



Department
for Education

Schools coronavirus (COVID-19) operational guidance

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Summary

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).

Who is this publication for?

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

All pupils should now be attending school.

We ask that schools:

- review and where necessary, update your risk assessment
- make sure you are following the system of controls to minimise the risk of infection, including engaging with the asymptomatic testing programme
- 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 has been in place for some time.

Most recently, we have made specific changes to the information on:

- face coverings
- attendance - advice on pupils who are abroad
- pupils travelling to the UK from abroad
- educational visits
- wraparound provision and extra-curricular activity
- music, dance and drama and school – performances
- pupil wellbeing and support
- state-funded school inspection
- annex C – further guidance on domestic residential educational visits

We have added a section on transitional, taster and open days, and also [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 Public Health England (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. Working with PHE, we continually review the measures, which are informed by the latest scientific evidence and advice and update our guidance accordingly.

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 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 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

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 during 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 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 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 [COVID-19 symptoms](#)
- a member of their household (including someone in their [support bubble](#) or [childcare bubble](#) if they have one) has 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 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 LFD or PCR test (if an LFD test is taken first, and a PCR test is then taken within 2 days of the positive lateral flow test, and is negative, it overrides the LFD test and the pupil can return to school)

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 COVID-19 infection](#)
- advise them to [arrange to have a test](#) as soon as possible to see if they have 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. It remains essential that anyone who gets a positive result from an LFD result self-isolates immediately, as must other members of their household, while they get a confirmatory PCR test.

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 develops 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 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 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.

PHE has advised that routinely taking the temperature of pupils is not recommended as this is an unreliable method for identifying COVID-19.

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

When an individual has had close contact with someone with 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 or PCR test as part of a community or worker programme - if an LFD test is taken first, and a confirmatory PCR test is then taken within 2 days of the positive lateral flow test, and is negative, it overrides the LFD test and the individual can return to school

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

Based on the current state of the pandemic and the positive progress being made, it is no longer necessary to recommend the additional precautionary face covering measures put in place from the 8 March.

From 17 May, in line with Step 3 of the roadmap, face coverings will no longer be recommended for pupils in classrooms or communal areas in all schools. Face coverings will also no longer be recommended for staff in classrooms.

In all schools we continue to recommend that face coverings should be worn by staff and visitors in situations outside of classrooms where social distancing is not possible (for example, when moving around in corridors and communal areas).

Where schools are delivering education and training, including extra-curricular activities and wraparound childcare, in a community setting (for example, library or community centre), staff and pupils will be exempt from the legal requirement to wear a face covering if they are in a private room or the premises has been exclusively hired for the sole use of its pupils and staff.

The reintroduction of face coverings for pupils, students or staff may be advised for a temporary period in response to particular localised outbreaks, including variants of concern. In all cases, any educational drawbacks should be balanced with the benefits of managing transmission. The Local Action Committee structure (bronze/silver/gold) should be used in such circumstances to re-introduce the use of face coverings. Immediate outbreak response (at the level of individual settings or a cluster of settings) remains for local directors of public health to advise on.

Children and young people aged 11 and over must still wear a face covering on public transport. In accordance with advice from PHE, they must also wear a face covering when travelling on dedicated transport to secondary school or college. This does not apply to children and young people who are exempt from wearing face coverings.

The use of face coverings may have a particular impact on those who rely on visual signals for communication. Those who communicate with or provide support to those who do, are exempt from any recommendation to wear face coverings in education settings or requirement in public places.

Where our guidance recommends face coverings, 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. Transparent face coverings may be effective in reducing the spread of COVID-19. However, the evidence to support this is currently very limited. Face coverings (whether transparent or cloth) should fit securely around the face to cover the nose and mouth and be made with a breathable material capable of filtering airborne particles.

The main benefit from a transparent face covering is that they can aid communication, for example enabling lip-reading or allowing for the full visibility of facial expressions, but this must be considered alongside the comfort and breathability of a face covering which contains plastic which may mean that the face covering is less breathable than layers of cloth.

More broadly, schools have a duty to make reasonable adjustments for disabled pupils and students, to support them to access education successfully. The following is a non-exhaustive list which provides examples of possible adjustments where face coverings are recommended:

- the provision and effective use of assistive listening devices, such as radio aids
- an increased focus on the listening environment, minimising all unnecessary background noise - steps should be taken so that children with hearing loss are taught in classrooms with the best possible acoustic conditions
- allowing the use of speech-recognition apps on mobile devices and tablets in classrooms, taking into account possible variations in the effectiveness of such apps in different classroom situations
- additional communication support, including remote speech-to-text reporters or sign language interpreters

Where appropriate, education settings should discuss with pupils and parents the types of reasonable adjustments that are being considered to support an individual.

Face visors or shields can be worn by those exempt from wearing a face covering but they are not an equivalent alternative in terms of source control of virus transmission. They may protect the wearer against droplet spread in specific circumstances but are unlikely to be effective in preventing the escape of smaller respiratory particles 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

Where face coverings are recommended there are some circumstances where people may not be able to wear a face covering.

This includes (but is not limited to):

- people who cannot put on, wear or remove a face covering because of a physical or mental illness or impairment, or disability
- where putting on, wearing or removing a face covering will cause people severe distress
- people speaking to or providing assistance to someone who relies on lip reading, clear sound or facial expressions to communicate
- to avoid harm or injury, or the risk of harm or injury, to the wearer or others – including if it would negatively impact on people’s ability to exercise or participate in a strenuous activity

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 use of face coverings in wider society, staff and pupils are already likely to have access to face coverings.

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

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, for example when pupils arrive at school wearing them. You should communicate this process clearly to pupils, staff and visitors and allow for adjustments to be made for those who may be distressed if required to remove a face covering against their wishes.

Safe wearing of face coverings necessitates:

- cleaning hands before and after touching face coverings, – including to remove or put them on
- safely storing face coverings in individual, sealable plastic bags between use
- not touching the front of face coverings during use or when removing them

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

If pupils arrive at school wearing a face covering you must instruct pupils to:

- not touch the front of their face covering 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

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 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 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.

All teachers and other staff can operate across different classes and year groups to facilitate the delivery of the timetable and specialist provision. Where staff need to move between groups, they should try and keep their distance from pupils and other staff as much as they can, ideally 2 metres from other adults. Try to minimise the number of interactions or changes wherever possible.

Measures within the classroom

Maintaining a distance between people while inside and reducing the amount of time they are in face-to-face contact lowers the risk of transmission. There is strong public health advice that staff in secondary schools maintain distance from their pupils, staying at the front of the class, and away from their colleagues where possible. Ideally, adults should maintain 2-metre distance from each other and from children. We know that this is not always possible, particularly when working with pupils with complex needs, or those who need close contact care. Provide educational and care support for these pupils as normal, with other increased hygiene protocols in place to minimise the risk of transmission.

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

When staff and pupils cannot maintain distancing, the risk can be reduced by keeping pupils in the smaller, class-sized groups.

You should make small adaptations to the classroom to support distancing where possible. That should include seating pupils side by side and facing forwards, rather than face-to-face or side-on. 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. While passing briefly in the corridor or playground is low risk, avoid creating

busy corridors, entrances and exits. Consider staggered break times and lunch times. Make sure you allow time for cleaning surfaces in the dining hall between groups.

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

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

Measures for arriving at, and leaving the setting

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

Staggered start and finish times should not reduce the amount of overall teaching time. A staggered start may include:

- condensing or staggering free periods or break time but retaining the same amount of teaching time
- keeping 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 onto 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 scoot to and from school wherever it is possible and safe to do so. Where pupils and staff need to use public transport, they should follow the [safer travel guidance for passengers](#).

The [transport to schools and other places of education](#) guidance requires those involved in the provision of dedicated transport to schools to identify the risks. You should adopt measures to address those risks in a way that works in the local circumstances. Distancing should be maximised 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. In accordance with advice from PHE, they must also wear a face covering when travelling on 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 help and preparation for the changes to routine that these measures will involve. Staff should plan to meet these needs, for example using social stories.

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

- local authorities
- health professionals
- regional schools' commissioners
- other services

Use individual healthcare plans to help pupils receive an education in line with their peers. In some cases, the pupil's medical needs will mean this is not possible, and educational support will require flexibility. Further information is available in the guidance on [supporting pupils at school with medical conditions](#).

Specialists, therapists, clinicians and other support staff for pupils with SEND should provide interventions as usual. They, as well as supply teachers, peripatetic teachers or other temporary staff, can move between settings. They should ensure they minimise contact and maintain as much distance as possible from other staff. Such specialists will be aware of the PPE most appropriate for their role. Schools should consider how to manage other visitors to the site, such as contractors, catering staff and deliveries, as well as cleaning staff on site who may be working throughout the school and across different groups. This will require close co-operation between schools and the other relevant employers.

You should have discussions with key contractors about the school's control measures and ways of working. They should ensure site guidance on physical distancing and hygiene is explained to visitors on or before arrival. Where visits can happen safely outside of school hours, they should. A record should be kept of all visitors with sufficient detail to support rapid contact tracing if required by NHS Test and Trace.

As normal, you should engage with your local immunisation providers to provide routine immunisation programmes on-site, ensuring these will be delivered in keeping with the school's control measures. These programmes are essential for children's health and wellbeing and can also provide benefits for staff.

Where a pupil routinely attends more than one setting on a part-time basis, for example, because they are dual registered at a mainstream school and a special setting, the settings should work through the system of controls collaboratively, enabling them to address any risks identified and allowing them to jointly deliver a broad and balanced curriculum for the pupil. Pupils should be able to continue attending both settings. While some adjustment to arrangements may be required, pupils in this situation should not be

isolated as a solution to the risk of greater contact except when required by specific public 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 the bubble. These should be cleaned regularly, along with all frequently touched surfaces.

Resources that are shared between classes or bubbles, such as sports, arts, and science equipment should be cleaned frequently. When sharing equipment between different bubbles, you should either:

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

You will need to assess the ability to clean equipment used in the delivery of therapies, for example, physiotherapy equipment or sensory equipment. Determine whether this equipment can withstand cleaning and disinfecting between each use before it is put back into general use. Where cleaning or disinfecting is not possible or practical, 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 playground equipment should be more frequently cleaned than normal. This also applies to resources used inside and outside by wraparound care and out-of-school settings providers.

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

- lunch boxes
- hats and coats
- 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 rotation should apply to these resources.

Parent pick-up and drop-offs

We know that travel to school patterns differ greatly. If those patterns allow, schools should consider staggered starts or adjusting start and finish times to keep groups apart as they arrive and leave school.

Staggered start and finish times should not reduce the amount of overall time children spend in school. A staggered start may, for example, include keeping the length of the day the same but starting and finishing later to avoid rush hour.

Schools should consider how to communicate this to parents and remind them about the process that has been agreed for drop off and collection, including that gathering at the school entrance and otherwise coming onto the site without an appointment is not allowed.

7. Keep occupied spaces well ventilated

Good ventilation reduces the concentration of the virus in the air, which reduces the risk from airborne transmission. This happens when people breathe in small particles (aerosols) in the air after someone with the virus has occupied and enclosed area.

When your school is in operation, it is important to ensure it is well ventilated and a comfortable teaching environment is maintained.

These can be achieved by a variety of measures.

Mechanical ventilation systems

These should be adjusted to increase the ventilation rate wherever possible and checked to confirm that normal operation meets current guidance and that only fresh outside air is circulated.

If possible, systems should be adjusted to full fresh air or, if not, then systems should be operated as normal as long as they are within a single room and supplemented by an outdoor air supply.

The Health and Safety Executive guidance on [air conditioning and ventilation during the COVID-19 pandemic](#) and [CIBSE COVID-19 advice](#) provides more information.

Natural ventilation

Opening windows (in cooler weather windows should be opened just enough to provide constant background ventilation and opened more fully during breaks to purge the air in the space) and opening internal doors can also assist with creating a throughput of air.

If necessary external opening doors may also 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 colder weather in preference to low level to reduce draughts
- increasing the ventilation while spaces are unoccupied (for example, between classes, during break and lunch, when a room is unused)
- providing flexibility to allow additional, suitable indoor clothing
- 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 covering of any type which covers your nose and mouth.

Most staff in schools will not require PPE beyond what they would normally need for their work. If a pupil already has routine intimate care needs that involve the use of PPE, the same PPE should continue to be used.

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

- a pupil becomes ill with COVID-19 symptoms, and only then if a 2 metre distance cannot be maintained
- performing [aerosol generating procedures \(AGPs\)](#)

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

The guidance on [safe working in education, childcare and children's social care](#) 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

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

- [primary schools, school-based nurseries 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 high temperature
 - a new continuous cough
 - a loss or change to your sense of smell or taste
- [self-isolate](#) immediately and not come to school if:
 - they develop symptoms
 - they have been in close contact with someone who tests positive for COVID-19
 - anyone in their household or support or childcare bubble develops symptoms of COVID-19
 - they are required to quarantine having recently visited countries outside the [common travel area](#)
 - they have been advised 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 COVID-19 or if asked by NHS Test and Trace

Booking a polymerase chain reaction (PCR) test through 119

Anyone who displays symptoms of COVID-19 can and should get a test. Tests for symptomatic illness can be booked online through the [NHS testing and tracing for 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 under 5, but children aged 11 and under will need to be helped by their parents or carers if using a home testing kit. Teenagers aged 12-17 will need to be supervised by an adult.

Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR) tests contingency supply

Separate to the asymptomatic testing regime, all schools were sent an initial supply of 10 PCR test kits before the start of the autumn term in 2020. You can replenish these kits when they run out by making an order through the online portal. You should call the Test and Trace helpdesk on 119 if the kits that you have ordered have not arrived.

Having a test at a testing site will deliver the fastest results for symptomatic cases. These PCR test kits are provided to be used in the exceptional circumstance that an individual becomes symptomatic and you believe they may have barriers to accessing testing elsewhere.

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 help ensure that symptomatic staff can get a test. If they test negative, they can return to work as soon as they are well and no longer have symptoms of 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, particularly some 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 and 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 COVID-19 amongst the school community

Swift action must be taken when someone tests positive for COVID-19. If someone who uses dedicated transport tests positive, local authorities should work with schools and colleges to identify close contacts.

Schools may receive support on this through the dedicated advice service introduced by PHE, which can be reached through the DfE helpline on 0800 046 8687, or their PHE local health protection team if escalated. Based on their advice, people who have been in close contact with the person who has tested positive must be sent home and 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 a legal requirement for an individual to self-isolate if they have been told to do so by NHS Test and Trace.

A risk assessment may be undertaken to determine this, but a close contact can be anyone who:

- lives in the same household as someone with COVID-19 symptoms or who has tested positive for COVID-19
- has had any of the following types of contact with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19 with either a PCR test or LFD test (if a confirmatory PCR test is negative, provided it was taken within two days of the positive LFD, it overrides the lateral flow test and close contacts can stop self-isolating):
 - face-to-face contact including being coughed on or having a face-to-face conversation within 1 metre
 - been within 1 metre for 1 minute or longer without face-to-face contact
 - been within 2 metres of someone for more than 15 minutes (either as a one-off contact or added up together over 1 day)
 - travelled in the same vehicle or a plane

Whilst awaiting the confirmatory PCR result, pupils, students and staff and close contacts should continue to self-isolate.

If someone who uses transport tests positive, 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 Perspex screen is in place

The advice service (or PHE local health protection team if escalated) will provide advice on who must be sent home and asked to self-isolate. To support them in doing so, we recommend you keep a record of pupils and staff in each group, and any close contact that takes places between pupils and staff in different groups (see section 6 of the system of control for more on [grouping pupils](#)). This should be a proportionate recording process. You do not need to ask pupils to record everyone they have spent time with each day or ask staff to keep definitive records in a way that is overly burdensome.

Where individuals are self-isolating and are within our definition of vulnerable, it is important that schools put systems in place to keep in contact with them, offer pastoral support, and check 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 can also be used for staff if needed. It is important that this letter is shared

promptly with all parents of children that have been asked to self-isolate as this letter allows parents who are on a low income and unable to work from home to apply to their local authority for financial support under the Test and Trace Support Payment scheme. They will not be able to make an application without providing this letter as supporting evidence. You must not share the names or details of people with COVID-19 unless essential to protect others.

Household members of those contacts who are sent home do not need to self-isolate themselves unless the pupil or staff member who is self-isolating subsequently develops symptoms. This is unless 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 obligation. If someone in a class or group that has been asked to self-isolate develops symptoms themselves within the 10 days from the day after contact with the individual who tested positive, they should follow [guidance for households with possible or confirmed coronavirus \(COVID-19\) infection](#).

They should get a test, and:

- if the test delivers a negative result, they should remain in isolation for the remainder of the 10-day isolation period - this is because they could still develop COVID-19 within the remaining days
- if the test result is positive, they should inform their school immediately, and must isolate from the day of onset of their symptoms and at least the following 10 full days - their household should self-isolate starting from when the symptomatic person in their household first had symptoms and the next 10 full days, following [guidance for households with possible or confirmed COVID-19 infection](#)

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.

Further guidance is available on [testing and tracing for COVID-19](#).

Reporting actual or suspected cases of COVID-19 through the education setting status form

From 11 January, we asked you to resume completing the educational setting status form. From 8 March, the form was amended to reflect wider opening. The data you supply helps the government monitor the impact of COVID-19 on schools.

See 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 living in England
- meet the [eligibility criteria](#)

Staff identified as close contacts of a positive case will require an NHS Test and Trace Account ID number (CTAS number) to be able to claim a Test and Trace Support Payment or discretionary payment. Parents and carers of self-isolating children should be provided with a letter to support their application for payment, but will not require an NHS Test and Trace Account ID number (CTAS number).

The Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) has launched the self-isolation service hub (020 3743 6715). The phone line is open 7 days a week, 8am to 8pm, allowing a school to provide contact details of any staff who have been asked to self-isolate and are likely to be eligible for the Test and Trace Support Payment or discretionary payment.

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

1. Ensure that you collate a list of appropriate close contacts for the person who has tested positive within your establishment and inform these close contacts that they now need to self-isolate.
2. Call the service hub on 020 3743 6715 as soon as you have the 8-digit NHS Test and Trace Account ID (sometimes referred to as a CTAS number) of 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 NHS Test and Trace Account ID for the person who has tested positive, Hub staff will assist in tracing the person in order to register their contacts on the Test 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. Following this, individuals who are employed or self-employed, on a low income, unable to work from home and losing income as a result may qualify for the [Test and Trace Support Payment scheme](#) 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 education setting (even where they have not been told to self-isolate by NHS Test and Trace) can also apply for the Test and Trace Support Payment scheme if they are on a low income, unable to work from home and need to take time off work to care for a child

who is self-isolating. Parents and carers do not require an NHS Test and Trace Account ID number in order to claim and schools are not required to register all children asked to self-isolate with NHS Test and Trace in the same way as staff.

The scheme is open to eligible parents and carers of children aged 15 and under, and parents of young people aged 16 to 25 with an education health and care plan. Further information on how parents and guardians can [claim financial support under the Test and Trace Support Payment scheme](#) is available.

Schools should provide parents and carers of children advised to self-isolate with the template letter, detailing the child's name and the dates of their isolation period. The parent or guardian will need to use this letter as supporting evidence as part of their application to their local authority for a payment from the Test and Trace Support Payment scheme. Parents whose children are told to self-isolate by their school will not be able to apply for financial support without a letter.

When a parent or guardian applies to the Test and Trace Support Payment scheme because they need to care for a child who is self-isolating, their local authority will be required to contact their child's school via phone or email to verify information about the child. This includes the child's name, age and dates of self-isolation. This is a standard check against fraudulent claims, and may take place before or after a payment is made.

You will only be asked to share information on children whose parents have made an application to their local authority for the Test and Trace Support Payment scheme. You may wish 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 14 days, or an overall rise in sickness absence where COVID-19 is suspected, you may have an outbreak.

You should call the dedicated advice service who will escalate the issue to your local health protection team where necessary and advise if any additional action is required. You can reach them by calling the DfE helpline on 0800 046 8687 and selecting option 1 for advice on the action to take in response to a positive case.

In some cases, health protection teams may recommend that a larger number of other pupils self-isolate at home as a precautionary measure. This could be the class or year group.

If you are implementing the system of controls, addressing any issues you have identified and therefore reducing transmission risks, whole site closure will not generally be necessary. You should not close the school 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 COVID-19 can return to their normal routine and stop self-isolating after they have finished their isolation period and their symptoms have gone or if they continue to have only a residual cough or anosmia. This is because a cough or anosmia can last for several weeks once the infection has gone. If they still have a high temperature after 10 days or are otherwise unwell, 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 pupils 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 symptoms should not attend the school, given the potential risk to others. In the event that a parent or carer insists on a pupil attending your school, you can take the decision to refuse the pupil if, in your reasonable judgement, it is necessary to protect your pupils and staff from possible infection with COVID-19. Your decision would need to be carefully considered in light of all the circumstances and current public health advice.

Asymptomatic testing

COVID-19 asymptomatic testing in schools

Rapid testing using Lateral Flow Devices (LFDs) helps to identify people who are infectious but do not have any COVID-19 symptoms. For secondary school staff and pupils, we have moved to a home testing model. The lateral flow devices used have received regulatory approval from the MHRA for self-use. Home test kits are available for all staff.

Testing remains voluntary but strongly encouraged.

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

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

Schools should retain a small ATS on-site so they can offer testing to pupils who are unable or unwilling to test themselves at home.

Home testing

Both pupils and staff in secondary schools will be supplied with LFD test kits to self-swab and test themselves twice a week at home. Staff and pupils must report their result to NHS Test and Trace as soon as the test is completed either online or by telephone as

per the instructions in the home test kit. Staff and pupils should also share their result, whether void, positive or negative, with their school to help with contact tracing.

Pupils aged 18 and over should self-test and report the result, with assistance if needed. Adolescents aged 12 to 17 should self-test and report with adult supervision. The adult may conduct the test if necessary. Children aged 11 attending a secondary school should be tested by an adult.

Confirmatory PCR tests

Staff or pupils with a positive LFD test result must self-isolate in line with the stay-at-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 taken within 2 days of the positive lateral flow test, and is negative, it overrides the self-test LFD test and the pupil can return to school, as long as the individual doesn't have COVID-19 symptoms. 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 on [testing for staff in primary schools and nurseries](#).

Primary age pupils will not be tested with LFDs. PHE have advised there are currently limited public health benefits attached to testing primary pupils with lateral flow devices. Primary age pupils may find the LFD testing process unpleasant and are unable to self-swab. We will review this approach in light of any emerging evidence.

Specialist settings

We recognise specialist settings will have additional considerations to take into account when delivering asymptomatic testing and [additional guidance on testing in specialist settings](#) has been published. We recognise that self-swabbing may cause significant concerns for some children and young people with SEND. Testing is voluntary and no child or young person will be tested unless informed consent has been given by the appropriate person.

Symptomatic testing

The asymptomatic testing programme does 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 self-isolate immediately according to government guidelines.

Those with symptoms are also expected to order a test online or visit a test site to take a lab-based [polymerase chain reaction \(PCR\) test](#) to check if they have the virus.

It remains imperative that the system of controls continues to be rigorously applied to enable the safest possible environment. The testing programme is an important addition to supporting leaders 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 secure their child's regular attendance at school (where the child is a registered pupil at school and they are of compulsory school age)
- the ability to issue sanctions, including fixed penalty notices in line with local authorities' codes of conduct

As usual, you are responsible for recording attendance, following up absence and reporting children missing education to the local authority.

You should not plan for rotas as there is no requirement to reduce occupancy in schools. Instead, everyone must follow the [system of controls](#).

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

Term time holidays

As restrictions begin to lift, some families may be looking to take holidays. As usual, parents should plan their holidays around school breaks and not take their children out of school on holiday during term time.

Where a parent wishes to take their child out of school for whatever reason, the onus is on them to apply for a leave of absence and demonstrate why they believe the circumstances are exceptional. Schools make decisions on granting leave of absence, but will not normally do so for a holiday.

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 have had 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 COVID-19

Some groups of people, including children, are at higher risk of severe illness from coronavirus. This group of people have been told directly by their GP or hospital clinician, or have received a letter, confirming that they are 'clinically extremely vulnerable'. Since the 1 April, those who are clinically extremely vulnerable (CEV) are no longer advised to shield. See guidance on [who is at higher risk from coronavirus](#), and [protecting people who are clinically extremely vulnerable](#).

All CEV pupils should attend their school unless they are one of the very small number of pupils under paediatric or other specialist care and have been advised by their GP or clinician not to 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. This is already set out in the [school attendance guidance](#) but is especially important in the context of the pandemic and the COVID-19 vaccination programme. If evidence is required, it can take the form of prescriptions, appointment cards, text or email confirmation of appointments, rather than a doctors' note. As usual, input from GPs should only be sought where there are complex health needs or persistent absence issues.

You are required to provide remote education to pupils who are unable to attend school because they are complying with government guidance or legislation around COVID-19, in the circumstances provided for in the [remote education temporary continuity direction](#). You should keep a record of this activity but do not need to record it in the attendance register.

You should offer pastoral support to pupils who are:

- self-isolating
- [vulnerable](#)

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

Pupils and families who are anxious about attending school

It is likely that some pupils, parents and households may be reluctant or anxious about attending school. This may include pupils who:

- 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 carers)

- are concerned about the possible increased risks from 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 reduce any risks including the system of controls and testing. 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 statutory reason applies.

Advice for schools and local authorities to support them to [improve school attendance](#) is available.

Pupils abroad who are unable to return

You should continue to work with local authorities to engage with families who are abroad to understand the child's circumstances and their plans to return.

You should encourage families to return where they are able to, emphasising the benefits of regular school attendance and reminding them that school attendance is mandatory.

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 is self-isolating or quarantining because of COVID-19 in accordance with relevant legislation or guidance published by PHE or the DHSC.

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.

Attendance register and codes

For each session that the pupil is absent, you must keep an accurate record in the attendance register. As always, it is up to you to decide how to record sessions in the attendance register based on the child's circumstances and in line with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 as amended. In these situations, code X (not attending in circumstances related to coronavirus) is unlikely to apply.

In some specific cases, code Y (unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances) will apply where a pupil is unable to attend because a national emergency has resulted in widespread disruption to travel. Code Y is unlikely apply in circumstances where families are not travelling back to the UK for other reasons (for example choosing to remain

abroad, or looking to avoid quarantine). Where code Y does not apply, schools should consider the authorised and unauthorised absence codes to identify the appropriate one.

Further guidance about the use of codes is provided in the [school attendance guidance](#).

Admission register

A pupil's name can only lawfully be deleted from the admission register on the grounds prescribed in [regulation 8 of the Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006 as amended](#). Schools may wish to seek their own legal advice and should ensure that they have appropriate evidence before deleting a pupil's name from the admission register.

Remote education

Where you are able to do so, you should provide remote education for pupils who are abroad, and facing challenges to return due to COVID-19 travel restrictions, for the period they are abroad.

Teacher assessments

If circumstances require it, you can conduct assessments remotely, as set out in [JCQ's guidance on the determination of grades for GCSEs, AS and A levels for summer 2021](#). A pupil's performance should be considered in light of the conditions in which the assessment is completed.

Travel and quarantine

All pupils travelling to England must adhere to [government travel advice](#) and parents should bear in mind the impact on their child's education which may result from any requirement to quarantine or isolate upon return.

Those arriving from a '[red list](#)' country, or have transited through one in the past 10 days, must [quarantine in a government approved facility](#) with a parent or legal guardian rather than at home.

Encouraging regular school attendance

You should continue to communicate clearly and consistently the expectations around school attendance to families and any other 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 and vulnerable children and young people
- pupils who were persistently absent prior to the pandemic
- pupils who have not engaged with school regularly during the pandemic

To support families who will need additional help to secure pupils' regular attendance, you can use the additional catch-up funding that has been provided, as well as existing pastoral and support services, attendance staff and pupil premium funding.

You should also work closely with other professionals across the education and health systems, where appropriate, to support school attendance. Continue to notify the pupil's social worker, if they have one, of non-attendance.

Vulnerable children

Where pupils who are self-isolating are within our [definition of vulnerable](#), it is important that you put systems in place to keep in contact with them.

When a vulnerable pupil is required 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:

- pupil referral units
- AP academies
- 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 whose attendance would be contrary to government guidance or law around 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 social contact and mixing as far as is practicable.

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

Due to the smaller size of many AP settings, and because AP settings are not typically organised by year groups, AP settings may wish to adopt whole school bubbles as part of their system of controls.

School workforce

School leaders are best placed to determine the workforce that is required in school, taking into account the advice set out in this section of the guidance for those staff who are CEV.

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

You must explain to staff the measures you are putting in place to reduce risks and should discuss any concerns individuals may have.

Staff who are clinically extremely vulnerable

Some groups of people are at higher risk of severe illness from coronavirus. This group of people have been told directly by their GP or hospital clinician, or have received a letter, confirming that they are 'clinically extremely vulnerable'. See guidance on [who is at higher risk from coronavirus](#), and [protecting people who are clinically extremely vulnerable](#).

Since the 1 April, those who are clinically extremely vulnerable (CEV) are no longer advised to shield. Updated advice is for the group to continue taking extra precautions to protect themselves, and to follow the practical steps set out in the [CEV guidance](#) to minimise their risk of exposure to the virus. Staff in schools who are CEV are advised to work from home where possible, but can attend their place of work if they cannot work from home.

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

Staff who are clinically vulnerable (CV)

CV staff can continue to attend school. 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 prevention 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 also have other health conditions that mean they are considered CEV, where the advice for clinically extremely vulnerable staff will apply. [COVID-19 vaccination: a guide for women of childbearing age, pregnant or breastfeeding](#) contains vaccination advice.

Your workplace risk assessment should already consider any risks to female employees of childbearing age and, in particular, risks to new and expectant mothers. If you are notified that an employee is pregnant, breastfeeding, or has given birth within the last 6 months, you should check the workplace risk assessment to see if any new risks have arisen. An 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 after birth, or while the employee is still breastfeeding, must be included and managed as part of the general workplace risk assessment. You must take appropriate sensible 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 risks.

You should be aware that pregnant women from 28 weeks' gestation, or with underlying health conditions at any point of gestation, may be at greater risk of severe illness if they catch COVID-19. This is also the case for pregnant women with underlying health conditions that place them at greater risk of severe illness if they catch 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 COVID-19 and pregnancy from the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists](#).

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

Current evidence shows that a range of factors mean that some people may be at comparatively increased risk from COVID-19.

Staff who feel they may be at increased risk but who have not been identified as clinically extremely vulnerable can attend school as long as the system of controls set out in this guidance are in place. You should continue with an equitable approach to risk

management for your workforce, recognising that staff may have a variety of baseline risks. Work continues to build our understanding of what these baseline factors are and the increased risks they pose.

There is further [information available on who is at higher risk from coronavirus](#).

Staff who live with those who may have comparatively increased risk from 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, from harm. Employers should continue to assess and update health and safety risks in the usual way, especially in the light of any changing circumstances.

Following the system of controls will help you:

- mitigate the risks of 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 [first aid during coronavirus \(COVID-19\) pandemic](#) 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 with all staff any changes in place as part of these measures.

Some staff may remain anxious and you may need extra systems in place to support staff wellbeing.

[Education Support](#) provides a free helpline for school staff and targeted support for mental health and wellbeing and the [Our Frontline: Wellbeing toolkit for educators](#) brings together a range of resources and support for staff.

You may also find this list of [mental health resources for parents, children, young people and staff](#) useful when planning your approach.

Staff deployment

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

You should ensure that you continue to have appropriate support in place for pupils with SEND. Any redeployments of staff should not be made at the expense of 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 experience to carry out the work, and all appropriate checks are made if they are engaging in regulated activity (see part 3 of [keeping children safe in education](#) for further information).

This includes making sure that for any interventions or care for pupils with complex needs:

- safe ratios 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 who are not 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 having pursued all the immediate options available, you still have concerns about staffing capacity, you should talk to your local authority or trust point of contact.

Further support on staff deployment is available including:

- a [workload reduction toolkit](#) to help review and minimise unnecessary burdens
- the Education Endowment Foundation's (EEF) 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 deal](#) when hiring agency workers. This offers a list of preferred suppliers, who must provide transparent charging rates. You can get support by emailing supplyteachers@crownccommercial.gov.uk with your school's requirements and contact details.

Supply staff and other temporary or peripatetic staff can move between schools. Such staff and visitors must follow your school's arrangements for managing and minimising risk based on the [system of controls](#). They should also have access to information on the safety arrangements and be provided with this as soon as possible after the booking.

This also applies to other temporary staff and volunteers working in schools such as:

- support staff working on a supply basis
- peripatetic staff such as music tutors and sports coaches
- those working in before and after school clubs

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

You should include supply staff, and all temporary staff, in your communications, policies and processes for asymptomatic testing including provision of test kits where feasible.

Other support including specialist staff

Specialists, therapists, clinicians and other support staff for pupils with special educational needs and disability (SEND) can attend schools to provide interventions as usual where this is reasonably necessary, including where this requires them to move between settings.

Volunteers may be used to support the work of the school, as would usually be the case. It is important that they are properly supported and given appropriate roles.

Where you are using volunteers, continue to follow the checking and risk assessment process in the volunteer section of [keeping children safe in education](#). Under no circumstances should a volunteer who has not been checked be left unsupervised or allowed to work in regulated activity.

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

Recruitment

You can continue recruiting members of staff. The [Teaching Vacancies](#) service can help schools to list vacancies for both permanent and fixed-term teaching staff quickly.

Schools should consider a flexible approach to interviews, with alternative options to face-to-face interviews offered where possible. The DfE teaching blog provides:

- information on the [experience of implementing interviews remotely](#)
- advice that can be sent to candidates on [how to prepare for remote interviews](#)

Where face-to-face meetings are necessary, you should share the school's control measures in advance and make it clear to candidates that they must follow the [system of controls](#) that you have in place. This includes any requirements for wearing face coverings where social distancing cannot be managed safely.

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 worked flexibly to ensure this year's newly qualified teachers (NQTs) are ready and prepared to enter the classroom. NQTs will also be supported by materials based on the [early career framework reforms](#). Schools in the early roll-out regions (Bradford, 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 COVID-19 testing in the same way other school staff are. They are expected to follow all control measures put in place by host schools.

Performance management and appraisal

Maintained schools must continue to follow the [school teachers' pay and conditions document](#). All pay progression for teachers must be linked to performance management.

You should consider adapting performance management and appraisal arrangements to take account of the current circumstances, particularly where these have had an impact on the ability of the teacher to meet fully their objectives.

Teachers must not be penalised during the appraisal process or any subsequent pay progression decisions because of the decision to restrict pupil attendance at schools.

You should carry out any appraisals and performance management for support staff in accordance with the employee's contract of employment. We do not specify pay or 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 inform workforce planning taking into account their individual contractual arrangements.

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 for 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 regularly picking up the same pupils each day
- minibuses
- services 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.

Do speak to the local authority or transport provider so that you understand the approach they are adopting. You might wish to request a copy of their updated risk assessment. It is important, wherever it is possible, that:

- social distancing is maximised within vehicles
- pupils either sit with their 'bubble' on school transport, or with the same constant group of children each day
- pupils clean their hands before boarding transport and again on disembarking
- additional cleaning of vehicles is put in place
- organised queuing and boarding is put in place
- fresh air (from outside the vehicle) through ventilation, is maximised, particularly through opening windows and ceiling vents

Pupils should not board home to school transport if they, or a member of their household, has had a positive test result or has symptoms of COVID-19.

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 school.

A [face covering](#) is a covering of any type which covers your nose and mouth. This does not apply to people who are [exempt from wearing a face covering](#) on public transport.

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 transport services to support capacity on public transport. Additional [funding for local transport authorities](#) is available for this purpose.

Wider public transport

In many areas, pupils normally make extensive use of the wider public transport system, particularly public buses. Public transport capacity continues to be constrained. Its use by pupils, particularly in 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 hours.

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 travel from 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 has travelled from or through a [‘red list’](#) country in the previous 10 days, is not permitted to enter the UK and should be told not to travel.

Guidance has been issued on the [quarantine arrangements for boarding school students travelling to attend a boarding school in England](#) who meet the UK entry requirements and have travelled from or through a ‘red list’ country in the previous 10 days.

The rules for pupils travelling from amber and green list countries are different and are explained in [the rules for entering guidance](#).

Pupils travelling from amber list countries may quarantine at home or at accommodation provided by their school for 10 days.

Pupils travelling from green list countries do not need to quarantine unless their COVID-19 test result is positive.

You should have plans for the collection and transfer of pupils travelling from red and amber list countries, from their point of arrival, and put in place suitable arrangements for their quarantine, which may be in the school's boarding accommodation.

School meals

We expect kitchens to be fully open and normal legal requirements will apply to the provision of food for pupils, including ensuring food meets the [standards for school food in England](#). This includes those eligible for:

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

School kitchens should follow the [guidance for food businesses on 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 during term time.

More information on [providing school meals during the COVID-19 pandemic](#) 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 remote education to pupils covered by the direction where their attendance would be contrary to government guidance or legislation around COVID-19. This includes, for example, where such guidance means that a class, group or a small number of pupils need to self-isolate. All such pupils not physically unwell should have access to remote education as soon as reasonably practicable, which may be the next school day.

Independent Schools (not including academies) are not all covered by the remote education temporary continuity direction. However, they are still expected to meet the [Independent School Standards](#) in full at all times. This includes the requirement to meet all of the education requirements set out in part 1 of the Independent School Standards.

The remote education provided should be equivalent in length to the core teaching pupils would receive in school and should include recorded or live direct teaching time, as well as time for pupils to complete tasks 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 in lieu of school-led video content.

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 used consistently across the school in order to allow interaction, assessment and feedback and make sure staff are trained and confident in its use. If schools do not have an education platform in place, they can access free support at [get help with technology](#)
- overcome barriers to digital access for pupils by:
 - distributing school-owned laptops accompanied by a user agreement or contract
 - providing printed resources, such as textbooks and workbooks, to structure learning, supplemented with other forms of communication to keep pupils on track or answer questions about work
- have systems for checking, daily, whether pupils are engaging with their work, and work with families to rapidly identify effective solutions where engagement is a concern
- identify a named senior leader with overarching responsibility for the quality and delivery of remote education, including that provision meets expectations 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 transfer into remote education what we already know about effective teaching in the live classroom by, for example:
 - providing frequent, clear explanations of new content, delivered by a teacher or through high-quality curriculum resources

- providing opportunities for interactivity, including questioning, eliciting and reflective discussion
- providing scaffolded practice and opportunities to apply new knowledge
- enabling pupils to receive timely and frequent feedback on how to progress, 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 pupils' knowledge
- avoiding an over-reliance on long-term projects or internet research activities

We expect you to consider these expectations in relation to the pupils' age, stage of development or special educational needs, for example where this would place significant demands on parents' help or support.

Younger children in Key Stage 1 or Reception often require high levels of parental involvement to support their engagement with remote education, which makes digital provision a particular challenge for this age group. We, therefore, do not expect that solely digital means will be used to teach these pupils remotely.

We also recognise that some pupils with SEND may not be able to access remote education without adult support and so expect schools to work with families to deliver an ambitious curriculum appropriate for their level of need.

A previous expectation for schools to publish information about their remote education provision on their website has now become a [legal duty](#). The legal duty does not require schools to provide any more information than they were previously expected to under the guidance relating to remote education. An [optional template](#) is available to support schools with this requirement.

[Get help with remote education](#) provides information for teachers and leaders, signposting the support package available. We have also published a [review your remote education provision](#) tool, to support school leaders in reviewing and self-assessing their current remote education offer.

Peer-to-peer advice and training is available through the [EdTech Demonstrator programme](#).

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

Delivering remote education safely

Keeping children safe online is essential. The statutory guidance [keeping children safe in education](#) provides the information on what you should be doing to protect your 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 COVID-19.

For schools delivering their remote education through live and recorded lessons, the following support is available through third-party resources:

- information portals to help schools, parents and staff deliver safe remote education:
 - [Safe Remote Learning knowledge base](#) by SGWfL
 - [Safeguarding during remote learning and lockdowns](#) by LGfL
- [live remote lessons](#) – SGWfL article answering questions asked of the Professional Online Safety Helpline addressing key concerns from teachers
- the National Cyber Security Centre, which includes information on which [video conference service](#) is right for you and using video conferencing services securely

Special educational needs

If pupils with SEND are not able to be in 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 use their best endeavours to secure the special educational provision called for by the pupils' special educational needs remains in place.

You should work collaboratively with families and put in place reasonable adjustments so that pupils with SEND can successfully access remote education. In this situation, decisions on how provision can be delivered should be informed by relevant considerations 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 the manufacturers recommendations. Good ventilation with fresh air is essential at all times in classrooms and particularly during this period.

Refer to the [system of controls](#) for guidance on keeping occupied 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 as appropriate). You should make adjustments to your fire drill to allow for social distancing as appropriate. Refer to [advice on fire safety in new and existing school buildings](#).

Opening after reduced occupancy

It is important that you undertake all the usual building checks to make the school safe. If buildings have been closed or had reduced occupancy, water system stagnation can occur due to lack of use. This can increase the [risk of Legionnaires' disease](#).

Advice on safely reoccupying buildings can be found in the Chartered Institute of Building Services Engineers' guidance on [emerging from lockdown](#).

Educational visits

We recognise the significant benefits of educational visits for children's educational development, as well as their mental health and wellbeing. We are taking steps to allow pupils to enjoy visits in line with the government's roadmap.

The [roadmap](#) is driven by data, not dates. The government will only move from one step to the next when it is safe to do so and based on 4 tests.

For that reason, all dates are indicative and subject to change. This advice has now been updated to reflect the Prime Minister's announcement regarding Step 3. Advice will continue to be updated in line with the roadmap.

Educational day visits

In line with the [roadmap](#), schools were able to resume educational day visits from 12 April.

Any educational day visits must be conducted in line with relevant COVID-secure guidelines and regulations in place at that time. This includes system of controls, such as keeping children within their consistent groups and the COVID-secure measures in place at the destination.

You should undertake full and thorough risk assessments in relation to all educational visits to ensure they can be undertaken safely. As part of this risk assessment, you will need to consider what control measures need to be used and follow wider advice on visiting indoor and outdoor venues. You should consult the [health and safety guidance on educational visits](#) when considering visits.

Domestic residential educational visits

In line with the roadmap, schools can undertake domestic residential education visits, from 17 May.

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

You should keep children within their consistent groups (bubbles) for the purpose of the visit.

Risk assessment for residential educational visits

[Annex C](#) sets out the conditions that should be met when planning and undertaking a residential educational visit as part of Step 3.

You should undertake full and thorough risk assessments in relation to all educational visits to ensure they can be undertaken safely. You should consider the principles set out in the [system of controls](#) and [annex C](#) to assure yourself that you are taking children into a safe environment.

New bookings

For new bookings, whilst there are still gaps in the traditional insurance market regarding COVID-19 cancellation cover, schools should be able to secure appropriate travel insurance for other aspects of their visit.

Given the likely gap in COVID-19 cancellation related insurance, schools considering booking a new visit are advised to ensure that any new bookings have adequate financial protection in place.

Many providers are now offering no cost deferral to a later date or a full cash refund of all monies paid against a new booking should a deferral not be acceptable. Other measures that may be available include:

- insurance backing of 'COVID-19 guarantee'
- extended payment terms
- financial protection in case of insolvency
- membership of industry organisations

You should speak to either your commercial insurance provider, the Risk Protection Arrangement (RPA) or an outdoor education adviser to assess the protection available and make sure it provides suitable protection in the event of a COVID-19 related cancellation. If unsure contact organisations such as the [British Insurance Brokers' Association](#) (BIBA) or [Association of British Insurers](#) (ABI) for independent advice on insurance cover and options.

International visits

The government has now published [red, amber and green list rules for entering England](#).

Given the complexities attached to international travel at this stage of the pandemic, we recommend schools do not go on any international visits this academic year up to and including 5 September 2021.

The position beyond 5 September will be reviewed again in advance of Step 4.

Credit notes

Any school holding ATOL or ABTA refund credit notes may use these credit notes to rebook educational or international visits.

Transitional, taster and open days

You should complete thorough risk assessments before running transitional, taster and open days to ensure that they are run in line with your system of controls and align with the advice contained within this guidance and the [roadmap out of lockdown](#).

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 mindful and considerate approach may help parents who have difficulty obtaining uniform items or are experiencing financial pressures.

Wraparound provision and extra-curricular activity

You should be working to resume all your before and after-school activities and wraparound childcare for your pupils.

All parents may access wraparound and extra-curricular provision for their children, 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 minimise mixing between children. This can be achieved by taking steps such as trying to keep children in consistent groups as described below.

Where providers are offering organised activities for children, such as wraparound childcare or extra-curricular activities are outdoors, this can currently happen in groups of any number.

However, until 17 May (in line with Step 3 of the roadmap) if the provision is taking place indoors, and it is not possible to group children in the same bubble as they are in during the school day, providers should keep children in consistent groups of no more than 15 children and at least one staff member.

From 17 May, in line with the commencement of Step 3 of the roadmap, where wraparound and other extra-curricular activities for children are taking place indoors, they will be able to take place in groups of any number. However, it remain important to continue to minimise mixing between children, where possible. This can be achieved by continuing to keep children in consistent groups every time they attend the setting. Smaller groups should be considered when it is not possible to do this. When considering appropriate group sizes it will be important to take into account factors such as the recommended occupancy levels of the premises you are operating from and levels of ventilation. For example, guidance for [providers of grassroots sport and sport facilities](#) recommends that the maximum occupancy of an indoor facility should be limited by providing a minimum of 100sqft per person.

The guidance for [providers who run community activities, holiday clubs, after-school clubs, tuition and other out-of-school provision for children](#) may help you to plan extra-curricular provision, including appropriate group sizes.

Where parents are using external 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 hire out your premises for use by external wraparound childcare providers, such as after-school or holiday clubs, make sure these organisations have:

- 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 receive a high-quality education that promotes their development and equips them with the knowledge and cultural capital they need to succeed in life
- the curriculum remains broad and ambitious - all pupils continue to be taught 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 that curriculum planning is informed both by an assessment of pupils' starting points and gaps in their knowledge, and an understanding of what is the most critical content for progression. To achieve this, you may need to make substantial modifications to your curriculum and should make effective use of regular formative assessment while avoiding the introduction of unnecessary tracking systems.

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

You may consider it appropriate to suspend some subjects for some pupils in exceptional circumstances.

Up to and including Key Stage 3, prioritisation within subjects of the most important components for progression is likely to be more effective than removing subjects, which may deprive pupils of the knowledge and cultural capital they need to succeed in life.

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 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 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 for pupils to read widely, 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 on [working safely during 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 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

If planning an indoor or outdoor face-to-face performance in front of a live audience, you should follow the latest advice in the [working safely during COVID-19 in the performing arts](#) guidance, which provides details of how to manage audiences as well as carry out performing arts safely. If planning an outdoor performance you should also give particular consideration to the guidance on delivering [outdoor events](#).

You may wish to still 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 COVID-19 pandemic](#).

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](#).

Indoor and outdoor competition between different schools can take now place.

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.

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

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 COVID-19 pandemic, 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 the impact of COVID-19 and associated restrictions

- 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.

You can also 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
- provide support for resilience, mental health and wellbeing including anxiety, bereavement and sleep issues
- support pupils with additional and complex health needs

Support and resources

Through the Wellbeing for Education Return programme the government funded a [webinar to support school and college staff](#).

Teachers can also 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 [COVID-19 staff resilience hub](#) with advice and tips for frontline staff.

The Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE) training module on [teaching about mental wellbeing](#) will help improve teacher confidence in talking and teaching about mental health and wellbeing in the classroom.

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

It is intended that Ofsted will resume its full programme of routine, graded school inspections in September 2021.

During the summer term, Ofsted is restarting some onsite inspections under its Education Inspection Framework. Ofsted has published an updated [school inspection handbook](#) and [section 8 inspection handbook](#) which take account of the challenges raised by COVID-19.

Independent schools (not including academies) inspection

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

For the summer term 2021, Ofsted have restarted some onsite standard inspections under its Education Inspection Framework and ISI intend to restart some standard inspections under its Regulatory Compliance Inspection Framework. Further information about these inspection arrangements will be available 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 next 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 [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 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: summer term for pupils in years 11 to 13

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 you 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.

You 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 you to maximise opportunities that meet the progression needs of your students during this period.

As usual, you need to record pupils in the register using the most appropriate code. This may be either authorised absence or unauthorised absence.

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.

You 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

You 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

You 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 COVID-19 restrictions apply)

Annex C: domestic residential educational visits

Overview

The purpose of this guidance is to highlight the issues that all schools and their designated Educational Visits Coordinator or visit leader should think about when considering any domestic residential educational visit. [General guidance](#) about educational visits is available, with specialist advice available from the [Outdoor Education Advisory Panel \(OEAP\)](#). All educational visits must be fully compliant with COVID-19 requirements.

It is important to remember that the UK is still operating under COVID-19 restrictions and that any educational visit that takes you to either [Scotland](#), [Wales](#) or [Northern Ireland](#) must be COVID-19 compliant with the required regulations at the educational visit destination.

In addition to the general COVID-19 guidance, you should operate within the principles outlined in this guidance. This includes working within the system of control, especially keeping children within their established bubbles throughout the visit and following the COVID-19 specific health and safety advice in [annex A: health and safety risk assessment](#).

All providers operating educational visits for schools should follow requirements on [hotels and other guest accommodation](#). You should familiarise yourself with the content of this guidance to ensure that accommodation arrangements for the educational visit are in line with the required standards.

You should be fully engaged with parents, carers and children about the organisation of the visit and the COVID-19 measures in place, from the initial planning to completion of the visit. You should be very clear and able to demonstrate that the visit has been fully risk assessed and that measures are in place to ensure that, as far as is practicably possible, the visit is and will remain COVID-19 compliant.

This guidance will continue to be reviewed and updated in line with the [roadmap](#) which is the government's approach to the easing of COVID-19 restrictions.

Considerations when planning educational visits

Bubble size

You should follow these principles when establishing your visit bubbles:

- bubbles should be formed from existing school bubbles such that residential visit bubbles only have pupils from a single existing bubble

- form bubbles no larger than circa 30 children - where possible aim to establish smaller bubbles
- only teachers and members of the school workforce already part of the established school bubble should accompany pupils on the visit as they are already part of the existing school bubble - they do not count towards the bubble size
- parents, carers or volunteers should not accompany the group to maintain the integrity of the bubble

Risk assessments

You must undertake full and thorough risk assessments in relation to all educational visits to ensure they can be undertaken safely. You should refer to:

- [annex A: health and safety risk assessment](#)
- [Health and safety on educational visits](#)
- [HSE's working safely during the coronavirus \(COVID-19\) pandemic](#)

The risk assessment should, amongst other things, set out how:

- the integrity of the bubble will be maintained throughout (including during recreational times) - you should:
- not 'top up' or mix the bubbles at any time during the visit
- think very carefully about how you will maintain the integrity of large bubbles
- the integrity of the bubbles will be maintained and bubble mixing prevented if more than one bubble is going on the trip
- you will maintain the bubble throughout the visit and ensure that bubbles do not mix with other school groups or bubbles or other guests
- contingency plans enable a rapid response to symptoms developing in the group or someone needing to self-isolate

Your risk assessment and extra planning must reflect the public health restrictions in place and your residential visit provider should be able to demonstrate how their centre meets the requirements set out in the guidance on [hotels and other guest accommodation](#). You should request this information prior to any visit and pay particular attention to how the centre will manage any COVID-19 cases during your stay.

Secondary schools should consider how you might use asymptomatic testing (JUMP LINK HERE) to manage the COVID-19 risk. Testing remains voluntary but strongly encouraged and you should consider how you utilise and encourage testing before and after the visit for secondary school children. All schools should consider how you utilise and encourage testing before and after the visits for school staff.

You should consider if there are additional factors to be considered for children (and staff) with SEND and medical conditions to comply with COVID-19 safety measures at the venue. Special schools and other [specialist settings](#) will help with this.

You should give consideration to spending as much time outdoors as possible whilst on the visit as this reduces the rate of transmission of the virus.

General preparation

You should check in advance that the provider has assessed the risk of COVID-19 and implemented appropriate control measures. In particular, you should ask the accommodation provider to confirm that they:

- are confident they can maintain the integrity of the school bubble and prevent mixing with other guests and bubbles
- have assessed overnight sleeping arrangements in line with the size of the group that will be expected to share rooms or dormitories, particularly in respect of measures to ensure appropriate ventilation (see more in the accommodation section)
- have measures in place to ensure the [effective and frequent sanitising and cleaning](#) of any shared facilities such as:
 - bathrooms
 - kitchen or dining
 - any potentially shared equipment or communal facilities
 - frequent touch surfaces

Both the school and the accommodation provider have a responsibility to ensure the integrity of the bubble is maintained throughout the visit. If asked, the provider should be in a position to set out how the integrity of the bubble can be maintained throughout the visit.

Accommodation

You should be familiar with the guidance on [hotels and other guest accommodation](#).

It sets out for accommodation providers that schools organising residential visits are asked to limit bubbles to no larger than circa 30 pupils. It also sets out that schools may bring multiple bubbles on a visit, as long as the integrity of the separate bubbles can be maintained.

The accommodation guidance sets out that residential educational visits organised by a school should be conducted in a way that maintains the integrity of the established school visit bubble. Accommodation providers should reflect this in their risk assessments. As part of your own risk assessment, you should carefully consider the

size of the bubble proposed for the visit and how the integrity of that bubble can be maintained throughout the visit.

Overnight sleeping arrangements place children and staff at increased risk of exposure to COVID-19. As a consequence, if the educational visit contains more than 6 people it is strongly recommended that the bubble is broken down into smaller groups for sleeping and room sharing is limited as far as possible. You should speak to your accommodation provider about sleeping arrangements in advance of the visit. It is also recommended that members of school staff have their own single room and do not share with other members of school staff. The accommodation provider risk assessment should amongst other things manage the numbers in each room overnight, space between beds, space between groups of beds and reflect the [HSE standards on the quality of ventilation](#).

In advance of any visit, it will be important for you to confirm arrangements with the accommodation provider, especially with regard to maintaining the integrity of the bubble, arrangements for overnight accommodations and travel to, from and during the visit. The guidance on [hotels and other guest accommodation](#) sets out the process and procedures any accommodation provider should follow when they are welcoming education settings on residential visits.

Insurance

As a school you should have an appropriate level of insurance cover whilst on an educational visit. Whilst it may be difficult to secure COVID-19 cancellation cover for new bookings any visits booked prior to the COVID-19 pandemic are likely to include cover for COVID-19. If unsure, you are advised to check with your insurance provider or broker, or the [Risk Protection Arrangement \(RPA\)](#), for information on the level of cover or protection available, especially in the event of a COVID-19 related cancellation.

It is important to note that we do not get involved in disputes regarding your travel provider's, or travel insurer's, performance or behaviour. Any dispute should be resolved in line with the contractual arrangements and in line with the relevant industry and sector representative body bonds, standards or codes of practice, consumer rights legislation or the current regulator guidance or domestic regulations. Any dispute should be resolved in line with the contractual arrangements and in line with the relevant industry and sector representative body bonds, standards or codes of practice, consumer rights legislation or the current regulator guidance or domestic regulations.

The Association of British Insurers (ABI) has produced information on [travel insurance implications following the COVID-19 pandemic](#).

Travel

Schools should carefully consider and plan their travel arrangements to and from their destination and follow the advice set out in this guidance. It is important to observe and

make travel plans that reflect the system of controls, especially in relation to maintaining the integrity and exclusivity of the educational visit bubble. General information on travel is available in the [safer travel guidance for passengers](#).



Department
for Education

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