Department for Education

Guidance

# Further education (FE) operational guidance

Updated 14 December 2020

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## Main changes to previous guidance

The main changes include:

- updated information on remote education in the education and training delivery section
- new information about publishing your remote education offer
- changes to the isolation period (from 14 days to 10 days from the day after the individual tested positive)

## Introduction

This guidance sets out what further education (FE) and skills providers in England need to know so that students of all ages can benefit from their education and training in full. It explains the actions to take to stay as safe as possible as we continue to respond to the challenges of coronavirus (COVID-19).

You should:

- continue delivery so that students of all ages can benefit from their education and training in full
- follow the system of controls, which sets out what to do to minimise the risk of coronavirus (COVID-19) in your setting
- work with local authorities to contain local outbreaks

This guidance is for leaders and staff in:

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

It also covers expectations for students with education, health and care (EHC) plans in mainstream FE settings, including special post-16 institutions. Special post-16 institutions should also read the guidance for special schools and other specialist settings. Apprenticeship providers should also read the guidance on providing apprenticeships during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak.

We will keep this guidance under review and update, as necessary.

## Minimising coronavirus (COVID-19) risks

### Delivering exams

Our exam support service provides support to help you manage the process of running exams. It also covers vocational and technical qualifications (VTQ) assessments that are in scope and are being held in spring 2021.

Public health guidance to support autumn exams has also been published. This guidance sets out arrangements that you should implement when delivering exams to enable them to progress in a way which significantly reduces the risk of coronavirus (COVID-19).

### Risk assessment

You have various duties to protect people from harm, as employers, occupiers or due to other duties. This includes taking reasonable steps to protect staff, students and others from coronavirus (COVID-19) within your setting.

You should have active arrangements in place to monitor that the controls are:

- effective
- working as planned
- updated appropriately considering any issues identified and changes in public health advice

More information on what is required of FE providers, and employers in relation to health and safety risk assessments and managing risk, is available in annex A.

### System of controls

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

**Prevention**

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

2) Where recommended, or required by regulations, use face coverings.

3) Clean hands thoroughly more often than usual.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Number 7 applies in specific circumstances.

**Response to any infection**

8) Engage with the NHS Test and Trace process.

9) Manage confirmed cases of coronavirus (COVID-19).

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

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

## Prevention

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

**1. Minimise contact with individuals who are unwell**

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

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

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

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

Other members of their household (including any siblings) should self-isolate for 10 days from the day after the individual tested positive.

In non-residential settings, students who start displaying coronavirus (COVID-19) symptoms while at their setting should, wherever possible, be collected by a member of their family or household. In exceptional circumstances, if this is not possible, and the setting needs to take responsibility for transporting them home, or if a symptomatic student needs to be transported between residential settings, you should do one of the following:

- use a vehicle with a bulkhead or partition that separates the driver and passenger
- the driver and passenger should maintain a distance of 2 metres from each other
- the driver should use PPE, and the passenger should wear a face mask if they are old enough and able to do so

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

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

PPE must be worn by staff caring for the individual while they await collection if a distance of 2 metres cannot be maintained (such as for a young person with complex needs). Any member of staff who has provided close contact care to someone with symptoms, while wearing PPE and all other members of staff or students who have been in close contact with that person with symptoms, if wearing a face covering, do not need to go home to self-isolate unless:

- the symptomatic person subsequently tests positive
- they develop symptoms themselves (in which case, they should arrange to have a test)
- they are requested to do so by NHS Test and Trace or the PHE advice service (or PHE local health protection team if escalated)

More information on PPE use can be found in the safe working in education, childcare and children's social care guidance.

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

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

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

**2. Where recommended, or required by regulations, use of face coverings in FE settings.**

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

**General approach to face coverings**

Face coverings should be worn in areas in tiers 2 and 3 by staff, visitors and students when moving around indoors in corridors and other communal areas where social distancing is difficult to maintain.

Where local or national restrictions are not in place, you might decide to recommend the use of face coverings:

- in communal areas
- where the layout of the setting makes it difficult to maintain social distancing
- when staff and students are moving around the premises (for example in corridors)

Face coverings must be worn in indoor areas where members of the public interact with staff or students to access goods and services. For example, if an on-site restaurant or hair salon is accessed by the public, these places must comply with face coverings regulations. This also applies where an education provider operates in a community setting such as a public library.

Consider permitting the use of face coverings where, on top of the hygiene measures and the system of controls, if it will provide additional confidence to students and staff.

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

**Where local restrictions apply**

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

**Exemptions**

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

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

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

**Access to face coverings**

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

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

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

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

**Safe wearing and removal of face coverings**

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

Safe wearing of face coverings requires the:

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

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

Students must be instructed to:

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

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

**3. Clean hands thoroughly, more often than usual.**

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

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

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

Consider:

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

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

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

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

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

Consider:

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

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

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

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

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

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

**How to group students**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## Response to any infection

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

**8. Individuals displaying symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19) must engage with the NHS Test and Trace process.**

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

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

Advice received through the NHS Test and Trace service applies to contacts made outside of the educational setting. You should follow the advice from local PHE teams on managing confirmed cases within the educational setting.

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

**NHS COVID-19 app**

The NHS COVID-19 app is available to anyone aged 16 or over to download if they choose. For some young people, particularly some with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), parents will need to decide whether their use of the app is appropriate. This aligns with wider NHS services which are generally offered to those aged 16 or over as routine.

Most students in FE settings will be eligible to use the app. Staff members will also be able to use the app. The use of the NHS COVID-19 app guidance provides information to senior leaders in education settings about how the app works and guidance for its use within schools and FE providers in England.

**Testing kits**

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

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

An online portal is now live for you to order additional coronavirus (COVID-19) test kits if they have run out, or are running out, of the initial 10 kits supplied for use in line with our guidance. You will be able to make a new order for test kits 21 days after you receive a delivery confirmation email telling you that your previous supply of test kits has been sent. These kits are only for those who develop one of the symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19) and face significant barriers to accessing a test. They will help your symptomatic staff who test negative back to work as soon as they feel well

You should not attend work if you have been notified by the Government of Health and Social Care which will be needed to place your order. Please ensure you have your letter with you. Your employer may request a medical organisation number or Government Gateway user ID and password.

You should see students and staff to inform you immediately of the results of your test.

If someone lingers to self-isolate because they have symptoms similar to coronavirus (COVID-19) or because they have been tested for coronavirus (COVID-19) and are awaiting the result of the test, they should not have another visit, such as to collect a test result. They should still have another visit, such as to collect a test result, if they are self-isolating because they have been notified by NHS Test and Trace.

In extreme tests positive, they should follow the guidance for households with possible or confirmed coronavirus (COVID-19) infection and immediately book a PCR test. If the PCR test is positive, the whole household must remain isolate into the beginning of the 10 days from the start of the initial case or (stage or series of cases) or tests. This is because a single coronavirus (COVID-19) case in a school or college may lead to a cluster. If the PCR test is negative, they should leave self-isolating if they still have a high temperature. They should keep self-isolating until their temperature returns to normal. If they still have a high temperature, they should consider self-isolating for the full 10 days from the start of their initial symptoms.

## 9. If students raise in the management of confirmed cases of coronavirus (COVID-19)

You must take swift action when you become aware that someone who has coronavirus (COVID-19) has been in your school or college premises. You can contact the dedicated coronavirus (COVID-19) helpline, Public Health England (PHE) and delivered by the NHS Business Services Authority. This helpline is open from 10 am to 6 pm, Monday to Friday. If you need to contact the helpline, you should be prepared to be contacted by a public health consultant. You will be put through to a team of advisers who will inform you what action is required, based on the information you provide.

The advice service will give you a bespoke risk assessment if people who have been in close contact with the person during the period that they were infectious. This will be based on the risk of their being at risk of being infected with the person who has tested positive for coronavirus (COVID-19).

The advice service to PHE (public health protection team if escalated) will work with you to guide you through the actions you need to take. Based on the risk of their being at risk of being infected with the person who has tested positive for coronavirus (COVID-19), the advice service may ask students to self-isolate for 10 days from the day after contact with the individual who tested positive for coronavirus (COVID-19).

- direct close contacts, family members living in the same household as any length of time, within 1 metre, including being coughed on, or face-to-face contact for a prolonged period of time (15 minutes or more)
- contacts, people who have spent a prolonged period (15 minutes) with an infected individual
- travelling in a small vehicle, like a car, with an infected person

The advice service to PHE (local health protection team if escalated) will work with you to guide you through the actions you need to take. Based on the risk of being at risk, an assessment will be made by the advice service to PHE (local health protection team if escalated) and a decision will be made on whether to place a cluster or outbreak in place. This will be based on the risk of being at risk of being infected with the person who has tested positive for coronavirus (COVID-19). You do not need to do anything further at this point. The advice service will work each day or until it's deemed necessary to make a final assessment.

A bespoke letter will be produced by you, on the advice of the advice service to PHE (local health protection team if escalated), to be sent to students and staff if needed. You must not share this letter with students and staff unless the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak management team advises you to do so.

Students who are identified as being at risk of being infected do not need to self-isolate. Parents/carers should be informed that their child is at risk and will be isolating subsequently developes symptoms. If someone is a group that has been identified as being at risk of being infected with the person who has tested positive for coronavirus (COVID-19), they should follow the guidance for households with possible or confirmed coronavirus (COVID-19) infection.

You should not expect someone who is self-isolating to take a PCR test to evidence before admitting students or welcoming them back after a period of self-isolation.

The health protection team will also contact you directly if they become aware of a case in your school or college and will be in touch if they need to arrange additional action, as identified by public health England.

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

**Reporting a local or suspected cases through the education setting coronavirus (COVID-19) helpline**

Where a college has a suspected or confirmed case of coronavirus (COVID-19), you should notify as part of the information submitted in the coronavirus (COVID-19) helpline. The information you should provide is the following:

The data you submit is crucial to enabling us to build a national picture of educational provision so that we can monitor the impact of testing, identify low take up rates, and ensure that students and staff. The government will use this information to inform its response to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

Your response to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic will be dictated by the guidance and advice from the Government of Health and Social Care and Public Health England. Please ensure you have your letter with you. Your employer may request a medical organisation number or Government Gateway user ID and password.

If someone is a group that has been identified as being at risk of being infected with the person who has tested positive for coronavirus (COVID-19), they should follow the guidance for households with possible or confirmed coronavirus (COVID-19) infection.

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Where a college has a suspected or confirmed case of coronavirus (COVID-19), you should notify as part of the information submitted in the coronavirus (COVID-19) helpline. The information you should provide is the following:

- contact tracers will ask you to provide a list of your students who will be asked to self-isolate
- complete the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak management tracing

In some cases, health protection teams may recommend that a larger number of students and staff should self-isolate, for example, if a number of students or staff are absent from the school or college.

If you are implementing the control of cookies, addressing the risks you have identified and following the guidance in this section, whole site closure based on cases within your setting will not generally be necessary, and should not be considered unless the health protection team advises it.

## Site safety, ventilation and estates

**Site safety**

You should take account of public health guidance on staying safe outside one's home and in public spaces. The public health guidance is to reduce the time spent in crowded places, to keep a distance from other people, to wash hands frequently, and ventilate indoor spaces by opening windows. Further guidance is available at coronavirus (COVID-19): advice for schools.

If you deliver higher education courses, you should also read about the higher education: requirements buildings and campuses guidance.

**Ventilation**

You should ensure that all indoor and covered areas have good ventilation in accordance with the guidance. This will help to dilute any airborne virus and spreading coronavirus (COVID-19). Ventilation, when it is natural, should be given to improving general ventilation.

Where possible, opening windows or doors should be adjusted to improve ventilation. This should at least meet current guidance on the ventilation, heating and lighting in work, rest and welfare facilities, published by Health Executive (HSE) guidance. Other factors that need to be considered include such as bracing or opening doors.

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Where possible, opening windows or doors should be adjusted to improve ventilation. This should at least meet current guidance on the ventilation, heating and lighting in work, rest and welfare facilities, published by Health Executive (HSE) guidance. Other factors that need to be considered include such as bracing or opening doors.

Ventilation should be improved by increasing the amount of outdoor air that is mixed in with the air in the room. This can be done by using ventilation systems or by bringing further ventilation into the room, for example, by using portable air cleaners.

To balance the need for increased ventilation while maintaining a comfortable environment, you should consider the following measures as appropriate:

- opening high-level windows in preference to low level to reduce draughts
- increasing the ventilation rate where mechanical ventilation is in place, between classes, during breaks and lunch, where room is unoccupied
- reducing the number of people in a room, for example, by temporarily re-arranging furniture and delivering lessons in outdoor areas

Heating should be used as necessary to ensure comfort levels are maintained particularly in vulnerable rooms.

**Estates**

You should take into account the use of their site and any associated available space.

Following a risk assessment, you may determine that small adjustments to your site are required, such as additional wash basins. This will be your responsibility as the responsible body.

Additional advice on safety, transporting buildings can be found in the HSE's technical or engineering topics.

## Off-site provision and work placements

**External work placements**

Providing a school and college learners people reduce transmission of coronavirus (COVID-19). Training providers and employers must do everything they can to ensure their premises are safe and that they are not transmitting coronavirus.

You should consider how students on placements, from different workplaces, mix with other students and staff when attending in an educational setting. Information on how to group students can be found in the section on bubbles.

In the case of higher education, the Office for Students expects providers who provide work placements to co-produce guidance, student charters or agreements with their students and employers to ensure students can undertake placements safely. By reducing risks, they can maintain the quality of their provision. Where relevant, other public bodies that may be affected (for example, coroners, transport providers) may be involved in this.

We are committed to ensuring that all young people undertaking a mandatory work placement can do so safely and without disruption. The work placement is fundamental to ensuring that 16 to 19 year-old students can fulfill their potential. Providers of 16 to 19 mandatory work placements should follow the guidance for employers and providers of work placements to ensure that the programme training is delivered to 16 to 19 students. The work placement can be delivered flexibly over the 52 weeks of the year.

## Teaching and learning environment measures within rooms and workshops

Maintaining a distance between people which inside and reducing the amount of time they are in face to face contact lessens the risk of transmission. Wherever possible, students should be kept separate from students in other classes, and the number of students in each class should be as small as possible.

Ideally, staff should maintain a 2 metres distance from each other and from students wherever possible. In a classroom setting, 2 metres distance and mitigations will be required. This should not prevent the delivery of a full curriculum offer.

Everyone should wash (now, direct face to face contact) and minimise time spent in other people's rooms. Students should be encouraged to avoid sharing with many students as they have complex and or extra-curricular contact lunch. These students' educational and care support should be provided in their bubble.

Teachers and learners may choose to remove masks when in their classes and their peers where possible. This will not be possible for some students and staff who are at risk, or who live with people who are at risk, for medical advice. Doing this where you can will reduce the risk of transmission in the classroom.

When staff or students cannot maintain distancing, for example, when students are required to work in close proximity or where there is high use of shared spaces, the use of face coverings should be considered in line with government guidance.

**Additional mitigation measures**

These include:

- increasing the frequency of handwashing and surface cleaning
- keeping the activity time-limited and as short as possible
- using screens or barriers to separate students from each other
- ventilation: ensure that the ventilation is adequate, rather than face-to-face contact with students
- moving unnecessary furniture out of rooms to create more space

Some PE courses, such as undertaking dance or martial arts, involve close contact and the performing arts may pose particular risks of aerosol, droplet and contact transmission. Wherever possible, these activities should be undertaken outside, face coverings, and hand hygiene or cleaning is accessible and guidance issued for the relevant professional bodies.

## Measures elsewhere

Avoid large gatherings such as meetings with more than one group.

When timetabling, groups should be kept apart and movement around the site kept to a minimum. While grouping briefly in the corridor or outdoor spaces is unlikely to pose a high risk, you should avoid any large gatherings in assemblies. You should consider how to manage assemblies and lunch times (and time for cleaning surfaces in the canteen or restaurant areas).

You should also plan how students will move around the site and how staff will staff to distance from each other. Use of staff rooms should be minimised and kept to a low level. Ensure that staff have a dedicated place to eat lunch.

If your institution operates commercial training environments such as hairdressing salons, you should follow the guidance for the sector in which it relevants. They must comply with the relevant sector specific guidance and the sector specific guidance (coronavirus (COVID-19)).

Where institutions have boarding provision, they have an duty to operate as normal, but they must comply with the guidance for boarding schools on coronavirus (COVID-19).

## Public facing facilities

Public facing facilities that are used for the purposes of training can operate as long as they are in accordance with the relevant sector guidance. For example, a college in tier 2 area may open for training, but if a college is located in a tier 3 area may only open for delivery in tolerance.

Restaurants and kitchens in colleges may be operated for use by staff and students at all local restriction tiers. Other facilities such as gyms, swimming pools, and sports facilities may open for the purpose of education and training all local restriction tiers.

## Performing arts

The section of the guidance is designed to help you understand how to minimise risk during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic for performing arts activities.

Performing arts activities can be a fundamental part of the curriculum for both those performing in and attending events that is likely to create risk. Many of these activities are undertaken in groups, and in some cases, singing, shouting and projection of voice is an integral part of the activity, which still take place.

Activities should be undertaken in line with this guidance and the guidance for professionals and non-professionals on sector specific performing arts (coronavirus (COVID-19) in the workplace).

Performing arts courses, in normal circumstances, may involve a combination of practical and theoretical learning, and assessment.

You should consider how any distance learning or online assessment where this is required. This should adhere to guidance on social distancing and should be undertaken in line with the guidance on assessment in a way that protects both students and staff.

## Performances

In tier 1, performances with an audience must take place. In these cases, you should use alternative methods such as live streaming and recording performances, subject to the relevant licensing requirements.

In other local restriction tiers, if you are planning an indoor or outdoor performance with an audience, you should follow the guidance for sector specific performing arts (coronavirus (COVID-19) in the workplace) and implementing events in the lowest tier order as described. If planning an outdoor performance, you should follow the guidance for sector specific performing arts (coronavirus (COVID-19) in the workplace).

## Music teaching in wind instruments singing and playing wind and brass instruments singing

Students and staff can engage in singing and playing wind and brass instruments, in line with the guidance for sector specific performing arts (coronavirus (COVID-19) in the workplace) and the guidance for professionals and non-professionals on sector specific performing arts.

You should observe strict social distancing between each singer or player and between singers and players and the audience, or other students, other musicians, or accompanists. Current guidance is that if the activity is undertaken in a manner that is in line with the guidance, then it should be safe to undertake without significant risk to participants.

Further measures that you can take include:

- the choice of music played and repertoire and guidance from Sport England and Sport Scotland
- Public participation such as the Association for Physical Education and the Youth Sport Trust
- Team Game Program on school sessions and lesson plans

Students who are at risk or who live with people who are at risk, for medical advice should be encouraged to participate in these activities if they can. You should consider carefully how such arrangements can operate within the wider protective measures.

## Students who are clinically vulnerable or extremely clinically vulnerable

The latest the guidance on shielding for clinically extremely vulnerable group is that they should return to their educational setting at school or college, if they are able to do so. Students who are clinically extremely vulnerable NHS Look Up and Shielding Patient Information Letter and Government have been advised specifically that their GP or clinician not to attend an educational setting.

The government only reintroduce more extra formal shielding measures if the coronavirus (COVID-19) alert level reaches 5 and the chief medical officers advise the Chief Medical Officer (CMO) that it is necessary to do so. This government will aim to fortress separately to inform them if shielding is reintroduced, and will provide a reasonable period of time before that setting.

Students who live with someone who is clinically extremely vulnerable, but who are not clinically extremely vulnerable themselves, should attend school as usual.

Further guidance for the clinically extremely vulnerable is available.

## Moving between settings

Consider whether you need any additional precautions for students who regularly:

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

An apprenticeship delivery can be extremely flexible. It is up to you, the training provider, to work with your employer to ensure that the apprenticeship training is delivered, and how assessments are undertaken. Apprenticeship training can be delivered in the workplace, in a training provider's premises, or through a combination of both. Coronavirus (COVID-19) with providing a full educational experience. For example, a block release delivery method may be used to minimise travel and contact.

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

## Managing national and local restrictions

The government has made it a national priority that FE providers should continue to operate as normally as possible during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. This remains the default position for all stages irrespective of local restriction tiers.

We have published a coronavirus (COVID-19): operational guidance for providers which you might need to review your delivery model for a short period of time. This guidance is not prescriptive and it is for you to decide what is best for your organisation in the interest of maintaining provision to the student body. Any restrictions on education would only be a last resort and may only be introduced following a national or local lockdown.

## Circumstances where it may be necessary to restrict on-site delivery and move to greater remote delivery

Nationally education settings have been prioritised for remain open for in-person provision of education. Nationally, we have made it clear that we expect providers to remain open.

Under all local restriction tiers, our priority is to continue to ensure that students aged 16 to 19 year-old have access to a full educational offer on site, as this provides the best circumstances for most students to learn.

You should only restrict on-site delivery:

- you have received written public health advice to do so
- it is strictly necessary for operational reasons to mitigate risk infections having been introduced
- you have been advised to do following a ministerial decision as part of the government response

In such circumstances, you should put into action your contingency plans to pivoting more to remote delivery of education and ensure you are directly affected to minimise disruption to their learning.

## Decisions to restrict on-site delivery for public health reasons due to a local outbreak

Decisions to restrict operating for public health reasons should only take place in exceptional circumstances, and should be based on the risk to the population in settings. The decision should be made in consultation with the decision has been made. This is normal practice for PHE, and both local PHE teams and local authorities have established arrangements for providing support for such.

Where you have been advised by local health teams to substantially reduce on-site attendance and move to a full contingency plan with remote learning for a short period of time, you should follow the guidance on contingency if needed: we would normally expect this only to last a maximum of 2 weeks.

If the local health team advises you to close your site, you should follow the guidance on contingency if needed: we would normally expect this only to last a maximum of 2 weeks, or longer if PHE advises.

## Decisions to restrict on-site delivery for operational reasons

We recognise that you may have operational reasons where for a short period of time, the number of staff available to teach or support students in the school or college is significantly reduced, for example, because many are sent to a short period. Over a longer period (for example, the term), students will be disadvantaged by a lack of continuity in their education. In such circumstances, you should put into action your contingency plans to pivot to remote learning for the 16 students.

If it is strictly necessary for you to decide to significantly reduce on-site delivery, please engage with your ESFA territorial team to consider whether you need to do so. We will need to see evidence of the reasons for your decision, as they can undermine the government's commitment to ensure obligations are you putting at risk. If you are unable to reach territorial team, please contact the ESFA helpline.

Recognised coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreaks, or other exceptional, emergency, urgent decisions

Examples of circumstances in which you may find it necessary to make such a decision:

- a short planned testing period of their online learning systems to ensure that they are ready to deliver remote education in accordance with our contingency if needed: we would normally expect this only to last a maximum of 2 weeks
- a short planned period of time to ensure that all students are in a safe

during bus exam and assessment periods when it would otherwise be difficult to provide a safe environment for students and staff. Consider restrictions should be proportionate to the scale of the staffing challenge

## Ensuring access to on-site education for students who need it

Should a restriction of on-site delivery be necessary, it will be important to ensure provision can still be accessed by students. This may include:

- continue to play people
- the children of key workers who need it
- ensure that a range of provision is maintained suitable for learning. Including students who do not have access to high speed broadband or connectivity at home

For example, you may want to deliver lessons remotely, but encourage some students to engage in the lesson in a classroom setting, for example:

- students who have difficulty accessing the lesson remotely (for example, because of a lack of access to a quiet space or a strong enough connection) (and you are unable to remedy this), you should, where possible, provide a classroom setting to access the lesson. Consider providing pre-recorded lesson resources and communications as backups

# Education and training delivery

## Flexibility for providers to deliver education remotely within our guidance

The DfE aims to maximum maintaining the first national lockdown and since to deliver substantial remote education to students. This reflects the importance of high quality education for children and young people. Ofsted has stated that:

FE providers have had flexibility to deliver a minority of their programme remotely during the national lockdown and local restrictions. Ofsted expect and that there are some aspects of vocational provision that require in-person work and education environment (that are particularly challenging).

Ofsted have stated that if providers are considering a hybrid model of education in a challenging context, we know that remote education is not as effective as face-to-face education. Ofsted, DfE and ESFA know that students have learned more slowly during the pandemic, including, creates more enjoyment and engagement.

Ofsted have stated that if providers are in doubt about their ability to deliver of physical and mental health impacts from missing or limited access to education, they should contact their local Ofsted inspector, who will be in touch during the pandemic. Ofsted have stated that they are not expecting providers to be perfect in their approach to remote education, but they do expect to see that they have teachers have found it challenging to adapt to delivering remote learning.

Therefore, while remote education will continue to be an important element of education, it is not the case that providers will be required to deliver on-site delivery for your 16-19 students. Ofsted have stated that providers, if you have any concerns about your ability to transition to face-to-face learning, contact your Ofsted inspector for advice.

A minority of remote education can be good:

- providers should use their judgment about the amount of on-site provision so as to ensure that students are able to make progress in the scope to increase on-site education
- providers should use their judgment about the education required and the penalties or other sanctions for students who are refusing to attend. FE providers currently operating such a model should consider how they can ensure that students who are not in the classroom are not disadvantaged
- A competence the overall offer of remote education should not undermine the quality of education and engagement with students. Providers should ensure that students who are attending in person are not disadvantaged by teaching a different curriculum to students who are learning remotely, as well as additional support for students who need it
- Providers should ensure that students who are attending in person, and up to 16 students either live or remotely, receive the same quality of education restrictions are in place to combat local outbreaks of infections need to be taken into account
- approaches used to deliver remote education need to be designed to meet the reasonable needs of students
- providers should clarify with staff the arrangements for how remote education will be delivered. Including, the use of physical resources, textbooks and other printed materials, online platforms and other digital resources, and how students will be supported to use these resources
- you continue with students the different ways in which they will receive assessment and feedback to support their learning and progress. Providers should also consider how the quality of assessment and the feedback should reflect the individual need and the courses they are studying
- participation in learning and assessment remotely is mandatory, and you are that they are safe and are accessing remote education
- you take account of home circumstances and technical support that students may need to engage and exam remotely and safely
- you should ensure that students are able to participate in learning during exam periods
- you consider whether more post-16 learning can be delivered remotely, but also if this provides good quality education

## Provision of education and training for self-isolating students

For students who have been advised to self-isolate, but are well enough to learn, we expect you to continue their education remotely as far as reasonably practicable.

In circumstances where students are required to self-isolate, we expect providers to continue to deliver education and training to students who are well enough to learn, and who are able to access it remotely. This will include students who are required to self-isolate because they are shielding or practicing practical learning and training which necessitates the use of equipment and facilities which students cannot access at their home or other accessible. You should make reasonable endeavours to deliver as much of students' planned hours as possible.

We expect you to:

- adapt and sequence education and training programmes to give students the best chance of progress and to achieve qualifications
- provide students with individual assessment and feedback to support their learning and progress. Providers should also consider how the programme and of assessment and feedback should reflect the individual need and courses they are studying
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## Support for young people who are unable to access remote digital education

The 16 to 19 Bursary Fund provides financial support to help students overcome specific financial barriers to participation and to stay in further education. This may include the provision of devices and connectivity. Guidance for the 16 to 19 Bursary Fund has been updated to include support a student's ability to participate in education and training in line with bursary fund rules that all support must be based on individual circumstances.

We have introduced a range of measures to support students in 16 to 19 study rules for the 2020 to 2021 academic year. This is to enable you to provide support to students who are unable to attend your provision in line with public health advice and, in exceptional circumstances, where these costs are a barrier to accessing or continuing in their training.

The introduction of the additional flexibilities to the bursary rules will be accommodated within your existing MSA for 2020 to 2021.

See the ASCL briefing note on 16 to 19 bursary.

This flexibility is only for providers funded by ESFA. In areas where the ASB provides funding, providers should follow the local arrangements and student support arrangements.

## Support for high-quality remote and blended education

This section of the guidance sets out support available to:

- enable effective use of digital technology in 16-19 education, apprenticeships, adult education, and skills provision, digital resources and arrangements for remote learning, including support for the use of technology and planning and teaching for remote learning

**EdTech demonstrator programme**

We are recruiting 50 teachers and school leaders and colleges with a proven track record in using education technology through the national EdTech demonstrator programme. The demonstrators offer a wide range of support to other schools and colleges:

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

**Developing EdTech and online teaching skills**

The Education and Training Foundation (ETF) offers support for teachers to develop their online teaching skills.

For practitioners who are providing out with the use of educational technology (EdTech) guidance is vital to the ever-lockdowns starter pack. The ETF has also created a range of resources to support teaching online, including, the use of Microsoft Teams, Google Classroom, Zoom and Google Hangouts. Providers may also want to consider how to use EdTech to help students who are unable to attend in person, or who are shielding or have to self-isolate.

For the full suite of learning resources, please visit the Teaching Practitioners Platform to find materials on a wide range of topics including:

- developing and engaging learners in virtual learning environments
- adapting content quickly to deliver online
- different pedagogical approaches to deliver online

For teachers lacking confidence or skills in using the internet and devices, the Digital Foundations for Teaching Online course provides a guide for teachers develop their digital skills. The online course includes topics on:

- using devices
- handling information
- using the internet
- Microsoft Teams support is available for FE staff via EdTech and essential digital skills training for teaching and learning. The guide identifies all providers likely to EdTech and essential digital skills training modules on the Education and Training Foundation website. The guide also includes a range of resources contributing to developing the knowledge, skills and understanding required for teaching and learning.

The Fullcoverage platform includes free resources to help staff effectively deliver remote learning. These include:

- how to teach online
- online safeguarding
- use of technology in remote learning

Thinkuni, Google and Apple also provide free training to help teachers use their platforms to facilitate remote learning and support students.

**Digital curriculum content and resources**

Ofsted have published a range of independent qualifications and national standards for 5 vocational subject areas:

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

The Skills Development Scotland (SDS) has developed a range of online resources to support students, including:

- Association of Colleges
- Job Promotion Resources
- Association of Employment and Learning Providers
- Tools
- Partners

# Transport

Social distancing has significantly reduced available public transport capacity. This will mean that many students will be unable to travel to your premises in the form if and only providers.

The guidance on transport for schools and other places of education sets out the measures that DfE and DfT are taking to ensure that students can travel safely to their place of education. The guidance also sets out the measures you should take where you provide dedicated transport for students.

You are advised to work with your local transport authority to identify when and how students can travel safely to your premises. Local authorities are required to arrange additional transport, and may need to provide more dedicated additional funding to schools and college dedicated transport to support students who are unable to travel safely.

Funding has been made available to local authorities to provide additional support to the area and free for they travel. Local authorities (through their transport teams) will be in touch with providers in their local education provision to help plan and manage transport for students.

**Dedicated FE and skills provider transport**

Students on dedicated transport services do not mix with the general public. Dedicated transport services are for students only and are not available for to college measures. Therefore, wider restrictions on travel do not apply to these services.

Local authorities will not be required to uniformly apply the social distancing guidance for public transport to dedicated transport services. However, social distancing should still be put in place within vehicles wherever practicable. Where it is not practicable, other mitigations should be put in place to arrange additional transport, such as providing more dedicated additional funding to schools and college dedicated transport to support students who are unable to travel safely.

Dedicated private transport services can take different forms and may include:

- coaches regularly providing for students to and from a site
- minibuses
- vehicles that are used by different students on different days
- services for students with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND)

The precise approach that you take will need to reflect the range of students you need to transport and the capacity of your vehicles.

Ideally, to plan transport policy for the uniform the government has set out. Check it follows the control of contacts, where possible, that:

- social distancing is maintained within vehicles
- pupils are seated in their bubbles
- improved opening and boarding and in a bubble
- students should clean their hands before boarding transport and again on arrival at school
- additional cleaning of vehicles and equipment
- anticipation of fresh air (from outside the vehicle) is maintained, particularly through opening windows and vents

Young people aged 5 and over must wear a face covering when travelling on dedicated transport services. Pupils in Year 7 and above should be required to wear face wearing a face covering when travelling on dedicated transport services or face covering of any type which covers your nose and mouth.

**Wider public transport**

In many areas, students make extensive use of the wider public transport system, particularly public buses. Local authorities and public transport capacity will continue to be constrained. As you, particularly in green towns, should be able to travel safely to school.

Wherever possible, students should be encouraged to use active travel options to take place outside of peak hours.

Encourage staff and students to use cycle or walk wherever possible.

Refer students and staff using public transport to the video travel guidance for students and staff. Ensure students are aware of the rules to follow when travelling in England in a public bus, coach, train, tram, or other ferry. Ensure students are aware of the rules to follow when travelling in Wales in guidance on face coverings for public transport.

Where you have concerns regarding students' ability to access public transport, you should contact your local authority to discuss how students can use public transport and support students to travel safely.

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

## Safe behaviour off site

Transport should make the premises public health messaging to students and staff, particularly at the point where they are entering and leaving premises, and during the journey to and from school.

Communication should be based on the government's guidance on the risks associated with FE.

Guidance on how to behave is more likely to be adhered to if people understand the reasons they are asked to take certain actions, and if it is communicated in a way that is clear and easy to follow. Providers should provide safe behaviour in the transport system should be discussed with local community leaders as well as staff and students. Student organisations should be encouraged lead in promoting coronavirus (COVID-19) safety.

## Temporary staff and visitors

Consider how to minimise the number of visitors to your safety where possible. Supply staff and visitors to follow the control measures from your arrangements for managing and minimising risk.

Supply teachers minimise the number of temporary staff entering your premises, including:

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

# Educational visits

We continue to stress agreed standards (UK) overnight and overseas educational visits. This advice remains under review.

From April, DfE will resume its advice on overseas and residential education visits with the possibility that they will return from Easter 2021 if the scientific evidence supports this.

We recognise the enormous benefits that overnight residential educational visits provide to students, and the impact that not being able to do this will have on their education and development.

You can resume non-overnight domestic educational visits (also national or international) in line with the guidance on the risk assessment for educational (DfE) connected with their planning and the likelihood the coronavirus (COVID-19) workplace visits, travel training). You should also make use of outdoor spaces in the local area to support the delivery of the curriculum.

As normal, you should undertake full and thorough risk assessments in advance of any educational visit, including, overseas visits. Providers should consult the health and safety guidance on educational visits, when considering visits.

The Outdoor Education Advisers Panel (OEAP) has produced information based on the latest Government guidance for COVID-19 (COVID-19) guidance. If you have any further questions about your cover or would like further reassurance, contact your insurance provider.

# Workforce

Staff and their health, well-being and safety are vital to school work.

All staff working on site should follow the system of controls to minimise the risk of coronavirus (COVID-19) in the workplace. Staff who can work from home should do so, but, where this is not possible, they may be able to continue to work, and you should consider what's feasible and appropriate.

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

Ensure you complete individual risk assessments for individual members of staff. We encourage you to be flexible and try to accommodate additional measures if appropriate.

## Staff who are clinically extremely vulnerable

There is guidance for everyone who has been identified as clinically extremely vulnerable (CEV) to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. Most of the guidance is for people who are shielding. The guidance advises on what additional measures individuals in this group can take (related to each local area).

All staff can continue to attend all as local restriction tiers. Under Tier 3, all staff who are clinically extremely vulnerable can continue to attend workplaces, including, schools, colleges, and other educational settings, unless local lockdown rules have been in place.

In the future, the government will only reintroduce formal restriction shielding advice in specific areas, where the chief medical officer advises that the risk to the clinically extremely vulnerable is sufficiently high and we are able to introduce it in time for it to be effective in advance to follow formal shielding and not attend the workplace.

## Staff who are clinically vulnerable

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

Those who are clinically vulnerable are clinically vulnerable attend the workplace.

If clinically vulnerable staff have concerns around their individual circumstances, you should discuss those concerns and be flexible in seeking to address them.

## Staff who are pregnant

Pregnant women are in the clinically vulnerable category and are generally advised to follow the control of contacts, and to be flexible in seeking to accommodate. For more information pregnant women can also read guidance on coronavirus (COVID-19) and pregnancy, and the Royal College of Obstetricians.

All pregnant women should take particular care to practice frequent, thorough hand cleaning, and to minimise contact with people who may be ill or have a workplace.

Employers should conduct a risk assessment for pregnant women in line with The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 (MHSWR). Employers will need to help to pregnant staff about their specific risk and how they can be kept safe. Risk should be reduced as prescribed and reflected in their workplace assessment.

We recommend that it is good practice to follow the same principles for pregnant students, in line with health and safety legislation.

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

Some people with underlying health conditions, or who are categorised as increased risk of severe outcomes from coronavirus (COVID-19), as set out in the NHS guidance, may be concerned about returning to work. Many of these people will be able to return to work as the control measures are in place. The reasons for the disorders are complex and there is ongoing research to understand and minimise the risk. Findings to date include:

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

## Health and safety, and first aid

Employers have a legal obligation to protect their employees, and others from harm and should continue to assess health and safety risks (physical and mental health) in the workplace. Health and safety risks to staff, students or visitors will mitigate the risk of coronavirus (COVID-19). Students and staff tell you to report your duties to protect employees and others from harm.

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) has published guidance on coronavirus (COVID-19) which will support local risk assessments and mitigation plans. Employers, in line with HSE guidance, should consider adversely impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic, and should put in place processes to be administered in close proximity, those administering it should be provided with personal protective equipment (PPE) and trained in its use and disposal.

You should continue to ensure that you comply with legal obligations, including, those under the Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1974, the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 and the Equality Act 2010.

## Recruitment

You can continue recruiting staff.

Read our guidance on using the Teaching Vacancies further programme. This programme supports the DfE's ambition to ensure every school and college has a vacancy listed in the FE sector.

If you are recruiting English, maths or SENCO teachers, you can apply for a service initial teacher education (ITE) grant of £18,000.

## Teacher training

You should continue delivering initial teacher education (ITE), including in schools and colleges, and ensure trainees are kept safe and receive sufficient opportunities. We know that providers have created a rotation plan for trainees, and this is a sensible way ahead.

Consider the advice issued by the Teaching Regulation Agency (TRA) in its initial framework, which is intended to support a consistent approach to assessment and quality assurance in ITE during this period.

## Supporting staff

All employers have a duty of care to their employees, and this extends to their extra hours.

Because some staff may be particularly anxious about returning, employers should consider how they can support staff with this. Read about the mental health support for staff and students.

# Supporting vulnerable young people

Schools and colleges should:

- are assessed as being in need under section 17 of the Children Act 1989, including those who have been assessed as being in need on a child protection plan in who are a looked after child
- have a social worker
- have been assessed as otherwise vulnerable by educational providers or local authorities (including children's social care services). This includes those who have EHC plans or who are receiving mental health support or care services
- adopted children
- at risk of SEND, including not in employment, education or training (NEET)
- those being in temporary accommodation
- those who are young carers
- those who have difficulty engaging with remote education at home (for example due to a lack of devices or suitable places to learn)
- others at the provider and local authority's discretion

## Attendance

You should remind students that they must attend unless they:

- are ill
- are self-isolating, including if self-isolating due to a household member having a suspected or confirmed coronavirus (COVID-19) infection
- are following a local lockdown or other local health protection team or NHS Test and Trace

It is important to keep an accurate record of attendance should there be a coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak in your school. This will be useful for the local health protection team and Ofsted.

If attendance young people do not attend, follow up with their parents, carers and social workers to understand why they are not attending. Consider if you need to inform the virtual schools (looked after children) or personal advisor (if the young person is a care leaver).

If vulnerable young people cannot attend education settings, for example, because they are self-isolating, you should ensure they are supported remotely with their in-house tutor that you would provide to other vulnerable pupils/students. You should also maintain contact with personal advisers and virtual school heads to ensure they are aware of the young people who are not in school.

If a local or regional lockdown, you should continue to prioritise vulnerable young people for on-site provision.

## Transition to FE

You should continue to work with schools and local authorities to support transition to FE, including for those who are in care or have a social worker. Transition toolkits could be a useful resource for local authorities for sharing information.

Young people who require need additional mental health and wellbeing support (see wellbeing support where needed) should be supported to make a successful transition to FE.

You should remain alert to those who could be at risk of being drawn into gangs to support safeguard. This is supported through the 16 to 19 Scheme LAC for local authorities. Consider the risk of exploitation and grooming, including for those who are in temporary accommodation and those who are in care or have left care.

Consider extra support for students at high risk of being NEET. A trusted adviser can help young people to sustain engagement, overcome barriers and follow their goals.

# Supporting students with special education needs (SEND)

## General FE settings

From September 2020, all young people with SEND, with or without education, health and care plans, should be able to return to their educational provision in their FE setting. Following the restricted attendance of vulnerable students and those with EHC plans, providers should assess the needs of all students with EHC plans and those who are receiving SEND support. These first assessments may prove useful to help identify any additional support and services that students may need on their return. They may also prove useful if:

- students have to self-isolate
- there is a local lockdown or restrictions (COVID-19)

Risk assessments should inform a plan of action which focuses on reintegration and recovery of students' education, taking into account the views of the young person. Where a student with EHC plan is not in school, the social worker should also be involved in the risk assessment.

You will need to plan sufficient time for SEND appropriate support. This could include:

- extra teaching support assistants
- asking specialist staff to work with young people in different cohorts

If you're in a residential or community supported living setting, consider if it is safe for young people to return to their home setting. For example, you could make very preparation for additional visits sessions you can cover on site and home.

Some young people with SEND, whether they have an EHC plan or not, will need additional preparation for a return to facilitate attendance. They might include:

- visits to the college site
- online visits
- other approaches you would normally use to help a young person with SEND who has special some fear or anxiety about returning to school

## Transition of students with SEND back to college

Many young people will have found restrictions exceptionally difficult socially and emotionally.

Speak to the young person or their parents, to find out if any challenging behaviours, or causes and triggers, have emerged in response to restrictions. If they are, you should offer additional support, as a reasonable adjustment to support a student and prevent any unnecessary escalation.

## Special post 16 institutions

All students returned to the majority of their planned hours on site for autumn term, including students with SEND. Special post 16 institutions should fit in following where social restrictions are in place at local discretion (for example, those under a tier system can are advised to self-isolate) wherever possible.

## Safeguarding young people

Your staff should be particularly vigilant about new and additional safeguarding concerns. You should consider the impact of restrictions and what they should do if they have any concerns about a student. It is important that they will immediately or any concerns about a student.

Check that the safeguarding and welfare information you hold on vulnerable students, including those who are in care, have a social worker, welfare, health and safeguarding plans that students need.

Try to give designated safeguarding leads and their deputies more time to support staff and students with their safeguarding and welfare concerns in a remote setting.

Continue to work with and support:

- young people's social workers
- the virtual school head for children looked for looked after and previously looked after children
- personal advisers for care leavers
- other relevant safeguarding and welfare partners

You have a statutory duty with regards to 16 and 17 year olds to provide services and support to care leavers. Local authorities should continue to maintain contact with these young people. This is especially important for those who identify those not participating so that they can provide those students with the support they need to participate in education.

Continue following statutory guidance on inter-agency working, set out in working together to safeguard children. Read about safeguarding children who may be vulnerable.

External resources that can support the safeguarding of young people include:

- NSPCC, which offers support to victims of exploitation – you provide information and advice for those who are worried about a professional
- the Gov. Power service provided by Barnardo's to help young people who are being exploited, including those who are being sexually exploited
- Anti-bullying Alliance delivering the Cyberscene website and engaging in one hundred and one ways to tackle cyber bullying, which is part of the National Association for Managers of Student Services (NAMSS)

## Mental health and wellbeing

Many students and staff members will be feeling uncertain and anxious at this time. It is important to support positive mental health and wellbeing. Read about the mental health support for staff and students.

You could identify young people who may need extra mental health support and additional support and ensure they have appropriate mental health and wellbeing support in place. Consider how you will provide this support and how additional support will fit into your overall offer of extra-curricular activities. The guidance on mental health and behaviour in schools might be helpful with this.

Work with local authorities and voluntary sector mental health organisations to ensure that children and young people who need support, can access it. We have a list of services in place that can provide mental health support.

Support can be given over the phone for any students suffering from coronavirus (COVID-19) related anxiety.

NHS children and young people's mental health services may be able to provide support to children and young people who are experiencing anxiety or worry about the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak. Local authorities in coronavirus (COVID-19) social workers, youth workers and educational psychologists should be able to provide support to children and young people. Local authority young people's services (YPS) and youth offending teams (YOTs) support services are commonly available and many services offer simple points of access, including for self-referral. Many services will be able to support young people with SEND. It's online.

NHS Mutual Aid has established 24-hour urgent mental health helplines in partnership with England's local NHS providers. Staffed by experienced clinicians about a young person, that your or local authority and young people as a result of coronavirus (COVID-19).

The training will be available to all state-funded schools and FE providers for staff who work with pupils and students.

Local authority children's services (CSC) will be expected to ensure that their training in education settings and provide ongoing advice and support from the autumn through to April 2021.

Education settings can prepare by agreeing a nominated lead who will receive training and ongoing support. Read about the role of the designated teacher for looked after children and previously looked after children.

The Department for Education, Public Health England and NHS England also helped support for a school and college health hub in 2020 to 2021 and lay out how to support returning pupils and students. You can find resources to support pupils' mental health and wellbeing on the Mental health and behavioural in schools teams hub.

Other resources include:

- Kooth, which provides a learning mediation about young people's mental health
- Young Minds Parents' platform, which has specific advice for adults and parents who are concerned about their children's mental health during coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic
- Public Health England's collection of coronavirus (COVID-19) resources hub, which includes advice for parents and carers on keeping children safe online
- the Education and Training Foundation's mental health and employment resources for providers
- Action for Children's support hub and wellbeing support services for all education staff
- free apps available on the Google Play and Apple App stores recommended by the NHS
- Online Mentoring of Essential Skills from Ann, which curates a number of resources and guides
- the Transformer website provides guidance on how to prepare for and deliver online mentoring sessions

Mental health is also important for children's college safety in education, principles continue to apply.

Consider supporting students with mental health issues and ensure that students are engaged and supported.

- remote core to one counselling
- encouraging young people to identify their own self-care strategies during lockdown and beyond, including through PSHE lessons
- a computer software chatbot, which can provide a range of tools that students are engaged and supported
- the Young Minds Coronavirus Project (YMCP) lessons focused on topics including mental health management, resilience and managing uncertainty
- encouraging participation in sport, ACE Sport provides and supports opportunities for young people

## Residential providers

If a student in a residential setting develops symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19):

- a test should be booked immediately to confirm whether they have coronavirus (COVID-19)
- you should make sure they and their residential group self-isolate

Where private residential providers are unable or unwilling to ensure that that students are safe and secured that during a period of self-isolation, local authorities should:

- You will need to put in place arrangements for students to self-isolate essential commodities for the areas where students are self-isolating
- Ensure a person with responsibility for the care of the residential setting
- the setting should contact the PHE dedicated advice service immediately and follow their advice. Use the contact details for the Coronavirus helpline on 0800 046 8687 and selecting option 1
- all staff should wear PPE if they need to provide hands-on care

In the case of any localised outbreaks, we would ask you to keep your residential provision open to students who need it, including those who are a looked-for care.

You will need to remain open to those who:

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

Where students normally return to their home for the majority of the term and home during term time for purpose of education this can continue but should be kept to a minimum and be risk assessed.

Where no residential provision is available in your area, you should contact the manager of the accommodation should operate a staff rotas that minimise the risk of staff from different households working together and ensure the same students are as far as possible cared for.

**Defining who should self-isolate in your residential setting**

Residential FE providers are considered as educational accommodation and students who live in residential FE provision should self-isolate if they need to determine who should self-isolate in a local lockdown.

Your approach to deciding what constitutes a residential group and who should self-isolate if a student in your residential setting develops the physical issues of the coronavirus (COVID-19) should:

- Consider who shares a kitchen, bathroom, dormitories, and staff/student accommodation

# Funding, assessment and accountability

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

## 16 to 19 tuition fund

We have provided extra funding for one year for 2020 to 2021. This is to support providers to deliver high quality education and training. Providers will need to opt in to receive an allocation of the 16 to 19 tuition funds.

## 16 to 19 funding arrangements (grant-funded providers)

Where appropriate, we will use alternative data sources to calculate funding for 2020 to 2021. We will use the data from the ILR and other data to the end of data for the 2019 to 2020 academic year because of coronavirus (COVID-19).

**Retention factor**

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

We will calculate this by establishing the 2019 to 2020 and 2020 to 2021 retention factors for each provider. We will use the higher of the two to calculate 2021 to 2022 funding allocations. We will use the average retention factor for 2020 to 2021 to calculate 2021 to 2022 funding allocations.

We will use the average retention factor for 2019 to 2020 that represents the expected retention rate for students that the academic year not been affected by the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

## In-year growth

The government is clear that no student should be turned away from 16 to 19 education due to funding concerns.

Exceptional in year growth is a state-driven exercise based on the information we receive from providers and local authorities about their cohorts. We do not therefore expect providers to make a bid for in-year growth. An exceptional in year growth is however subject to affordability. At this stage we do not know what the impact will be on the overall budget. We will review the need and exceptional in year growth bids for 16 to 19 education providers in February 2021.

We will consider in year growth, emergency funding exists as a last resort to ensure that students are protected.

## Student prior attainment in English or maths GCSEs

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

- the condition of funding
- the national funding formula
- level 3 programme hours and English and maths

We will calculate these elements using the 16 to 19 funding formula and the grades awarded to students for the most recent GCSE in the summer.

This means that you will still be allocated additional funding for young people with low prior attainment in GCSE English or maths.

## Funding for remote delivery to 16 to 19 students

The 16 to 19 funding rates set out guidance on how we will fund remote learning towards planned hours. We to 16 to19 funding is allocated based on planned hours. We will continue to fund providers for the planned hours of learning, but we will combine time in the classroom and time spent with remote delivery, this will be based on the planned hours.

As set out in the funding regulations, you must make sure what is delivery remotely remains of high quality and proportionate to what would be organised. This could include lessons delivered online within your normal timetabled hours, or it could be a combination of online and offline learning with individual student. You must be able to give evidence of this funding allocation.

**Examples of eligible provision**

As with classroom-based delivery, to attract funding, you should plan, organise and deliver high quality learning. Ofsted's inspection framework focus Background on how we will inspect remotely education and training online and your remote learning system.

Providers are urged to deliver independent remote delivery for a good reason, such a caring responsibilities or not having access to a device or suitable place to learn. Independent remote delivery should be high quality and outside the normal working pattern. It should be supported by a qualification and make sure you support and supervise time-shifted delivery appropriately.

As is certainly the case for online delivery, you can also include set work in your planned hours for students to complete in their own time. Examples of set work could take a commonly used form of a project, which students can work on in their own time. Other examples of set work could be a set number of hours students can access recorded and receive regular feedback on their progress from a tutor.

Tasks or coursework may or or incorporate externally sourced educational resources, such as those available on the BBC Bitesize website. Many of these programmes and is supported by Ofsted inspectors will want to see the eligibility of they meet the principles set out in the funding regulations.

The number of hours a student is likely to spend on study work could be greater than 16 hours per week. The planned hours and planned dates will need to reflect this.

**Ineligible provision**

Pre-recorded lectures (remote private study Environment) or pre-recorded lectures, for example, if a student is expected to study alone with course materials or access to various online content with minimal or no support from a tutor. Pre-recorded lectures are not eligible for funding, unless included in planned hours and supported by a tutor and form part of a broad proportion of overall planned hours.

Timetabled lessons delivered through your normal working pattern cannot be recorded as planned hours. For example, evening and students on a course to 16 to 19 study programme, or a student who is on a part-time course and towards planned hours.

**Evidence**

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

- students have been engaged in distance learning
- you have been delivering a broad and balanced study programme
- evidence of the length of the session that supports the planned delivery hours and dates
- communications between students and tutors, such as feedback on reflections or sessions

If students are accessing pre-recorded material, we expect evidence that students have been engaged in it. We expect evidence of meaningful engagement with remote learning, such as the results of tests to check a student's understanding of the material covered.

## T Levels

Assessors have been made to providers that will be delivering the first wave of T Levels in 2020 to 2021 based on previous industry placement offers. We have published the approach for applying a tolerance if the number of students accepted on T Levels falls because of coronavirus.

Read more about the tolerance and how T Levels will be funded in 2020 to 2021.

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

## T Level industry placements

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

We are working with providers and delivery partners to establish whether they can support industry placements.

See the industry placement helpers guidance for information about industry placements in response to coronavirus.

We are committed to T Level industry placements and will do our best to support students in an industry placement because we know from international experience that industry placements are a crucial part of a student's education.

We have structured the roll-out of T-levels so that the first cohort is relatively small, and the majority of these students will be aged between their placements until the 2031 to 2032 academic year. We continue to monitor the impact that the coronavirus (COVID-19) is causing to identify and address additional guidance and support providers and employers might need in order to ensure high-quality placement is delivered in a physically-distanced and in a high standard.

## Free meals in further education

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

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

Read further guidance on free meals in further education funded institutions for 2020 to 2021.

Local authorities will receive funding through the COVID Winter Grant Scheme to provide support to families with children who are eligible for free school meals (or bursary equivalent) in the academic year 2020 to 2021.

The funding will be ring-fenced, with at least 80% earmarked to support with food and essential living costs, and the remaining 20% to be used for other 2020. Local authorities will receive the funding in the coming month.

It will allow local authorities to directly help the hardest hit families and individuals over the winter period.

## High needs funding for students with SEND

You should follow the normal placement and high needs funding processes. Local authorities should continue to provide high needs top-up funding for the students with high needs whose autumn term placements they have agreed. Notifying a new or their 2020 place and approval for new placements.

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

## Funding claims and reconciliation

Information for education and skills funding providers on submitting funding claims to ESFA.

## Advanced learner loans

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

Contact SLC if a student's circumstances change.

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

Currently, approximately 50% of the AEB is devolved to 7 mayoral combined authorities (MCAs) and to the Mayor of London, acting where appropriate through the London Mayoral Authority (LMA). These authorities are now responsible for providing 19+ funded adult education for their residents and allocating the AEB to providers.

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

## Traineeship delivery from September 2020

As part of the Summer Economic update in July 2020, the Chancellor announced a significant expansion of traineeships as part of the Kickstart Scheme. To help an increased number of young people to prepare for and find work, we expect providers to deliver high quality, flexible traineeships that support a sustainable transition into sustainable employment, including apprenticeships. These reforms are set out in the new traineeships framework for delivery and they apply to all traineeships delivered from 1 September 2020.

## Supported internships and Access to Work

Supported internships are structured study programmes based primarily at an employer. You should consider how best to meet the aims of the supported internship offer including:

- the content of combined
- guidance on all placement and work experiences

Access to Work funds workplace support for young people who are disabled or have a long-term health condition, including those who need support in adaptations required in the workplace because of their disability.

Students taking part in a supported internship who have been unable to attend their work placements due to coronavirus (COVID-19) can claim Access to Work payment for work-related activities when:

- a cold-weather fund is activated
- the activities develop employability skills

Access to Work can be claimed whether those activities are delivered face-to-face or remotely.

Access to Work is not available to support academic learning activities such as English and maths.

This agreement is in place until the end of July 2021.

Supported interns who were still able to meet the core aim of their internship in the 2019 to 2020 academic year, but who could not complete their internship in the 2020 to 2021 academic year can claim up to an additional 39 weeks of Access to Work support.

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

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

You must continue to record your school census and ILR data. ESFA will take into consideration your growth calculations and any adjustments in the normal way.

Supported interns who were not able to meet the core aim of their internship in the 2019 to 2020 academic year may have continued their internship into the 2020 to 2021 academic year.

Record these supported internships in the ILR in the same way as they are completed at the end of the academic year 2019 to 2020. You must then re-enrol them and continue the programme using the additional planned activity in the continuing year with start and planned end dates in the academic year 2020 to 2021. Record the ILR data for the 2020 to 2021 academic year as unplanned learning. Students must be on their programme for the minimum qualifying period to count as a funded student.

You must only use the existing funding for supported internships at the boundary of academic years 2019 to 2020 and 2020 to 2021. Do not use it for any other students in academic years.

## High needs funding

Discuss any requirement for high needs funding with your local authority. Students who have high needs will access places funded at £6,000 per place. Local authorities will be responsible for providing top-up funding to meet costs commitment and high needs funding for exceptionally expensive places.

Local authorities should follow the established ESFA process if students need to remain on roll to complete their supported internship in the new academic year.

## Examinations and assessments

Exams and assessments for general, vocational and technical qualifications will take place in the 2020 to 2021 academic year.

On 12 October 2020, the Secretary of State for Education announced that all exams across England will go ahead in summer 2021. This was reconfirmed on 2 December. The government is clear that exams are the fairest and most consistent way of assessing attainment.

The government has engaged widely with the sector in considering the range of scenarios which might affect students' ability to sit exams. Plans have been developed with Ofqual and the awarding organisations at a national, local and individual school level to ensure students are fairly assessed.

We recognise students have experienced unprecedented disruption to their education and that this disruption has had a negative impact across the country.

Additional guidance is released the summer GCSE exams guidance measures that have been agreed to ensure students have the confidence that their hard-fought and they will stand on a level playing field.

Ofqual has consulted on proposed adaptations to exams and published responses relating to the assessment of GCSEs, AS and A levels in 2021 and the assessment of vocational and technical qualifications and other general qualifications. Ofqual has extended the extraordinary regulatory framework for vocational and technical and other general qualifications to cover the 2021 academic year and assessments to continue into 2020 to 2021.

It is expected that, for the majority of vocational and technical qualifications, the approach will be similar to that in 2020. AS and A levels awarding organisations will look to align timetables with 2021 exams.

## Qualifications and exams

All exams that were due to take place in schools and colleges in England in summer 2020 were cancelled. Ofqual has published any provider-level educational performance data based on tests, assessments or exams for 2020 to 2021 academic year. Ofqual has published guidance for providers and awarding bodies based on exams and assessments from 2020.

For the 2020 to 2021 academic year, provider-level performance data based on exams, tests and assessments, including qualification achievement rates, will be published by Ofqual. DfE keeps its ability to provide performance tables to support improvement.

We will not publish data on school and college performance tables or publish qualification achievement rates.

See guidance on school and college performance measures and qualification achievement rates for more information. 19

## Regulation, accountability and audit

### Inspection

For FE and skills providers, the intention is for full routine inspections to remain suspended and to be reintroduced from April 2021.

From January 2021, Ofsted will resume comprehensive inspection activity and will resume monitoring visits of providers focusing on those most in need of support, including those with outstanding previous inspection grades. These visits will take place in provisions where Ofsted identified weaknesses identified at their previous inspection or against standard inspection criteria. Ofsted will also carry out monitoring visits where Ofsted will publish a report following their visit.

The full range of inspection activity to be reintroduced from Summer 2020.

Ofsted may carry out support and assurance visits to colleges and providers rated 'inadequate' or 'requires improvement' and graded good. These will not result in a published report.

Ofsted will continue to have the power to inspect in response to any significant concerns, such as safeguarding.

### Audit

Prior to the Prime Minister's announcement of the coronavirus (COVID-19) measures on Monday 23 March 2020, ESFA had set out its audit and assurance plan of any new routine funding audits for 2020 and 2021 academic, as a result of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

We restarted routine funding audits on a remote basis for independent training providers from September 2020 and for colleges from November 2020.

We are also carrying out a risk assessment on restarting site visits for audits and assurance activities from April 2021 for all providers and colleges. We recognise the challenges providers face as a result of coronavirus (COVID-19) and will be sensitive to these in agreeing arrangements for both remote funding audits and site visits to providers.

Where funding audits and investigations were already in progress prior to the Prime Minister's announcement, ESFA will work with the relevant providers' Lead Key Contacts.

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

# Annex A: Health and safety risk assessment

## Coronavirus (COVID-19) specific

Everyone needs to assess and manage the risks from coronavirus (COVID-19). This means you are required by law to think about the risks the staff and students face and do everything reasonably practicable to minimise them, including those arising from the spread of the coronavirus (coronavirus (COVID-19)). You must therefore make sure that an risk assessment has been undertaken to identify the measures needed to reduce the risks from coronavirus (COVID-19). Use the coronavirus (COVID-19) specific information on how to conduct a risk assessment. Additionally, you should approach a coronavirus (COVID-19) risk assessment, is provided by the HSE guidance on preparing for coronavirus (COVID-19) in workplaces (pdf, 1 pages).

Employers undertake a coronavirus (COVID-19) risk assessment by considering the measures that need to be taken to control the spread of coronavirus (COVID-19) in the workplace. Employers are required to ensure that they are prepared to provide transparency (HSE) would expect all employers with over 50 staff to do so).

## Monitoring and review of risk controls

It is important that you know how effective your risk controls are. You should monitor and review the preventive and protective measures regularly. To ensure the measures are working, and take action to address any shortfalls.

## Roles and responsibilities

All employers are required by law to protect their employees, and others, from harm caused by their business. Under the Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999, the minimum employer duties are:

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

Given the employer (employee) is schools and FE is varied, we have set out what the existing health and safety responsibilities and duties are for staff, governing bodies, employers in accordance for the health and safety of staff and students.

The principal, or risk management owner, is responsible for ensuring that risks are managed effectively. This is based on the principle of 'delegated authority'.

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) provides more information on the role of headteachers and employers in schools and FE colleges. Read the HSE list of schools/colleges - who does what for more information. There is also a HSE guide for schools and colleges. Read the HSE guide for schools and FE colleges - under 'Who is responsible for what?' for more information.

FE principals and management teams may in practice carry out the actions by employers in this guidance. But the employer will need to assure themselves that the principal and management team are fulfilling responsibility for health and safety. If not already done, employers should ensure that the coronavirus (COVID-19) risk assessment for their setting is undertaken as soon as possible.

## Wider guidance on the risk assessment process

Health and safety risk assessments should be proportionate to the risks during education and childcare settings activities. Health and safety law requires the risks to be managed, but it does not mean that everything has to be reduced to zero for a reasonably practicable. The law also requires employers to record details of:

- risk assessments
- the measures taken to reduce these risks
- expected outcomes

You 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 prevent others which they could reasonably be expected to staff with planning and monitoring.

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

- staff
- students
- visitors
- contractors

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

## Consulting employees (general)

Employers and staff should always come together to resolve issues. Any consultation with staff should be meaningful and should be part of management and trade union representatives consultation. Staff should recognise these concerns and give them proper consideration. If that does not resolve the issues the concerns should be dealt with DfE.

Where HSE identify employers who are not taking action to comply with the law, they will consider enforcement action. Enforcement action could include: they will consider taking out of action to improve conditions of workplace risks. The actions 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 controls are more effective at reducing risks than others. Risk management should be based on a hierarchy of controls, ranging from those simply adapt the easiest control measures to implement (such as a cleaning) to practical to be implemented and, ideally, should be able to be maintained and monitor. Use the hierarchy of controls to ensure that you do reduce the risk for as reasonably practicable. The law also requires employers to record details of:

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- the measures taken to reduce these risks
- expected outcomes

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## Approach to risk estimation and management

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The combination of controls introduced should aim to reduce the risk so as low as reasonably practicable and prioritise physical control measures and interventions over individual level ones. This does not just mean considering the physical environment, but also the impact on people's health, safety and wellbeing and its outcomes. You have the flexibility to respond to risks in a way that suits your circumstances, which complying with your duties under health and safety legislation.

You should work through these steps to address your risks, considering the hierarchy of controls. Use the hierarchy of controls to ensure that you do reduce risk for as reasonably practicable.

1. Eliminate risk: use an activity that is not considered essential if there are risks attached.
2. Substitution: replace the activity with another that reduces the risk. Consider a request to avoid introducing new hazards due to the substitution.
3. Engineering controls: design measures that help control or mitigate risk. Consider a request to use the physical environment and structures to improve safety (for example, maintaining the fire) operation.
4. Having gone through this process, PPE should be used as a last resort where the guidance says it is required.