Department for Education

Restricting attendance during the national lockdown: schools

Guidance for all schools in England

January 2021

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Summary

Expiry or review date

This guidance will be regularly reviewed and will expire when schools are no longer asked to limit attendance.

Who is this guidance for?

This guidance applies to all schools in England, including:

- schools maintained by local authorities
- academies
- free schools
- alternative provision schools including pupil referral units
- special schools, including non-maintained special schools
- independent schools
- boarding schools

This guidance is for schools during the national lockdown period. Where this guidance refers to “schools”, that does not include maintained nursery schools or pre-reception classes.

Schools will be familiar with much of this guidance, including the system of controls, which they have been implementing since the start of the autumn term. Guidance has been updated where necessary to reflect the change to only some children attending on-site.

This guidance includes new information on:

- Attendance – including confirmation of who should attend (including in alternative provision and special schools) and how attendance should be recorded
- Testing – including confirmation that the testing programme can continue in secondary schools
- Workforce – including advice for those who are extremely clinically vulnerable
- Free School Meals
- Educational visits – confirmation that no visits should take place during this period
- Remote education – including further information on remote education expectations
- Accountability expectations – including inspections, exams and assessments

Introduction

During the period of national lockdown, schools, alternative provision (AP), special schools, colleges and wraparound childcare and other out-of-school activities for children should allow only vulnerable children and young people and the children of critical workers to attend (recognising that the characteristics of the cohorts in special schools and alternative provision will mean these settings continue to offer face to face provision for all pupils, where appropriate). All other pupils and students should not attend and should learn remotely until February half term.

Early years provision should continue to remain open and should continue to allow all children to attend full time or their usual timetable hours. This includes early years registered nurseries and childminders, maintained nursery schools, as well as nursery classes in schools and other pre-reception provision on school sites. Only vulnerable children and children of critical workers should attend on-site reception classes. This is the default position for all areas irrespective of national lockdown restrictions.

In light of the evolving public health measures, schools and colleges can continue with the vocational and technical exams that are due to take place in January, where they judge it right to do so. This may be particularly important for occupational competence Vocational and technical qualifications (VTQs) which can only be fulfilled through practical assessment, such as an electrician.

It is for the school or college to decide whether to put on the exam. If a student is unable to take their assessment this January, they may be able to take the assessment at a later date. In the event that is not possible, we will put in place arrangements to ensure they are not disadvantaged. We are working with Ofqual on these arrangements and will provide updated guidance on this, and on VTQ assessments scheduled for February onwards, in due course.

We know that receiving face-to-face education is best for children's mental health and for their educational achievement. We will continue to review the restrictions on schools, colleges and universities and will ensure that children and young people return to face-to-face education as soon as possible.

Limiting attendance does not suggest that schools and colleges have become significantly less safe for young people. Instead limiting attendance is about supporting the reduction of the overall number of social contacts in our communities. We have resisted restrictions on attendance at schools since the first lockdown but, in the face of the rapidly rising numbers of cases across the country and intense pressure on the NHS, we now need to use every lever at our disposal to reduce all our social contacts wherever possible.

For vulnerable children and young people and the children of critical workers, who should still attend school or college, as they did in March to July, and their teachers, the system of protective measures means that any risks are well managed and controlled.

We are responding to the intense pressure on the NHS, but that pressure is not driven by children. We are not seeing significant pressure from coronavirus (COVID-19) in paediatrics across the UK. The new variant appears to affect all ages but we have not seen any changes in the severity of the disease among any age groups, including children and young people.

The majority of children and young people have no symptoms or very mild illness only. As cases in the community rise there will be an increase in the number of children we see with coronavirus (COVID-19) but only very rarely will they require admission to hospital.

Public health advice to minimise coronavirus (COVID-19) risks

The system of controls set out in this section provides a set of principles for infection control and if schools follow this advice and maximise the use of these control measures, they will effectively minimise risks of viral transmission. All elements of the system of controls are essential. All schools must cover all key elements, but the way different schools implement some of the requirements will differ based on their individual circumstances. Where something is essential for public health reasons in this section, 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.

These measures remain just as important during the period where attendance is limited to only vulnerable children and young people, and the children of critical workers.

Schools must comply with health and safety law, which requires them to assess risks and put in place proportionate control measures. Schools should thoroughly review their health and safety risk assessments and plans that address the risks identified using the system of controls, with which schools will now be familiar. Essential measures include:

- a requirement that people stay at home if they:
    - are ill with virus symptoms
    - have tested positive, even if asymptomatic
    - have been advised by NHS Test and Trace to do so
    - are household members of a positive case, even if that case is asymptomatic
    - are required to self-isolate for travel-related reasons
- robust hand and respiratory hygiene
- enhanced cleaning and ventilation arrangements
- active engagement with NHS Test and Trace
- formal consideration of how to reduce contacts and maximise distancing between those in school wherever possible
- minimise the potential for contamination so far as is reasonably practicable

How contacts are reduced will depend on the school's circumstances, including how many children need to attend during this period, and will (as much as possible) include:

- keeping children in consistent groups
- avoiding contact between groups
- arranging classrooms with forward facing desks
- staff maintaining distance from pupils and other staff as much as possible

Risk assessment

Employers must protect people from harm. This includes taking reasonable steps to protect staff, pupils and others from coronavirus (COVID-19) within the education setting.

Schools should have already assessed the risks and implemented proportionate control measures to limit the transmission of coronavirus (COVID-19).

It is a legal requirement that schools should revisit and update their risk assessments (building on the learning to date and the practices they have already developed). It is good practice to treat risk assessments as a “living document” which is kept under review, especially having regard to changing circumstances.

Schools should have already considered the additional risks and control measures. Schools will review and update their wider risk assessments and consider the need for relevant revised controls in respect of their conventional risk profile considering the implications of coronavirus (COVID-19). Schools should also have ensured that they have implemented sensible and proportionate control measures which follow the health and safety hierarchy of controls to reduce the risk to the lowest reasonably practicable level.

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

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

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

The system of controls: protective measures

Having assessed their risk, schools must work through the below system of controls, adopting measures to the fullest extent possible in a way that addresses the risk identified in their assessment, works for their school and allows them to deliver a broad

and balanced curriculum for the pupils attending during this period, including full educational and care support for those pupils who have Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND).

If schools follow the guidance set out here they will effectively reduce risks in their school and create an inherently safer environment.

System of controls

This is the set of actions schools must take. They are grouped into ‘prevention’ and ‘response to any infection’ and are outlined in more detail in the following sections.

Prevention

1) Minimise contact with individuals who are unwell by ensuring that those who are required to stay at home do not attend school.

2) Where recommended, the use of face coverings in schools.

3) Clean hands thoroughly more often than usual.

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

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

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

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

8) Always keeping occupied spaces well ventilated.

Numbers 1 to 5, and number 8, must be in place in all schools, all the time.

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

Number 7 applies in specific circumstances.

Response to any infection

9) Engage with the NHS Test and Trace process.

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

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

Numbers 9 to 11 must be followed in every case where they are relevant.

Prevention

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

Ensuring that pupils, staff and other adults do not come into the school if they have coronavirus (COVID-19) symptoms or have tested positive in at least the last 10 days and ensuring anyone developing those symptoms during the school day is sent home, are essential actions to reduce the risk in schools and further drive down transmission of coronavirus (COVID-19).

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

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

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

If a child 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 child, with appropriate adult supervision if required. Ideally, a window should be opened for ventilation. If it is not possible to isolate them, move them to an area which is at least 2 metres away from other people.

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

PPE must be worn by staff caring for the child 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, including the use of personal protective equipment (PPE) guidance.

If a child in a boarding school shows symptoms, they should initially self-isolate in their boarding house (or the accommodation they stay in while at school). Most children 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.

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

Any member of staff who has provided close contact care to someone with symptoms, even while wearing PPE, and all other members of staff or pupils who have been in close contact with that person with symptoms, even if wearing a face covering, do not need to go home to self-isolate unless:

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

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 COVID-19: cleaning of non-healthcare settings guidance.

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

2. Where recommended, use of face coverings in schools

Under national lockdown, in settings where pupils in year 7 and above are educated, face coverings should be worn by adults and pupils when moving around the premises, outside of classrooms, such as in corridors and communal areas where social distancing cannot easily be maintained. This does not apply to younger children in primary schools and in early years settings.

Schools will need to communicate quickly and clearly to staff, parents and pupils that the new arrangements require the use of face coverings in certain circumstances.

Exemptions

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

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

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

Access to face coverings

It is reasonable to assume that staff and young people will now have access to face coverings due to their increasing use in wider society. PHE has made resources available on how to make a simple face covering.

However, where anybody is struggling to access a face covering, or where they are unable to use their face covering due to having forgotten it, or it having become soiled or unsafe, education settings should take steps to have a small contingency supply available to meet such needs.

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

Safe wearing and removal of face coverings

Schools should have a process for managing face coverings in school. This process should be communicated clearly to pupils and staff.

Safe wearing of face coverings requires cleaning of hands before and after touching – including to remove or put them on – and the safe storage of them in individual, sealable plastic bags between use. Where a face covering becomes damp, it should not be worn and the face covering should be replaced carefully.

Pupils must be instructed not to touch the front of their face covering during use or when removing it and they must dispose of temporary face coverings in a 'black bag' waste bin (not recycling bin) or place reusable face coverings in a plastic bag they can take home with them, and then wash their hands again.

Further guidance on face coverings

- Safe working in education, childcare and children's social care provides
- Face coverings in education settings

3. Clean hands thoroughly more often than usual

Coronavirus (COVID-19) is an easy virus to remove when it is on skin. This remains true for the new variant. This can be done with soap and running water or hand sanitiser. Schools must ensure that pupils clean their hands regularly, including when they arrive at school, when they return from breaks, when they change rooms and before and after eating. Regular and thorough hand cleaning is going to be needed for the foreseeable future. Points to consider and implement:

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

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

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

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

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

Points to consider and implement:

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

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

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

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

The overarching principle to apply is reducing the number of contacts between children and staff. This can be achieved through keeping groups separate (in 'bubbles') and through maintaining the distance between individuals. Whilst schools are attended by vulnerable children and the children of critical workers only, where possible schools should keep group sizes small. For children old enough, they should also be supported to maintain distance and not touch staff where possible. Any additional space available where there are lower numbers of pupils attending, should be used wherever possible to maximise the distance between pupils and between staff and other people.

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

a. How to group children

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. They have been used to date in recognition that children, especially the youngest children, cannot socially distance from staff or from each other and this provides an additional protective measure. Maintaining distinct groups or 'bubbles' that do not mix makes it quicker and easier in the event of a positive case to identify those who may need to self-isolate and keep that number as small as possible.

Each group should be kept apart from other groups where possible and older children should be encouraged to keep their distance within groups. Schools with the capability to do it should take steps to limit interaction and the sharing of rooms and social spaces between groups as much as possible. We recognise that younger children will not be able to maintain social distancing and it is acceptable for them not to distance within their group.

Both the approaches of separating groups and maintaining distance are not 'all-or-nothing' options and will still bring benefits even if implemented partially. Siblings may also be in different groups. Endeavouring to keep these groups at least partially separate

and minimising contacts between children will still offer public health benefits as it reduces the network of possible direct transmission.

All teachers and other staff can operate across different groups. 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. Again, we recognise this is not likely to be possible with younger children and teachers in primary schools can still work across groups if that is needed.

b. 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 younger children, but if adults can do this when circumstances allow that will help. In particular, they should avoid close face to face contact and minimise time spent within 1 metre of anyone. Similarly, it will not be possible when working with many pupils who have complex needs or who need close contact care. These pupils' educational and care support should be provided as normal.

For children old enough, they should also be supported to maintain distance and not touch staff and their peers where possible. This will not be possible for the youngest children and some children with complex needs and it is not feasible in some schools where space does not allow. Schools doing this where they can, and even doing this some of the time, will help.

When staff or children cannot maintain distancing, particularly with younger children in primary schools, the risk can also be reduced by keeping pupils in smaller groups.

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

c. Measures elsewhere

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

Groups should be kept apart and movement around the school site kept to a minimum. While passing briefly in the corridor or playground is low risk, schools should avoid

creating busy corridors, entrances and exits. Schools should also consider staggered break times and lunch times (and time for cleaning surfaces in the dining hall between groups).

Schools should also plan how shared staff spaces are set up and used to help staff to distance from each other. Use of staff rooms should be minimised, although staff must still have a break of a reasonable length during the day.

d. Other considerations

Some pupils with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) (whether with education, health and care plans or on SEN support) will continue to need specific help with the changes to routines they are experiencing, so teachers and special educational needs coordinators should plan to meet these needs, for example using social stories.

Schools, local authorities, health professionals, regional schools commissioners and other services should work together to ensure that children with medical conditions are fully supported, including through the use of individual healthcare plans, so that they may 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. Our guidance on supporting pupils at school with medical conditions remains in place.

Supply teachers, peripatetic teachers and other temporary staff can move between schools. They should ensure they minimise contact and maintain as much distance as possible from other staff. They should also participate in schools' rapid testing programmes where these have been established. Specialists, therapists, clinicians and other support staff for pupils with SEND should provide interventions as usual.

Schools should consider how to manage other visitors to the site, such as contractors, and ensure that the risks associated with managing contractors, visitors, catering staff and deliveries, as well as cleaning staff on site who may be working throughout the school and across different groups, are addressed. This will require close cooperation between both schools and the other relevant employers. Schools should have discussions with key contractors about the school's control measures and ways of working. Schools should ensure site guidance on physical distancing and hygiene is explained to visitors on or before arrival. Where visits can happen outside of school hours, they should. A record should be kept of all visitors with sufficient detail to support contact tracing if required by NHS Test and Trace.

Where a child routinely attends more than one setting on a part time basis, for example, because they are dual registered at a mainstream school and an alternative provision setting or special school, schools should work through the system of controls

collaboratively, enabling them to address any risks identified and allowing them to jointly deliver a broad and balanced curriculum for the child.

Equipment and resources are integral to education in schools. For individual and very frequently used equipment, such as pencils and pens, it is recommended that staff and pupils have their own items that are not shared. Classroom based resources, such as books and games, can be used and shared within the group; these should be cleaned regularly, along with all frequently touched surfaces. Resources that are shared between groups, such as sports, art and science equipment should be cleaned frequently and meticulously and always between groups, or rotated to allow them to be left unused and out of reach for a period of 48 hours (72 hours for plastics) between use by different bubbles.

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

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

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

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

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

8) Keeping occupied spaces well ventilated

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

This can be achieved by a variety of measures including:

- mechanical ventilation systems – these should be adjusted to increase the ventilation rate wherever possible, and checked to confirm that normal operation meets current guidance (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)
- 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). Opening internal doors can also assist with creating a throughput of air
- natural ventilation – if necessary external opening doors may also be used (as long as they are not fire doors and where safe to do so)

Further advice on this can be found in Health and Safety Executive (HSE) guidance on air conditioning and ventilation during the coronavirus outbreak and CIBSE coronavirus (COVID-19) advice.

To balance the need for increased ventilation while maintaining a comfortable temperature, the following measures should also be used as appropriate:

- opening high level windows in preference to low level to reduce draughts
- increasing the ventilation while spaces are unoccupied (for examples, between classes, during break and lunch, when a room is unused)
- providing flexibility to allow additional, suitable indoor clothing. For more information see School uniform
- rearranging furniture where possible to avoid direct drafts

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

Response to any infection

9. Engage with the NHS Test and Trace process

All school staff and pupils can access The NHS Test and Trace testing system, used to test symptomatic people (using a 'polymerase chain reaction (PCR) test'). If a pupil who has attended school, or a staff member, receives a positive PCR test having developed symptoms, schools should follow the guidance below.

Secondary schools participating in the rapid asymptomatic testing programme should follow the Mass asymptomatic testing: schools and colleges guidance for handling any positive tests as a result of that programme.

Schools must ensure they understand the NHS Test and Trace process.

Schools must also ensure that staff members and parents/carers understand that they will need to be ready and willing to:

- book a PCR test if they or their child are displaying symptoms. The main symptoms are a high temperature, a new continuous cough and/or a loss or change to your sense of smell or taste. Staff and pupils must not come into the school if they have symptoms and must be sent home to self-isolate if they develop them in school. All children can be tested if they have symptoms, including 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
- provide details of anyone they or their child have been in close contact with if they were to test positive for coronavirus (COVID-19) or if asked by NHS Test and Trace
- self-isolate if they have been in close contact with someone who tests positive for coronavirus (COVID-19), or if anyone in their household develops symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19), or if they are required to do so having recently travelled from certain other countries. Secondary schools participating in the rapid aymptomatic testing should follow the Mass asymptomatic testing: schools and colleges guidance for handling any positive tests as a result of that programme. Where consent is not given for a secondary-age pupil who has been a close contact of the positive case to participate in asymptomatic testing, the pupil must self-isolate.

Anyone who displays symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19) can and should get a PCR test. PCR tests can be booked online through the NHS testing and tracing for coronavirus website, or ordered by telephone via NHS 119 for those without access tothe internet. Essential workers, which includes anyone involved in education or childcare, have priority access to PCR testing. The government will ensure that it is as easy as possible to get a PCR test through a wide range of routes that are locally accessible, fast and convenient. We will release more details on new PCR testing avenues as and when they become available and will work with schools so they understand the quickest and easiest way to get a PCR test.

The PCR test kits sent to schools are provided to be used in the exceptional circumstance that an individual becomes symptomatic and schools believe they may have barriers to accessing testing elsewhere. It is for schools to determine how to prioritise the distribution of their test kits in order to minimise the impact of the virus on the education of their pupils.

These kits can be given directly to staff or parents and carers collecting a child who has developed symptoms at school. In particular, these test kits will also help ensure that

symptomatic staff can also get a test and if they test negative, can return to work as soon as they no longer have symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19). Further information is provided in our guidance Coronavirus (COVID-19): test kits for schools and FE providers.

Schools should ask parents of children attending school and staff to inform them immediately of the results of any tests taken outside school and follow this guidance.

1. If someone with symptoms tests negative for coronavirus (COVID-19), then they should stay at home until they are recovered as usual from their illness but can safely return thereafter. The only exception to return following a negative test result is where an individual is separately identified as a close contact of a confirmed case, when they will need to self-isolate for 10 days from the date of that contact.

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

NHS COVID-19 app

The app is available to anyone aged 16 or over to download if they choose. For some young people, particularly some with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), parents will need to decide whether or not their use of the app is appropriate.

This will mean that some students in year 11, and the majority of students in years 12 and above will be eligible to use the app and benefit from its features. Staff members will also be able to use the app. The guidance for schools and further education colleges in England is intended to provide information to senior leaders in education settings about the app and how it works, and to set out guidance for its use within schools in England.

Rapid testing in schools and colleges

Secondary schools participating in the rapid asymptomatic testing programme should follow the Mass asymptomatic testing: schools and colleges guidance.

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

Schools must take swift action when they become aware that someone who has attended has tested positive for coronavirus (COVID-19) having developed symptoms and taken a PCR test outside of school.

Secondary schools participating in the rapid asymptomatic testing programme should follow the Mass asymptomatic testing: schools and colleges guidance to ensure contacts of the positive case are tested. Primary schools and any secondary schools not participating in the rapid asymptomatic testing programme must follow the advice below.

If schools would like support on the action they should take to respond to a positive case, they can contact the dedicated advice service introduced by Public Health England (PHE) and delivered by the NHS Business Services Authority. This can be reached 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. Schools will be put through to a team of advisers who will inform them of what action is needed based on the latest public health advice

The advice service (or PHE local health protection team if escalated) will work with schools to guide them through the actions they need to take. Based on their advice, schools must send home those people who have been in close contact with the person who has tested positive, advising them to self-isolate for 10 days from the day after contact with the individual tested positive. Close contact means:

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

The advice service (or PHE local health protection team if escalated) will provide advice on who must be sent home. To support them in doing so, we recommend schools keep a record of pupils and staff in each group, and any close contact that takes places between children 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. Schools 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 who 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 will be provided to schools, on the advice of the health protection team, to send to parents and staff if needed. Schools must not share the names or details of people with coronavirus (COVID-19) unless essential to protect others.

Household members of those contacts who are sent home do not need to self-isolate themselves unless the child, young person or staff member who is self-isolating subsequently develops symptoms. If someone in a class or group that has been asked to self-isolate develops symptoms themselves within the 10-days from the day after contact with the individual tested positive should follow guidance for households with possible or confirmed coronavirus (COVID-19) infection. They should get a test, and:

- if someone who is self-isolating because they have been in close contact with someone who has tested positive for coronavirus (COVID-19) starts to feel unwell and gets a test for coronavirus themselves, and the test delivers a negative result, they must remain in isolation for the remainder of the 10-day isolation period. This is because they could still develop coronavirus (COVID-19) within the remaining days.
- if the test result is positive, they should inform their setting immediately, and should isolate for at least 10 days from the onset of their symptoms (which could mean the self-isolation ends before or after the original 10-day isolation period). Their household should self-isolate for at least 10 days from when the symptomatic person first had symptoms, following guidance for households with possible or confirmed coronavirus (COVID-19) infection

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

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

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

This process will look different for secondary schools once they have commenced lateral flow testing of close contacts of confirmed cases. The advice will be update shortly to reflect this.

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

Secondary schools participating in the rapid asymptomatic testing programme should refer to the guidance for asymptomatic testing in schools and colleges to ensure contacts of the positive case are tested. Primary schools and any secondary schools not participating in the rapid asymptomatic testing programme must follow the advice below.

If schools have two or more confirmed cases within 10 days, or an overall rise in sickness absence where coronavirus (COVID-19) is suspected, they may have an outbreak and must continue to work with their local health protection team who will be able to advise if additional action is required.

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

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

School operations

Attendance

During the period of national lockdown, primary, secondary, alternative provision and special schools will remain open to vulnerable children and young people and the children of critical workers only (recognising that the characteristics of the cohorts in special schools and alternative provision will mean these settings continue to offer face to face provision for all pupils, where appropriate). All other pupils should receive remote education. Pupils who are self-isolating should not attend school. Clinically extremely vulnerable pupils are also advised not to attend school.

Schools should continue to record attendance in the register. Schools should follow up on absences of the pupils who are expected to be in school but where a parent wishes for their child to be absent, we expect schools to authorise the absence during this national lockdown period. Absence will not be penalised.

Critical workers

Parents whose work is critical to the coronavirus (COVID-19) and EU transition response include those who work in health and social care and in other key sectors. Children with at least one parent or carer who is a critical worker can go to school if required. This includes parents who may be working from home.

Schools should speak to parents and carers to identify who needs to go to school. If it proves necessary, schools can ask for simple evidence that the parent in question is a critical worker, such as their work ID badge or pay slip. Parents and carers who are critical workers should keep their children at home if they can.

We know that every school will have a different number of children of critical workers who need to attend. It is important that on-site provision is provided for these pupils, and there is no limit to numbers of these pupils who may attend and schools should not limit attendance of these groups. This is because we are reducing overall social contact across areas and the country rather than individually by each institution.

Vulnerable children and young people

The definition of vulnerable children and young people includes children who have a social worker, an education, health and care plan (EHCP) or who may be vulnerable for another reason at local discretion (“otherwise vulnerable”).

Schools are expected to allow and strongly encourage vulnerable children and young people to attend. Parents/carers of vulnerable children and young people are strongly encouraged to take up the place.

If vulnerable children and young people do not attend, schools should:

- work together with the local authority and social worker (where applicable) to follow up with the parent or carer to explore the reason for absence, discussing their concerns using supporting guidance considering the child's circumstances and their best interests
- work together with the local authority and social worker (where applicable) and other relevant partners to encourage the child or young person to attend educational provision, particularly where the social worker agrees that the child or young person's attendance would be appropriate

Where schools grant a leave of absence to a vulnerable child or young person they should still speak to parents and carers, and social workers (where applicable) to explore the reasons for this and any concerns raised. The discussions should focus on the welfare of the child or young person and ensuring that the child or young person is able to access appropriate education and support while they are at home.

Where providers have had to temporarily stop on-site provision on public health advice, they should inform the local authority to discuss alternative arrangements for vulnerable children and young people and work towards welcoming back pupils as soon as possible, where feasible to do so.

Regardless of setting, schools are encouraged to work collaboratively with other schools and education providers and other local partners (including the local authority, social workers, police, youth services, key workers etc.) to maximise opportunities for face-to-face provision for vulnerable children.

Recording attendance

All pupils who are not eligible to be in school should be marked as Code X. They are not attending because they are following public health advice.

As vulnerable children are still expected to attend school full time, they should not be marked as Code X if they are not in school (except if they are shielding, self-isolating or quarantining). If the parent of a vulnerable child wishes their child to be absent, the parent should let the school know. The Department expects schools to grant applications for leave of absence given the exceptional circumstances. This should be recorded as code C (leave of absence authorised by the school) unless another authorised absence code is more applicable.

Schools should not plan for rotas or allow children other than those who are vulnerable or whose parent or carer is a critical worker to attend on-site, even if the school believes it can accommodate more children safely.

Alternative provision schools

Alternative Provision schools should remain open to vulnerable children and young people and children of critical works (recognising that the characteristics of the cohorts in alternative provision will mean these settings continue to offer face to face provision for all pupils, where appropriate).

We expect AP schools to actively encourage those they consider to be vulnerable – identified in partnership with local services - to attend provision. They should provide robust remote learning for those who are not attending.

On occasion AP schools will encounter circumstances where they cannot provide their usual interventions and provision at adequate staffing ratios, or with staff with vital specialist training. In these circumstances they should seek to resume as close as possible to full time provision, as soon as possible, for all children of critical workers and those deemed vulnerable.

Hospital schools should continue to provide full time education where it is safe and feasible to do so, and in line with hospital infection prevention and control (IPC) measures.

Special schools and specialist post 16 provision

We want children and young people in special schools, including residential special schools, and special post-16 institutions to continue to receive high-quality teaching and specialist professional support. This is because we know that children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), and their families, can be disproportionately impacted by being out of education.

Special schools should continue to welcome and encourage pupils to attend full-time where the parent/carer wishes for their child to be able to attend. Special post-16 settings should continue to welcome and encourage students to attend as per their usual timetable where the young person wishes to attend.

On occasion special schools may encounter circumstances where they cannot provide their usual interventions and provision at adequate staffing ratios, or with staff with vital specialist training. In these circumstances they should seek to resume as close as possible to the child of young person’s specified provision as soon as possible. Pupil level risk assessments, which were used last spring, should not be used to filter children

and young people in or out of attendance, but could be helpful to prioritise the provision a child or young person can get if full time provision for all is not possible.

Opening hours

We expect schools to operate for their normal hours. Where possible, we would encourage breakfast club and after school provision, to help support the children of critical workers.

Expectations for remote provision, including expected hours, is included in the 'Remote Education' section.

Transport

Transport services to education settings should continue to be provided.

The transport to school and other places of education: 2020 to 2021 academic year guidance remains in place.

Those involved in the provision of home to school or college transport must do all that is reasonably practicable to maximise social distancing where possible and minimise the risk of transmission. What is practicable is likely to vary according to local circumstances. Local authorities are not required to uniformly apply the social distancing guidelines for public transport, on dedicated school or college transport. However, distancing should still be put in place within vehicles wherever possible. This means that where fewer children and young people are attending school or college, sufficient levels of capacity should be maintained to maximise social distancing. For example, through alternate seating or separation between year groups or schools.

Children, young people and staff can continue to use public transport where necessary. We encourage everyone to walk, cycle or scoot wherever possible and safe. This will help to reduce pressure on the public transport network and allow social distancing to be practised. Where children, young people and staff need to use public transport, they should follow the safer travel guidance.

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. This does not apply to people who are exempt from wearing a face covering on public transport.

Boarding and residential schools, including international pupils

Vulnerable children and the children of critical workers who have already travelled to their boarding school should continue to receive face to face education. Where other pupils have already travelled to their boarding school, in anticipation of school starting, they can continue to receive remote education in their boarding houses.

Vulnerable children and the children of critical workers who have not yet done so can return to their boarding school to receive face to face education. Where other pupils have not yet returned to their boarding school, they should not travel and should receive remote education at home.

School workforce

Under the national lockdown, the expectation is that everybody should work from home where possible. School leaders are best placed to determine the workforce that is required in school, taking into account the updated guidance for those staff who are clinically extremely vulnerable. The expectation is that those staff not attending school will work from home where possible. We have worked closely with the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) and PHE to develop this specific guidance for school settings. The PHE and DHSC endorsed system of controls outlined in this document sets out the measures that school leaders and all school staff should follow. Where schools implement the system of controls outlined in this document, in line with their own workplace risk assessment, PHE and DHSC confirm that these measures create an inherently safer environment for children and staff where the risk of transmission of infection is substantially reduced. As a result, on current evidence, PHE and DHSC advise that schools are not currently considered high risk settings when compared to other workplace environments. All staff attending the school setting should follow the measures set out in the system of controls section of this guidance to minimise the risks of transmission. This includes continuing to observe good hand and respiratory hygiene and maintaining social distancing in line with the provisions as set out in the ‘prevention’ section.

School leaders should explain to staff the measures the school has put in place to reduce risks. We anticipate adherence to the measures in this guidance will provide the necessary reassurance for staff to attend school.

If staff are concerned, including those who may be clinically vulnerable or who believe they may be at possible increased risk from coronavirus, we recommend school leaders discuss any concerns individuals may have around their particular circumstances and reassure staff about the protective measures in place.

Staff who are clinically extremely vulnerable

Following the reintroduction of shielding, clinically extremely vulnerable staff are advised that they should not attend the workplace. Clinically extremely vulnerable individuals are those identified through a letter from the NHS or a specialist doctor as in the group deemed clinically extremely vulnerable (CEV or shielding list). Staff who are identified as clinically extremely vulnerable should follow the published guidance.

Staff should talk to their employers about how they will be supported, including to work from home. Schools should continue to pay clinically extremely vulnerable staff on their usual terms.

Those living with someone who is clinically extremely vulnerable can still attend work where home-working is not possible.

Staff who are clinically vulnerable

Clinically vulnerable staff can continue to attend school where it is not possible to work from home. While in school they should follow the sector-specific measures in this document to minimise the risks of transmission.

This includes taking particular care to observe good hand and respiratory hygiene, minimising contact and maintaining social distancing in line with the provisions set out in the 'prevention' section of this guidance. This provides that ideally, adults should maintain 2 metre distance from others, and where this is not possible avoid close face to face contact and minimise time spent within 1 metre of others. While the risk of transmission between young children and adults is likely to be low, adults should continue to take care to socially distance from other adults including older children and adolescents.

People who live with those who are clinically vulnerable or clinically extremely vulnerable can attend the workplace but should ensure they maintain good prevention practice in the workplace and home settings.

Staff who are pregnant

As per national restrictions, staff should work at home where possible. If home working is not possible, pregnant staff and their employers should follow the advice in the Coronavirus (COVID-19): advice for pregnant employees.

Pregnant women are in the 'clinically vulnerable' category and are generally advised to follow the above advice, which applies to all staff in schools. All pregnant women should take particular care to practise frequent thorough hand washing, and cleaning of frequently touched areas in their home or workspace, and follow the measures set out in the system of controls section of this guidance to minimise the risks of transmission. Pregnant women are not advised to be vaccinated against COVID-19.

An employer's workplace risk assessment should already consider any risks to female employees of childbearing age and, in particular, risks to new and expectant mothers (for example, from working conditions, or the use of physical, chemical or biological agents). Any risks identified must be included and managed as part of the general workplace risk assessment. As part of their risk assessment, employers should consider whether adapting duties and/or facilitating home working may be appropriate to mitigate risks.

If a school is notified that an employee is pregnant, breastfeeding, or has given birth within the last 6 months, the employer should check the workplace risk assessment to see if any new risks have arisen. If risks are identified during the pregnancy, in the first 6 months after birth, or while the employee is still breastfeeding, the employer must take appropriate sensible action to reduce, remove or control them.

While it is a legal obligation for employers to regularly review general workplace risks, there is not necessarily a requirement to conduct a specific, separate risk assessment for new and expectant mothers. However, an assessment may help identify any additional action that needs to be taken to mitigate risks.

Employers should be aware that pregnant women from 28 weeks' gestation, or with underlying health conditions at any gestation, may be at greater risk of severe illness from coronavirus (COVID-19). This is because, although pregnant women of any gestation are at no more risk of contracting the virus than any other non-pregnant person who is in similar health, for those women who are 28 weeks pregnant and beyond there is an increased risk of becoming severely ill, and of pre-term birth, should they contract coronavirus (COVID-19).

This is also the case for pregnant women with underlying health conditions that place them at greater risk of severe illness from coronavirus (COVID-19).

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

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

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

Some people with particular characteristics may be at comparatively increased risk from coronavirus (COVID-19). Where it is not possible to work from home, these staff can attend school as long as the system of controls set out in this guidance are in place. The reasons for the disparities are complex and there is ongoing research to understand and translate these findings for individuals in the future. Further information is available at https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/drivers-of-the-higher-covid-19-incidence-morbidity-and-mortality-among-minority-ethnic-groups-23-september-2020

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

Employer health and safety and equalities duties

Schools have a legal obligation to protect their employees, and others, including children, from harm and should continue to assess health and safety risks in the usual way. Following the steps in this guidance will mitigate the risks of coronavirus (COVID-19) to children and staff and help schools to meet their legal duties to protect employees and others from harm.

The Health and Safety Executive published guidance on first aid during coronavirus (COVID-19) which will support local risk assessments and provides guidance for first aiders. It is clear that treating any casualty properly should be the first concern. Where it is necessary for first aid provision to be administered in close proximity, those administering it should pay particular attention to sanitation measures immediately afterwards including washing hands.

Schools should continue to meet their equalities duties. Guidance is available in Equality Act 2010 advice for schools.

Supporting staff

Governing boards and school leaders should have regard to staff (including the headteacher) work-life balance and wellbeing. Schools should ensure they have explained to all staff the measures they are proposing putting in place and involve all staff in that process.

All employers have a duty of care to their employees, and this extends to their mental health. Schools already have mechanisms to support staff wellbeing and these will be particularly important, as some staff may be particularly anxious about attending school. DfE is providing additional support for both pupil and staff wellbeing in the current situation. Information about the extra mental health support for pupils and teachers and Wellbeing for Education return programme is available.

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

Staff deployment

Schools may need to alter the way in which they deploy their staff, and use existing staff more flexibly. Managers should discuss and agree any changes to staff roles with individuals.

It is important that planning builds in the need to avoid increases in unnecessary and unmanageable workload burdens. This could include a review of existing practices in this respect and schools may wish to draw on DfE's workload reduction toolkit.

DfE has also published a range of resources, including case studies to support remote education and help address staff workload, this includes case studies on managing wellbeing.

If, having pursued all the immediate options available, schools still have concerns about staffing capacity, representatives should talk to their local authority or trust.

Deploying support staff and accommodating visiting specialists

Schools should ensure that appropriate support is made available for pupils with SEND, for example by deploying teaching assistants and enabling specialist staff from both within and outside the school to work with pupils in different classes or year groups.

Where support staff capacity is available, schools may consider using this to support catch-up provision or targeted interventions. Teaching assistants may also be deployed to lead groups or cover lessons, under the direction and supervision of a qualified, or nominated, teacher (under the Education (Specified Work) (England) Regulations 2012 for maintained schools and non-maintained special schools and in accordance with the freedoms provided under the funding agreement for academies). Any redeployments should not be at the expense of supporting pupils with SEND. Headteachers should be satisfied that the person has the appropriate skills, expertise and experience to carry out the work, and discuss and agree any proposed changes in role or responsibility with the member of staff. This includes ensuring that safe ratios are met and specific training undertaken, for any interventions or care for pupils with complex needs where specific training or specific ratios are required.

The Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) has published guidance on making the best use of teaching assistants to help primary and secondary schools.

When deploying support staff flexibly it is important that headteachers consider regulated activity and ensure only those who have the appropriate checks are allowed to engage in regulated activity. Full guidance is provided in part 3 of keeping children safe in education.

Recruitment

Recruitment should continue as usual. The government's Teaching Vacancies service can help schools to list vacancies for both permanent and fixed-term teaching staff quickly. The free national service for searching and listing teaching roles will be directing newly qualified teachers (NQTs) and job seeking teachers to this service.

As DfE guidance advises limiting the number of visitors, it may be appropriate for schools to consider a flexible approach to interviews, with alternative options to face-to-face interviews offered where possible. Interviewing remotely may be a new experience for many schools. The DfE teaching blog provides some information on the experience of implementing interviews remotely. There is also advice that can be sent to candidates on how to prepare for remote interviews.

Where face-to-face meetings are arranged, schools should make clear to candidates that they must adhere to the system of controls that schools have in place. Schools will also have the discretion to require face coverings for visitors where social distancing cannot be managed safely.

Schools must comply with their legal duties regarding pre-appointment including having regard to part three of the statutory safeguarding guidance keeping children safe in education.

Initial teacher training (ITT) providers have worked flexibly to ensure this year's NQTs are ready and prepared to enter the classroom. They will also be supported by materials DfE is making available to all schools based on the early career framework reforms, to support them as they start their teaching career. 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 offered to some 2,000 NQTs. In addition, around 3,000 NQTs will be offered a one-year version of the structured support package.

Supply teachers and other temporary staff or peripatetic teachers

Schools can continue to engage supply teachers and other supply staff during this period and schools may want to consider how supply teachers, and other temporary staff, can assist in delivering face to face education.

We recommend that schools consider using DfE's and Crown Commercial Service's agency supply deal when hiring agency workers, as this offers a list of preferred suppliers that must be transparent about the rates they charge. Schools can get direct support

from Crown Commercial Services on how to use the agency supply deal by emailing supplyteachers@crowncommercial.gov.uk with the school's details and contact details.

Supply staff and other temporary workers can move between schools, where it is necessary to use supply staff and to welcome visitors to the school such as peripatetic teachers, those individuals will be expected to comply with the school's arrangements for managing and minimising risk and schools should ensure that all temporary staff have access to the information on the safety arrangements in place, and ensure that this is provided as soon as possible after the booking is confirmed.

To minimise the numbers of temporary staff entering the school premises, and secure best value, schools may wish to use longer assignments with supply staff and agree a minimum number of hours across the remainder of the academic year.

Deployment of ITT trainees and engagement with schools

We strongly encourage schools to continue hosting initial teacher training (ITT) trainees throughout the national lockdown and beyond. While it is understandable that schools will have many priorities at this time, it is important that we protect the pipeline of future teachers. ITT trainees are included in the definition of a critical worker. This means that trainees can continue to go into their school or college on placement to support the teaching of vulnerable children and young people and the children of critical workers. Trainees who continue to go into their host school or college should be offered coronavirus (COVID-19) testing in the same way as the wider school staff. Trainees can also support schools in other ways, including supporting remote education, developing lesson materials and offering pastoral support. ITT providers may be able to provide schools with extra support to host trainees at this time. Schools should contact relevant ITT providers directly to discuss what support is available. Trainees will be expected to follow control measures put in place by schools.

Schools should consider how they can host ITT trainees during this period, and discuss with relevant ITT providers how this can be done flexibly and innovatively to help meet both school and trainee needs. Deployment decisions will need to take into account the skills and capacity of the trainees in question.

Trainees could:

- take responsibility, with the usual mentor oversight, for small groups of pupils in school across or within years, adapting resources for such groups, creating online education materials, re-planning sequences of lessons or delivering catch-up lessons

- be engaged in wider professional activity, for instance tackling pupil, family and school needs by learning about, identifying and addressing challenges such as vulnerability, mental health problems or safeguarding issues
- develop or engage in working groups to share best practice around resilience, commitment and team-working
- work in pairs or groups to co-plan, co-teach and co-assess lessons with their mentors or other trainees. Paired and group placements, where these are possible, benefit trainees, mentors and teaching staff, promoting a greater sense of team collaboration, ongoing professional learning and reductions in workload

This is not intended to be exhaustive and ITT partnerships will need to ensure they have identified and comply with all legislation and guidance relevant to ITT.

Performance management and appraisal

Maintained schools must continue to adhere to the School Teachers' Pay and Conditions Document (STPCD), which includes the requirement to ensure that all pay progression for teachers is linked to performance management. We would expect schools to use their discretion and take pragmatic steps to adapt performance management and appraisal arrangements to take account of the current circumstances.

Schools should ensure that teachers are not penalised during the appraisal process or in respect of any subsequent pay progression decisions as a result of the decision to close schools (for all but children of critical workers and vulnerable children) and where this has impacted on the ability of the teacher to meet fully their objectives.

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

Other support

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 schools are using volunteers, they should continue to follow the checking and risk assessment process as set out in the volunteer section in part 3 of keeping children safe in education. Under no circumstances should a volunteer who has not been checked be left unsupervised or allowed to work in regulated activity. Mixing of volunteers across groups should be kept to a minimum, and they should remain 2 metres from pupils and staff where possible.

Other practical considerations

School funding

Schools will continue to receive their core funding allocations – as determined by the local authority for maintained schools and through the general annual grant (GAG) for academies – for the 2020 to 2021 financial year (April 2020 to March 2021 for maintained schools and until August 2021 for academies and non-maintained special schools). This will happen regardless of any periods of partial or complete closure and will ensure schools can continue to pay staff and meet other regular financial commitments.

Schools have been able to claim for specific additional costs as a result of coronavirus (COVID-19) incurred between March and July 2020 – guidance for that is here. Most schools made their claims in July and eligible schools have now received this funding. Schools that made claims in the second window that ran until 22 December, will receive their funding in February (for local authority maintained schools) and March (for academies).

We also introduced a Coronavirus (Covid-19) workforce fund to support schools to continue providing on-site provision last November and December. More details about that support are here.

Local authorities will also continue to receive their high needs budgets and should continue to pay top-up and other high needs funding to schools. This will ensure that the employment and payment of staff supporting pupils with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) can continue. High needs funding will therefore continue to be paid to the following types of setting, whether from local or central government:

- local authority-maintained schools (mainstream, special and pupil referral units)
- academies and free schools (mainstream, special and alternative provision)
- non-maintained special schools
- independent schools, including independent special schools
- independent alternative provision
- high needs places in further education (FE) colleges and sixth form colleges
- special post-16 providers
- hospital schools

Funding will be maintained and services should not be reduced because some or all children and young people are not in attendance (because of sickness or self-isolation, or where the institution has temporarily or partially closed).

Similarly, where schools pay top-up or other funding for pupils attending alternative provision (AP), or pay for other SEND or AP services, we expect these payments to continue so that teachers and other staff can be paid in accordance with their existing employment contracts.

If placements and services for this term have not yet been agreed, schools should fund on the basis of previous patterns of placements and commissioning.

Residential provision in schools

State-funded residential children's social care provision is offered in state-maintained schools, non-maintained special schools and independent schools. While the educational costs are funded from the dedicated schools grant, the residential costs are met from social care budgets. Local authorities will continue to receive funding for social care provision and should continue to pay residential costs so that the employment and payment of staff supporting children and young people who require residential provision can continue.

Some independent schools have joint registration as a children's home and are effectively funded by local authorities that place the children in those settings. This funding should continue.

Safeguarding

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

Schools should review their child protection policy (led by their designated safeguarding lead) to reflect the move to remote education for most pupils. In some cases, a coronavirus (COVID-19) annex or addendum that summarises related changes might be more effective than rewriting and re-issuing the whole policy. It will be important that all staff working in the school are aware of the revised policy.

There should be no change to local multi-agency safeguarding arrangements, which remain the responsibility of the three safeguarding partners (local authorities, clinical commissioning groups and chief officers of police). We expect all local safeguarding partners to be vigilant and responsive to all safeguarding threats and ensure vulnerable children and young persons are safe – particularly as more children and young people will be learning remotely.

It is expected that schools will have a trained DSL (or deputy) available on site. However, it is recognised that for some schools there may be operational challenges to this. In such cases, there are two options to consider:

- a trained DSL (or deputy) from the school can be available to be contacted via phone or online video, for example working from home
- sharing trained DSLs (or deputies) with other schools (who should be available to be contacted via phone or online video)

Where a trained DSL (or deputy) is not on site, in addition to one of the above options, a senior leader should take responsibility for co-ordinating safeguarding on site.

Catering and free school meals

During the period of national lockdown, schools should continue to provide meal options for all pupils who are in school. Meals should be available free of charge to all infant pupils and pupils who are eligible for benefits-related free school meals who are in school.

Schools should also continue to provide free school meal support to pupils who are eligible for benefits related free school meals and who are not attending school. Extra funding will be provided to support schools to provide food parcels or meals to eligible children. Where schools cannot offer food parcels or use local solutions, we will ensure a national voucher scheme is in place so that every eligible child can access free school meals while their school remains closed. Further guidance will be provided shortly.

Estates

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

Schools 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

Where buildings have been limiting attendance to just vulnerable children and children of critical workers or had reduced occupancy, water system stagnation can occur due to lack of use, increasing the risks of Legionnaires' disease. Advice on this can be found in the guidance on legionella risks during the coronavirus outbreak.

Educational visits

We advise against educational visits at this time. This advice will be kept under review.

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

School uniform

Some schools may feel it is appropriate to relax their uniform policy whilst only certain categories of pupils are attending. This is a decision for school leaders.

Wraparound and extra-curricular

Schools should continue to offer wraparound provision, such as breakfast and after-school clubs, for those children eligible to attend school (i.e. children of critical workers and vulnerable children and young people). Resuming this provision is important to ensure that parents and carers who are critical workers can continue to work, as well as to provide enriching activities for vulnerable children that improve their wellbeing or support their education.

Schools should also work closely with any external wraparound providers which these pupils may use, to ensure as far as possible, children can be kept in a group with other children from the same bubble they are in during the school day. However, where it is not possible, or it is impractical to group children in the same bubbles as they are in during the school day - for example, if only one or two children are attending wraparound provision from the same school day bubble - schools and external providers may need to group children with others from outside their school day bubble or from a different school, where children from multiple schools are attending provision. If schools or external providers need to do this, they should seek to keep children in small, consistent groups with the same children each time, as far as this is possible. If necessary, it would be appropriate for one staff member to supervise up to two small groups, provided that any relevant ratio requirements are met.

Schools can consult the guidance produced for providers who run community activities, holiday clubs, after-school clubs, tuition and other out-of-school provision for children, to advise on the protective measures providers should put in place for the duration of the national lockdown to ensure they are operating as safely as possible.

Schools may also continue to open up or hire out their premises for use by external wraparound childcare providers, such as after-school or holiday clubs, that offer provision to children of critical workers and/ or vulnerable children. In doing so, schools should ensure they work with providers to consider how they can operate within their wider protective measures and should also have regard to any other relevant government guidance.

Music, dance and drama in school

Schools have the flexibility to decide how music, dance and drama will be provided to pupils attending school while following the measures in their system of controls.

Pupils should continue to have access to a quality arts education. Music, dance and drama build confidence and help children live happier, more enriched lives, and discover the joy of expressing themselves, while ensuring that all safeguards are in place to reduce the risk of infection in environments where singing, chanting, playing wind or brass instruments, dance and drama takes place.

Schools 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, schools 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.

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

Performances

Schools should not host any performances with an audience.

Peripatetic teachers

Schools can continue to engage peripatetic teachers during this period, including staff from music education hubs.

Peripatetic teachers can move between schools, for instance, but schools should consider how to minimise the number of visitors where possible as set out in the system of controls.

Further information on the music education hubs, including contact details for local hubs, can be found at music education hubs, published by Arts Council England.

Music teaching in groups

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

Playing instruments and singing in groups should take place outdoors wherever possible. If indoors, use a room with as much space as possible, for example, larger rooms; rooms with high ceilings are expected to enable dilution of aerosol transmission. If playing indoors, limiting the numbers to account for ventilation of the space and the ability to social distance. It is important to ensure good ventilation. Advice on this can be found in Health and Safety Executive guidance on air conditioning and ventilation during the coronavirus outbreak and CIBSE coronavirus (COVID-19) advice.

Singing, wind and brass playing should not take place in larger groups. 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.

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. Also, use microphones where possible or encourage singing quietly.

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

Handling equipment and instructions

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

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

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 available at hygiene: handwashing, sanitation facilities and toilets.

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

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

Consider limiting the number of suppliers when hiring instruments and equipment. Schools 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 schools 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 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, led by a member of staff from the school or peripatetic teacher. This may mean teachers interacting with pupils from multiple groups, so schools will need to take particular care, in line with measures set out above on peripatetic teachers.

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

Schools have the flexibility to decide how physical education, sport and physical activity will be provided to pupils attending school while following the measures in their system of controls.

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

Schools can hold PE lessons indoors, including those that involve activities related to team sports, for example practising specific techniques, within their own system of controls. However, outdoor activities and sports should be prioritised where possible, and large indoor spaces used where it is not, maximising natural ventilation flows (through opening windows and doors or using air conditioning systems wherever possible) distancing between pupils and paying scrupulous attention to cleaning and hygiene. This is particularly important in a sports setting because of the way in which people breathe during exercise.

The ability for schools to offer team sports is likely to be limited. Where schools are considering team sports schools must 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 i.e. sports on the list available at grassroots sports guidance for safe provision including team sport, contact combat sport and organised sport events. Competition between different schools should not take place.

Schools should refer to advice from organisations such as the Association for Physical Education, Sport England and Youth Sport Trust.

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

Remote education

Due to the dedication of teachers and school leaders, the vast majority of schools have already been delivering remote education where it has been needed, continually improving their provision in line with expectations and emerging best practice.

The temporary continuity direction makes it clear that schools have a duty to provide remote education for state-funded, school-age children whose attendance would be contrary to government guidance or law around coronavirus (COVID-19). The Direction requires schools to have regard to this guidance. Ofsted inspection will consider the quality of schools' remote education in accordance with the expectations set out in this guidance.

The remote education provided should be equivalent in length to the core teaching pupils would receive in school and will include both recorded or live direct teaching time, and time for pupils to complete tasks and assignments independently. The amount of remote education provided should be, as a minimum:

- 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

If parents feel their children's school is not providing remote education of a suitable quantity and quality, they are encouraged to in the first instance raise their concerns with the teacher or headteacher and, if the concerns are not resolved, to report the matter to Ofsted.

Ofsted will inspect schools – of any grade – where it has significant concerns about safeguarding or the quality of remote education being provided. Such concerns could be triggered by, for example, parents complaining about remote education directly to Ofsted.

In addition, as announced in December, while Ofsted's routine graded inspections remain suspended, inspectors will, during the spring term, conduct monitoring inspections of schools most in need of challenge and support – those previously judged to be providing an inadequate education and some previously judged to require improvement. Those inspections will provide assurance that pupils in those schools are receiving the best possible education – whether through classroom teaching or remote education. The Department is discussing how these inspections will be implemented with her Majesty's Chief Inspector.

In the context of schools limiting attendance to all but vulnerable children and children of critical workers, schools are expected to build on their existing remote education

provision, ensuring a strong offer is in place for all pupils. Our Get Help With Remote Education page on gov.uk provides a one-stop-shop for teachers and leaders, signposting the support package available. Senior leadership teams and governors will want to assure themselves that their remote education offer meets the expectations in this guidance by reviewing and self-assessing their current practice. We will publish a "review your remote education provision" tool, to support school leaders in doing this.

To stop pupils and students falling behind, our £1bn catch up package remains in place, including the £650 million catch-up premium and in-school support through the National Tutoring Programme (NTP).

Note that the expectations set out in this guidance are for schools rather than for individual teachers.

In developing their remote education, we expect schools 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 - GOV.UK (education.gov.uk)
- 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.
- It may also be that some pupils who have difficulty engaging in remote education may be considered to be vulnerable children, and therefore eligible to attend provision in person. As outlined in the guidance, this is a decision based on local discretion and the needs of the child and their family, as well as a wide range of other factors.

- 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
- publish information for pupils, parents and carers about their remote education provision on their website by 25 January 2021 – an optional template is available to support schools with this expectation

When teaching pupils remotely, we expect schools to:

- set meaningful and ambitious work each day in an appropriate range of subjects
- provide teaching that is equivalent in length to the core teaching pupils would receive in school. This will include both recorded or live direct teaching time and time for pupils to complete tasks and assignments independently, and will be as a minimum:
    - 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.

- 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 schools 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 Special Education Needs and Disabilities (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.

Special educational needs

For pupils with SEND, their teachers are best-placed to know how the pupil's needs can be most effectively met to ensure they continue to make progress even if they are not able to be in school due to self-isolating. The requirement for schools to use their best endeavours to secure the special educational provision called for by the pupils' special educational needs remains in place.

Schools should work collaboratively with families, putting in place reasonable adjustments as necessary, so that pupils with SEND can successfully access remote education alongside their peers.

Where a pupil has provision specified within their EHC plan, it remains the duty of the local authority and any health bodies to secure or arrange the delivery of this in the setting that the plan names. However, there may be times when it becomes very difficult to do so, for example, if they are self-isolating. In this situation, decisions on how provision can be delivered should be informed by relevant considerations including, for example, the types of services that the pupil can access remotely, for example, online teaching and remote sessions with different types of therapists. These decisions should be considered on a case by case basis, avoiding a one size fits all approach.

Vulnerable children

Where individuals who are self-isolating are within our definition of vulnerable, it is important that schools put systems in place to keep in contact with them.

When a vulnerable child is asked to self-isolate, schools should notify their social worker (if they have one). School leaders should then agree with the social worker the best way to maintain contact and offer support to the vulnerable child or young person.

Schools should also have in place procedures to check if a vulnerable child is able to access remote education support, to support them to access it (as far as possible) and to regularly check if they are doing so.

Delivering remote education safely

Keeping children safe online is essential. The statutory guidance keeping children safe in education provides schools and colleges with information on what they should be doing to protect their pupils online.

Support on delivering online remote education safely is available from:

- safe remote learning, published by SWGfL
- online safety and safeguarding, published by LGfL, which covers safe remote learning
- the National Cyber Security Centre, which includes which video conference service is right for you and using video conferencing services securely
- safeguarding and remote education during coronavirus (COVID-19)
- annex C of keeping children safe in education

Catch up

The government announced £1 billion of funding to support children and young people to catch up lost time after school closure. This is especially important for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged backgrounds.

This funding includes a one-off universal £650 million catch-up premium for the 2020 to 2021 academic year to ensure that schools have the support they need to help all pupils make up for lost teaching time.

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.

We recognise that it may be challenging for schools to deliver effective catch-up support during periods when COVID-19 restrictions impact their normal operating procedures. Schools can continue to offer NTP tuition as arranged with Tuition Partners - the majority of tuition partners are already in a position to offer online tuition at home – and the Academic Mentor programme will also continue with mentors working online in line with individual schools policies. Schools should also use this period to strategically plan the catch-up support required for their pupils in the next half-term.

The Catch-up Package also includes a £350 million National Tutoring Programme to provide additional, targeted support for those children and young people who need the most help

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

Pupil wellbeing and support

Pupils may be experiencing a variety of emotions in response to the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak, such as anxiety, stress or low mood. This may particularly be the case for vulnerable children, including those with a social worker and young carers. It is important to contextualise these feelings as normal responses to an abnormal situation. Some may need support to re-adjust, either to a return to learning at home or being in school without their peers, and some may be showing signs of more severe anxiety or depression. Others will not be experiencing any challenges and will be content with the change in circumstances.

The return to remote learning for most will limit pupils' social interaction with their peers, carers and teachers, which may have an impact on wellbeing.

To support school staff to understand how coronavirus (COVID-19) is affecting children and young people's mental health and wellbeing, and what they can do to look after, promote and support their own, other staff's and children and young people's wellbeing and mental health, the government has recently launched the Wellbeing for Education Return programme.

Local authorities have received funding to employ skilled staff to deliver the training to schools and provide ongoing advice and support from the autumn until March 2021.

Additionally, NHS mental health services have remained open, and schools should still refer to their local NHS children and young people's mental health service. All NHS mental health trusts are providing 24/7 access to crisis telephone lines to support people of all ages throughout the pandemic.

DfE, Public Health England and NHS England have also recorded a free webinar for school and college staff which sets out how they can support their pupils and students. A recording of this is available:

View webinar

This includes experts discussing the impacts of the pandemic on pupils' mental wellbeing.

Schools should consider the provision of pastoral and extra-curricular activities to all pupils, including those learning at home (for example through online activities and assemblies), designed to:

- Support social engagement and maintaining friendships
- Address and equip pupils to respond to issues linked to coronavirus (COVID-19)

- Support pupils with approaches to improving their physical and mental wellbeing

To support these activities, Public Health England have produced guidance for parents and carers on supporting children and young people's mental health and wellbeing. This includes key actions they can take to support their child or young person's mental health and wellbeing during the pandemic such as supporting safe ways to connect with friends. It also emphasises the importance of children continuing to remain fit and active and, wherever possible, having the 60 minutes of daily physical activity recommended by the Chief Medical Officers. Further advice and resources are available from the Association for Physical Education, Youth Sport Trust and Sport England.

Public Health England's Every Mind Matters campaign also includes resources which aim to support everyone to feel more confident in taking action to look after their mental health and wellbeing.

Schools should also provide more focused pastoral support where issues are identified that individual pupils may need help with, drawing on external support where necessary and possible. Schools should also consider support needs of particular groups they are already aware need additional help (for example, children in need.) To support this, teachers may wish to access the free MindEd learning platform for professionals, which contains materials on peer support, stress, fear and trauma, and bereavement. MindEd have also developed a coronavirus (COVID-19) staff resilience hub with advice and tips for frontline staff. Schools should also make sure that parents and pupils are aware of who in the school to contact if they have a new concern about mental health and wellbeing.

We have also published the relationships, sex and health education training modules for teachers to support them in preparation to deliver content on mental health and wellbeing. The training module on teaching about mental wellbeing, which has been developed with clinical experts and schools, will improve teacher confidence in talking and teaching about mental health and wellbeing.

Where there is a concern a child is in need or suffering or likely to suffer from harm, the school (generally led by the designated safeguarding lead or deputy) should follow their child protection policy and part 1 of the statutory safeguarding guidance keeping children safe in education and consider any referral to statutory services (and the police) as appropriate.

Schools should consider how they are working with school nursing services to support the health and wellbeing of their pupils; school nursing services are continuing to offer support to pupils in school and working remotely– school nurses as leaders of the healthy child programme can offer a range of support including:

- support for resilience, mental health and wellbeing including anxiety, bereavement and sleep issues
- support for pupils with additional and complex health needs
- supporting vulnerable children and keeping children safe

Schools and school nurses need to work together to ensure delivery of the healthy child programme (which includes immunisation), identifying health and wellbeing needs which will underpin priorities for service delivery.

Assessment and accountability

Inspection

For state-funded schools, the intention is that routine, graded Ofsted inspections will not be reintroduced until the summer term. During the spring term, it is intended that inspectors will conduct monitoring inspections in schools most in need of support - inadequate schools and some schools that require improvement. These monitoring inspections will not be graded, and will focus on matters that are particularly relevant at this time such as curriculum and teaching (including remote education), and attendance, particularly of vulnerable pupils. Inspectors will be sensitive to the school's context, and support schools to prioritise the right actions. We are discussing with Ofsted the implementation of these inspections in light of the recent changes set out in this guidance.

As has been the case throughout, Ofsted will also have the power to inspect a school in response to any significant concerns, including those relating to safeguarding and remote education.

Primary assessment

The Department recognises that due to the further disruption caused by school closures, primary assessments cannot continue as intended. We will therefore cancel the statutory key stage 1 and key stage 2 tests and teacher assessments planned for summer 2021, including the key stage 2 tests in reading and mathematics.

We remain determined to ensure that every young person, no matter their age or background, is provided with the education and opportunities they deserve despite the challenges faced by schools. We know that schools will continue to use assessment during the summer term to inform teaching, to enable them to give information to parents on their child's attainment in their annual report and to support transition to secondary school. We strongly encourage schools to do this, using past test papers if they wish.

Primary assessments have a crucial role in supporting pupils to grasp the basics of reading, writing and mathematics and to prepare them for secondary school. As such, these arrangements will apply for summer 2021 only, and the Department is planning for a full programme of primary assessments to take place in the 2021/22 academic year.

The Standards and Testing Agency will update its guidance as soon as possible.

Exams

We cannot guarantee all students will be in a position to fairly sit their exams this summer. Therefore we can confirm that this year GCSEs, A and AS level exams will not go ahead this summer as planned, and we will look at options to enable candidates to receive a grade. The Secretary of State for Education will be asking Ofqual to consult rapidly on an approach for alternative arrangements that will allow students to progress fairly.

Accountability expectations

Performance tables are suspended for the 2019 to 2020 academic year, and no school or college will be judged on data based on exams and assessments from 2020.

For the 2020 to 2021 academic year, we confirmed on 3 December that we will not be publishing data based on exams and assessments from summer 2021 on school and college performance tables.

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

We will say more about the implications of the recent changes set out in this guidance for school and college accountability in due course.

Annex: Health and safety risk assessment

Coronavirus (COVID-19) specific

Everyone needs to assess and manage the risks from coronavirus (COVID-19). This means school employers and leaders are required by law to think about the risks their staff and pupils face and do everything reasonably practicable to minimise them, recognising they cannot completely eliminate the risk of coronavirus (COVID-19). School employers must therefore make sure that a risk assessment has been undertaken to identify the measures needed to reduce the risks from coronavirus (COVID-19) so far as is reasonably practicable. General information on how to make a workplace COVID-secure, including how to approach a coronavirus (COVID-19) risk assessment, is provided by the HSE guidance on working safely.

Schools should undertake a coronavirus (COVID-19) risk assessment by considering the measures in this guidance to inform their decisions and control measures. A risk assessment is not about creating huge amounts of paperwork, but rather about identifying sensible measures to control the risks in the workplace, and the role of others in supporting that. It is good practice to treat risk assessments as a “living document” which is kept under review, especially having regard to changing circumstances. The risk assessment will help school leaders and employers decide whether they have done everything they need to. Employers have a legal duty to consult their employees on health and safety in good time. It also makes good sense to involve pupils (where applicable) and parents in discussions around health and safety decisions to help them understand the reasons for the measures being put in place. Employers can do this by listening and talking to them about how the school will manage risks from coronavirus (COVID-19). The people who do the work are often the best people to understand the risks in the workplace and will have a view on how to work safely. Involving them in making decisions shows that the school takes their health and safety seriously.

Sharing your risk assessment

Schools should share the results of their risk assessment with their workforce. If possible, they should consider publishing it on their website to provide transparency of approach to parents, carers and pupils (There is an expectation that all employers with over 50 staff to do so).

Monitoring and review of risk controls

It is important that employers know how effective their risk controls are. They should monitor and review the preventive and protective measures regularly (and especially in the light of any changing circumstances), to ensure the measures are working, and taking action to address any shortfalls.

Roles and responsibilities

All employers are required by law to protect their employees, and others, from harm. Under the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999, the **minimum** employers must do is:

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

Given the employer landscape in schools is varied, we have set out here what the existing DfE Health and safety: responsibilities and duties for schools guidance states about the roles and responsibilities for health and safety in schools. The employer is accountable for the health and safety of school staff and pupils. The day-to-day running of the school is usually delegated to the headteacher and the school management team. In most cases, they are responsible for ensuring that risks are managed effectively. This includes health and safety matters.

Schools must appoint a competent person to ensure they meet their health and safety duties. The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) provides more information on the role of headteachers and employers in the guidance The role of school leaders - who does what and a simple guide to who the employer is in each type of school setting in its FAQs section, under 'Who is accountable for health and safety within a school?'.

References to actions by employers in this guidance may in practice be carried out by headteachers in schools, but the employer will need to assure themselves that they have been carried out, as they retain the accountability for health and safety. If not already done, employers should ensure that a coronavirus (COVID-19) risk assessment for their school is undertaken as soon as possible. As pupils have been attending school during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic for some time, the employer is likely to have gone through a lot of this thinking already. We recommend that those employers use this document to identify any further improvements they should make.

Wider guidance on the risk assessment process

Health and safety risk assessments identify measures to control risks during education and childcare setting activities. Health and safety law requires the school employer to assess risks and put in place measures to reduce the risks so far as is reasonably practicable. The law also requires employers to record details of risk assessments, the measures taken to reduce these risks and expected outcomes.

Schools need to record significant findings of the assessment by identifying:

- the hazards
- how people might be harmed by them
- what they have in place to control risk

Records of the assessment should be simple and focused on controls. Outcomes should explain to others what they are required to do and help staff with planning and monitoring.

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

- staff
- pupils
- visitors
- contractors

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

Consulting employees (general)

It is a legal requirement that employers must consult with the health and safety representative selected by a recognised trade union or, if there isn't one, a representative chosen by staff. As an employer, schools cannot decide who the representative will be.

At its most effective, full involvement of staff creates a culture where relationships between employers and staff are based on collaboration, trust and joint problem solving. As is normal practice, staff should be involved in assessing workplace risks and the development and review of workplace health and safety policies in partnership with the employer. Consultation does not remove the employer's right to manage. They will still make the final decision but talking to employees is an important part of successfully managing health and safety.

Resolving issues and raising concerns

Employers and staff should always come together to resolve issues. Any concerns in respect of the controls should be raised initially with line management and trade union representatives and employers should recognise those concerns and give them proper consideration. If that does not resolve the issues, the concern can be raised with HSE. Where the HSE identify employers who are not taking action to comply with health and safety legislation and published standards to control the risk of virus transmission in the workplace, they will consider taking a range of actions to improve control of workplace

risks. The actions the HSE can take include the provision of specific advice to employers through to issuing enforcement notices to help secure improvements.

Approach to risk estimation and management

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

1. Elimination: stop an activity that is not considered essential if there are risks attached.

2. Substitution: replace the activity with another that reduces the risk. Care is required to avoid introducing new hazards due to the substitution.

3. Engineering controls: design measures that help control or mitigate risk.

4. Administrative controls: identify and implement the procedures to improve safety (for example, markings on the floor, signage).

5. Having gone through this process, PPE should be used in circumstances where the guidance says it is required.

Department for Education

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