, following the cancellation of summer 2020 exams, students will be awarded the centre assessment grade submitted by their school or college for A and AS level and GCSE (except in cases where the centre assessment grade is lower than the grade calculated by the exam board, where the calculated grade will stand).

Both final GCSE grades and revised A and A level grades were issued to schools and colleges in the week beginning 17 August 2020, and students will be able to use these grades to move onto their next step. There will also be an opportunity for students to sit exams in the autumn and Ofqual has confirmed these exams will be available in all subjects. Where a student wishes to sit an exam, DfE's guidance on centre responsibility for autumn GCSE, AS and A level exam series sets out that we expect the centre that entered them for the summer series to enter them in the autumn series and take overall responsibility for ensuring that they have somewhere appropriate to sit their exams. Our Exam Support Service will launch at the start of the autumn term to support schools and colleges to manage this process.

Accountability expectations

Performance tables are suspended for the 2019 to 2020 academic year. No school or college will be judged on data based on exams and assessments from 2020. Until the new data release is available, all those working with settings, including Ofsted and DfE regional teams, should refer to the 2019 data. We will continue to use 2019 data as a starting point for any conversation about support for settings with Ofsted judgements below good. More information is set out in the school and college accountability guidance.

Section 5: contingency planning for outbreaks

Contingency plans for outbreaks

The COVID-19 contain framework sets out how national and local partners will work together to prevent, contain and manage local outbreaks. If a local area sees a spike in infection rates that result in localised community spread, relevant authorities will decide which measures to implement to help contain the spread. All decisions relating to education provision in a geographical area will be made at a national level by the Secretary of State for Education.

There may be exceptional circumstances in which some level of restriction to attendance at schools is required in a local area. The COVID-19 contain framework includes an overview of the tiers of intervention for education settings when managing local outbreaks and implementing restrictions. In the event of local restrictions on education settings being required, we will publish further operational guidance for education settings in the affected area, in order to notify them of restrictions and support them to implement their contingency plans in their local context. Within the 'tiers of restriction', priority is given to vulnerable children and children of critical workers for face-to-face provision in all cases.

For individuals or groups of self-isolating pupils, remote education plans should be in place. These plans should meet the same expectations as those for any pupils who cannot yet attend their setting due to coronavirus (COVID-19) (see the section on remote education support).

Remote education support

If a class, group or small number of pupils need to self-isolate or a local restrictions requires pupils to remain at home, settings should have the capacity to offer immediate remote education. They should consider how to continue to improve the quality of their existing offer and have a strong contingency plan in place for remote education provision by the end of September. This planning will be particularly important in situations that present significant logistical challenges, for example, if large numbers of pupils are required to remain at home. We recognise that some pupils with SEND may not be able to access remote education without adult support and settings should work with families to deliver a broad and ambitious curriculum.

In developing these contingency plans, settings should ensure that pupils and students can continue to engage in learning. They should explain to parents and carers the support that their children are receiving and discuss the plans for returning to settings, how they can support this and any additional help they might need.

Special schools and specialist settings have an experienced, expert workforce including:

- special educational needs co-ordinators
- education psychologists
- speech and language therapists
- qualified teachers of sensory impairments
- other therapists
- teaching assistants, often with specialist knowledge

Designing at-home learning and support for children and young people with EHC plans could involve any or all of these professionals, to design or adapt interventions or learning materials. For example, it might involve designing a speech and language intervention that parents can deliver at home or adapting or selecting online learning materials.

When developing these contingency plans expect settings to:

- use a curriculum sequence that allows access to suitable high quality online and offline resources and teaching videos, and that is linked to the school's curriculum expectations
- give access to high quality appropriate remote education resources
- select the online tools that will be consistently used across the school in order to allow interaction, assessment and feedback, and make sure staff are trained in their use
- provide suitable printed resources, such as textbooks and workbooks, for pupils who do not have suitable online access

When teaching pupils remotely, we expect settings to:

- set assignments so that pupils have meaningful and ambitious work each day in a number of different subjects
- teach a planned and well sequenced curriculum so that knowledge and skills are built incrementally, with a good level of clarity about what is intended to be taught and practised in each subject
- provide frequent, clear explanations of new content, delivered by a teacher in the setting or through high quality curriculum resources or videos
- gauge how well pupils are progressing through the curriculum, using questions and other suitable tasks, and set a clear expectation on how regularly teachers will check work
- enable teachers to adjust the pace or difficulty of what they are teaching in response to questions or assessments, including, where necessary, revising material or simplifying explanations more to ensure pupils' understanding
- plan a programme that is of equivalent length to the core teaching pupils would receive in their setting and would ideally include daily contact with teachers

Settings will need to consider these expectations in relation to the pupils' age, stage of development or special educational needs, for example if this would place significant demands on parents' help or support. They should avoid an over-reliance on long-term projects or internet research activities.

The government will also explore making a temporary continuity direction in the autumn term, to give additional clarity to settings, pupils and parents as to what remote education should be provided. We will engage with the sector before a final decision is made on this.

A range of resources to support settings in delivering remote education are available.

Schools may consider using some of their catch-up funding on remote resources in line with the access to technology section of the EEF's COVID-19 support guide for schools.

From that start of the autumn term, Oak National Academy will make available video lessons covering the entire national curriculum, available to any school for free. These are being in developed in partnership with a wide group of teachers and school leaders to develop lessons in the popular topics. The resources will be as flexible as possible, allowing schools to reorder topics and lessons, to match their own plans and curriculum.

Oak National Academy specialist content for pupils with SEND. This covers communication and language, numeracy, creative arts, independent living, occupational therapy, physical therapy and speech and language therapy. Their provision for next academic year will include an expanded range of content for the specialist sector.

Government-funded access to one of 2 free-to-use digital education platforms: Google for Education or Microsoft Office 365 Education. Schools can apply through The Key for School Leaders. The Key also provides feature comparison and case studies on how schools are making the most of these platforms.

A network of schools and colleges for help and support on effective use of tech for remote education that can be accessed through the EdTech Demonstrator Programme.

Laptops, tablets and 4G wireless routers were made available to local authorities and academy trusts to support vulnerable and disadvantaged children (specifically, care leavers, children and young people with a social worker, and disadvantaged year 10 pupils) between May to July 2020. Local authorities and academy trusts will continue to own these devices.

Following pupils returning to school in the autumn term, laptops and tablets will be distributed directly to schools affected by a local coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak. These will be available for disadvantaged pupils in years 3 to 11 and clinically extremely vulnerable children from all year groups unable to attend school. These devices will be owned by the school and provided to children and young people who would otherwise be unable to access remote education.

In addition to 4G routers provided to local authorities and academy trusts, DfE is working in partnership with BT to offer free access to BT WiFi hotspots for disadvantaged pupils. We are also working with the major telecommunications companies to expand this offer and provide access to free additional data to families who rely on a mobile internet connection while the response to coronavirus (COVID-19) requires pupils to learn from home and access social care services online. More information on increasing internet access for vulnerable and disadvantaged children is available.

Further support is available from:

- The National Cyber Security Centre, on which video conference service is right for you and using video conferencing services securely
- DfE advice on safeguarding and remote education during coronavirus (COVID-19), particularly annex C
- statutory guidance on online safety in annex C of keeping children safe in education
- expert advice at SWGfL safe remote learning and LGfL safe remote learning

Annex A

Coronavirus (COVID-19) specific health and safety risk assessments

Everyone needs to assess and manage the risks from coronavirus (COVID-19). This means employers and leaders are required by law to think about the risks the staff, pupils 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 and make the setting '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.

Settings 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 education 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 pupils (where applicable), young people 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 setting will manage risks from coronavirus (COVID-19) and make the setting '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 setting takes their health and safety seriously.

Sharing your risk assessment

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 pupils (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:

1. Identify what could cause injury or illness in the organisation (hazards).
2. Decide how likely it is that someone could be harmed and how seriously (the risk).
3. Take action to eliminate the hazard, or if this isn't possible, control the risk.

Given the employer landscape in special educational settings is varied, we have set out here what the existing DfE health and safety guidance states about the roles and responsibilities for health and safety in settings.

The employer is accountable for the health and safety of setting staff and pupils. The day-to-day running of the setting 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. Settings 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 and a simple guide to who the employer is in each type of setting, 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 settings, 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 setting is undertaken as soon as possible. Where pupils are already attending their setting, 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 and the measures taken to reduce these risks and expected outcomes. Settings 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
- pupils
- visitors
- contractors

Settings 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/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 commences 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.

Approach to risk estimation and management

Some types of control are more effective at reducing risks than others. Risk reduction measures should be assessed in order of priority as set out below: schools should not simply adopt the easiest control measure to implement. 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 individual risks completely. The combination of controls introduced should aim to reduce the risk to as low as reasonably practicable and prioritise structural, environmental interventions over individual level ones. This does not just mean considering risks of transmission, but also balancing these against risks to wider health and well-being and to education. Schools have the flexibility to respond to risks in a way that suits their circumstances whilst complying with their duties under health and safety legislation. Schools should work through the following steps to address their risks, considering for each risk whether there are measures in each step they can adopt before moving onto the next step:

1. Elimination: stop an activity that is not considered essential if there are risks attached.
2. Substitution: replace the activity with another that reduces the risk. Care is required to avoid introducing new hazards due to the substitution.
3. Engineering controls: design measures that help control or mitigate risk.
4. Administrative controls: identify and implement the procedures to improve safety (for example, markings on the floor, signage).
5. Having gone through this process, PPE should be used in circumstances where the guidance says it is required.

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1. Para 9.214 of the SEND Code of Practice states that, where parents want their child or young person to go to a school or college which is further from home than a school or college which could equally meet the child's or young person's needs, then the local authority can come to an agreement with the parents that the parents pay all or part of the costs of the transport if the local authority agrees to name the parents' preferred school or college. ↩

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Coronavirus (COVID-19)

Coronavirus (COVID-19): guidance and support

The UK has left the EU

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