Department for Education

Guidance

Schools coronavirus (COVID-19) operational guidance

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This guidance explains the actions school leaders should take to minimise the risk of transmission of coronavirus (COVID-19) in their school. This includes public health advice, endorsed by Public Health England (PHE).

It is for leaders and staff in:

- primary schools
- secondary schools (including sixth forms)
- special schools, special post-16 providers and alternative provision
- 16 to 19 academies
- infant, junior, middle, upper schools
- boarding schools

We expect independent schools to follow the control measures set out in this guidance in the same way as state-funded schools, and health and safety legislation applies equally to independent schools.

Where this guidance refers to schools, that does not include maintained nursery schools or pre-reception classes.

Separate guidance is available for:

- early years and childcare settings
- further education colleges and providers

Additional operational guidance is also available for special schools, special post-16 providers and alternative provision.

Schools and trusts should work closely with parents and carers (future references to parents should be read as including carers), staff and unions when agreeing the best approaches for their circumstances.

Overview

From 8 March, all pupils should be attending school.

To prepare for this:

- review and where necessary, update your risk assessment
- make sure you are following the system of controls to minimise the risk of infection, including planning for asymptomatic testing
- have a contingency plan in place for outbreaks in your school or changes in restrictions
- communicate any changes in your processes to parents

Much of the content in this guidance will be familiar to you, as it replicates what was in place for the autumn term. We have made specific changes to the information on:

- Test and Trace support payments
- current expectations for clinically extremely vulnerable pupils and staff
- educational visits
- wraparound provision and extra-curricular activity
- physical activity in schools
- inspections

We have added annex B which is guidance on year 11 to 13 exam cohort attendance and provision for the 2021 summer term.

Public health advice

We have worked closely with the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) and PHE to develop this guidance. Based on the recent ONS data, the risks to education staff are similar to those for most other occupations.

Implementing the system of controls, creates a safer environment for pupils and staff where the risk of transmission of infection is substantially reduced. The way to control this virus is the same, even with the current new variants. We are further strengthening the measures, to provide more reassurance and to help decrease disruption the virus causes to education.

You must comply with health and safety law and put in place proportionate control measures. To meet these obligations you must:

- review your health and safety risk assessments in light of this refreshed guidance
- make any necessary changes to your control measures applying the system of controls

Risk assessment

Educational providers have a legal duty to protect people from harm. This includes taking reasonable steps to protect staff, pupils and others from coronavirus (COVID-19) within your school.

You must implement sensible and proportionate control measures which follow the health and safety hierarchy of controls to reduce the risk to the lowest reasonably practicable level. This hierarchy of controls is set out in annex A.

You must regularly review and update your risk assessments - treating them as 'living documents' - as the circumstances at your school and the public health advice changes. This is particularly relevant as you prepare to welcome back more pupils. This includes having active arrangements in place to monitor that the controls are:

- effective
- working as planned

You must notify your staff and their health and safety representatives of review outcomes.

For more information on what is required of school leaders in relation to health and safety risk assessments and managing risk, see annex A.

System of controls

We know that the predominant variant of coronavirus (COVID-19) is more transmissible however, PHE advice remains that the way to control this virus is with the system of controls, even with the current new variants.

In this section where something is essential for public health reasons, as advised by Public Health England (PHE), we have said 'must'. Where there is a legal requirement we have made that clear. This guidance does not create any new legal obligations.

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

If you follow the system of controls, you will effectively reduce risks in your setting and create an inherently safer environment.

These additional measures will be reviewed in partnership with health experts to decide whether the evidence suggests that these measures can be eased ahead of the summer term.

Prevention

You must always:

1. Minimise contact with individuals who are required to self-isolate by ensuring they do not attend the school.

2. Ensure face coverings are used in recommended circumstances.

3. Ensure everyone is advised to clean their hands thoroughly and more often than usual.

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

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

6. Consider how to minimise contact across the site and maintain social distancing wherever possible.

7. Keep occupied spaces well ventilated.

In specific circumstances:

8. Ensure individuals wear the appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) where necessary.

9. Promote and engage in asymptomatic testing, where available.

Response to any infection

You must always:

10. Promote and engage with the NHS Test and Trace process.

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

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

1. Minimise contact with individuals who are required to self-isolate by ensuring they do not attend the school

When an individual develops coronavirus (COVID-19) symptoms or has a positive test

Pupils, staff and other adults must not come into the school if:

- they have one or more coronavirus (COVID-19) symptoms
- a member of their household (including someone in their support bubble or childcare bubble if they have one) has coronavirus (COVID-19) symptoms
- they are legally required to quarantine, having recently visited countries outside the Common Travel Area
- they have had a positive test
- have been in close contact with someone who tests positive for coronavirus (COVID-19)

They must immediately cease to attend and not attend for at least 10 days from the day after:

- the start of their symptoms
- the test date if they did not have any symptoms but have had a positive test (whether this was a Lateral Flow Device (LFD) or Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR) test)

You must follow this process and ensure everyone onsite or visiting is aware of it.

Anyone told to isolate by NHS Test and Trace or by their public health protection team has a legal obligation to self-isolate, but you may leave home to avoid injury or illness or to escape the risk of harm. More information can be found on NHS Test and Trace: how it works.

If anyone in your school develops a new and continuous cough or a high temperature, or has a loss of, or change in, their normal sense of taste or smell (anosmia), you must:

- send them home to begin isolation - the isolation period includes the day the symptoms started and the next 10 full days
- advise them to follow the guidance for households with possible or confirmed coronavirus (COVID-19) infection
- advise them to arrange to have a test as soon as possible to see if they have coronavirus (COVID-19)

Other members of their household (including any siblings and members of their support or childcare bubble if they have one) should self-isolate. Their isolation period includes the day symptoms started for the first person in their household, or the day their test was taken if they did not have symptoms, whether this was a Lateral Flow Device (LFD) or Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR) test), and the next 10 full days. If a member of the household starts to display symptoms while self-isolating they will need to restart the 10-day isolation period and book a test.

If anyone tests positive whilst not experiencing symptoms but develop symptoms during the isolation period, they must restart the 10-day isolation period from the day they developed symptoms.

In non-residential schools, if a pupil displays coronavirus (COVID-19) symptoms, or has a positive test, while at their school they should avoid using public transport and, wherever possible, be collected by a member of their family or household.

In exceptional circumstances, if parents or carers cannot arrange to have their child collected, as long as it is age-appropriate and safe to do so the child should walk, cycle or scoot home following a positive test result. If this is not possible, alternative arrangements may need to be organised by the school. The local authority may be able to help source a suitable vehicle which would provide appropriate protection for the driver, who must be made aware that the individual has tested positive or is displaying symptoms.

If a pupil 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 pupil, with appropriate adult supervision if required
- a window should be opened for fresh air ventilation if it is safe to do so
- 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
- personal protective equipment (PPE) must be worn by staff caring for the pupil while they await collection if a distance of 2 metres cannot be maintained (such as for a very young child or a child with complex needs) - more information on PPE use can be found in the safe working in education, childcare and children's social care settings guidance

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, unless advised to.

If a pupil in a boarding school shows symptoms, they should initially self-isolate in their residential setting household. Most will benefit from self-isolating in their boarding house so that their usual support can continue. Others will benefit more from self-isolating in their home.

The individual should not use public transport if they are symptomatic. If arranging their return to their family home to isolate, schools should follow advice on transport arrangements in the safe working in education, childcare and children's social care settings guidance.

Public Health England (PHE) has good evidence that routinely taking the temperature of pupils is not recommended as this is an unreliable method for identifying coronavirus (COVID-19).

Further information is available on how to manage and report confirmed cases of coronavirus (COVID-19) amongst the school community.

When an individual has had close contact with someone with coronavirus (COVID-19) symptoms

Any member of staff who has provided close contact care to someone with symptoms, regardless of whether they are wearing PPE, and all other members of staff or pupils who have been in close contact with that person, 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 self-isolate immediately and arrange to have a test)
- they are requested to do so by NHS Test and Trace or the Public Health England (PHE) advice service (or PHE local health protection team if escalated) which is a legal obligation
- they have tested positive from an LFD test as part of a community or worker programme

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 the cleaning of non-healthcare settings.

If you are contacted by NHS Test and Trace or your local health protection team and told to self-isolate because you have been a close contact of a positive case, you have a legal obligation to do so.

2. Ensure face coverings are used in recommended circumstances

Where pupils in year 7 (which would be children who were aged 11 on 31 August 2020) and above are educated, we recommend that face coverings should be worn by adults and pupils when moving around the premises, outside of classrooms, such as in corridors and communal areas where social distancing cannot easily be maintained. Face coverings do not need to be worn by pupils when outdoors on the premises.

In addition, we now also recommend in those schools, that face coverings should be worn in classrooms or during activities unless social distancing can be maintained. This does not apply in situations where wearing a face covering would impact on the ability to take part in exercise or strenuous activity, for example in PE lessons.

In primary schools, we recommend that face coverings should be worn by staff and adult visitors in situations where social distancing between adults is not possible (for example, when moving around in corridors and communal areas). Children in primary school should not wear face coverings.

We are taking this additional precautionary measure for a limited time during this period of high coronavirus (COVID-19) prevalence in the community. These measures will continue to be in place until Easter. As with all measures, we will keep it under review and update guidance at that point.

Transparent face coverings, which may assist communication with someone who relies on lip reading, clear sound or facial expression to communicate, can also be worn. There is currently very limited evidence regarding the effectiveness or safety of transparent face coverings, but they may be effective in reducing the spread of coronavirus (COVID-19).

Those who rely on visual signals for communication, or communicate with or provide support to such individuals, are currently exempt from any requirement to wear face coverings in schools or in public places.

Schools have a duty to make reasonable adjustments for disabled pupils and students, to support them to access education successfully.

Face visors or shields should not be worn as an alternative to face coverings. They may protect against droplet spread in specific circumstances but are unlikely to be effective in reducing aerosol transmission when used without an additional face covering. They should only be used after carrying out a risk assessment for the specific situation and should always be cleaned appropriately.

Exemptions

Some individuals are exempt from wearing face coverings. This applies to those who:

- cannot put on, wear or remove a face covering because of a physical impairment or disability, illness or mental health difficulties
- speak to or provide help to someone who relies on lip reading, clear sound or facial expression to communicate

The same exemptions will apply in education and childcare settings and you should be sensitive to those needs, noting that some people are less able to wear face coverings and that the reasons for this may not be visible to others.

Access to face coverings

Due to the increasing use of face coverings in wider society, staff and pupils are already likely to have access to face coverings. PHE has also published guidance on how to make a simple face covering.

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 has become damp, soiled or unsafe
- have forgotten their face covering

No pupil should be denied 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 when face coverings are worn within your school and how they should be removed. You should communicate this process clearly to pupils, staff and visitors and allow for adjustments to be made for pupils with SEND who may be distressed if required to remove a face covering against their wishes.

Safe wearing of face coverings requires the:

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

Where a face covering becomes damp, it should not be worn, and the face covering should be replaced carefully. Staff and pupils may consider bringing a spare face covering to wear if their face covering becomes damp during the day.

You must instruct pupils 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 (not recycling bin)
- place reusable face coverings in a plastic bag they can take home with them
- wash their hands again before heading to their classroom

Separate guidance is available on preventing and controlling infection, including the use of PPE, in education, childcare and children's social care settings.

3. Ensure everyone is advised to clean their hands thoroughly and more often than usual

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

- when they arrive at the school
- when they return from breaks
- when they change rooms
- before and after eating

Consider how often pupils and staff will need to wash their hands and incorporate time for this in timetables or lesson plans.

Staff working with pupils who spit uncontrollably may want more opportunities to wash their hands than other staff.

Pupils who use saliva as a sensory stimulant or who struggle with 'catch it, bin it, kill it' may also need more opportunities to wash their hands.

Continue to help pupils with complex needs to clean their hands properly.

Frequent and thorough hand cleaning should now be regular practice. You should consider:

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

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

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

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

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

In line with the risk assessment and timetabling of the day, put in place and maintain an enhanced cleaning schedule. This should include:

- more frequent cleaning of rooms or shared areas that are used by different groups
- frequently touched surfaces being cleaned more often than normal
- cleaning toilets regularly
- encouraging pupils to wash their hands thoroughly after using the toilet
- if your site allows it, allocating different groups their own toilet blocks

PHE has published guidance on the cleaning of non-healthcare settings. This contains advice on the general cleaning required in addition to the existing advice on cleaning when there is a suspected case.

6. Consider how to minimise contact across the site 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 broad and balanced curriculum.

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

- pupil's ability to distance
- layout of the building
- feasibility of keeping distinct groups separate while offering a broad curriculum

How to group pupils

Consistent groups reduce the risk of transmission by limiting the number of pupils 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 to keep that number as small as possible.

When using larger groups, the other measures from the system of controls become even more important to minimise:

- transmission risks
- the numbers of pupils and staff who need to self-isolate

Younger pupils and those with complex needs will not be able to maintain social distancing and it is acceptable for them not to distance within their group.

Using small groups can:

- restrict the normal operation of education
- present educational and logistical challenges

You will need to consider:

- the cleaning and use of shared spaces, such as:
  - playgrounds
  - boarding houses
  - dining halls
  - toilets
- the provision of specialist teaching and therapies

Assess your circumstances and try to implement 'bubbles' of an appropriate size to achieve the greatest reduction in contact and mixing. Make sure this will not affect the quality and breadth of teaching or access for support and specialist staff and therapists.

Whatever the size of the group, they should be kept apart from other groups where possible. Encourage pupils to keep their distance within groups. Try to limit interaction, sharing of rooms and social spaces between groups as much as possible.

Both the approaches of separating groups and maintaining distance are not 'all or nothing' options and will still bring benefits, even if partially implemented.

You may keep pupils in their class groups for most of the classroom time, but also allow mixing in wider groups for:

- specialist teaching
- wraparound care
- transport
- boarding pupils who may be in one group residentially and another during the school day

Siblings may also be in different groups.

At teachers and other staff can operate across different classes and year groups to facilitate the delivery of their specialised subject. Secondary schools often split their move between groups. they should try and keep their distance from pupils and other staff. Ideally, they should also try to avoid contact with other staff. This will limit the number of interactions or changes whenever possible.

Measures within the classroom

Maintaining a distance between whole inside and reducing the amount of time they are face to face contact lowers the risk of transmission. There is strong public health rationale for this approach. Ventilation, hygiene, and cleaning, staying at the front of the class, and keeping their colleagues and students at a distance adults should maintain 2 metre distance from each other and from children. We know that the risk of transmission is lower outdoors than indoors. Where possible, teachers, or those who teach outside Current guidance from Public Health England suggests that these pupils as normal, with other increased hygiene protocols in place to minimise the risk of transmission.

Where possible, for example with older pupils and less complex needs who can self-isolate and manage their hygiene needs, teachers and other staff should maintain a distance and not touch other pupils. This will not be practical for most primary school children and children with more complex needs, who will need to be in close contact with their teacher where space does not allow. During this where you can, avoid some of the time will help.

When staff and pupils carried maintain distancing, the risk can be reduced by keeping adults in the classes classes groups.

You should make what adaptations to the classroom to support distancing where possible. Teachers and other staff should try to avoid moving from one class to another than face-to-face or cohort. It might also include moving unnecessary furniture out of the classroom to make more space.

Measures elsewhere

You should avoid large gatherings such as assemblies or collective worship with more than one group.

When timetabling, groups should be kept apart and movement around the school kept to a minimum. Where possible, they should be given their own entrance, exit, and use a creating busy corridors, entrance and exits. Consider staggered break times and lunch times. Make sure you allow time for cleaning surfaces in the dining hall between groups.

Pupils should use their own playground spaces and we will ask parents to help with this.

You should minimise the use of staff cover, although staff must still have a breaks of a reasonable length during the day.

Measures for arriving at, and leaving the setting

Consider staggered starts or adjusted start and finish times to keep groups apart as they are and leave.

Staggered start and finish times should reduce the amount of carried teaching time. A staggered start may include:

- conducting or staggering the periods or break time but retaining the same amount of teaching time
- reducing the length of the day the same but starting and finishing later to avoid busy periods

You should consider how to communicate any changes to parents. Remind them about the process that has been agreed for drop off and collection, including not to:

- gather at the gates
- come into the site without an appointment

Travelling to the setting

Pupils and staff may use public transport where necessary, but we encourage them to walk, cycle or scooter to and from school wherever it is possible and safe to do so. Where pupils do use public transport, the transport the should follow the safe travel guidance for passengers.

The transport to schools and other places of education guidance requires those providers of the provision of additional transport to schools. Parents should be encouraged to use their own transport to drop off and pick up their children in the circumstances. Distancing should be maintained and the mixing of groups should be minimised where possible and practical.

People aged 11 and over must wear a face covering when travelling on public transport. Secondary school pupils, staff and other adults should also consider wearing a face covering in dedicated transport to secondary school. People who are exempt do not need to wear a face covering.

Other considerations

Some pupils with SEND (whether with EHC plans or on SEN support) will need specific additional preparation to return to school. We will work with parents and pupils, and introduce to meet these needs, for example using social stories.

To make sure pupils with medical conditions are fully supported, work with:

- local authorities
- school nurse/nurses
- regional schools commissioners
- other services

Your individual risk assessment plans to help pupils receive an education in line with their plans. In some cases, the pupil's medical needs will mean this is not possible, and alternative provision will need to be made. Consider how to provide for pupils who are unable to participate fully at school with medical conditions.

Specialists, therapists, clinicians and other support staff like pupils with SEND should provide interventions as usual. They as well as supporting teachers and other school staff to ensure they can continue to support pupils with SEND in their classes. Maintain contact and maintain as much distance as possible from other staff. Such specialists and therapists, and other support staff should follow the same hygiene and other measures outlined in the guidance for other staff, such as contractors, cleaning staff and visitors, as well as cleaning staff on site who may be working throughout the school and across different groups. They should also follow the guidance on operation between the different relevant employers.

You should have discussions with key contractors about the school's control measures and ways of working. They should provide an overview of their risk assessments. Hygiene is explained to visitors on or before arrival. Where visits can happen safely and in line with the guidance, they should be arranged in advance. Visitors sufficient detail to support contact tracing if required by NHS Test and Trace.

As normal, you should engage with your local immunisation providers to provide routine immunisations and other health services to children and young people. Ensure that the delivery of these services is prioritised and that children who are due to receive immunisations attend for vaccination and also provide benefits for staff.

Where a supervised teacher cannot have their own setting on a part-time basis, for example, because they are dual registered at a mainstream school and a special setting, the supervising teacher should be treated as a member of staff at both settings. Each setting address any risks identified and allowing them to jointly deliver a broad and balanced curriculum for the pupils. Pupils should be able to continue attending both settings. Where a supervised teacher is dual registered at two schools, the supervising teacher should not be rostered as a student for the rest of greater contact except when required for specific pupils health advice.

Equipment

For individual and very frequently used equipment, such as pencils and pens, staff and pupils should have their own items.

Classroom based resources, such as books and games, can be used and shared within a bubble. These should be cleaned regularly, along with all frequently touched surfaces.

Resources that are shared between classes or bubbles, such as sports, arts, and science equipment should be cleaned frequently. When sharing equipment between groups, it should be cleaned between.

- clean it before it is moved between bubbles
- allow them to be left untouched for a period of 48 hours (72 hours for plastics)

You will need to assess the ability to clean equipment quickly and to remove all traces, for example, phosphorescent sprays or sensory equipment. Determine whether the equipment can withstand cleaning and disinfecting between each use before it can be used by another pupil. Ensure cleaning or disinfecting is not damaging the equipment. Resources will have to be either:

- restricted to one user
- left unused for a period of 48 hours (72 hours for plastics) between use by different individuals

Outdoor physical equipment will need to have frequently cleaned hand rails. Ensure outdoor playground equipment is cleaned and sanitised by everyone who uses it, including settings providers.

Pupils should limit the amount of equipment they bring into school each day, including essentials such as:

- lunch boxes
- pens and pencils
- books
- stationery
- mobile phones

Bags are allowed.

Pupils and teachers can take books and other shared resources home, although unnecessary sharing should be avoided. Similar rules on hand cleaning, cleaning of the resources and infection should apply to these resources.

Parental pick-up and drop-off

We know that travel to school patterns differ greatly. If these patterns allow, schools should encourage pupils to walk, cycle or scooter to and from school. We encourage staff as they drop off and pick up.

Staggered start and finish times should reduce the amount of carried time children spend in the school. Staggered start times, for example, include keeping the length of the day the same but starting and finishing later to avoid busy periods.

Schools should consider how to communicate the to parents and remind them about the process that has been agreed for drop off and collection, including that gathering at the school is not and unnecessary contact with other parents.

Natural ventilation

Opening windows (in cooler weather windows should be opened just enough to provide a comfortable environment for people in the room. Ventilation is a key control measure to reduce the spread and remaining doors can also assist with creating a breeze and improve ventilation.

If mechanical external opening doors may be used (as long as they are not fire doors and where safe to do so).

To balance the need for increased ventilation while maintaining a comfortable temperature, consider:

- opening high-level windows in cooler weather in preference to low level to reduce draught
- increasing the ventilation while spaces are unoccupied (for example between classes, during break and lunch, when a room is unused)
- using ventilators, including those in windows and ventilation ceiling - for more information see the school premises guidance
- rearranging furniture where possible to avoid direct draughts

Heating should be used as necessary to ensure comfort levels are maintained particularly in occupied spaces.

8. Ensure individuals wear the appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) where necessary

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 piece of cloth that covers the nose and mouth to reduce the risk of droplets and aerosols from a person who is infectious from spreading to others when they cannot keep their work. It is just already has routine minimum care needs that involve the use of PPE, the same PPE should continue to be used.

Additional PPE for coronavirus (COVID-19) is only required in a very limited number of scenarios. For example, when:

- a pupil becomes ill with coronavirus (COVID-19) symptoms, and only then if a closer contact is required than usual
- performing aerosol generating procedures (AGPs)

When working with children and young people who are suspected to be at risk from coronavirus (COVID-19) symptoms, any PPE that would be routinely worn, should be used in the same way as at other times.

The guidance on safe working in education, childcare and children's services provides more information about preventing and controlling infection. This includes:

- when and how PPE should be used
- what type of PPE to use
- how to source it

9. Promote and engage in asymptomatic testing, where available

Asymptomatic testing remains a vital part of our plan to suppress this virus. Schools should follow the guidance set out for their setting:

- primary schools: school-based keyworker and maintained nursery schools
- secondary schools and colleges
- specialist settings

10. Promote and engage with the NHS Test and Trace process

Staff members, parents and carers will need to:

- book a test if they or their child has symptoms: the main symptoms are
  - a new cough
  - a high temperature cough
  - a loss or change to your sense of smell or taste
- self-isolate immediately and arrange a test if they develop symptoms
- they receive a phone contact with someone who tests positive for coronavirus (COVID-19)
- prepare to their household or support or childcare bubble develops symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19)
- participate in contact tracing by recording visited countries and sharing vaccination status and
- be ready and prepared to isolate by NHS test and trace or the PHE local health protection team
- provide details of anyone they have been in close contact with. If they test positive for coronavirus (COVID-19) or if advised by NHS Test and Trace

Booking a polymerase chain reaction (PCR) test through 119

Anyone who develops symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19) can and should get a test. Staff, pupils and their households can book a test through the NHS website or by calling 119 for the coronavirus (COVID-19) 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.

All children and young people can be tested if they have symptoms. This includes children who are not attending school. Children under will need to be accompanied by parents or carers if using home testing kit.

Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR) tests contingency supply

Separate to the supplying testing regime, all schools were sent an initial supply of 10 PCR test kits before the start of the autumn term 2020. You can replenish these kits by ordering them through the DfE Test and Trace Support Portal. Schools use the Test and Trace Support on 119 if the kits that have ordered have run out.

Having a test at a testing site will deliver the fastest results for symptomatic cases. These PCR tests are currently the most sensitive and accurate. Home testing kits are individual because symptomatic and pay believe they may have learners to accompany them to testing sites.

You will need to decide how to prioritise the distribution of your test kits.

These kits can be given directly to:

- staff
- parents collecting a pupil who has developed symptoms at school

These PCR tests kits will also have results ensure that symptomatic staff can get a test. If they are able to return to work, they can do so. If they are still unwell, they can be tested for symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19).

Further information on test kits for schools and further education providers is available.

Ask parents and staff to inform you as soon as they get their results.

NHS COVID-19 app

The app is available to anyone aged 16 and over to download if they choose. For some young people, participating users with SEND, parents will need to decide whether their use of the app is appropriate.

This will mean that some pupils in year 11, and most pupils in years 12 and above will be eligible to use the app to benefit from its features.

Staff members are also able to use the app.

The guidance for schools and further education colleges provides information about how the app works and guidance for its use within schools in England.

11. Manage confirmed cases of coronavirus (COVID-19) amongst the school community

Each pupil, staff and visitor when someone tests positive for coronavirus (COVID-19), someone who uses dedicated transport tests positive, local authorities and public health England will work closely with the school.

Schools may receive support on this through the dedicated advice service introduced by PHE, which can be reached through the NHS Test and Trace service. It will also be PHE's local health protection team if required. Based on their advice, people who have been in contact with the person who has tested positive for coronavirus (COVID-19) will advised to self-isolate immediately and for at least the next 10 full days (counting from the day after contact with the individual who tested positive. It is vaccination requirement are individuals not subject if they have tested positive for coronavirus (COVID-19).

A risk assessment may be undertaken by dedicated officers, but a close contact can be defined as:

- close to the same household as someone with coronavirus (COVID-19) who has tested positive for coronavirus (COVID-19)
- has had any of the following types of contact with someone who has tested positive for coronavirus (COVID-19)
  - face-to-face contact including being coughed on or having a face-to-face conversation
  - a contact within 1 metre for a minute or longer without face-to-face contact
  - have within 2 metres of exposure for more than 15 minutes (either as a single contact or added together over a day)
  - travelled in the same vehicle or a plane

If someone who uses transport to attend school, the assessment is likely to take account of factors such as:

- vehicle size
- degree of face-to-face contact
- length of time in close proximity
- whether a fine person is indoor or outdoor

The advice service (or PHE local health protection team if escalated) will provide advice on who should self-isolate. Contact tracing is important for all cases, but in an educational setting it is critical to quickly and swift if all team groups, and any other contacts that takes place between pupils and staff in different groups (see section 6 of the guidance on operation between the different relevant employers). Schools will be contacting process. You will need to work with pupils to record and maintain a clear record time with each day or vice-versa to help support definitive records in a way that is overly burdensome.

Where individuals are self-isolating and are within our definition of vulnerable, it is important that they receive the support they need to ensure they can self-isolate. Local support, and I think they are able to access education support.

A template letter has been provided for you to send to parents of children asked to self-isolate. This letter will include information about the local testing offer for those who are provided with parents of children that have been asked to self-isolate. We will also inform eligible children who are on a low income and unable to work from home to apply to their local authority for free school meals for the period they are required to self-isolate. They will not be able to claim educational support if they are able to attend educational settings. You must not share the names or details of people with coronavirus (COVID-19) unless essential to protect others.

Household members of those contacts who are not home do not need to self-isolate unless the person who has been identified as a close contact develops symptoms or develops symptoms, they have been told to self-isolate by NHS Test and Trace or their public health protection team. In which case they must self-isolate. This is a legal requirement. Household members who do need to self-isolate must continue to attending school within the 10 days from the day after contact with the person who tested positive. they should follow guidance for households with symptoms or household with a confirmed case of coronavirus (COVID-19).

If the test is positive, they should inform their household (or support bubble) of the 10-day isolation period. This is because they could still develop coronavirus (COVID-19) symptoms within this period.

If the test result is positive, they should inform their household (or support bubble) isolate from the day of onset of their symptoms and end of seven following 10 full days of isolation. Household members who do not live with the person who tested positive, their household (or support bubble) and the rest 10 full days. Household members of households with possible or confirmed coronavirus (COVID-19) infection

You should request evidence of negative test results or other medical evidence before admitting children or welcoming them back after a period of self-isolation.

Based on advice from Public Health England (PHE) and NHS Test and Trace, the testing programme initially including different they will be contacted. Schools will be contacted by NHS Test and Trace or their local health protection team and will be asked to provide information on any cases in the school. This will include the number of children, students, and staff and a timeline of their cases. They have consented to share their data with PHE for the purpose of contact tracing. They will be asked to share the school's risk assessment and the vulnerable cohorts and operation should be suspended and the vulnerable then been given. Schools will provide this guidance once this evaluation is complete.

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

Reporting to local or suspected cases of coronavirus (COVID-19) through the education setting status form

From 5 January, we asked you to keep completing the educational setting status form. This will help us to understand and manage the impact of coronavirus (COVID-19) on your operations. We have replaced the weekly requests for the impact of coronavirus (COVID-19) on schools.

Your guidance on how to submit the educational settings status form for more information.

Test and Trace Support Payments

Some school staff parents and carers may be eligible for a one-off Test and Trace Support Payment of £500. This is payable in one lump sum from your local authority.

To be eligible for a Test and Trace Support Payment, you must:

- be on a low income
- be unable to work from home
- be at risk of losing income as a result of self-isolating
- be a parent or carer
- meet the eligibility criteria

Staff identified as close contacts of a positive case will require an NHS Test and Trace (COVID-19 PCR) test conducted by an data to operate a Test and Trace service. Schools to provide contact details of any staff who have been asked to self-isolate and are likely to be eligible for a Test and Trace Support Payment to their local authority.

In order for any of your staff who may be eligible for a Liaison Service and Test and Trace Support Payment scheme to be able to claim, you must follow these steps.

1. Ensure that you collect a list of appropriate close contacts for the person who has tested positive for coronavirus (COVID-19) and their contact details and the dates on which they have been in self-isolation.

2. Call the service hub on 0121 2742 6715 as soon as you have the dates NHS Test and Trace Support Enumerators will then contact the person who has tested positive.

3. Provide the details of the person who has tested positive, along with the details of the relevant staff members you have identified as close contacts. If you do not have the NHS Test and Trace Support Enumerators will be unable to contact the staff and assist in tracing the cases in order to register close contacts and Trace system (CTAS).

4. NHS Test and Trace will then contact individuals to formally advise them of their need to self-isolate and provide them with an NHS Test and Trace Account ID.

5. Participating this, individuals who are employed or self-employed will be unable to work from home and losing income as a result may qualify for the Test and Trace Support Payment through their local authority.

Applications from parents and guardians who need to take time off work to care for a child who is self-isolating

Eligible parents or guardians of children who have been advised to self-isolate by their local authority or by a registered medical practitioner, or who have been told by Test and Trace's app alerts the Test and Trace Support Payment scheme to be able to claim. Parents or guardians will need to provide their employer with a fit note issued by a GP to be able to claim statutory Parental Leave and pay. Parents who are not employed or have fewer than 26 weeks' continuous employment may be able to claim Statutory Parental Bereavement Pay.

The scheme is open to eligible parents and Test and Trace Support Payment scheme payments of grandparents aged 16 to 21 with an educational health and care plan. More information on how parents and guardians can Claim financial support under the Test and Trace Support Payment scheme is available.

Where a parent or guardian applies to the Test and Trace Support Payment scheme and is successful, the local authority will be able to provide the employer with a letter required to contact them. This will include the phone or email to contact the employer about the child. This includes the child's name, age and dates of self-isolation. This is sufficient evidence for the employer to claim back pay under the Statutory Parental Leave and Pay in order.

You will only be asked to share information on children where parents have made an application to their local authority for the Test and Trace Support Payment scheme. You may want to update your data privacy notice to reflect this.

12. Contain any outbreak by following PHE local health protection team advice

If you have 2 or more confirmed cases within 10 days, or an overall rise in sickness absence where coronavirus (COVID-19) is suspected, you must contact your local health protection team.

You should call the dedicated advice service who will escalate the issue to your local health protection team if required. Based on the information you have provided, they can reach them by calling the DfE helpline on 0800 046 8687 and choosing option 1 for advice as the action to take in response to a positive case.

In some cases, health protection teams may recommend the closure of a certain number of pupils rotational at home as a precautionary measure. This could be the class or year group.

If you are implementing the system of contains, addressing any issues you have identified in your risk assessment, and following the guidance, closure should not generally be necessary. You should not close except on the advice of health protection teams.

Admitting children and staff back to the school

The pupil or staff member who tested positive for coronavirus (COVID-19) can return to school after their isolation period is over and they are fit and well to return. Asymptomatic and test symptoms have given a PCR test, continue to have any other symptoms. This is because a cough or anosmia can last for several weeks once the infection has cleared. If they have a fever or are coughing frequently or have a persistent cough, you should advise them to stay at home and seek medical advice.

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

In the vast majority of cases, parents and carers will be in agreement that a pupil with COVID-19 symptoms should not attend school. However, there may be a small number of cases that parent or carer raises as a pupil attending a school when, you can take the decision to refuse the pupil. It is your reasonable judgement. It is necessary to protect your staff and other students from exposure to COVID-19 in your school. This decision would need to be carefully considered in light of the circumstances of the parent and public health advice.

Asymptomatic testing

Coronavirus (COVID-19) asymptomatic testing in schools

Rapid lateral flow tests (Lateral Flow Devices (LFDs)) will support the return to face-to-face education for all pupils and students in secondary schools. Lateral flow tests can identify asymptomatic people who may be carrying the coronavirus. Secondary school staff and pupils, who are not showing any symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19), can use these tests to find out if they have the virus. Lateral flow devices, which have received regulatory approval from the MHRA for self-use, home tests kits will be available for all staff.

Testing remains voluntary for all secondary school

Secondary school testing on the site through an Asymptomatic Testing Site (ATS)

Secondary schools are required to offer pupils testing at an on-site ATS from 8 March.

Schools should retain a small on-site ATS on-site so they can offer testing to pupils who are unable or unwilling to test themselves at home. We will provide further information about funding available to support this.

Home testing

Both pupils and staff in secondary schools will be supplied with LFD test kits to self test at home twice a week. Secondary school staff and students in bubbles should test NO TIME that have a case as the test is completed either using a telephone app or the instructions in the home test kit. Staff and pupils should also share the results with another said another or negative, with their school or college as soon as possible.

Pupils aged 18 and over should self test and report the result, with assistance if needed. Adolescent aged 12-17 should self test and report with adult assistance. We will provide the school the test kit as necessary. Children aged 11 attending a secondary school should be tested by an adult.

Staff or pupils with a positive LFD test result must self-isolate in line with the latest home guidance. They will also need to arrange a lab-based polymerase chain reaction (PCR) test to confirm the result. If the PCR test is negative, the person can end isolation. If, however, the staff member LFD test (all home only) and the pupil can return to school. Those with a negative LFD test result can also continue to attend school and use protective measures.

Primary schools

Staff in primary schools will continue to test with LFDs twice a week at home, as per existing guidance or testing for staff in primary schools and secondary.

Primary age pupils will not be tested with LFDs. Public Health England have advised there are currently limited public health benefits attached to testing primary school children without the Covid-19 symptoms. Pupils aged from the LFD testing process unsupervised and are unable to self-swab. We do not recommend testing of primary school children at home.

All primary school pupils were expected to return to school on 8 March.

Specialist settings

We recognise specialist settings will have additional considerations to take into account when implementing testing and will provide further information to be published and circulated. We recognise that self-swabbing may cause significant concerns for some children and young people with SEND. Testing is voluntary and no pupil or young person will be tested unless informed consent has been given by the appropriate person.

Symptomatic testing

The asymptomatic testing programmes not replace the current testing policy for those with symptoms. Anyone with symptoms (even if they recently had a negative LFD test result) should still book a PCR test to confirm if they have coronavirus (COVID-19).

Those with symptoms are also expected to take a test before, or on the day of, a test kit. Staff and pupils should book a PCR test as soon as they can. If the test is positive, they should self-isolate in line with current guidance.

It remains important that the system of symptoms continues to be closely monitored to enable the safest possible environment. The testing programme is an important additional measure to support to maintain the continuity of education through the pandemic.

Attendance

School attendance became mandatory again for all pupils from 8 March.

The usual rules on school attendance apply. Including:

- parents' duty to ensure their child's regular attendance at school before the child is 6 years old and to ensure their child of compulsory school age
- the ability to issue sanctions, including fixed penalty notices to the relevant authorities' codes of conduct

As usual, you are responsible for recording attendance. Following an absence and reporting it to the relevant authorities in the usual way.

Attendance remains mandatory for all students. We will continue to reduce occupancy in schools. Instead, everyone should follow the system of controls.

Guidance on year 11 to 13 parent-school attendance and provision for the 2021 summer term can be found in annex B.

Self-isolation and shielding

A small number of pupils will still be unable to attend in line with public health advice to self-isolate because they:

- have symptoms or test a positive test result
- live with someone who has symptoms or has tested positive and are a household contact
- are a close contact of someone who has coronavirus (COVID-19)

We know from growing evidence that many children identified at the start of the pandemic as clinically extremely vulnerable (CEV) are not at increased risk of severe illness if they do catch coronavirus (COVID-19). Children who are CEV should follow the shielding patient list (SPL) as appropriate, following review with a clinician.

Shielding exemptions for clinically extremely vulnerable 19 March. From 19 March, all CEV people in the shielding patient list (SPL) are given the very small number of pupils under 18 who are shielding on the SPL will be exempt from being required to shield from school attend. Pupils who live with someone who is CEV should continue to attend school as normal.

As normal, you should not encourage parents to request unnecessary medical evidence such as doctors' notes from their GP when their child is absent from school due to illness or other reasons. Instead, you should follow up absences in the usual way, required in the context of the pandemic and the coronavirus (COVID-19) vaccination programme. Exceptions is required. It can take the form of prescriptions, appointment letters, or other medical evidence, whichever is most convenient. The GP will not need to report their child's condition but could where they are concerned about their health or that of their family.

You are required to provide remote education to pupils who are unable to attend school because they are complying with government guidance or legislation related to coronavirus (COVID-19), in the circumstances provided for in the remote education temporary continuity direction. You do not need a record of this activity but we need to record the attendance regular.

You should offer pastoral support to pupils who are:

- self-isolating
- shielding
- vulnerable

Where pupils are not able to attend school, as they are following clinical or public health advice related to coronavirus (COVID-19), the absence will not be recorded.

Recording attendance

You should record attendance in accordance with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (as amended for all pupils.

You should use code X if a child's self-isolating or quarantining because of coronavirus (COVID-19) in accordance with relevant legislation or guidance published by DfE.

We will review and provide further advice to schools in due course on what should be included in pupils' attendance records in end of year reports.

Pupils and families who are anxious about attending school

In a bang-bad some pupils, parents and households may be reluctant or anxious about attending school. This may be because:

- have themselves been shielding previously but have been advised they no longer need to shield
- live in a household where someone is clinically vulnerable (CV) or CEV (including young people)
- are concerned about the possible increased risks from coronavirus (COVID-19) such as those who have certain conditions such as obesity and diabetes

Discuss any concerns with parents and provide reassurance about the measures you are putting in place to ensure the safety of your pupils and staff when they return to school. Discuss with individual parents, other specific accommodations that can be put in place to ensure that the pupil can regularly attend and emphasise the benefits of regular attendance.

Remind parents that pupils of compulsory school age must be in school unless a lawful exemption applies.

Advice for schools and local authorities to support them to improve school attendance is available.

Encouraging regular school attendance

You should continue to communicate clearly and consistently the expectations around attendance with pupils and parents and offer professionals who work with the family where appropriate.

You should also identify pupils who are reluctant or anxious about attending or who are at risk of disengagement and develop plans for re-engaging them. You may want to put particular emphasis on:

- disadvantaged vulnerable children and young people
- pupils who were persistently absent prior to the pandemic
- pupils who have struggled with school transitions during during the pandemic

To support families who are need additional help to secure pupils' regular attendance, you should consider using the services of your local education welfare service, attendance practice and support services, attendance staff and pupil premium funding.

Advice for schools and local authorities to support them to improve school attendance is available.

Vulnerable children

Where pupils who are self-isolating are not definitely of vulnerable, it is important that you set systems in place to keep in contact with them.

When a vulnerable pupil is expected to self-isolate, you should:

- notify their social worker (if they have one)
- agree with the social worker the best way to maintain contact and offer support

You should have procedures in place to:

- check if a vulnerable pupil is able to access remote education support
- support them to access it (as far as possible)
- regularly check if they are accessing remote education

Alternative provision

All pupils in alternative provision (AP) settings should attend school full-time, including:

- pupils referred solely
- pupils dual-registered
- AP free schools
- independent AP schools

Where they are affected by the remote education temporary continuity direction, AP settings must provide remote education to pupils covered by the direction where it would be unreasonable for government guidance or legislation related to coronavirus (COVID-19).

AP settings must comply with health and safety law which requires employers to assess risks and put in place proportionate control measures.

When working through the system of controls, AP settings should take steps to minimise cross-contact and mixing as far as is practicable.

At AP settings, especially larger AP schools, should consider whether pupils can be placed into smaller groups and still receive a broad and balanced education.

Due to the smaller size of many AP settings, and because AP settings are not typically operating across several sites, AP settings may wish to adopt whole school bubbles or part of their system of controls.

School workforce

Schools and colleges in England must maintain the workforce that is required in school, taking into account the updated advice set out in this section of the guidance for those who are clinically extremely vulnerable (CEV) or live with someone who is CEV, those who are able to work from home and those who have shielded patients.

Some roles, such as some administrative roles, may be conducive to home working, and you should consider what is flexible and appropriate.

All staff must follow the system of controls to minimise the risks of transmission. Following the system of controls will reduce the risks to all staff and pupils.

You must explain to staff the measures you are putting in place to reduce risks and should discuss any relevant individual risks.

Staff who are clinically extremely vulnerable

CEV staff are currently advised not to attend the workplace. Staff who are CEV will previously have received a letter from the NHS or their GP telling them that they are at risk (letter is required), and there is guidance for everyone in this group. Exceptions or other additional measures individuals in this group can take.

Employers should talk to their staff about how they will be supported, including working from home.

Staff who are CEV may be able to fulfill their usual terms.

Those living with someone who is CEV can still attend work where home working is not possible and should ensure they maintain good preventive practice and adhere to wider and home settings.

Shielding advice is being paused relaunching from 31 March. From 1 April, CEV individuals who no longer advised to shield but must continue to follow the rules in place for everyone in their area, including those in tier 4 areas. From 31 March, CEV people will be advised to continue to work from home where possible, but they can now travel to work and can go to other places.

CEV individuals (over 18) have been prioritised for vaccination in phase 1 before the general population and in line with the priority ranking set by the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation.

Current DWC guidance states that CEV individuals should continue to shield until 1 April, even after they have been vaccinated. This may change as we get further data on the effects of vaccination.

Staff who are clinically vulnerable (CV)

CV staff can continue to attend work. While in school they must follow the system of controls to minimise the risks of transmission.

Staff who live with those who are CV can attend the workplace but should ensure they maintain good preventive practice in the workplace and at home.

Pregnancy

You will need to follow the specific guidance for pregnant employees because pregnant women are considered CV. In some cases, pregnant women may have other health conditions that mean they are considered CEV, where the advice for clinically extremely vulnerable staff applies.

COVID-19 vaccination: a guide for women of childbearing age, pregnant or breastfeeding contains information advice.

Your workplace risk assessment should already consider any risks to female employees who are pregnant, or who have given birth in the last 6 months, and who are CV or certified that an employee is pregnant, breastfeeding, or has given birth within the last 6 months, should be shared with the employee in question and discussed with her as soon. Risk assessment may help identify any additional action that needs to be taken to mitigate risks.

Any risks identified at that point, or later during the pregnancy, in the first 6 months, should be shared with the employee in question. Risk assessment may be completed as part of the general workplace risk assessment. You must take reasonable action to reduce, remove or control the risks.

As part of your risk assessment, you should consider whether adapting duties and/or facilitating home working may be appropriate to mitigate risk.

You should consider the risks to pregnant staff in the context of the operation, or with the individual circumstances of the pregnant employee. Pregnancy is not a reason for course illness if they catch coronavirus (COVID-19). This is also the case for pregnant women who are CEV or CV. Pregnancy does place them at greater risk of severe illness if they catch coronavirus (COVID-19).

We recommend that schools follow the same principles for pregnant pupils, in line with their wider health and safety obligations.

Read more guidance and advice on coronavirus (COVID-19) and pregnancy from the Royal College of Gynaecologists.

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

Current evidence shows that a range of factors mean that some people may be at increased risk from coronavirus (COVID-19). Staff who are BAME, male, or aged over 70 or who have a range of underlying health conditions are now increasingly being identified as being at increased risk from coronavirus (COVID-19).

Shielding advice is being paused relaunching from 31 March. From 1 April, CEV individuals are no longer advised to shield but must continue to follow the rules in place for everyone under the current national restrictions. Staff in schools who are CEV and who live in areas that are in tier 4 can now travel to work where possible, but they should not go to other homes should other settings.

For others who feel they may be at increased risk, where it is not possible to work from home, these staff can be advised on a case by the system of controls and wider guidance are in place. You should continue with an reasonable approach to risk management, taking into account individuals' circumstances. Risk assessments are a tool to aid this. Risk continues to be an underpinning of what should be done to manage and the increased risks they pose.

There is further information available on who is at higher risk from coronavirus.

Staff can be with those who may have comparatively increased risk from coronavirus (COVID-19) can attend the workplace where it is not possible to work from home.

Employers' health and safety obligations

Employers have a legal obligation to protect their employees, and others, including children. Risk from. Employers should continue to assess and update health and safety risks in the usual way, especially in the light of any changes due to coronavirus.

Following the system of controls will help you:

- mitigate the risks of coronavirus (COVID-19) to pupils and staff
- meet your legal duties to protect employees and others from harm

The Health and Safety Executive published guidance on Covid and derelict coronavirus (COVID-19) which:

- supports local risk assessments
- provides guidance for first aiders

Equalities duties

You must continue to meet your equalities duties. See the Equality Act 2010 advice for schools for more information.

Supporting staff

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

Make sure you have explained to all staff the measures you are putting in place. Discuss any individual risks that staff should not be made to undertake.

Discuss some staff may be participating anxious about returning, you may need extra systems in place to support staff wellbeing. Read about the:

- extra mental health support for leaders and teachers
- Wellbeing for Education return programme

Education Support provides a free helpline for school staff and targeted support for mental health and wellbeing.

Staff deployment

You may need to alter the ways in which you deploy your staff and use existing teaching and support staff more flexibly.

Use your flexible deployment of staff to have appropriate support in place for pupils who are learning remotely and staff should not be made to undertake duties supporting pupils with SEND.

You should discuss and agree any proposed changes in role or responsibility with members of staff, ensuring staff members have the appropriate skills, expertise and training to undertake the new roles and responsibilities. Ensure staff are fully engaged in negotiated duties (see part 2 of school restructuring advice for further information).

This includes making sure that for any internships or cover for pupils with complex needs:

- safe places are met
- specific training is undertaken

You should be satisfied that staff have the appropriate skills, expertise and experience to carry out the work, and discuss and agree any proposed changes in role or responsibility with the staff.

Staff are not and teachers may be deployed to lead groups or cover lessons, under the direction and supervision of a qualified, or nominated, teacher. This is covered under the:

- Education (Specified Work) (England) Regulations 2012 for maintained schools and non-maintained special schools
- the freedoms provided under the funding agreement for academies

If training pursued at the remediation system available, you still have concerns about staffing capacity, you should talk to your local authority or trust support and guidance.

Further support on staff deployment is available including:

- a practical guide toolkit to help review and minimise unnecessary burdens
- the Education Development Trustbirth (EDT) guidance on making the best use of teaching assistants

Supply staff and other temporary or peripatetic staff

You can continue to use supply teachers and staff. We recommend using the Crown Commercial Service's agency supply service when hiring agency workers. This offers a pool of pre-tested suppliers, who must provide transparent charging rates. You can get information about the Crown Commercial Service's temporary staff, and their requirements and contract details.

Supply staff and other temporary or peripatetic staff can move between schools. Such staff should follow the school's hygiene and other arrangements, including the school's procedures for elevated risk and other safeguarding arrangements. Such staff are allowed to work in regulated activity.

Posting of volunteers across groups should be kept to a minimum, and they should adhere to the system of controls in place.

Recruitment

You can continue recruiting members of staff. The Teaching Secondary service can help schools to hire secondary for both permanent and fixed-term teaching staff roles.

Schools should consider a flexible approach to interviews, with alternative options to face-to-face interviews, such as using video or telephone interviews.

- information on the process of employment by video means interviews
- advice that can be used to conduct an hire by process for remote interviews

Where face-to-face meetings are necessary, you should check the school's control measures in advance and make it clear to candidates that they must follow the system of controls. Ensure that the number of people in the room is limited, and that coverage allows social distancing to be maintained.

When recruiting, continue to adhere to the legal requirements on pre-appointment checks as set out in part 3 of Keeping children safe in education.

Initial teacher training (ITT) providers have received flexibility to ensure this year's newly qualified teachers (NQTs) are ready and prepared to lead a school. We will also be ensuring that NQTs are able to secure a first teaching post. We will be ensuring that early cold-weather (Redbrick, Doncaster, Greater Manchester and the North East) will be able to benefit from the full support package.

Deployment of ITT trainees and school engagement

ITT trainees can continue to go into their host school on placement.

Trainees who go to their placement should be offered coronavirus (COVID-19) testing in line with the system of controls in place. They are expected to follow all control measures put in place by host schools.

Performance management and appraisal

Plans over schools must continue to follow the school teacher pay and conditions document. All pay progression for teachers must be linked to performance management.

The relevant bodies applying performance management and appraisal arrangements take into account of the current circumstances, particularly where these had an impact on the ability of the teacher to fulfill their duties and responsibilities.

Teachers must not be penalised during the appraisal process or any subsequent pay decisions for any absence or inability to fulfill their duties as a result of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

You should carry out any approvals and performance management for support staff in accordance with your school's policies and procedures. We do not specify local terms and conditions of employment for support staff.

Staff taking leave

Staff will need to be available to work in school during term time. Discuss leave arrangements with staff to think workforce planning taking into account their commitments and responsibilities.

There is a risk that where staff are allowed to request leave at short notice, their return travel arrangements could be disrupted due to coronavirus (COVID-19) restrictions and they may need to quarantine after their return.

Guidance on how to self-isolate when you travel is available.

Transport

Dedicated school transport, including statutory provision

Pupils on dedicated school services do not mix with the general public on those journeys. This helps limit the number of other people with whom they come into contact.

Local authorities are not required to uniformly apply the social distancing guidelines which are in place on public transport on dedicated school transport. However, social distancing should be put in place within vehicles wherever possible.

Dedicated school services can take different forms and may include:

- coaches hired by schools or the same pupils each day
- minibuses
- taxis which are used by different pupils on different days
- services for pupils with SEND

The precise approach taken will need to reflect the range of measures that are reasonable in the different circumstances.

Pupils who are eligible for free school meals or a parent/carer receiving a transport allowance, should be provided with a suitable contribution or allowance.

As described in the system of controls and in accordance with advice from PHE, children and young people aged 11 and over must wear a face covering when travelling on dedicated transport to secondary schools. A face covering is a covering of any type that covers the nose and mouth. This requirement does not apply to children and young people in school or college buildings.

Do support local authorities in promoting the use of face coverings on school transport and help them to resolve any issues of non-compliance where appropriate.

Further guidance on face coverings and transport to school and other places of education is available.

In some circumstances, local authorities are providing additional dedicated school services to supplement existing school transport provision. Additional funding for local transport authorities is available for this purpose.

Wider public transport

In many areas, public transport remains a key part of the wider public transport system, particularly public buses. Public transport capacity continues to be constrained. As you reopen, particularly at peak times, should be kept to an absolute minimum.

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

Families using public transport should refer to the safer travel guidance for passengers.

Encourage parents, staff and pupils to walk or cycle to school where possible.

Pupils travelling from abroad

Where pupils have been abroad to attend a boarding school you will need to explain the rules to pupils and their parents before they travel to the UK.

Anyone who is not a British or Irish national, or who does not have the right to reside in the UK, who is travelling from or through a red or amber country in the 10 days before their arrival in England, will be refused entry into the UK.

These guidance has been issued on the quarantine arrangements for travelling overland (Switzerland, Liechtenstein and Luxembourg) and the quarantine and testing requirements and have travelled from or through a 'red list' country in the previous 10 days.

Pupils travelling to England from other, non-red, but countries outside the common travel area (Ireland, the Channel Islands and the Isle of Man) will be required to undergo either isolation and purchase a home testing package, with coronavirus (COVID-19) tests to take on days 2 and 8 after arrival to support the UK's genomic sequencing programme.

Before travelling arrangements, they need to:

- take a coronavirus (COVID-19) test and get a receptive result during the 3 days before you travel
- book and pay for a travel test package, which will include coronavirus (COVID-19) tests to be taken on days 2 and 8 after arrival in England
- complete a passenger locator form before arrival, with details of where they will quarantine when you arrive and the travel test package booking reference number

Where pupils have travelled to England from a country from where travel is permitted they are required to quarantine in their own accommodation for 10 days. You should make sure that pupils are aware of the rules that they need to follow when they arrive and put in place suitable arrangements for their self-isolation and check for the school's boarding accommodation. You may also want to consider whether the test to release scheme is appropriate for these pupils.

School meals

We expect kitchens to be fully open and normal legal requirements will apply to the provision of school meals, including ensuring food meets the standards for school food in England. This includes these eligible for:

- benefits-related free school meals
- universal infant free school meals

School kitchens should follow the guidance for food businesses on coronavirus (COVID-19).

You should also continue to provide free school meal support to pupils who are eligible for benefits-related free school meals and who are learning at home at any time.

More information on providing school meals during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak is available.

Remote education

From 8 March, attendance is mandatory for all pupils of compulsory school age. Schools affected by the remote education temporary continuity direction are still required to provide a remote education to their pupils, but they should also make alternative arrangements to implement guidance on isolation and coronavirus (coronavirus (COVID-19)). This includes, for example, where such guidance means that a pupil is not able to be in school because they are self-isolating but not otherwise ill, vulnerable children and the children of critical workers will all physically attend school to access to remote education as some reasonably practicable, which may be the most effective way.

Independent Schools (not including academies) are not all covered by the remote education temporary continuity direction. Instead, they are covered by the Independent School Standards in full at all times. This includes the requirement to meet the standard in relation to the provision of a broad and balanced curriculum.

Your remote education provided should be equivalent in length to the core teaching pupils would receive in school and should include recorded or live teaching of core or foundation subjects in order to support pupils to make sure and assignments independently. As a minimum you should provide:

- Key Stage 1: 3 hours a day on average across the cohort, with less for younger children
- Key Stage 2: 4 hours a day
- Key Stages 3 and 4: 5 hours a day

Online video lessons do not necessarily need to be recorded by teaching staff at the school. Oak National Academy lessons, for example, can be provided a lesson of school work to pupils.

In developing remote education, we expect you to:

- teach a planned and well sequenced curriculum so that knowledge and skills are built incrementally, with a good level of clarity about what is intended to be taught and practised in each subject so that pupils can progress through the school's curriculum
- select a digital platform for remote education provision that will be consistently across the school in order to allow interaction, assessment and feedback and make sure staff are trained and confident in its use. We have provided a list of digital platform in phase. We can access free support at get help with technology
- overcome barriers to digital access for pupils by:
  - distributing school laptops with pre-installed software to pupils who don't have any suitable devices, such as textbooks and workbooks, for practicing learning, supplemented with other forms of communication to keep pupils on track or provide feedback, for example
  - loan systems for computing, data, whether pupils are engaging with the work and work families to rapidly identify effective solutions where engagement is a concern
  - identifying a shared service leader with responsibility responsibility the quality and delivery of remote education, including that underpinned digital inclusion for remote education

When teaching pupils remotely we expect schools to:

- set meaningful and ambitious work each day in an appropriate range of subjects
- consider how to transition into remote education what we already know about effective teaching and assessment practice, for example, ensuring:
  - providing frequent, clear explanations of new content, delivered by teacher or through high-quality curriculum resources
  - assessing understanding and misconceptions, including questioning, skilled questioning, discussion
  - providing scaffolded practice and opportunities to apply new knowledge
  - enabling pupils to receive feedback on their learning and how to improve, using digitally facilitated or whole-class feedback where appropriate
  - using assessment to ensure teaching is responsive to pupils' needs and addresses any critical gaps in knowledge
  - providing a varied session week with opportunities to interact live with teachers and other pupils for education, including that underpinned digital inclusion for remote education

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  - providing a varied session week with opportunities to interact live with teachers and other pupils for education, including that underpinned digital inclusion for remote education

Other ways we can support schools to provide remote education are:

- ensuring access to high quality digital or paper based resources to support teaching and learning, including those that support pupils with SEND
- providing pre-recorded lessons
- providing a timetable that includes a balance of live teaching (teacher-led time) and independent time for pupils to work on their own
- ensuring teachers are trained and confident in the use of the school's digital platform
- providing ongoing technical support for pupils and families
- providing pre-recorded lessons
- providing a timetable that includes a balance of live teaching (teacher-led time) and independent time for pupils to work on their own
- ensuring teachers are trained and confident in the use of the school's digital platform
- providing ongoing technical support for pupils and families

Delivering remote education safely

Keeping children safe online is essential. The statutory guidance keeping children safe in education provides information on how to ensure online safety for children and pupils online. The guidance includes a collection of resources which includes support for:

- safe remote education
- virtual lessons
- live streaming
- information to share with parents and carers to support them in keeping their children safe online

Safeguarding and remote education during coronavirus (COVID-19) provides guidance to help schools and teachers support pupils' remote education during coronavirus (COVID-19).

Our school safety plan remains in place throughout the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak. Following support is available through third party resources:

- information portal for schools, parents and children safe remote education
- Safer Remote Learning Independent Study for SEMH
- Safer Remote Learning Independent Study for SEND
- Live streaming lessons - SWGfL article presenting guidance on use of the Professional Online Safety Helpline addressing key concerns from teachers
- Live streaming lessons - SWGfL article which includes additional considerations relevant to right for you and using video conferencing services securely

Special educational needs

Pupils with SEND and who are able to school their teachers are best placed to know how the pupil's needs can be most effectively met to ensure they continue to make progress.

The requirement for schools within the 2014 Children and Families Act to see their pupils with special educational needs and disabilities prioritise attendance in school for special educational needs remains unchanged.

You should work collaboratively with families and put in place reasonable adjustments to support children with SEND who are not able to attend school, including those who are vulnerable but who continue to be able to attend school, taking into account the circumstances including the types of services that the pupil can access remotely.

You can access further information on supporting pupils and students with SEND to access remote education.

Estates

There is no need for class sizes to be adjusted from the usual size.

Ventilation systems

Where mechanical ventilation systems exist, you should ensure they are maintained in accordance with manufacturer's instructions and ventilation is kept as fresh as is essential at all times in classrooms and particularly during the period.

Refer to the system of controls for guidance on keeping as cooled spaces well ventilated.

Fire safety

Fire safety management plans should be reviewed and checked in line with operational changes. You should check:

- all fire doors are operational at all times
- your fire alarm system and emergency lights have been tested and are fully operational

Carry out emergency drills as normal following social distancing is in place. You should make adjustments to your fire drill to allow for social distancing as appropriate. Refer to review the fire safety in schools and colleges guidance.

Opening after reduced occupancy

It is important that you undertake all the usual building checks to make the school safe. Including make sure school is fit for reduced occupancy, water quality and ventilation are in order before you reopen.

Advice on safety recommissioning can be found in the Chartered Institute of Building Services Engineers' guidance on emerging from lockdown.

Educational visits

In line with current coronavirus (COVID-19) restrictions, we continue to advise against unnecessary educational visits.

DfE recognises the significant benefits of educational visits to children's educational development and wellbeing. We know that many schools will want to plan for educational visitors to enjoy visits to take place with the government's roadmap. The roadmap, is dependent on data, not dates. The government will step away from one step to the next when it is safe to do so based on the data.

Do not assume that visits are indicative and subject to change. Advice will be updated in line with the roadmap.

Educational day visits

In line with the roadmap, should step 2 coronavirus as planned, schools can resume educational day visits no earlier than 12 April.

Any educational day visits must be conducted in line with relevant coronavirus (COVID-19) secure risk assessments and guidance. Take into account the risk of cross contacts, such as keeping children within their consistent groups and the COVID-secure measures in place at the destination.

Schools should undertake thorough risk assessments in relation to all educational visits to ensure they can be undertaken safely. As part of this risk assessment, you should consider the number of pupils and staff that will be involved and follow wider advice on visiting indoor and outdoor venues. Schools should also consider the health and safety guidance on educational visits when considering visits.

Domestic residential educational visits

In line with the roadmap, we advise against domestic residential educational visits until at least step 3, no earlier than 17 May.

The roadmap is driven by data not dates. The approach to domestic residential visits is dependent on the roadmap and is subject to change.

Existing bookings

Should step 3 coronavirus as planned, may provide residential educational visits to take place from step 3 coronavirus as planned, near visits will be possible from no earlier than 17 May.

Schools are advised not to enter into any new financial or contract commitments at this stage. Take advice with remain under review and updated at the earliest opportunity.

Any new domestic residential educational visits must be conducted in line with relevant coronavirus (COVID-19) secure guidance and regulations in place at that time.

We are working with Public Health England and the sector to develop a set of coronavirus (COVID-19) secure residential visits and look ahead to step 3 and for advice will be provided.

International visits

The Global Travel Taskforce has been commissioned to set out how to facilitate a return to international travel as soon as possible while managing the risk from imported coronavirus (COVID-19) cases. It is based on 5 Q2 2021. The advice will be updated following the publication of the report.

Credit notes

Any cancellations, PCL or ATOL which credit notes may use these credit notes to reduce educational or international visits.

Indemnity

We recognise the gap created by the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic in the commercial insurance market relating to coronavirus (COVID-19) travel cancellation insurance.

We are working with the Treasury's Treasury to explore the possibility of enhancing that gap and putting in place a commercial (COVID-19) restricted indemnity that will:

- give schools cover against coronavirus (COVID-19) travel cancellations in the future
- allow schools to have more with confidence

More details will be provided as soon as they are available.

School uniform

We would encourage all schools to maintain their usual uniform policies. Uniform can play a valuable role in contributing to the ethos of a school and setting an appropriate tone.

Uniforms do not need to be cleaned:

- more often than usual
- using different methods

Think about how you will manage pupil non-compliance. Taking a kindful and proportionate approach to those who have difficulty obtaining uniform items or are experiencing financial hardship.

Increased ventilation may make school buildings cooler than usual over the winter months. Consider allowing pupils to wear additional items of clothing in addition to the school's current uniform. Where this occurs, no extra financial pressure should be placed on parents.

Wraparound provision and extra-curricular activity

As of 8 March, you should be working to resume all your before and after school provision and extra-curricular activity in accordance with the rules in place. Attendance is necessary to support parents to work, attend education and access vaccination, and as part of pupil's wider education and training. We will amend the Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (England) Regulations 2020 to remove the duty on Secretaries of State to close educational premises settings regardless of circumstances.

Until 29 March, you should operate primarily that where they are accessing this provision for their children, that they must only be using this, where and for the following reasons:

- the provision is being offered as part of the school's educational activities (including extra-curricular activities)
- the provision is for an essential child or young person
- the provision is as part of their child's ability to obtain a requested qualification or to complete assessments of an educational nature
- the use of the provision is reasonably necessary to support them to:
  - work
  - seek work
  - undertake education or training
  - attend a medical appointment
  - address a medical need
  - attend a support group

From 29 March, all parents will also be able to access provision for one of these additional purposes:

- where the provision is taking place outdoors - all children may access outdoor provision in accordance with guidance
- their children are eligible for free school meals and are attending provision as part of the holiday activities and food programme

As part of step 2 no earlier than 12 April of the roadmap, all parents may access provision for any reason, without any restrictions on the reasons for which they may attend.

You should continue to work closely with any external wraparound providers which your pupils may use to minimize mixing between children. This can be achieved by asking clubs such as trying to keep children in the same school day bubble or school together, or in consistent groups.

If the provision is being delivery indoors and it is not possible to group children in consistent groups, you should ensure that the provision is being delivered in a way that minimizes contact between groups more than 15 children and at least one of the following:

For outdoor provision, until 29 March, providers should continue to keep children in small groups of no more than 15 children, in line with the advice on outdoor provision.

From 29 March, when all outdoor sports and supervised activities for children will be permitted, providers should continue to keep children in consistent groups where this is feasible or groups of no more than 15 children and at least one of the following:

The guidance for providers who run community activities, holiday clubs, after school clubs, adult education and playing sport and physical activity for children and adults sets out the relevant requirements.

Where parents are using extended childcare providers or out of school extra-curricular activities for their children, you should also:

- advise them to limit their use of multiple out-of-school settings providers, and to only use one out-of-school setting in addition to school as far as possible
- encourage them to check providers have put in place their own protective measures
- send them the link to the guidance for parents and carers

If you have not your premises for use by external wraparound childcare providers, such as after-school or holiday clubs, make sure they do so if possible:

- considered the relevant government guidance for their sector
- put in place protective measures

Curriculum

You should ensure that all pupils - particularly disadvantaged, SEND and vulnerable pupils - are given the support needed to make good progress.

The key principles that underpin our advice on curriculum planning are as follows:

- education is not optional - all pupils should receive a broad and balanced curriculum, their development and equips them with the knowledge and cultural capital they need to succeed in life
- the curriculum remains broad and ambitious - and pupils continue to study a wide range of subjects, maintaining their choices for further study and employment

Key curriculum expectations

Informed by these principles, you should meet the following key curriculum expectations:

Teach an ambitious and broad curriculum in all subjects

Where appropriate, teaching time should be prioritised to address the most significant gaps in pupils' knowledge.

You should ensure the curriculum planning is informed both by an assessment of pupils' knowledge and by the curriculum that they have missed, and is designed to the most critical content for progression. To achieve this, you may need to make substantial curriculum adjustments, for example, to ensure that there is time for teaching and assessment while avoiding the introduction of unnecessary novelty and complexity.

You can use existing flexibilities to create time to cover the most important content in which pupils are not yet secure.

Teach sufficient content to support some subjects for some pupils in exceptional circumstances

Up to and including Key Stage 3, prioritisation within subjects of the most important content may be necessary in order to teach a sufficient range of subjects. Ensure that pupils are still introduced to a broad and ambitious curriculum.

If you choose to suspend some subjects for some pupils (where the subject is not one that is statutorily mandated) you should be able to show that this is in the best interests of these pupils and this should be subject to discussion with parents.

Early years foundation stage (EYFS) to Key Stage 3

For pupils in Reception, disapplications of specific EYFS requirements can be used where coronavirus (COVID-19) restrictions prevent settings delivering the EYFS in full.

You may consider focusing more on the prime areas of learning in the EYFS, including communication and language, personal, social and emotional development, and physical development, if you think this would support your children following time out due to coronavirus (COVID-19). For pupils in Reception, teachers should also assess and address gaps in language, early reading and mathematics, particularly ensuring children's acquisition of phonic knowledge and extending their vocabulary.

For Reception, consider how all groups of children can be given equal opportunities for outdoor education.

Key Stages 1 and 2

For pupils in Key Stages 1 and 2, you are expected to prioritise identifying gaps and re-establishing good progress in the essentials (phonics and reading, increasing vocabulary, writing and mathematics), identifying opportunities across the curriculum so they read widely, and developing their knowledge and vocabulary.

You should ensure your curriculum offer remains broad, so that the majority of pupils are taught a full range of subjects over the year, including:

- sciences
- humanities
- music and the arts
- physical education and sport
- religious education
- at Key Stage 2, languages

Key Stage 3

For pupils in Key Stage 3, you are expected to consider whether any modification to your curriculum offer is needed to address the most significant gaps in English and mathematics.

You should ensure the curriculum remains broad from year 7 to year 9 so that the majority of pupils are taught a full range of subjects over the year, including:

- sciences
- languages
- humanities
- music and the arts
- physical education and sport
- religious education
- citizenship

Key Stages 4 and 5

The majority of pupils in years 10 and 11 are expected to continue to study mandatory non-examination subjects like PE, alongside their examination (teacher assessment) subjects. This will support them towards their preferred route to further study.

Pupils in years 12 and 13 are more likely to undertake self-directed study, but you may still need to ensure they receive additional support. Discontinuing a subject is likely to significantly limit choices for further study and employment, so is expected to be rare.

Guidance on year 11 to 13 exam cohort attendance and provision for the 2021 summer term can be found in annex B.

Relationships, sex and health education (RSHE)

Schools are required to provide some relationships, sex and health education to all secondary age pupils in the academic year 2020 to 2021, and to provide some relationships and health education to all primary age pupils.

You are also required by law to publish a relationships and sex education (RSE) policy and to consult parents on this. You must engage with parents on the school's RSE policy. You can do this online and do not necessarily need to do so in person.

You may choose to focus this year's RSHE teaching on the immediate needs of your pupils, such as health education, introducing a more comprehensive RSHE programme in September 2021.

You should prioritise RSHE content based on the needs of your pupils, with particular attention to the importance of positive relationships, as well as mental and physical health.

Music, dance and drama in school

You should continue teaching music, dance and drama as part of your school curriculum, especially as this builds pupils' confidence and supports their wellbeing. There may, however, be an additional risk of infection in environments where singing, chanting, playing wind or brass instruments, dance or drama takes place.

Singing, wind and brass instrument playing can be undertaken in line with this and other guidance, including guidance provided by the Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport (DCMS) on working safely during coronavirus (COVID-19) in the performing arts.

Schools can continue to engage peripatetic teachers during this period, including staff from music education hubs. Further information on the music education hubs, including contact details for local hubs, is available at music education hubs published by the Arts Council England.

Schools that offer specialist, elite provision in music, dance and drama should also consider this guidance alongside the DCMS guidance on the performing arts. Specialist provision delivered by further education (FE) providers or higher education (HE) providers should consider the respective DfE guidance for these sectors.

Minimising contact between individuals

The overarching objective should be to reduce the number of contacts amongst pupils, and between pupils and staff, including for rehearsal and performance. As set out in the system of controls, this can be achieved through keeping groups separate (in bubbles) and through maintaining social distance between individuals. These are not alternative options. Both measures will help, but the balance between them will change depending on the age of pupils, the layout of the building, and the feasibility of keeping groups separate from each other while offering a broad curriculum.

If staff need to move between classes and year groups, they should try and keep their distance from pupils and other staff as much as they can, ideally 2 metres from other adults.

You should take particular care in music, dance and drama lessons to observe social distancing where possible. This may limit group activity in these subjects in terms of numbers in each group. It will also prevent physical correction by teachers and contact between pupils in dance and drama.

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

Performances

You should not host any performances with an audience. You may wish to consider alternatives such as live streaming and recording performances, subject to the usual safeguarding considerations and parental permission.

Singing, and playing wind and brass instruments in groups

Singing, wind and brass playing should not take place in larger groups such as choirs and ensembles, or assemblies unless significant space, natural airflow and strict social distancing and mitigation can be maintained.

When planning music provision, you should consider additional specific safety measures. There is some evidence that additional risk can build from aerosol transmission with volume and with the combined numbers of individuals within a confined space. This is particularly evident for singing and shouting, but with appropriate safety mitigation and consideration, singing, wind and brass teaching can still take place. The government has published advice on safer singing.

Playing outdoors

Playing instruments and singing in groups should take place outdoors wherever possible. If indoors, consider limiting the numbers in relation to the space.

Playing indoors

If indoors, use a room with as much space as possible, for example, larger rooms, rooms with high ceilings are expected to enable dilution of aerosol transmission.

If playing indoors, limit the numbers to account for ventilation of the space and the ability to social distance. It is important to ensure good ventilation. Advice on this can be found in Health and Safety Executive guidance on air conditioning and ventilation during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak.

Social distancing

In the smaller groups where these activities can take place, schools should observe strict social distancing between each singer and player, and between singers and players, and any other people such as conductors, other musicians, or accompanists. Current guidance is that if the activity is face-to-face and without mitigating actions, 2 metres is appropriate. Pupils should use seating where practical to help maintain social distancing.

Seating positions

Pupils should be positioned back-to-back or side-to-side when playing or singing (rather than face-to-face) whenever possible. Position wind and brass players so that the air from their instrument does not blow into another player.

Microphones

Use microphones where possible or encourage singing quietly.

Handling equipment and instruments

Measures to take when handling equipment, including instruments, include the following.

Handwashing

Require increased handwashing before and after handling equipment, especially if being used by more than one person.

Avoiding sharing instruments and equipment

Avoid sharing equipment wherever possible. Place name labels on equipment to help identify the designated user, for example, percussionists' own sticks and mallets.

If instruments and equipment have to be shared, disinfect regularly (including any packing cases, handles, props, chairs, microphones and music stands) and always between users, following government guidance on cleaning and handling equipment.

Instruments should be cleaned by the pupils playing them, where possible.

Handling scores, parts and scripts

Limit handling of music scores, parts and scripts to the individual using them.

Suppliers

Consider limiting the number of suppliers when hiring instruments and equipment. You should agree whose responsibility cleaning hired instruments is with the suppliers. Clean hire equipment, tools or other equipment on arrival and before first use.

Equipment and instruments should be stored in a clean location if you take delivery of them before they are needed, and they should be cleaned before first use and before returning the instrument.

Pick up and drop off points

Pick up and drop off collection points should be created where possible, rather than passing equipment such as props, scripts, scores and microphones hand-to-hand.

Individual lessons

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

If there is no viable alternative, music lessons in private homes can resume, following the same guidelines, and additionally following the government guidance for working in homes, and the guidance for out-of-school provision.

In individual lessons for music, dance and drama, social distancing should be maintained wherever possible, meaning teachers should not provide physical correction.

Physical activity in schools

You have the flexibility to decide how physical education, sport and physical activity will be provided while following the measures in your system of controls.

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

You can hold PE lessons indoors, including those that involve activities related to team sports, for example practising specific techniques, within your own system of controls.

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

Where you are considering team sports you should only consider those sports whose national governing bodies have developed guidance under the principles of the government's guidance on team sport and been approved by the government such as sports on the list available at grassroots sports guidance for safe provision including team sport, contact combat sport and organised sport events.

From 29 March, outdoor competition between different schools can take place.

Indoor competition between different schools should not take place until wider indoor grassroots sport for under 18s is permitted. This will be no earlier than 12 April and we will confirm in due course.

Refer to:

- guidance on grassroot sports for public and sport providers, safe provision and facilities, and guidance from Sport England
- advice from organisations such as the Association for Physical Education and the Youth Sport Trust
- guidance from Swim England on school swimming and water safety lessons available at returning to pools guidance documents
- using changing rooms safely

You can work with external coaches, clubs and organisations for curricular and extra-curricular activities. You must be satisfied that it is safe to do.

Activities such as active miles, making break times and lessons active and encouraging active travel can help pupils to be physically active while encouraging physical distancing.

Education, Health and Care (EHC) plans

You should, along with the local authority and health partners (where applicable), work with families to co-produce arrangements for delivering all therapies and support that would normally be in place for children with EHC plans. There may be times when it becomes more difficult to do so than usual, particularly if children and young people are isolating.

Decisions should be considered on a case-by-case basis which takes account of the needs of, and circumstances specific to, the child or young person, avoiding a 'one size fits all' approach.

The statutory duties and timescales remain in place for EHC needs assessments and reviews. At all times it is important that these continue to ensure that the child or young person, and their parent and carer, is at the centre of the process and can engage with the process in a meaningful way.

It is important that you co-operate in supporting timely consultations over potential placements for September, and in providing families with advice and information where requested.

Catch-up support

You will decide how the catch-up premium provided by the government is spent in your school. To help schools make the best use of this funding, the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) has published a support guide for schools with evidence-based approaches to catch up and a further school planning guide: 2020 to 2021.

The National Tutoring Programme will continue to offer tuition as normal and schools should continue to sign up and engage with the programme.

Behaviour, discipline and wellbeing

Your policies should set clear, reasonable and proportionate expectations of pupil behaviour. Further information on behaviour and discipline in schools is available.

Set out clearly the consequences for poor behaviour and deliberately breaking the rules. You should also set out how you will enforce those rules including any sanctions, especially for any restrictions on movement within school and new hygiene rules.

Lack of routine and classroom discipline may contribute to disengagement for some pupils returning to school. This could result in an increase in poor behaviour. Consider what sanctions or consequences are appropriate for poor behaviour and whether additional support should be put in place for these pupils including those who:

- may struggle to reengage in school
- are at risk of being absent or persistently disruptive

Some pupils may return to school having suffered from:

- bereavement
- anxiety
- in some cases, increased welfare and safeguarding harms

This may lead to an increase in social, emotional and mental health concerns, particularly for vulnerable groups such as:

- pupils with a social worker
- previously looked-after children who left care through adoption or special guardianship
- young carers

These pupils may need additional support and access to services such as educational psychologists, social workers and counsellors.

Additionally, provision for pupils who have SEND may have been disrupted during the period of restrictions on attendance and there may be an impact on their behaviour. Work with local services (such as health and the local authority) to ensure the services and support are in place for a smooth return to schools for pupils.

Disciplinary actions

The disciplinary powers that you normally have, including suspension and expulsion, remain in place.

Expulsion should only be used as a last resort and must be lawful, reasonable, and fair. Where a pupil with a social worker is at risk of suspension or expulsion, inform their social worker and involve them in relevant conversations.

Try to avoid expelling any pupil with an EHC plan, or a looked-after child. Where a looked-after child is at risk of suspension or expulsion, the designated teacher should contact the relevant authority's virtual school head as soon as possible. This will help you to decide how to help the child and avoid an expulsion becoming necessary.

Where a previously looked-after child is at risk of expulsion, the designated teacher should speak with the child's parent or guardian and seek advice from their virtual school head.

Pre-empting that a pupil may commit a disciplinary offence, and not allowing the pupil to attend school, is an unlawful suspension.

You should already have arrangements in place to support attendance and engagement. Consider what additional support pupils may need to make a successful return to full-time attendance.

Any disciplinary suspension or expulsion of a pupil from a school, even for short periods of time, must follow the statutory procedure. 'Informal' or 'unofficial' suspensions, such as sending pupils home 'to cool off' for part of the day are unlawful, regardless of whether they occur with the agreement of parents or carers.

It is unlawful to punish a child for the actions of their parents. For example, refusing to allow a pupil to class because their parents did not attend a meeting or because the parents brought the pupils to school late would be unlawful.

Ofsted will continue to look for any evidence of off-rolling. Off-rolling is never acceptable. Ofsted is clear that pressuring a parent to remove their child from the school (including to home educate their child) is a form of off-rolling. Elective home education should always be a positive choice taken by parents without pressure from their school.

Pupil wellbeing and support

Some pupils may be experiencing a variety of emotions in response to the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak, such as anxiety, stress or low mood. This may particularly be the case for vulnerable children, including those with a social worker and young carers. It is important to contextualise these feelings as normal responses to an abnormal situation.

Consider using pastoral and extra-curricular activities to:

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

You may also need to provide more focused pastoral support for pupils' individual issues, drawing on external support where necessary and possible. Our 'Every interaction matters' webinar can help with offering pastoral support for wellbeing.

Where there is a concern a pupil is in need or suffering or likely to suffer harm, follow your child protection policy and part 1 of keeping children safe in education. Consider any referral to statutory services (and the police) as appropriate.

Work with school nurses, where they are in place, to:

- ensure delivery of the healthy child programme (which includes immunisation)
- identify health and wellbeing needs
- provider support for resilience, mental health and wellbeing including anxiety, bereavement and sleep issues
- support pupils with additional and complex health needs

Wellbeing for Education Return Programme

The Wellbeing for Education Return programme, provides training and resources to help school staff respond to the wellbeing and mental health needs of pupils. The training provides practical examples to support staff and pupils within a school.

Local authorities have received funding to employ skilled staff to:

- deliver the training to schools
- provide advice and support until March 2021

Support and resources

Teachers can access the free MindEd learning platform for professionals, which contains materials on peer support, stress, fear and trauma, and bereavement. MindEd have also developed a coronavirus (COVID-19) staff resilience hub with advice and tips for frontline staff.

The training module on teaching about mental wellbeing will help improve teacher confidence in talking and teaching about mental health and wellbeing in the classroom.

A recording of the free webinar for school staff DfE, PHE and NHS England hosted to set out how to support returning pupils is available.

You can access Whole School SEND consortium resources on the Whole School SEND Resource page of the SEND gateway. They have also produced:

- a leaflet about successful returns following a period of absence
- a leaflet on transition planning for post-year 11 destinations
- a COVID-19 SEND review guide
- a handbook to support teachers to take a whole school approach to supporting pupils following a traumatic event

Safeguarding

Schools must continue to have regard to the statutory safeguarding guidance keeping children safe in education.

You should consider revising your child protection policy to reflect the return of more pupils. This should be led by your designated safeguarding lead (DSL).

As children return try to give designated safeguarding leads and their deputies more time to:

- support staff and pupils with new safeguarding and welfare concerns
- handle referrals to children's social care and other agencies where appropriate

The designated safeguarding lead should continue to coordinate with children's social care, the local 3 safeguarding partners and other agencies and services to identify harm and ensure children are appropriately supported. They should speak to school nurses who have continued virtual support to pupils who have not been in school.

Elective home education (EHE)

You should encourage parents to send their children to school, particularly those who are vulnerable.

EHE does not automatically put children at greater risk of harm. You should consider whether a parent's decision to educate at home gives greater cause for concern compared to remaining in school.

If you feel there is additional cause for concern, you should follow your own organisation's child safeguarding policy and refer this to the designated safeguarding lead (DSL) who will then consider making a referral to the local authority in line with existing procedures. This should happen as soon as you become aware of a parent's intention, or decision, to home educate.

Alerting local authorities as soon as possible where needed helps them to check if a child is receiving statutory social care services and notify any relevant social worker to work with the home education team to carry out any further checks or assessments that may be needed.

Part 1 of keeping children safe in education is clear that you are expected to support social workers and other agencies following any referrals. You will already be aware which children have a social worker assigned to them or their immediate family.

You should work with local authorities and, where possible, coordinate meetings with parents to seek to ensure EHE is being provided in the best interests of the child.

You may find it helpful to direct parents to the advice on understanding what EHE is. Schools are not required to provide any support to parents that have withdrawn their child for EHE. Support provided by local authorities is discretionary, including support for a child's special educational needs.

If a parent wants you to admit their child, you should follow your normal processes for in-year admissions applications. Or, put them in touch with their local authority admissions team to discuss how to apply for a school place for their child.

Inspection

State-funded school inspection

Routine, graded Ofsted inspections remain suspended for the spring term. We are engaging with Ofsted and the sector on the inspection arrangements for the summer term and will provide information about this soon.

In the spring term, Ofsted is conducting non-graded monitoring inspections of:

- inadequate schools
- schools judged as requires improvement at their last 2 (or more) consecutive inspections
- some other schools that require improvement

The monitoring inspections are designed to:

- provide assurance to parents
- provide support to schools
- take into account the school's context, including the impact of coronavirus (COVID-19)
- enable inspectors to reach an assessment of whether leaders and those responsible for governance are taking effective action to provide education in the current circumstances

The monitoring inspections focus on:

- action being taken to provide education in the current circumstances
- the curriculum, including any adaptions to meet current challenges
- the provision of remote education
- support for pupils with SEND, whether they are in school or being educated at home
- the contribution of those responsible for governance
- the impact of support and challenge provided to the school, including from any external partners

Ofsted also continues to have the power to inspect a school where it has significant concerns. This could include concerns relating to:

- the quality of education being provided, including remote education
- safeguarding

Independent schools (not including academies) inspection

Ofsted and the Independent Schools Inspectorate will continue to undertake emergency, progress monitoring and material change inspections where appropriate in the spring term.

Information about the inspection arrangements for the summer term will be provided soon.

Exams and assessments

Primary assessment

We have cancelled the statutory Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 tests and key teacher assessments planned for summer 2021, including the Key Stage 2 tests in reading and mathematics.

You should continue to use assessment during the summer term, using past test papers if you wish. This will inform teaching, enable you to give information to parents on their child's attainment in their annual report, and support transition to secondary school.

We are planning for a full programme of primary assessments to take place in the 2021 to 2022 academic year.

Exams

GCSE, A and AS levels exams will not go ahead this summer as planned.

Students taking GCSE, AS and A levels, will receive grades based on teacher assessment, with teachers supported to reach their judgements by guidance and training from the exam boards.

Information about awarding qualifications in summer 2021 is available.

Guidance on year 11 to 13 exam cohort attendance and provision for the 2021 summer term can be found in annex B.

Accountability expectations

Performance tables were not published for the 2019 to 2020 academic year. We will not judge schools on data based on exams and assessments from 2020.

We will not publish data based on exam and assessment results from summer 2021 on school and college performance tables.

Read coronavirus (COVID-19): school and college accountability to see what this means for accountability in 2019 to 2020 and 2020 to 2021.

Contingency planning

For individuals or groups of self-isolating pupils and pupils who are shielding following government guidance related to coronavirus (COVID-19), remote education plans should be in place.

You should continue to operate as normally as possible. In the event that restrictions in schools are needed to help contain the spread of the virus, you may be asked to revise your delivery models for a short period of time. To help with this, we have published a contingency framework, which outlines how schools should operate in the event of any restrictions.

Any decision that there should be local restrictions in any childcare or education settings will be made by central government on a case-by-case basis.

Find guidance on how schools can order devices and access support to get set up with a digital platform at get help with technology.

Annex B

Many schools usually incorporate a period of independent study leave in the summer term for year 11 and 13 pupils as exams approach. However, this year the needs of the cohort will be different and a period of independent study leave may not be applicable.

The 2021 exams approach requires schools to submit grades by 18 June 2021. This process requires considerable staff resource and we recognise that in practice, for many pupils, work done after the May half term will not contribute towards their grades.

We have therefore set out guidance about valuable activities pupils should be engaged in. Schools should make appropriate judgements on the activities for their own pupils. This might not mean full-time provision and could include visits to education providers, independent study or remote provision combined with attendance in person.

We are not changing the legislation that governs compulsory school age. As usual, pupils cease to be of compulsory school age on the last Friday of June in the year in which they turn 16. That means that those pupils (most of whom will be in year 11) are not required to attend school after this date.

We know that this year, many schools will already have plans in place for the last half of the summer term to support their current pupils. We strongly encourage all schools to maximise opportunities that meet the progression needs of their students during this period.

Activities to consider

Design and plan content to support pupils to embed curriculum content in which they are less secure which may include remote or independent work

This can include using:

- video lessons and summer education recovery resources from Oak National Academy (for up to year 11)
- other high-quality resources including the free digital resources in the skills toolkit

Liaise with local 16 to 19 providers (which may be your own school sixth form, but may also be other local sixth form or FE colleges) to support pupils' transition to A level study or vocational technical qualifications

This can include identifying and prioritising the delivery of content deemed essential for the course(s) to cover, either in the classroom, remotely, or for pupils to follow up themselves.

Schools should:

- give FE providers access to all year 11 pupils ahead of the summer to inform their options and choices and provide taster sessions
- support pupils who have not secured a post-16 route and assist them in finding a route which best meets their progression needs and aspirations

Schools could enable all post-16 providers to contact all their pupils and offer transitional programmes, including during school time from the assessment period.

Provide support to students around their training and pastoral needs, as well as study skills post-16

Schools should:

- work with local authorities to agree how those at risk of becoming NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training) can be referred for intensive support, drawn from the range of education and training support services available locally
- provide support on study skills, other enrichment activities, careers advice and guidance for students on the options available, as well as the support available for mental health and wellbeing for all students progressing to further study or employment
- support students completing apprenticeship applications and preparing for work, in partnership with employers, including providing work experience (so far as coronavirus (COVID-19) restrictions apply)

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Coronavirus (COVID-19)

Coronavirus (COVID-19): guidance and support

Brexit

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