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**Coronavirus (COVID-19): Guidance on reducing the risks from COVID19 in schools (v7)**

**Non-statutory guidance to ensure a low risk and supportive environment for learning and teaching. 17 December 2021**

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-on-reducing-the-risks-in-schools/pages/overview/>

The table below summarises the current approach for key mitigations:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Mitigation** | **Status** |
| Risk assessment | Retain |
| Encouragement of vaccination | Retain |
| Environmental cleaning | Retain |
| Hand and respiratory hygiene | Retain |
| PPE in specific circumstances | Retain |
| Face coverings in communal areas | Retain |
| Face coverings in secondary classrooms | Retain |
| Physical distancing for adults | Retain |
| One-way systems | Retain |
| Staggered drop-off and pick-up | Retain |
| Staggered start and stop times/ break and lunch times | Retain |
| Restrictions on assemblies | Retain |
| Support for people in the highest risk groups | Retain |
| Support for pregnant staff | Retain  |
| 2x weekly at-home asymptomatic testing | Retain  |
| Outbreak management | Retain  |
| Self-isolation, contact tracing and testing for adults 18+ |  Strengthen |
| Self-isolation, contact tracing and testing for U18s  |  Strengthen |
| Minimise contacts | Proportionate reintroduction |
| Ventilation |  Strengthen |
| Restrictions on school visitors | Proportionate reintroduction |
| Restrictions on Drama, Music, PE and Dance | Not required |
| School Transport | Retain  |
| Limits on school trips | Proportionate reintroduction |
| Readiness and assurance | Retain |
| Residential accommodation | Retain |

[PDF Reducing Risks in Schools Guidance](https://www.gov.scot/binaries/content/documents/govscot/publications/advice-and-guidance/2020/10/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-on-reducing-the-risks-in-schools/documents/guidance-on-reducing-the-risks-in-schools-30-october-2020/guidance-on-reducing-the-risks-in-schools-30-october-2020/govscot%3Adocument/Reducing%2BRisks%2Bin%2BSchools%2Bguidance%2B-%2Bversion%2B7.0%2B-%2B17%2BDecember%2B2021.pdf?forceDownload=true) (includes following numbered paragraphs)

Key changes to the previous guidance that will be introduced are:

* **A strengthened approach to minimising contacts, primarily through the reintroduction of groupings/bubbles where practicable indoors (paras 25-27)**
	+ size of such groupings might differ depending upon local circumstances and the need to minimise education disruption – for example a grouping might refer to a whole class in primary school, and a whole year group or the senior phase in secondary school
	+ continue to avoid assemblies and other types of large group gatherings
	+ Where it is necessary to bring groups together, alternative mitigating actions should be put in place, such as physical distancing, ventilation, face coverings, meeting outside and limiting the time spent together
	+ As with the existing policy, preliminary examinations remain permitted provided they are held in accordance with this guidance.
* **Restrictions on school visitors (para 28-35)**
	+ In recognition of the positive impact on the wellbeing of children and young people, supply staff and other professional visitors can continue to visit schools.
* This includes all categories of staff included in previous Non-core staffing guidance:
	+ Police, Clergy, Social Workers, Supply teachers, Instrumental Music Instructors, Skills Development Scotland staff, JET Team, School Nurse
	+ Peripatetic: ASL, Psychologists, Youth Music Initiative (YMI), Tutors, Local Authority Youth Workers
	+ Outdoor learning specialists, SQA staff and appointees (e.g. visiting assessors and visiting verifiers, Education Scotland, including HMIe
	+ non-council delivery partners and volunteers where this is deemed essential to support learning or to have a positive impact on health and wellbeing
	+ Movements should be limited to those that are **necessary to support children and young people or the running of the school** until otherwise advised
	+ Consider if support by virtual means is possible
	+ Visitors should take regular lateral flow tests when asymptomatic – a daily LFT is recommended if visiting a different setting each day

**VISITOR CHECKLIST**

* **Date and result of most recent LFT**
* **Name of previous setting visited (aware of any Outbreaks)**
* **Relevant Risk Assessment shared**
* **Understand and accept setting’s risk mitigations: FACTs (including 2m adult to adult distancing)**

**GUIDANCE NOTE – WORKFORCE SUPPLY (Staff supporting in other schools)**

* [**https://cityofedinburgheducation.sharepoint.com/:w:/r/sites/EdinburghLearns/EdinburghLearnsAtHome/\_layouts/15/Doc.aspx?sourcedoc=%7BD2824620-B5ED-46FE-B707-5FA12452D462%7D&file=Guidance%20Note%20Workforce%20Supply%20-%20Staff%20Supporting%20other%20schools%2014.12.21%20v1.docx&action=default&mobileredirect=true**](https://cityofedinburgheducation.sharepoint.com/%3Aw%3A/r/sites/EdinburghLearns/EdinburghLearnsAtHome/_layouts/15/Doc.aspx?sourcedoc=%7BD2824620-B5ED-46FE-B707-5FA12452D462%7D&file=Guidance%20Note%20Workforce%20Supply%20-%20Staff%20Supporting%20other%20schools%2014.12.21%20v1.docx&action=default&mobileredirect=true)

**Visits by Parents/carers**

* Parents/carers may attend school premises for individual visits where this is agreed with the school and is considered necessary to support children and young people (wellbeing, progress and behaviour of children)
* Parents/carers may attend school premises to spectate at outdoor school sports events, providing all activity is consistent with relevant Scottish Government guidance on health, physical distancing, and hygiene
* **Activities or clubs outside the usual school timetable, including Lets (para 28-35 & Annex A)**
* These are important for wider health and development of children and to promote wider achievement opportunities
* Can be conducted subject to following guidance for schools, and guidance for the general public where applicable.  Schools should consider the need for out of hours cleaning when scheduling activities (p230)
* This includes community use after 6:00pm, on Friday afternoons and at weekends
* community-based interventions and community learning and development programmes, including those that involve adults learning within school settings, may also make use of school premises if that is necessary (p32)
* **Updated guidance on the required approach to ventilation and CO2 monitoring** **(paras 36-45)**
	+ expectation of regular assessment of CO2 levels and appropriate remedial action when problems are identified
	+ Sufficient monitors should be available to enable ongoing decision-making by staff about balancing ventilation (including by opening of doors and windows) with temperature during the winter months, taking account of changes in weather conditions
	+ Flexible uniform/staff dress policies to help ensure that children, young people and staff can stay warm if/when windows or doors require to be opened
* **Updated text on asymptomatic testing, specifically the processes to be followed when distributing test kits (paras 46-52)**
* **A strengthened approach to self-isolation for high risk / household contacts, whereby they are required to self-isolate for 10 days regardless of age, vaccination status or a negative PCR result (para 53)**
	+ TAP will, through the contact tracing system, identify those contacts where there is a higher risk of transmission and ask them to self-isolate and take a PCR test
	+ Other low risk contacts will be identified by schools when they are informed of positive cases, and sent information letters that advise them to take certain mitigating actions. These actions do not require self-isolation, but include important advice on LFD testing and other mitigating actions.

**Self-isolation**

* Any adult or child who develops symptoms of COVID-19 (high temperature, new continuous cough or a loss or change to sense of smell or taste), or has a positive LFT, must self-isolate immediately in line with NHS Guidance. NB: People living in the same household, for example any siblings, must also isolate while awaiting the outcome of the test result of the case (adult or child)

**Identifying high risk contacts of adults e.g. staff members who test positive**

* Household members (children, partner, etc.) and any other adults who were within 2 metres of them for more than 15 minutes; who they saw more than once for shorter times that add up to 15 minutes; or who they were face to face with (within 1 metre) for any amount of time.
* This includes people in their household, but could also, for example, include school colleagues they have worked closely with, or socialised or shared a car with. All of these adults are classed as high risk contacts

**Identifying high and low risk contacts of children and young people e.g. pupils who test positive**

* These include people they live with or who have stayed overnight in their home
* Child and young person cases are asked not to share contacts from outside the home such as teachers, classroom contacts or friends unless they have had unusually close or prolonged contact with them e.g. provision of close personal care or overnight stays. This is because these non-household child and young person contacts are considered low risk
* **Details relating to school staff eligibility for exemption from self-isolation under the critical worker guidance (paras 84-93)**
* In the case of schools, this means considering exemptions in order to avoid school buildings closing and avoiding moving to remote learning where possible.
* 88. Staff who volunteer not to self-isolate must only do so following a risk assessment of their personal circumstances, and the employers’ duty of care to all their employees must be respected.
* 89. Under the process, before a staff member who is a close contact of a positive case can return to work, they must meet the criteria as set out in the guidance for critical workers exemptions:
	+ - have had their second COVID-19 vaccination more than 14 days ago
		- have a valid vaccination record
		- do not have symptoms of COVID-19
		- have evidence of a negative PCR test
		- take daily lateral flow tests for up to 10 days after being exposed to the virus
		- fully comply with any PPE requirements, hand hygiene and other infection control measures
		- 90. Staff who cannot reasonably isolate from on-going exposure to a COVID-19 positive household member should not volunteer to return to work.
* **An update to guidance on school visits and trips in order to reflect the above ‘in school’ mitigations (paras 99-101)**
* **A requirement that schools and local authorities continue to provide essential in-person support for particular groups (including vulnerable children and young people) in the event of temporary school closures at a local level (Annex A, para 192)**