

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

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

Version 6.0

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VERSION CONTROL

Version	Date	Summary of changes
V1.0	30/7/2020	First version of document
V2.0	25/8/2020	Update to guidance on face coverings in Key Public Health Measures section and Dedicated School Transport section.
V3.0	11/9/2020	Various updates for clarification of key issues, including self-isolation, testing procedures, quarantine, outbreak and case management, and links to updated guidelines on Physical Education and Home Economics.
V4.3	30/10/2020	<p>Shifting the emphasis of the guidance from “reopening schools” to “reducing risks in schools”.</p> <p>Further changes resulting from feedback on the experience of implementing the guidance at local level. Key changes include updated guidance on: ventilation for autumn/winter; shielding and individual risk assessments and Additional Support Needs.</p> <p>Updates to versions 4.1, 4.2 and 4.3, to take account of comments from CERG members where possible, the latest advice from the sub-group, and to align with the levels approach within the Strategic Framework.</p>
V5.1	24/03/2021	<p>Separate supplementary guidance for schools was published before Christmas to support the move to remote learning for most children and young people in January 2021. Updated versions of that supplementary guidance were published on 21 January, 16 February and 8 March.</p> <p>A revised version of this guidance was published on 24 March.</p>
V5.2	19/04/2021	Updated to take account of the return to a levels approach from 26 April and to make some minor updates and clarifications.
V5.3	17/05/2021	Updated to take account of wider societal changes from 17 May and to make other updates and clarifications.
V5.4	25/05/2021	Minor amendments to Annex A.
V6.0	03/08/2021	<p>Update in time for the 2021/22 school session. A summary of the key changes is provided in the main section. Annex A sets out detail on remaining (previous) mitigations, with any historical text removed. Key updated sections are:</p> <p>Paras 29-33 – vaccinations 34-56 – self isolation policy 57-58 – groupings 59-61 – physical distancing 62-65 – school visitors 66-70 – dedicated school transport 71-72 – drama, music, PE and dance 73-75 – ventilation 76-79 – asymptomatic testing programme 80-93 – individuals on the highest risk list (previously those on the shielding list) 94-97 – pregnancy 98 – outbreak management 99 – school visits and trips 100 – readiness and assurance 101 – early learning and childcare 102 – residential boarding/hostel accommodation in educational facilities</p>

OVERVIEW

Summary

1. This guidance takes effect from 9th August. It sets out that:
 - local authorities and schools should continue to apply the mitigations that were in place at the end of last term, with the exception of some modifications as set out in this guidance. This approach to retaining mitigations is expected to remain in place for a period of up to 6 weeks (until the end of September), following which further advice will be provided.
 - the modifications that should be made to mitigations relate to:
 - an updated wider policy on self-isolation, contact tracing and testing for U18 close contacts, which results in the ability to remove contact groupings in schools; and
 - further minor adjustments to the previous mitigations to ensure consistency with measures in place in wider society.

These modifications should be made as soon as possible after the return to school, and in any case within 4 weeks of return.

2. The table below summarises the approach for key mitigations:

Mitigation	Approach (retain/ retain with modifications/ remove/ new)	Timings
Risk assessment	Retain	Ongoing
Encouragement of vaccination	New	Ongoing
Environmental cleaning	Retain	Up to 6 weeks (then contingent on further advice).
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 (note change to “at least 1m”, but 2m distancing expected to remain for logistical purposes)	
One-way systems	Retain	
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/pregnant staff	Retain (updated guidance)	
2x weekly at-home asymptomatic testing	Retain (updated guidance/materials to support uptake and recording)	
Outbreak management	Retain (updated guidance re: public health approach)	
Self-isolation, contact tracing and testing for adults 18+	Retain with modifications (updated guidance – removal of some restrictions)	Align relevant school

	for double-vaccinated adult close contacts)	arrangements with updated approach in wider society ASAP
Self-isolation, contact tracing and testing for U18s	Retain with modifications (updated guidance – removal of some restrictions for U18 close contacts)	
Groupings	Remove	Remove ASAP and in any case within 4 weeks
Ventilation	Retain (strengthened guidance for LAs on CO2 monitoring)	Ongoing
Restrictions on Drama, Music, PE and Dance	Remove (in line with previous guidance)	Up to 6 weeks (then contingent on further advice)
Restrictions on school visitors	Retain with modifications (P1 parents/carers permitted to support transition where strictly necessary)	
School Transport	Retain with modifications (alignment with public transport).	
School trips	Retain (updated guidance)	
Readiness and assurance	Retain (updated guidance)	Ongoing

- Mitigations will be kept under constant review, and if data and evidence suggest that any specific mitigations can be removed at an earlier stage advice will be provided to that effect.
- Annex A** sets out detailed guidance on the application of mitigations and other safety measures. It has been updated to take account of evolving knowledge and experience of dealing with the pandemic, and to remove out-of-date material. Otherwise this material remains largely in line with the version of the Reducing Risks guidance in operation last term, and schools and local authorities will be familiar with much of the content.

Purpose of this guidance

- The guidance applies to all local authorities and schools (primary/secondary/special/school hostels/residential) under their management. Local authorities and schools should exercise their judgement when implementing this guidance, to ensure the safety and wellbeing of their children, young people and staff taking into account local circumstances.
- Local authorities should ensure that any external organisations involved in delivering services in schools (e.g. contracted facilities management services) are required to follow this guidance.
- Nothing in this guidance affects the legal obligations of local authorities with regard to health and safety, public health and their responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010. Local authorities must continue to adhere to all such duties when implementing this guidance.
- This guidance should also be used by grant-aided schools and independent schools to support their recovery efforts.
- Recognising its specific context, [separate guidance](#) for the Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) and childcare sector has been developed.

Key context (including revised strategic framework)

10. The Scottish Government published its [Strategic Framework update](#) and [Review of Physical Distancing](#) on Tuesday 22nd June 2021. This includes important context for the return to school/ELC.
11. It sets out a change to the Scottish Government's overarching strategic intent, from:

'to suppress the virus to the lowest possible level and keep it there, while we strive to return to a more normal life for as many people as possible'.

to one where we work:

'to suppress the virus to a level consistent with alleviating its harms while we recover and rebuild for a better future'.
12. All areas of Scotland moved to Level 0 on 19 July. As announced on Tuesday 3rd August, Scotland will move beyond Level 0 from 9th August. This means that by the time schools begin to return from w/c 9th August, we expect an easing of restrictions in wider society.
13. In considering arrangements for schools from August, this guidance has drawn on expert advice from the Advisory Sub-Group on Education and Children's Issues. In developing that advice, the Advisory Sub-Group took account of relevant evidence and the potential impact of proposed mitigations in schools. In reaching their conclusions, they specifically considered Long Covid, the impact on staff safety and wellbeing, the wider impact on children and families and the potential for disrupted learning in future. An [advice note](#) from the Advisory Sub-group is being published along with this guidance. An evidence summary will be published soon after, and will be available on the Advisory Sub-Group's [web page](#).
14. This guidance has also benefited from stakeholder input via the COVID-19 Education Recovery Group (CERG), the Education Recovery Youth Panel, and other key fora. It has taken careful account of the evolving risk environment in schools and wider communities.
15. The position with regard to vaccination of school staff, and the consequent change in the risk profile of the school environment, has been an important consideration in developing this guidance. For example, it is [estimated](#) that around 85% of teachers who have taken up the offer of a first dose of vaccination will have been offered both doses of the vaccine and therefore should have developed a second dose response by 16th August (79% of the teacher population in Scotland), and this will increase to 90% by 23rd August (85% of the teacher population). Further, of those who have only received one dose, the vast majority will be under 40 and are likely to have received the Pfizer or Moderna vaccination (which have relatively high rates of protection against hospitalisation and severe illness in comparison to a single dose of the AstraZeneca vaccination). This timeline of near-complete vaccination of over 18 year olds by late September also indicates widespread protection of adults in other settings, including universities and colleges, training providers etc.
16. The unique features of the school environment have been carefully considered. These include the fact that, in line with current JCVI advice, only a minority of children and young people will be vaccinated by the time Scottish schools return. This means that large numbers of unvaccinated children and young people will come together in a way that is unlikely to happen in other parts of society. However, the adult population required to mix with this unvaccinated population in schools will have high and increasing levels of protection from vaccination. In addition, evidence

continues to indicate that children and young people are at lower risk of infection and transmission than the adult population.

17. Further careful consideration has been given to the harms that have arisen from those mitigations recommended to date which are disruptive to education, particularly including self-isolation requirements (the latter of which are primarily aimed at protecting more vulnerable adults). Avoiding, wherever possible, the sort of disruption we have seen to senior phase pupils' certification processes during the past two years will be of particular importance from the point of view of fairness to young people.
18. The updates to mitigations set out in this guidance take account of these, and other, factors, and seek to balance the range of harms arising from COVID-19 in the school environment.
19. The Scottish Government is committed to promoting and protecting equality in the implementation of all Government policy and in upholding the principles of the UNCRC and GIRFEC in relation to any government actions or guidance that impacts on the lives of children and young people. Both a [Children's Rights and Wellbeing Impact Assessment](#) (CRWIA) and a broader [impact assessment](#) on the arrangements for returning to school in August, have been published.
20. Local authorities and schools will continue to offer support to the mental health and wellbeing of staff and pupils as they return to schools. As previously, a particular focus on children and young people with Additional Support Needs will be essential during this latest phase of the pandemic. [Guidance on support for continuity of learning](#) and [Curriculum for Excellence in the Recovery Phase](#) both reinforce the importance of wellbeing as a critical focus in recovery. Balancing progress in learning with children and young people's social and emotional needs should continue to be a priority. Detailed guidance on supporting staff and children and young people's wellbeing remains in place in Annex A of this guidance.

RETENTION OF PREVIOUS MITIGATIONS

21. With the exception of the changes set out in the following section, all mitigations that were in place at the end of the previous term should be retained. This position is expected to be maintained for up to 6 weeks (until the end of September), to allow the impact of a modified policy on self-isolation for under 18 close contacts to be monitored.
22. Schools have previously been advised to plan to begin the new term in August with the current mitigations in place. An important driver of this approach was the logistical challenges of removing and then reinstating mitigations, which can divert staff resources and prevent them from focusing on supporting children and young people's education.
23. Schools therefore need take no action to remove the mitigations they currently have in place, unless otherwise advised in the following section.
24. **Annex A** provides the detailed guidance on previous mitigations that should be retained. This largely replicates the previous version of the Reducing Risks guidance, with out-of-date material removed and any modifications in the following section appropriately reflected.

25. Following the initial period of operation (of up to 6 weeks) it is expected that updated guidance will be provided, to support schools to move to a set of baseline mitigations in line with wider society, subject to data and evidence supporting this move.
26. Mitigations will be kept under constant review, and if data and evidence suggest that any specific mitigations can be removed at an earlier stage advice will be provided to that effect. Particular attention will be paid to whether there is an ongoing requirement for face coverings in classrooms.

CHANGES TO PREVIOUS GUIDANCE

27. This section sets out the key changes to mitigations and measures previously in place. Local authorities and schools should ensure that all staff and pupils are aware of these updates and, where modifications to mitigations are required, these changes should be implemented as soon as possible after they return, and in any case within 4 weeks.
28. Modifications to mitigations in line with this guidance should be appropriately reflected in updated risk assessments. Full guidance on the risk assessment process, which is as previously set out in the Reducing Risks guidance, is in **Annex A**.

Vaccination (new)

29. All schools should encourage staff who have not received both doses of the vaccine to seek vaccination as soon as possible, following the recommended gap between doses. Information on securing an appointment can be found at: [Registering for a coronavirus vaccine | The coronavirus \(COVID-19\) vaccine \(nhsinform.scot\)](#). Drop-in clinics for every age cohort (18+) for first and second doses are now available across every mainland health board area.
30. In its [advice](#) published on 19 July, the JCVI recommended against routine universal vaccination of children and young people under 18 years of age. As evidence shows that COVID-19 rarely causes severe disease in children without underlying health conditions, the JCVI's view is that the minimal health benefits of offering universal COVID-19 vaccination to children do not outweigh the potential risks.
31. The JCVI did however recommend vaccinating three key groups of children and young people under 18 years of age:
 - Children aged 12 to 15 years of age with severe neuro-disabilities, Down's Syndrome, underlying conditions resulting in immunosuppression, and those with profound and multiple learning disabilities, severe learning disabilities or who are on the learning disability register are considered at increased risk for serious COVID-19 disease.
 - Children and young people aged 12 years and over who are household contacts of persons (adults or children) who are immunosuppressed should be offered COVID-19 vaccination on the understanding that the main benefits from vaccination are related to the potential for indirect protection of their household contact who is immunosuppressed.
 - Young people aged 16 to 17 years of age who are at higher risk of serious COVID-19, as currently set out in the Green Book (COVID-19: the green book, chapter 14a - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)), should continue to be offered COVID-19 vaccination in line with the current programme approach.

32. Local health boards will work with local colleagues such as community children's nursing, learning disability service and paediatric services to plan the most appropriate vaccination setting according to children and young people's individual needs. It is not anticipated that schools will be involved in this process.
33. The Scottish Government has decided, in agreement with Governments across the UK, to follow this JCVI advice on deployment of vaccination of those aged under 18 as set out above.

Self-isolation policy (including contact tracing and testing) (updated – FROM 9 AUGUST)

34. From 9th August 2021, there will be important updates to self-isolation policy in wider society that will impact on the school environment. The key points from the updated policy are set out here.
35. This section of the guidance will be kept under review in the period immediately following publication, and may be updated to ensure alignment with final NHS Test and Protect guidance published at the time the new policy is implemented.

People with symptoms or testing positive

36. Staff, children or young people who develop the symptoms of COVID-19 (high temperature, new continuous cough or a loss or change to sense of smell or taste), or who test positive using PCR tests or Lateral Flow Device (LFD), must self-isolate immediately in line with [NHS Guidance](#).
37. Staff, children and young people are strongly encouraged to inform their schools of any positive tests when reporting absences.

Adults (18+) who are close contacts

38. NHS guidance on self-isolation of adult (18+) staff who are identified by Test and Protect as close contacts of positive cases should be followed. **From 9th August**, this is expected to state that any adults who are fully vaccinated and who are identified as close contacts of positive cases should:
- Self-isolate immediately and book a PCR test. They should continue to self-isolate while awaiting their results;
 - If the test is positive, they should continue to self-isolate in line with NHS guidance. This states that they should remain at home and should not go to work, school, public areas or use public transport. They should not go out to buy food or other essentials;
 - If they need support, and cannot get this from friends or family, the National Assistance Helpline is there to help and can be reached on 0800 111 4000;
 - If the test is negative and the close contact remains without symptoms, they may end self-isolation and resume their daily lives, even if they have ongoing contact with the index case (e.g. a household member).
 - Close contacts should remain vigilant and if symptoms newly develop at any time, they must follow NHS guidance, self-isolate immediately and book a PCR test.

39. From 9th August, people who are aged between 18 years and 18 years and 4 months, and who are not yet vaccinated or who have only had a single dose of the vaccine, should follow the guidance above for fully vaccinated adults.
40. From 9th August, people older than 18 years and 4 months, who are not yet vaccinated or who have only had a single dose of the vaccine, should:
- Self-isolate immediately for 10 days from symptom onset in the symptomatic person and book a PCR test;
 - If the test is positive, they should continue to self-isolate in line with NHS guidance.
 - If the test is negative, still continue to self-isolate in line with NHS guidance. This is because a test cannot indicate whether someone is incubating the disease, and therefore may go on to develop it after a test is taken.
41. Adult staff who are fully vaccinated should ensure they continue to test twice weekly using LFDs, which can be accessed via their schools.
42. If a close contact has had a positive PCR test in the last 90 days, they do not need to do another PCR test to be exempt from self-isolation, provided they are fully vaccinated and remain asymptomatic.

Children and young people U18 (0-17 years old) who are close contacts

43. NHS guidance on self-isolation of children and young people aged U18 (0-17) will be updated from 9th August. The previous blanket requirement for close contacts aged 0-17 years old to self-isolate for 10 days will be removed from that date. This decision has been taken after careful consideration of the data and evidence around the risks of infection and transmission in this age group, and the evolving risk environment in schools and wider society. It has been informed by the [advice](#) of the Advisory Sub-Group on Education and Children's issues, and the expert views of senior clinicians. The Scottish Government expects that this updated policy, while applicable in settings wider than just the school environment, will contribute significantly to educational continuity for children and young people.
44. To support risk mitigation around this change of policy, the same testing arrangements as for fully vaccinated adults will apply.
45. From 9th August, U18s who are identified by Test and Protect as close contacts of positive cases should:
- self-isolate immediately and book a PCR test. They should continue to self-isolate while awaiting their results;
 - if the test is positive, they should continue to self-isolate in line with NHS guidance. This states that they should remain at home and should not go to work, school, public areas or use public transport. They should not go out to buy food or other essentials;
 - if they need support, and cannot get this from friends or family, the National Assistance Helpline is there to help and can be reached on 0800 111 4000;
 - if the test is negative, and the child or young person remains without symptoms, they may end self-isolation and resume their daily lives (including returning to school), even if they have ongoing contact with the index case (e.g. a household member).

- Close contacts should remain vigilant and if symptoms newly develop at any time, they must follow NHS guidance and self-isolate immediately.
 - If an under 18 close contact has had a positive PCR test in the last 90 days, they do not need to do another PCR test to be exempt from self-isolation provided they remain asymptomatic.
46. Children and young people in secondary schools should ensure they continue to test twice weekly using LFDs, which can be accessed via their schools. Parents may also wish to encourage younger children in primary schools to test twice weekly using the universal testing offer.
47. From 9th August, exemptions from testing will apply to close contacts who are aged under 5, or who for medical reasons are unable to be tested or are exempt. For these groups, a PCR test will not be required to end self-isolation. However, children under 5 who are close contacts may be encouraged to take a PCR test where possible. This reflects the lower risks of infection and transmission in this age group, and the fact that younger children may find it harder to tolerate testing.

Contact tracing

48. From 9th August, the approach to contact tracing of U18s, including in the school environment will be adjusted better to reflect the evidence and data re: risks of infection and transmission amongst close contacts in this age cohort, and in the school environment.
49. From 9th August, only those close contacts aged under 18 who are at the highest risk of being exposed to infection will be directly contact traced by Test and Protect, and asked to self-isolate until they have received a negative PCR test. Test and Protect will focus on identification of household, overnight (sleepover) or clear, prolonged close contacts.
50. From 9th August, schools and ELC settings will no longer be as extensively involved in supporting contact tracing. They may be requested by Test and Protect to support identification of any adult staff or clinically vulnerable U18s who are not fully vaccinated and who have had unusually close or prolonged contact with an index case, so that tailored public health advice can be provided as per the policies described above.
51. The approach of requiring whole classes or groupings of pupils to self-isolate as close contacts will no longer be followed in normal circumstances. However, to ensure that any potential lower-risk contacts in the school environment are provided with public health advice on vigilance for symptoms and other key matters, schools and ELC settings should send “warn and inform” letters to staff, parents/carers and young people in relevant classes or year groups when they are made aware of a positive case. Those lower-risk potential contacts in the school/ELC environment will not be advised to self-isolate or seek a PCR test.
52. Incident Management Teams involved in the handling of outbreaks may still make the decision to engage with schools in the handling of cases.
53. The “warn and inform” letter that schools should send to parents/carers and staff in the event of a positive case should advise them of the facts and:

- Make clear there is no requirement to self-isolate unless contacted by Test and Protect and advised otherwise;
- Advise recipients to be particularly vigilant for symptoms and to self-isolate immediately and book a PCR test if they become symptomatic;
- Ask them and their children to follow particularly closely the mitigations in guidance; and
- Strongly encourage staff and secondary pupils to continue testing and recording results regularly as part of the schools asymptomatic testing offer (see below), as well as advising households to take advantage of the universal testing offer.

A template letter will be made available to local authorities to support this approach.

54. If a child, young person (or their parent/carer if under 16 years) or staff member is contacted by Test and Protect and identified as a high-risk close contact while at school, the person should leave school and travel home avoiding the use of public transport wherever possible and, if possible, they should wear a face covering en route. They should then follow the guidance on self-isolation and PCR testing provided by Test and Protect, as summarised above. The Scottish Government has published [advice around how to self-isolate](#), including [advice for employers on how to support people who are asked to self-isolate](#).

Accessing PCR tests

55. There are a number of ways to get a PCR test:

- Book a test at [NHS Inform](#) for your nearest COVID-19 test site. There are drive-through, walk-through, mobile testing units across Scotland which are open from 8-am until 8pm, 7 days a week. Small scale test sites have also been set up in Highland, Grampian and Argyll & Bute to provide access to testing within local communities. A full list of sites can be found at [Gov.Scot](#).
- Order a home PCR test kit [online](#), or by calling 119. A test will then be delivered to your home. To return you can either drop the test at your nearest priority post box, or if you are unable to go out, you can also call 119 to book a courier collection from your home.

Self-isolation policies and outbreak management

56. The National Incident Management Team will offer support and advice to Directors of Public Health or Incident Management teams who, exceptionally, wish to consider introducing alternative self-isolation policies in the event of significant outbreaks in schools or communities, if they feel this is strictly necessary to manage the situation effectively and mitigate any emerging significant health impacts on school communities or wider communities. More information on outbreak management can be found later in this guidance.

Groupings (removed)

57. The revised approach to contact tracing means that groupings (sometimes referred to as “bubbles”) are no longer required to be maintained in schools. These should be removed as soon as possible, and in any case within 4 weeks of the start of term.
58. Schools should, however, continue to avoid assemblies and other types of large group gatherings, in keeping with the retention of existing mitigations for up to 6 weeks. This precautionary approach reflects the unique environment in schools, which will still involve

bringing together large numbers of unvaccinated children and young people on a non-discretionary basis (and which can therefore be differentiated from other situations in society in which large gatherings take place).

Physical distancing (updated)

59. Physical distancing between adults, and between adults and children and young people, should remain in place in the school estate.
60. To ensure alignment with wider society and planned changes in ELC, this requirement has now been updated to physical distancing of at least 1m. As schools should already have 2m physical distancing arrangements that work well and do not limit capacity, **it is expected that most schools will wish to retain these 2m distancing arrangements for logistical reasons**. It is therefore not anticipated there will be a logistical requirement to make changes to physical distancing arrangements in the school environment. Retaining 2 metres between adults in schools who do not yet meet the criteria for exemption from self-isolation will also help to reduce the risk that they are identified as a close contact.
61. As previously, there is no requirement for strict physical distancing between children and young people in schools, although maintaining distancing between secondary school pupils is encouraged where possible. Previous guidance on approaches to this can be found in Annex A.

School visitors (updated)

62. Supply staff and other visitors e.g. visiting teachers, psychologists, nurses, social workers, youth workers, outdoor learning specialists, HEI tutors and those providing therapeutic support, can move between schools where necessary. This should continue to be limited to those that are necessary to support children and young people or the running of the school until otherwise advised. Consideration should be given to the provision of this support by virtual means as appropriate.
63. Parents/carers may accompany children onto school premises where this is agreed with the school and strictly necessary to support children and young people, for example where there are concerns about individual children making a successful transition from ELC to P1. Any such visits should be risk assessed and agreed in advance as being necessary by schools. Otherwise, where virtual arrangements for parental engagement are already in place and working well, these should continue to be used.
64. Visitors should be expected to comply with the school's arrangements for managing and minimising risk (including physical distancing and use of face coverings). Schools should ensure that all temporary staff are given access to information on the safety arrangements in place, including the school risk assessment. Arrangements for school visitors should be communicated clearly to staff and the wider school community.
65. Schools and local authorities should, in partnership with related partners and local public health teams, pay very close attention to any evidence suggesting emerging bridges of transmission between settings. In the event that any such evidence is identified, they should consult immediately with local public health teams on any requirement to pause or further reduce such movement between schools.

Dedicated school transport (updated)

66. The position on face coverings and physical distancing on dedicated school transport will align with the expected position on public transport.
67. This has been updated so that only young people aged 12 and over are required to wear face coverings. This means that children aged 5-11, who were previously asked to wear face coverings, no longer need to do so.
68. Physical distancing between passengers who travel on dedicated school transport is not required, but it remains important to be cautious and exercise personal responsibility. Pupils should be supported to understand that, where possible, it is safer to keep a distance from other people. As a precautionary measure, we recommend that 1m distancing between drivers and children and young people on dedicated school transport should continue to be observed where possible.
69. When physical distancing restrictions on public transport are removed, measures to increase capacity on public transport for school pupils, e.g. dedicated zones, will not be necessary. It is acceptable for pupils from different schools to share dedicated school transport.
70. Existing arrangements for cleaning, hygiene and ventilation on school transport should continue and they remain important mitigations alongside the wearing of face coverings. Further detail on these existing mitigations is in **Annex A**.

Drama, Music, PE and Dance (updated)

71. While not an update to previous guidance, schools should note that, in line with the move to Level 0 and beyond, children and young people can now engage in all drama, music, PE and dance activity in schools, indoors and outdoors.
72. Safety mitigations should continue to apply in relevant settings where these activities are taking place (e.g. good ventilation, enhanced hygiene, etc.).

Ventilation (updated)

73. Previous guidance on ventilation continues to apply. In addition, the following strengthened guidance on CO2 monitoring should be followed by local authorities:
 - Local authorities should ensure that all schools have access to CO2 monitoring, whether via mobile or fixed devices. This is in order to support the goal of all school buildings, including all learning and teaching spaces, being assessed for ventilation issues with a view to remedial action being taken where required. This assessment work should be completed by the start of the October break wherever possible, subject to any issues regarding supply of CO2 monitors. These assessments may be undertaken by the use of fixed or mobile CO2 monitoring or by other appropriate means (e.g. computer modelling of the school estate), depending on the ventilation systems and other arrangements already in place in school buildings.

- Local authorities and other providers should ensure the information they gather as a result of these assessments is used to inform actions to improve ventilation in schools where required, in line with the previous detailed guidance at Annex A. This may include, for example:
 - Remedial works where appropriate (e.g. accelerated maintenance to remedy windows that will not open or faulty ventilation).
 - Providing further guidance to users (e.g. on regular opening of windows, etc.).
- Local authorities and the Scottish Government will continue to work in partnership together to consider the knowledge acquired as a result of these assessments, including in respect of areas of the school estate with priority ventilation issues and the deployment of effective strategies to achieve temperature/ventilation balance, user comfort, etc. This partnership working will help inform joint consideration of longer-term actions to improve ventilation in the school estate.

74. Equivalent commitments in respect of day care of children services are set out in separate ELC guidance, with specific arrangements under development to support the PVI sector.

75. Additional funding of £10m will be provided to local authorities to support this work in the schools and ELC sectors, in addition to previously provided COVID logistics funding.

Asymptomatic testing programme (updated)

76. It is important that schools and local authorities continue to promote twice-weekly at-home LFD testing actively to their staff and secondary pupils, and that participants are encouraged to [record their results](#).

77. Some additional steps have been taken to support school and local authority efforts to promote greater uptake and recording of testing for staff and secondary pupils.

78. Previous advice requested schools and local authorities to provide kits to staff and secondary pupils before going on holiday so that they can test prior to return. Local authorities have been asked to ensure communications activity in the run-up to school return re-emphasises this request.

79. The following updates apply:

- **Communications:** The Scottish Government has worked in collaboration with Young Scot to develop a direct mailer pack that will be sent to every secondary school in Scotland, with printed materials (posters, stickers, door hangs, etc) that can be used to promote uptake and recording of results. Schools are encouraged to make use of these. The Scottish Government will also be working with Young Scot to deliver communications via social media channels.
- **Improvements to test kits/UKG website:** Some potential barriers to testing identified by survey evidence were the discomfort of tests and the time it takes to do them and record results. To address this, the following actions are being taken:

- After the start of term, once schools have used up their current stocks of Innova test kits and place orders for additional test kits, they will be provided with a new type of LFD test kit. While very similar to the current tests, the new LFD device involves a nasal-only swab. This is in response to feedback that throat swabbing can be uncomfortable for some school participants. The new types of test kit also take only c.15-20 minutes for results to be returned, reducing the amount of time involved in testing.
- The UK Government have also updated their online reporting portal so that household accounts can be created. This will allow parents to record results for more than one child without having to re-enter data multiple times.
- After 6 weeks, once all staff have had the opportunity to be fully vaccinated, and subject to evidence around implementation of the updated self-isolation policy for children and young people, the asymptomatic testing programme will be reviewed. Options may include implementing the programme only in geographical areas where so indicated by community prevalence and based on the advice of the local Director of Public Health/IMT. Decisions on this will be taken on the basis of evidence nearer the time and in line with the wider testing strategy.

People in the highest risk group (previously those on the shielding list) (updated)

80. This updated guidance applies to those who are at the highest clinical risk from coronavirus. Information on who is considered to be at highest risk is available at [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): shielding advice and support - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot/shielding-advice-and-support) along with advice and support for this group, including attending work and school. Everyone in this cohort will have received a letter from the Chief Medical Officer advising them that they are on the shielding list or the highest risk list.
81. The Chief Medical Officer has written to everyone on this list in relation to the move to level 0. His advice is that people at highest risk can now follow the same advice as the rest of the population in the context of our cautious approach to easing restrictions. This is because the vaccination programme is working well and, as the number of people who have been vaccinated rises, everyone will benefit from greater protection, even the small number of people who cannot be vaccinated for medical reasons. Evidence [continues to emerge](#) about how well the vaccine works for people who are most clinically vulnerable.
82. Over 93% of people at highest risk have now received both doses of the vaccine and nearly 96% have received their first dose. Due to some health conditions, some people cannot receive the vaccine. If anyone is unsure about their circumstances, they may speak with their clinician. Otherwise, anyone on the highest risk list and their family members who haven't had the vaccine are encouraged to do so as soon as possible.
83. The Chief Medical Officer's advice to everyone on the list, at level 0 and beyond level 0, is that it is currently safe to go into work if you cannot work from home and that it is safe to use public transport.
84. It is essential that everyone continues to follow the public health advice and remaining restrictions. Strict adherence to mitigations is strongly encouraged for staff and pupils at highest risk. Mitigations which remain in place for now such as face coverings are not just to give added

protection to the population as a whole, but also to give protection and assurance to those at highest clinical risk. It is important to protect each other through getting the vaccination, getting tested, and following the remaining rules and guidance.

85. It continues to be the employer's responsibility to regularly carry out workplace risk assessments and put in place measures to make the workplace as safe as is reasonably practicable to try and minimise the risk to staff including contracting COVID-19. In carrying out risk assessments, employers should be mindful of their duties under the Equality Act 2010 at all times. Employees also have a responsibility to comply with safe working practices.
86. It is essential that employers conduct a COVID-19 risk assessment which will help them to identify measures which can be implemented to reduce the risk of transmission in the workplace. Employers can be asked for copies of the risk assessments for the workplace.
87. It is advised that those who are at highest risk also carry out an individual risk assessment. This includes a COVID-Age tool, which employees can use to highlight personal risk and support discussions with employers about any additional adjustments or arrangements that may be needed to make the workplace and duties safe for them. Find advice about individual risk assessments and the COVID-Age tool on gov.scot at: [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): guidance on individual occupational risk assessment - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot/resources/consultation-papers/coronavirus-guidance-on-individual-occupational-risk-assessment/).
88. Any concerns can be discussed with managers or employers. Further advice is also available from:
- Occupational Health services provided by your employer, where available
 - a Health and Safety representative in your workplace
 - your workplace's Human Resources (HR) department
 - your trade union or professional body
 - the [Citizens Advice website](https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/) or the free Citizens Advice Helpline on 0800 028 1456, (Monday to Friday, office hours)
 - the Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service (ACAS).
89. There is guidance for employers and employees on making the workplace safe for people at highest risk at [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): shielding advice and support - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot/resources/consultation-papers/coronavirus-shielding-advice-and-support/). This includes employer responsibilities to carry out regular workplace risk assessments, individual risk assessments, and additional steps people can take to keep themselves safe.

Children and young people in the highest risk group

90. The Chief Medical Officer's advice at level 0 and beyond level 0, is that children and young people on the highest risk list can follow the same advice as for the rest of the population. This includes attending education and childcare.

Household members of people who are in the highest risk group

91. Children and young people who live with a person who is at highest risk should attend school in line with arrangements for the return to school after the summer holidays. All children and young people attending school should comply with the arrangements for the reduction of risks of transmission of the virus within schools, including hand hygiene and the use of face coverings where appropriate.
92. Household and family members of people at highest risk can also go to work. It is the employers' responsibility to make sure the workplace and duties are as safe as possible. Household members of people that are at highest risk should discuss their concerns with their employer.
93. The Chief Medical Officer has encouraged everyone on the highest risk list to ask members of their household over 12 years of age to use the free at-home LFDs, including staff and pupils who can access these at school. We encourage all school staff and pupils in secondary schools who live with someone at highest risk to use the offer of LFD testing, as this will help to find people who don't have symptoms and would not know they have coronavirus. This can then reduce the risk of passing on coronavirus to a family or household member who is at highest risk.

Pregnancy

94. It is now recommended that pregnant women have the vaccine. Further information can be found at: [Combined info sheet and decision aid 20.07.2021 \(rcog.org.uk\)](#)
95. Schools and local authorities should continue to follow their duties and responsibilities under both the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 and the Equality Act 2010. These include ensuring that appropriate individual risk assessments are in place to inform any reasonable adjustments required to remove risk for pregnant women.
96. Schools and local authorities should follow the guidance set out by the [Health and Safety Executive](#) and in the most recent [Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists](#) advice to keep the risk of exposure as low as is practically possible to pregnant women, particularly in the third trimester.
97. Normal pregnancy risk assessments should also be undertaken, and careful attention paid to mental health and wellbeing. Schools and local authorities should be sensitive to any anxiety pregnant staff may be feeling, and offer support and solutions to address this wherever possible. Individuals should discuss requirements with their line manager in the first instance. In the event of any concerns that cannot be addressed in this way, they should speak with their local HR or Health and Safety team, as well as their Trade Union representative.

Outbreak Management

98. Arrangements for joint working between schools, local authorities and local Health Protection Teams (HPTs) remain as before. The definitions of clusters and outbreaks are unchanged. However, guidance has now been updated to make clear that schools are no longer to contact HPTs to notify them of every single confirmed case in a school setting. Single cases will be identified by Test and Protect and close contacts will be identified through them too.

School visits and trips (updated)

99. Updated guidance on school visits and trips is now available and should continue to be followed in the period after return: [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): school visits and trips - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot/Topics/healthandcare/coronavirus/covid-19/schoolvisitsandtrips). At present, the guidance on residential visits for level 0 continues to apply beyond level 0, however Scottish Government is working with outdoor education providers to develop updated guidance for beyond level 0.

Readiness and assurance (updated)

100. To achieve collective assurance that the education system has in place the arrangements needed to deal with future outbreaks, schools and local authorities should familiarise themselves with the scenarios, expectations and actions set out at **Annex B**. They should work together to ensure that these actions are complete and that a state of readiness is maintained for as long as is required to deal with the pandemic.

Early learning and childcare

101. There is [separate guidance for Early Learning and Childcare settings](#), which (while closely aligned to many of the mitigations in this guidance for schools) reflects the support required for, and the lower transmission risks associated with, very young children.

Residential boarding/hostel accommodation in educational facilities

102. There is separate supplementary guidance for residential boarding/hostel accommodation in educational facilities which will be updated shortly to reflect the latest international travel restrictions and clinical advice on managing specific risks in residential accommodation.

KEY MITIGATIONS FOR RETENTION

1. This annex provides the detailed guidance on the mitigations from the previous term that should be retained. This annex largely replicates the previous version of the Reducing Risks guidance, with out-of-date material removed and any modifications set out earlier in this guidance appropriately reflected.

KEY PUBLIC HEALTH MEASURES

2. This Annex sets out the key public health measures that local authorities and schools should implement to minimise the risks of COVID-19 transmission and infection. These controls will help prioritise the health, safety and wellbeing of children, young people and staff.
3. The guidance has been informed by advice from the [COVID-19 Advisory Sub-group on Education and Children's Issues](#) which has regularly discussed the mitigations required to manage risks regarding the return to in-school learning for children, young people and staff.
4. Schools and ELC settings should place a high priority on ensuring they implement these mitigations, and those in [equivalent guidance](#) on ELC settings, to maximise safety and reduce risks for children, young people and staff.
5. This guidance is designed to promote a consistent and equitable approach. Every school and setting is different, however, and local authorities and schools will understand best how this guidance can be applied in their settings.

Risk assessment

6. It is a legal requirement that local authorities ensure that risk assessments are conducted and regularly reviewed and updated. In considering their risk assessments, it is imperative that schools and local authorities continue to take a precautionary approach. Risk assessments should consider all mitigations set out in this guidance to ensure the safety and wellbeing of children, young people and staff in schools.
7. In accordance with relevant legislation and guidance, all local trade unions should be consulted with and involved in the development and updating of risk assessments. School risk assessments should be shared with and be easily accessible to staff and trade unions, including catering and facilities management teams and contractors where appropriate.
8. It is imperative that all members of the school community understand what measures are being put in place and why.

Coronavirus (COVID-19) specific

9. Everyone needs to engage with assessing and managing the risks from coronavirus (COVID-19). Employers and school leaders should consider the risks the staff and children and young people face and do everything reasonably practicable to minimise them, recognising they cannot completely eliminate the risk of coronavirus (COVID-19). 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 as safe as possible, including how to approach a coronavirus (COVID-19) risk assessment, is provided by the [HSE guidance on working safely](#).

10. 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. 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. HSE have prepared guidance on [Talking with your workers about preventing coronavirus \(COVID-19\) - Supporting vulnerable workers \(hse.gov.uk\)](#). It also makes good sense to involve children and young people (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) and make the school as safe as possible. 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

11. 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 children and young people.

Monitoring and review of risk controls

12. It is important that employers know how effective their risk controls are. They should monitor and review the preventive and protective measures regularly, to ensure the measures are working, and take action to address any shortfalls.

Roles and responsibilities

13. 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, employers must:
 - identify what could cause injury or illness in the organisation (hazards)
 - decide how likely it is that someone could be harmed and how seriously (the risk)
 - take action to eliminate the hazard, or if this isn't possible, control the risk
14. 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 children and young people. 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.

15. The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) provides more information on the role of headteachers and employers in its guidance on [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 part of planning for the return to school, 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

16. Health and safety risk assessments identify measures to control risks during education and childcare setting activities. Health and safety law requires the 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
17. 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.
18. Risk assessments consider what measures you need to protect the health and safety of all:
 - staff (including volunteers)
 - children and young people
 - visitors
 - contractors
19. 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)

20. 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, you cannot decide who the representative will be.

21. 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

22. Employers and staff should always come together to resolve issues. As school/settings continue to operate and follow updated guidance, 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 the standards set out in relevant public health legislation and guidance to control public health risks, 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.

Public health measures to prevent and respond to COVID-19

23. In order to address the risks identified in their risk assessments, local authorities and schools should adopt core public health measures in a way that is appropriate to their setting. Ensuring a positive learning environment for all children and young people should include measures focused on preventing and responding to infections.
24. Essential public health measures include:
- symptom vigilance and a requirement that people who have COVID symptoms stay at home;
 - enhanced hygiene and environmental cleaning arrangements;
 - effective ventilation;
 - maintaining physical distancing from others where possible;
 - wearing face coverings or appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) where necessary;
 - staff and secondary aged learners completing asymptomatic tests and recording results twice weekly; and
 - active engagement with Test and Protect.

Enhanced hygiene and environmental cleaning

Personal hygiene

25. Schools should strongly encourage and support all children, young people, staff and any others for whom it is necessary to enter the school estate to maintain appropriate personal hygiene throughout the day.
26. The key personal hygiene measures that all children, young people and staff should follow to reduce the risk of COVID-19 infection are:

- frequent washing/sanitising of hands for 20 seconds and drying thoroughly, and always when entering/leaving the building, before/after eating and after using the toilet;
 - encouraging children, young people and staff to avoid touching their faces including mouth, eyes and nose; and
 - using a tissue or elbow to cough or sneeze, and use bins that are emptied regularly for tissue waste.
27. It will be the responsibility of every individual in the school to observe good hygiene practice to minimise the risk of infection. Schools should identify opportunities to reinforce for all children, young people and staff the importance of effective hygiene measures throughout the school day, as part of their work on responsible citizenship. Involving children and young people in discussions about how to manage mitigations will be critical to their success. Signage should be applied appropriately, including in toilets.
28. NHS Inform [Covid-19 General Advice](#) states that adequate facilities should be available for hand hygiene, including handwashing facilities that are adequately stocked or have alcohol-based hand rub at key areas. In consultation with their local authority, schools should make appropriate arrangements for the storage of alcohol-based hand rub. Outdoor hand basins or hand sanitisers should be available at entry/exit points, to allow all building users to wash/sanitise their hands as they enter/leave the building at pick up/drop off time and at break/lunch times. Help should be given to those children and young people who struggle to wash their hands independently. Over time it is possible that children and young people will become complacent about hand hygiene. Schools should involve them in making plans to ensure continued rigour.
29. School uniforms/clothing and staff clothing should be washed/cleaned as normal. Any arrangements in place to support washing of school uniform and clothing should be continued.

Enhanced environmental cleaning

30. The local authority/school should undertake regular health and safety checks of the school estate, including water quality sampling for legionella and other bacteria. The Health and Safety Executive has produced guidance on [Legionella risks during the coronavirus pandemic - HSE news](#).
31. Local authorities and schools should ensure that an enhanced environmental cleaning regime is in place. The regime put in place should be in line with [Health Protection Scotland Guidance for Non-Healthcare Settings](#). This specifies in particular:
- Ensuring regular detergent cleaning schedules and procedures are in place using a product which is active against bacteria and viruses; ensure adequate contact time for cleaning products is adhered to.
 - Ensuring regular (at least twice daily) cleaning of commonly touched objects and surfaces (e.g. desks, handles, dining tables, shared technology surfaces etc.);
 - Ensuring that where possible movement of individuals between work stations is minimised and where work spaces are shared there is cleaning between use (e.g. avoid hot desks and instead each individual, children, young people and staff, has a designated desk);
 - Ensuring there are adequate disposal facilities;

- Wedging doors (other than fire doors) open, where appropriate, to increase fresh air and reduce touchpoints;
 - Setting clear use and cleaning guidance for toilets to ensure they are kept clean and physical distancing is achieved as much as possible; and
 - Cleaning work vehicles, between different passengers or shifts as appropriate.
32. There should also be more frequent cleaning of rooms/areas that must be used by different groups, including staff (e.g. classrooms, toilet blocks, changing rooms and staff areas).
33. Movement of children, young people and staff between classrooms should be minimised wherever possible. Where this cannot be avoided, the provision of appropriate cleaning supplies to enable them to wipe down their own desk/chair/surfaces before leaving and, especially, on entering the room should be considered as part of overall hygiene strategies for secondary schools.
34. Careful consideration should be given to the cleaning regime for specialist equipment (e.g. in practical subjects or for children with additional support needs), sensory rooms, practical subjects with specialist equipment and dining halls, etc. to ensure safe use. Staff can safely eat in the dining hall if they wish. They should use their own crockery/cutlery in staff areas and ensure these are cleaned with warm water and general purpose detergent and dried thoroughly before being stored for re-use.
35. It is recommended that younger children access toys and equipment that are easy to clean. The use of resources such as sand, water and playdough should be part of relevant risk assessments. Children and young people should wherever possible be encouraged not to bring toys from home to the setting or to share their personal belongings, although it is appreciated that for younger children and for some children and young people with additional support needs this may be difficult to prevent. Consideration should be given to practical alternatives to provide comfort and reassurance, which is particularly important for younger children and children with additional needs. However, if a child brings their own book/bag/personal device that only they use then this should not increase the risk of indirect spread of the virus. Children, young people and staff should be instructed to keep bags on the floor and not on their desks or worktops.
36. Children, young people and staff can take books and other resources home, although unnecessary resource sharing including textbooks should be avoided, especially where this does not contribute to education and development. Cleaning between uses should be in accordance with the [Health Protection Scotland Guidance for Non-Healthcare Settings](#).

Fomites (objects or materials which may carry infection)

37. If school resources (for example, text books, jotters) are taken home by a child, there is no longer a requirement to quarantine these for 72 hours upon return to the setting. Evidence on fomite transmission has continued to evolve and Public Health Scotland have now advised that we can remove this requirement from the guidance. Enhanced hand hygiene, as set out elsewhere, should be adhered to by all staff, children and families and is a more proportionate way of reducing the risk of fomite transmission.

Ventilation and heating

38. This section of the guidance is informed by the latest scientific and public health advice and research from the Advisory Sub-group on education and children's issues, Health Facilities Scotland, ARHAI Scotland and the SAGE Environmental and Modelling Group (EMG) which published [updated guidance](#) on 23rd October 2020. Cognisance has also been taken of UK and European building services industry guidance ([CIBSE](#) and [REHVA](#)). This guidance has been developed in consultation with HSE which has produced general guidance on [Ventilation and air conditioning during the coronavirus \(COVID-19\) pandemic \(hse.gov.uk\)](#).
39. This section was reviewed throughout July 2021. As there was no new or emerging advice/evidence on heating and ventilation practices from SAGE EMG and based on user feedback from local authorities and the Scottish Heads of Property Services (SHoPS) network the guidance in this section remains largely unchanged. In its [advice published on 3 March](#), the Advisory Sub-group did recommend however, that **greater emphasis should be placed on ventilation**, by keeping windows open as much as possible, and doors open when feasible and safe to do so. Updated [advice](#) published on 3 August 2021 also emphasised the need for a renewed focus on the importance of good ventilation and the potential for CO2 monitors to be utilised to ensure good air quality in enclosed spaces. [The World Health Organisation \(WHO\) has published a roadmap](#) to improve and ensure good indoor ventilation in the context of COVID-19. The Scottish Government has also published [ventilation guidance](#).
40. This section of the guidance is intended primarily for relevant local authority teams – it is not expected that headteachers or teachers should have the expertise to apply it independently.
41. The key requirement for local authorities is to work with schools to identify and implement local approaches that balance the need for fresh air in key parts of the school estate with the maintenance of adequate temperatures. The latest scientific advice identifies that ventilation is an important factor in mitigating against the risk of far-field (>2m) aerosol transmission. The relative importance of far-field aerosol transmission compared to other transmission routes is not yet known, but evidence suggests it is a risk in poorly ventilated spaces.
42. There is therefore a need for an appropriate supply of fresh air to assist with minimising the risk of virus infection. There is also a need to maintain indoor temperatures for reasons including user comfort, health and wellbeing, and learning and teaching.
43. This guidance seeks to identify practical measures which may be incorporated to balance these issues. The precise balance to be struck, and the most effective ways of doing so, will depend heavily on local factors including building design, location and prevailing weather conditions. It is expected that average external temperatures will drop over the winter months, and also that average wind speeds will rise (c30-40%) compared to summer. The rise in wind speed will increase the need to reduce draughts by closing (or partially closing) windows. The increased speed may however provide some compensation in terms of maintaining overall ventilation rates.
44. While measures to improve ventilation should be viewed as just one part of the overall package of control measures in schools, they are being viewed by the Advisory sub-group as an increasingly important mitigation. Schools should continue to ensure a focus on implementation

and maintenance of wider controls including personal hygiene, symptom vigilance, enhanced cleaning and distancing.

45. Relevant local authority teams may already be in a position to provide the necessary expert advice to schools on appropriate local approaches to the assessment of current ventilation and the development of strategies to improve ventilation. Where any necessary expertise is not available within a local authority, they may wish to draw on expert external advice to inform their strategies - some local authorities have already done so, and are sharing this expertise through their national networks. In providing advice, local authorities may wish to consider grouping school buildings by common criteria (e.g. type of construction, primary/ secondary/ASN, window type, heating system, etc.) and should develop a package of viable options in consultation with trade unions and staff in those schools.
46. Schools should ensure that risk assessments are updated regularly, in consultation with local authorities, staff, trade unions and (where applicable) PFI/NPD providers, to consider issues around ventilation and heating/warmth that are relevant to their specific environments. Drawing on local authority advice, they should consider areas of the school where air flow (including pockets of stagnant air in occupied spaces) and/or temperature may be problematic, and the strategies that may be used to address these issues and mitigate risks appropriately. Some examples of potential approaches are provided below.
47. Schools should as a minimum ensure that adequate levels of ventilation and appropriate temperatures are maintained, with reference to the [School Premises Regulations](#). While minimum requirements vary depending on the specific part of the school estate, for classrooms the regulations stipulate 2 air changes per hour and a temperature of 17°C. Reference should also be made to the [Workplace \(Health, Safety and Welfare\) Regulations 1992](#) requirements to maintain a reasonable temperature in the workplace.

Natural ventilation and temperature

48. The primary effective method of increasing natural ventilation remains the opening of external doors, vents and windows. Wherever it is practical, safe and secure to do so, and appropriate internal temperatures can be maintained in line with statutory obligations, this approach should be adopted. Keeping doors open (again, with appropriate regard to safety and security) may also help to reduce contact with door handles.
49. However, internal fire doors should never be held open (unless assessed and provided with appropriate hold open and self-closing mechanisms which respond to the actuation of the fire alarm system). The Fire Safety Risk Assessment should always be reviewed before any internal doors are held open.
50. As noted above, schools are also required to maintain internal temperatures and conditions in line with statutory obligations (see the School Premises (Scotland) Regulations 1967 and the Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992). It is recognised that in the autumn and winter, schools are therefore unlikely to be able to keep external doors and windows open as often, or for as long, as in warmer weather periods.

51. Scientific and public health advice is that measures to introduce fresh air can have a beneficial impact on virus suppression. Schools should therefore be supported to adopt strategies that help balance requirements for ventilation with internal temperatures and conditions. Expert advice identifies that using reasonable approaches which recognise the importance of user comfort may help overall behavioural adherence to guidance in relation to ventilation.
52. Potential approaches to increase natural ventilation, the suitability of which will depend on a range of local factors including weather conditions, may include:
- partially opening doors and windows to provide ventilation while reducing draughts
 - opening high level windows in preference to low level to reduce draughts
 - purging spaces by opening windows, vents and external doors (e.g. between classes, during break and lunch, when a room is unused, or at other suitable intervals if a space is occupied for long periods at a time)

Mechanical ventilation

53. Where it is not possible to keep doors and windows open while maintaining appropriate internal conditions in line with statutory obligations, and centralised or local mechanical ventilation is present, systems should wherever possible be adjusted to full fresh air. Air recirculation should be avoided or minimised. If this is not possible while maintaining appropriate internal conditions, systems should be operated to achieve statutory temperature and air change rate requirements as a minimum. Additional points to assist with the practical delivery of this approach include:
- Where ventilation units have filters present enhanced precautions should be taken when changing filters. Additional advice on filters can be located in the REHVA Covid guidance.
 - Ventilation systems should be checked or adjusted to ensure they do not automatically adjust ventilation levels due to differing occupancy levels.
 - Consider starting mechanical ventilation ahead of the school day and allow it to continue after classes have finished.

Fans

54. Fan heaters, fan assisted heating systems or air conditioning within a single space may assist in maintaining appropriate temperatures, provided there is an adequate supply of fresh air into the space. This approach should only be used where the balance of adequate ventilation and appropriate temperature cannot be achieved otherwise. Filter maintenance should also be carefully undertaken as noted above. Care should be taken to avoid unregulated use of ad hoc devices which may cause increased risk in terms of electrical load, inappropriate installation, cable trip hazard and potential fire or electrocution risk.

CO₂ monitors

55. As set out earlier in this guidance, local authorities should ensure that all schools and day care of children services have access to CO₂ monitoring, whether via mobile or fixed devices. This is to support the goal of all school and ELC buildings, including all learning, teaching and childcare spaces, being assessed for ventilation issues with a view to remedial action being taken where required. This assessment work should be completed by the start of the October break wherever

possible, subject to any issues regarding supply of CO₂ monitors. These assessments may be undertaken by the use of fixed or mobile CO₂ monitoring or by other appropriate means (e.g. computer modelling of the school estate), depending on the ventilation systems and other arrangements already in place in school and ELC buildings.

56. It is important that local authority advice is sought on the use of monitors to ensure their proper specification, installation, location, calibration and effective use. It should be noted that CO₂ monitors cannot monitor levels of virus, but by monitoring levels of CO₂, these can be used as a proxy measure.
57. CO₂ monitors detect the amount of CO₂ in a space, which will increase if adequate ventilation is not provided, thereby prompting user intervention such as opening a window or vent. Some schools will have these installed on premises already while others may, in consultation with relevant local authority teams, choose to use portable devices for periodic or ongoing monitoring. The most recent scientific advice and research is that an upper level of 1500 ppm should be used to identify and prioritise multi-occupancy, regularly-used areas for improvement.
58. This scientific advice and research also indicates that indoor spaces where there is likely to be an enhanced aerosol generation rate (e.g. loud singing/drama, indoor PE when permitted) should aim to ensure ventilation is sufficient to maintain CO₂ concentrations at lower levels (a figure of 800ppm is provided), and should also include additional mitigations such as face coverings for audiences and restricting the size of groups and duration of activities.
59. Local authorities should consider how to apply lessons learned from CO₂ monitoring across all parts of the learning estate. This could be achieved both between schools within a local authority and also by sharing data between local authorities.
60. Relevant local authority teams should provide clear advice on the appropriate use of CO₂ monitors, including procedures to be followed by staff in the event of inappropriate levels being indicated. These should be proportionate and reasonable, and help ensure both safety and continuity of education. They may include, for example, contact with relevant local authority teams to discuss approaches to improving ventilation in the event of concerns being identified.
61. School operators (e.g. local authorities, leisure trusts, third parties, etc.) should also be aware of [additional guidance in relation to ventilation of sports and leisure facilities](#) which may be applicable within school buildings e.g. community use of gyms, fitness rooms, sports halls etc.

Implementation

62. Local authorities and schools should, in consultation with staff and trade unions, ensure there are clear plans for effective implementation of local strategies. Key points to consider may include:
 - Clarity on responsibility for implementing approaches, with due regard for workload;
 - Provision of instruction or signage, etc. to support implementation (e.g. with clear instructions for window/door/vent opening and mechanical system operation);

- Pragmatic, proportionate procedures to be followed in the event of any concerns around ventilation or heating. Local authorities may wish to ensure that contact details are provided for relevant local authority teams or health and safety officers.

Sharing of good practice

63. Local authorities are committed to sharing good practice and expert advice across national networks, including the ADES Resources network and SHoPS. During the operational periods of the last school year, local authorities have been modelling and developing practical approaches to implementation of the strategies in this guidance in order to achieve the regulatory requirement of 2 air changes per hour in classrooms. Feedback in July 2021 has indicated that strategies are working well, helping to identify any poorly ventilated spaces, plan maintenance or upgrade works, and provide reassurance to building users and wider stakeholders. Operational feedback will continue to be sought to validate the guidance, approach and inform any necessary updates.
64. This section of the guidance will be kept under careful review and updated in light of emerging science and practice.

Physical distancing in primary schools

65. There is no requirement for physical distancing between children in primary schools. Distancing between adults not from the same household should be maintained and there should also be distancing between adults and children whenever possible. To ensure closer alignment with wider society and planned changes in ELC, this will be a requirement for “physical distancing of at least 1m”. However, as schools already have 2m physical distancing arrangements for adults that work well and do not limit capacity, it is expected these will be retained in practice.

Physical distancing between young people – secondary schools

66. Most secondary schools can only support a full time return to school for all pupils when there is no requirement for physical distancing between pupils throughout the school day.
67. School staff and other adults in the school should continue to apply physical distancing when with other adults and with pupils. As in primary schools, to ensure alignment with wider society, this will be a requirement for “physical distancing of at least 1m”. However, as schools already have 2m physical distancing arrangements for adults that work well and do not limit capacity, it is expected these will be retained in practice.
68. It is important to understand that this arrangement has been developed in the specific context of schools. There are sound reasons for approaches to physical distancing to vary in different contexts, including the drawing of judgements about cumulative risk across the whole of society and the features of distinct environments.
69. The Advisory Sub-group has however previously emphasised that, without distancing between pupils in secondary schools, the additional mitigations such as effective ventilation must be strictly adhered to. Secondary schools should also encourage physical distancing between

young people wherever practicable and emphasize the importance of complying with the most up to date guidance on physical distancing in general.

70. Distancing should be implemented in a proportionate way. Importantly, schools should ensure that the specific approaches adopted do not introduce capacity constraints and/or prevent full-time learning in school.

71. Mitigations that schools should consider include:

- Encourage young people to maintain distance where possible, particularly indoors – encouraging young people not to crowd together or touch their peers is recommended;
- Discourage social physical contact (hand to hand greeting/hugs);
- Use all the available space in classrooms, halls, libraries or social spaces to promote distancing where possible;
- Adjust class space if required, and where possible, to maintain spacing between desks or between individual young people;
- Seat young people side by side and facing forwards, rather than face to face;
- Avoid situations that require young people to sit or stand in direct physical contact with others;
- Where young people need to move about within the classroom to perform activities (for example to access a shared resource) this should be organised to minimise congregation around the point of access to the shared resource;
- Where staffing within the school allows it, consider altering class sizes and composition to intensify support for young people and create more space. For example, where there are 3 maths sets in a year group (one set with 30 pupils, another with 20 pupils and another with 10 pupils) class size and composition may be altered to improve the spread of pupils and create 3 sets of 20 pupils;
- Young people in the senior phase may require to spend time in college environments. They should ensure that they follow the COVID-19 guidance for universities, colleges and student accommodation providers on the appropriate approach to these specific circumstances while on campus. This has now been included in [updated guidance for colleges](#).

72. Secondary schools should consider which of these possible mitigations are achievable in their establishment and look to implement as many as is practicable.

73. In special schools and units, and where there are children with complex additional support needs, the need to maintain distancing needs to be carefully considered. The balance of the staffing complement, numbers of children and young people and their needs, and therefore the staffing and resources required (PPE, cleaning of equipment), should be considered/assessed throughout the school day and adjusted where appropriate/necessary. Further guidance on meeting the needs of children with additional support needs is provided within [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): supporting children and young people with complex additional support needs - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](#) and [continuity of learning guidance](#).

Groupings

74. Contact groups will no longer be required, in line with the changes to self-isolation policy set out above. Schools may therefore proceed to remove this mitigation at the earliest opportunity, and in any case within 4 weeks of the start of term.

75. Schools should, however, continue to avoid assemblies and other types of large group gatherings, in keeping with the retention of existing mitigations for up to 6 weeks. This precautionary approach reflects the unique environment in schools, which will still involve bringing together large numbers of unvaccinated children and young people on a non-discretionary basis (and which can therefore be differentiated from other situations in society in which large gatherings take place).
76. Where it is necessary to bring larger groups together, alternative mitigating actions should be put in place, such as meeting outside or limiting the time spent together. When undertaking fire test drills or procedures where the whole school is evacuated, schools and local authorities should prioritise fire safety, but may consider muster points and whether these need to be altered to ensure a greater degree of separation.
77. Children and young people can attend multiple education settings, either in other educational establishments or the wider community, with an appropriate risk assessment conducted. If sporadic or linked cases have occurred in one school, temporary suspension or reduction of attendance at other facilities should be part of this risk assessment, led by the local Health Protection Team.

Physical distancing and minimising contact for adults

78. Physical distancing between adults, and between adults and learners who are not from the same household, should be maintained. This will help mitigate risk, but it is acknowledged that this is not always possible, particularly when working with younger primary school children or children with additional support needs who may require personal or intimate care.
79. For the early stage (P1-P2), schools may consider making use of ELC models of managing children's interactions and other mitigations, where appropriate, particularly where adopting a play based approach. Detailed guidance on [reopening early learning and child care services](#) is available.
80. Other than where schools are using ELC models and guidance in the early stage (P1 -2), where adults cannot keep their distance and are interacting face-to-face with other adults and/or children and young people, face coverings (or, in certain specific circumstances, PPE - see section on PPE and other protective barrier measures, below) should be worn at all times. This applies to all staff including support staff and classroom assistants. Transparent face-coverings may be supplied by local authorities where appropriate and used where there is a risk of detriment to the child's health and wellbeing. See the section on face coverings for further information.
81. Risk assessments should pay particular attention to the position of support assistants or other staff who may have to work in close contact with multiple children and young people throughout the day. In line with the advice above, distancing should be maintained by support assistants, and if that is not possible, face coverings should be worn (including transparent ones where appropriate). As part of risk assessment the need for PPE should be considered and PPE used accordingly. Where resources permit, if mitigations such as these cannot reasonably be implemented, schools might wish to consider timetabling/organising classes to limit the number

of children and young people with whom a support assistant needs to come into close contact during the course of a day.

82. All staff can operate across different classes and year groups within a setting where this is necessary in order to facilitate the delivery of the school timetable. Where staff need to move between classes and year groups, they should try to keep at least 1m distancing from learners and other staff as well as wearing face coverings as appropriate.
83. With regard to movement of NCCT teachers between classes and across settings, this should be minimised wherever possible. Schools should be encouraged to follow SNCT and LNCT guidance on how flexibility of time over a 2 or 4 week period may help to reduce movement of staff across classes.
84. Appropriate arrangements and places should be available to enable all school and ELC staff to take their breaks safely. Schools should plan how shared staff spaces, including kitchens, are set up and used to help staff to distance from each other. The number of people in staff rooms at any one time should be limited to ensure at least 1m distancing can be maintained and face coverings should also be worn. This includes at kettle stations and other gathering points.
85. Any facilities management work carried out within the school setting should adhere to the principles of physical distancing and be subject to risk assessment to put in place mitigating actions. Procedures should be put in place for deliveries to minimise person-to-person contact.

School visitors (including supply staff)

86. Updated guidance is available on this issue in the “Changes to Previous Guidance” section.

Drop off and pick up

87. The arrangements for parents/carers to drop off and collect children and young people require careful consideration, to ensure that large gatherings of people can be avoided and physical distancing between adults and children of different groupings is maintained. Schools should consult parents/carers on their plans and ensure that any arrangements put in place are communicated clearly to parents/carers.
88. Parents should not enter school buildings unless required, in line with the updated guidance on school visitors (see “Changes to Previous Guidance”). Some approaches that local authorities and schools should consider include the following:
 - staggered drop off/pick up times or locations, so that not all children and young people arrive onsite at one time as long as this does not reduce the overall amount of learning time in school for children and young people;
 - if the school has additional access points, consideration may be given to whether it would be beneficial to open these to reduce congestion;
 - consideration may be given to where children and young people go as they arrive at the facility. This could include heading straight to their group’s designated learning space/classroom, which could be indoors or outdoors;

- if parents/carers are dropping off children, they should be discouraged from gathering outside the school and should maintain distancing as far as practicable, when dropping off their children. Appropriate markings may be introduced at the school gates;
- if parents/carers are dropping off children, they should wear face coverings;
- for those arriving by car, parents/carers may be encouraged to park further away from the school and then walk with their children to avoid congestion, or alternatively use active travel routes where feasible. Car-sharing with children and young people of other households should be discouraged – see [advice on car-sharing](#);
- where learning spaces can be accessed directly from outside, this may be encouraged to decrease interactions between individuals in circulation spaces; and
- particular consideration should be given to the arrangements for parents/carers of children and young people with additional support needs or disabilities, who may normally drop their children off within the school building, and those who arrive at school using school transport, including taxis.

Break times and lunch times

89. Break times will continue to require careful consideration. Schools may wish to consider staggered break and lunch times, etc (although these will not be suitable for all schools, and staggering break and lunch times to an extent that they could reduce the overall amount of time children and young people can spend learning in school should be avoided). Localised solutions should be agreed and, as far as possible, children, young people and parents/carers should be involved in these discussions.
90. If children and young people go offsite for lunch, they should follow the rules in place for wider society, for example wearing a face covering when entering a shop. Risk assessments should consider procedures for when children and young people leave and return to school premises, including hand hygiene. Schools may wish to contact local shops in advance to alert them to plans.

PPE

91. For the majority of staff in schools, PPE is not required or necessary. Where it is required or necessary, the following arrangements will apply.
92. Where the use of PPE is being considered within an education and childcare setting the specific conditions of each individual setting must be taken into consideration and comply with all applicable legislation, including the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974, Personal Protective Equipment Regulations 1992 and the Management of Health and Safety Regulations 1999 which outlines the process of, and legal requirements for, risk assessment.
93. Schools and local authorities already have set risk assessment processes for the use of PPE. Following any risk assessment (individual or organisational), where the need for PPE has been identified using the [HSE Personal Protective Equipment \(PPE\) at Work](#) guide, appropriate PPE should be readily available and provided and staff should be trained on its use. The use of PPE by staff within schools, for example support staff, support assistants, staff with vulnerabilities, should be based on a clear assessment of risk and need for an individual child or young person, such as personal care, where staff come into contact with blood and body fluids or lift children

and young people. Where the use of PPE is risk assessed as being required, staff should be trained in how to put on and take off PPE (as required by Health and Safety Regulations) and suitable waste facilities provided.

94. Risk assessments should already exist for children and young people with more complex needs, including those with emotional and behavioural needs. These risk assessments should be updated as a matter of priority in light of changes to provision such as environment and staffing. Risk assessments must be mindful of the additional distress children and young people may be experiencing due to measures introduced such as the use of face coverings or PPE, and the need for continued protection of staff. If for any reason, risk assessments are not in place, then they must be undertaken swiftly in accordance with this guidance and local risk assessment guidance. If there are any issues relating to risk assessment or staff wish to raise concerns they should in the first instance do so with their line manager in line with local procedures. Where concerns remain they can also contact their trade union representative and/or local HR or Health and Safety team. Employers should recognise those concerns and give them due consideration. If that does not resolve the concerns they can be raised directly with the HSE.
95. Local infection control procedures that outline safety and protocols should also be stringently followed and adequate training provided. This includes procedures for putting on and taking off PPE, the disposal of soiled items; laundering of any clothes including uniform and staff clothing, towels or linen; and cleaning equipment for children and young people, such as hoists and wheelchairs.
96. Specific guidance has been developed and published for first responders ([COVID-19: guidance for first responders](#)) who, as part of their normal roles, provide immediate assistance requiring close contact until further medical assistance arrives. This guidance sets out clearly what a first responder is required to do if they come into close contact with someone as part of their first responder duties. It covers the use of PPE and CPR.
97. The types of PPE required in specific circumstances are set out below:
 - **Routine activities:** No PPE is required when undertaking routine educational activities in classroom or school settings.
 - **Suspected COVID-19:** A fluid-resistant surgical mask should be worn by staff if they are looking after a child or young person who has become unwell with symptoms of COVID-19 and 2m distancing cannot be maintained while doing so.
 - If the child or young person who has become unwell with symptoms of COVID-19 needs direct personal care, gloves, aprons and a fluid-resistant surgical mask should be worn by staff.
 - Eye protection should also be worn if a risk assessment determines that there is a risk of splashing to the eyes such as from coughing, spitting, or vomiting.
 - Gloves and aprons should be used when cleaning the areas where a person suspected of having COVID-19 has been.
 - **Intimate care:** Gloves and aprons should continue to be used when providing intimate care to a child or young person. This can include personal, hands-on care such as washing, toileting, or first aid and certain clinical procedures such as assisted feeding.

- Fluid-resistant surgical masks should be used. Eye protection should also be worn if a risk assessment determines that there is a risk of splashing to the eyes such as from coughing, spitting, or vomiting.
- Gloves and aprons should be used when cleaning equipment or surfaces that might be contaminated with body fluids such as saliva or respiratory secretions.
- **Aerosol Generating Procedure (AGP):** There are a small number of medical procedures which increase the risk of transmission through aerosols (tiny droplets) being transferred from the patient to the care giver. These are known as aerosol generating procedures (AGPs). Within education settings, these are only undertaken for a very small number of children with complex medical needs, such as those receiving tracheostomy care.
- Staff performing AGPs in these settings should follow Scotland's National Prevention and Infection Control Manual (NSS and HPS) with personal protective equipment (PPE) guidance on aerosol generating procedures, and wear the correct PPE, which is:
 - a FFP2/3 respirator
 - gloves
 - a long-sleeved fluid repellent gown
 - eye protection
- Children and young people should be taken from the classroom or shared area for any AGP to be carried out in a designated room with the doors closed and any windows open. If this is not possible, for example in children and young people who require sporadic care, such as urgent tracheostomy tube suction, individual risk assessments should be carried out. In all instances, efforts should be made to:
 - ensure that only staff who are needed to undertake the procedure are present and that no other children or young people are in the room
 - minimise clutter to make the process of cleaning the room as straightforward as possible
 - clean all surfaces and ventilate the room following a procedure and before anyone not wearing appropriate PPE enters. Clearance of infectious particles after an AGP is dependent on the ventilation and air change within the room. For a room without ventilation, this may take an hour

Face coverings

98. The Scottish Government regularly reviews the policy position on face coverings in light of emerging scientific evidence and advice. It remains our judgement that face coverings provide adequate protection for use in the community and in most workplaces because they are worn in addition to taking other measures, such as physical distancing, hand and respiratory hygiene, cleaning surfaces, ventilation and symptom vigilance. The current face covering guidance on the [Scottish Government website](#) recommends:

- that face coverings are made of cloth or other textiles and should be two, and preferably three, layers thick and fit snugly around the mouth, nose and chin while allowing you to breathe easily;
- that schools follow and endorse best practice on how to wash, store, wear and dispose of face coverings; and
- workplaces endorse and support staff to follow the best practice in the use of face coverings.

99. For the majority of staff in schools, medical grade masks or PPE are not required. Any decision to use medical grade masks or PPE in schools (or any specific workplace settings) would need to be informed by an organisational risk assessment, undertaken with health and safety experts and public health advisers.
100. Unless otherwise stated, the approach to face coverings below should be applied across all primary and secondary school settings. However, as noted earlier in this guidance, schools may opt to apply ELC models in the early stages of primary school (P1-2), in which case the relevant guidance should be followed.
101. Anyone (whether child, young person or adult) wishing to wear a face covering in any part of the school should be permitted to do so.
102. Some individuals are exempt from wearing face coverings. Further information on exemptions can be found in wider [Scottish Government guidance](#).
103. Face coverings should be worn by adults wherever they cannot keep physical distance with other adults and/or children and young people.
104. Face coverings should also be worn in the following circumstances (except where an adult or child/young person is exempt from wearing a covering):
- at all times when adults in primary schools are moving around the school in corridors, office and admin areas, canteens (except when dining) and other indoor communal areas, (including staff rooms and toilets);
 - at all times for all staff and learners in secondary schools (including special schools and independent and grant aided schools); and
 - in line with the updated arrangements for public transport, where adults and children and young people aged 12 and over are travelling on dedicated school transport.
105. Face coverings should be worn by parents and other visitors to all school sites (whether entering the building or otherwise), including parents at drop-off and pick-up.
106. Classroom assistants and those supporting children with Additional Support Needs, who may routinely have to work closely with primary, secondary or special school pupils, should wear face coverings as a general rule (see earlier section on physical distancing). However, the use of opaque face coverings should be balanced with the wellbeing and needs of the child, recognising that face coverings may limit communication and could cause distress to some children – appropriate use of transparent face coverings may help in these circumstances. It is advised that these adults should be very alert to symptoms and follow closely the guidance on responding to COVID-19 symptoms.
107. Local Incident Management Teams, led by Health Protection Teams, may recommend a further strengthening of the use of face coverings in all classrooms (particularly in secondary schools) when dealing with local outbreaks.

108. Where local decisions on the strengthened use of face coverings are made, it will remain vitally important to consider the potential impact on children and young people, including via the appropriate use of Equality Impact Assessments.

109. The impact of wearing a face covering for very young learners and/or learners with additional support needs, including any level of hearing loss, should be carefully considered. Communication for many of these learners (including hearing impaired young people) relies in part on being able to see someone's face clearly. This is also important for children and young people who are acquiring English and who rely on visual cues to enable them to be included in learning. Individuals who may not be able to handle and wear face coverings as directed (e.g. young learners, or those with additional support needs or disabilities) should not wear them as it may inadvertently increase the risk of transmission. Scottish Government [guidance on "Helping Others"](#) sets out supportive approaches when interacting with hearing impaired people. The National Deaf Children's Society has also [suggested some ways in which communication with hearing impaired learners can be supported](#), in circumstances where face coverings are a barrier to communication.

110. In classes where any such impacts are anticipated and no alternative mitigations are reasonable, schools should consider the use of transparent/see-through face coverings. Some children and young people may need additional support/reassurance about the reasons for adults wearing face coverings. However, as face coverings have become prevalent in wider society, this is likely to be less of a concern.

111. It is vital that clear instructions are provided to staff and children and young people on how to put on, remove, store and dispose of face coverings in all of the circumstances above, to avoid inadvertently increasing the risks of transmission. The key points are as follows:

- Face coverings should not be shared with others.
- Before putting on or removing the face covering, hands should be cleaned by washing with soap and water or hand sanitiser.
- Make sure the face covering is the right size to cover the nose, mouth and chin. Children should be taught how to wear the face covering properly, including not touching the front and not pulling it under the chin or into their mouth.
- When temporarily storing a face covering (e.g. during classes), it should be placed in a washable, sealed bag or container. Avoid placing it on surfaces, due to the possibility of contamination.
- Re-usable face coverings should be washed after each day of use in school at 60 degrees centigrade or in boiling water.

112. Disposable face coverings must be disposed of safely and hygienically. Children and young people should be encouraged not to litter and to place their face coverings in the general waste bin. They are not considered to be clinical waste in the same way that used PPE may be.

113. Further general advice on face coverings is available in the [Scottish Government's COVID-19: face coverings guidance](#).

114. There should be regular messaging from schools children, young people and staff about these instructions, with a clear expectation that face coverings are worn in the relevant areas except for those who are exempt.
115. Local authorities and schools should consider carefully how to address any equity concerns arising from the use of face coverings, including in respect of the impacts on certain groups of pupils and the costs of providing face coverings for staff and children and young people. It is reasonable to assume that most staff and young people will now have access to re-usable face coverings due to their increasing use in wider society, and the Scottish Government has made available a [video](#) 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/unsafe, schools should take steps to have a contingency supply available to meet such needs on a stigma-free basis.
116. As is usual, if there are any concerns about a child or young person behaving or acting in a way which doesn't align with school policy or procedure, their behaviour or actions should be discussed with them to resolve those concerns as quickly as possible, with any further action taken in line with usual school policy or procedure. If all approaches to resolve the concern with a child or young person in relation to health and safety measures have been exhausted then exclusion could be considered as an appropriate measure, but only as a last resort. "[Included, engaged and involved part 2: preventing and managing school exclusions](#)", provides national policy guidance on the use of early intervention and prevention to promote positive relationships and behaviour.
117. It is not recommended that face coverings are used in secure schools.

Testing (asymptomatic, symptomatic and close contact testing)

118. Please see the first section of this guidance for further information about new measures to support uptake and recording of the asymptomatic testing offer for staff and secondary pupils.
119. The asymptomatic testing offer is for all school staff and secondary pupils. It is delivered in partnership by the Scottish Government and the UK Department for Health and Social Care. Local authorities and schools should take all appropriate measures to promote awareness and uptake of this offer.
120. Detailed, step-by-step guidance about the asymptomatic testing programme has been shared with schools and ELC providers via Objective Connect, a document sharing platform. This guidance was developed in collaboration with NHS Test and Protect and the UK Department for Health and Social Care to support school and ELC providers in the delivery of the Schools/ELC Asymptomatic Testing Programme. Schools should provide staff and secondary pupils with Lateral Flow Devices (LFDs) for twice-weekly, at-home rapid testing. Participants should then record all results (positive, negative or void) via the online digital reporting portal, which can be found at www.nhsinform.scot/campaigns/coronavirus-covid-19-report-your-test-result.
121. In the event of supply or delivery issues affecting the availability of LFD test kits in schools, staff and pupils can access regular asymptomatic LFD testing through the Universally

Accessible Testing programme, which is available to everyone in Scotland. LFD test kits are available for collection from COVID test centres or pharmacies, or delivery by ordering online.

122. Confirmatory PCR tests will continue to be made available for all those who test positive using LFDs. It is very important that schools encourage all those participating to undertake these PCR follow-up tests, to mitigate against any risk of false positives and unnecessary self-isolation.
123. Asymptomatic testing is an additional measure and should not replace other mitigations. School staff and secondary pupils who opt to undertake asymptomatic testing do not need to self-isolate while awaiting results, as long as no symptoms develop. Additionally, asymptomatic staff, student teachers and learners who receive negative LFD test results must not regard themselves or behave as if they are free from infection.
124. Symptomatic staff, student teachers and learners should not use LFDs and must not attend work or school. They must access a PCR test as per their usual symptomatic testing channel. If a symptomatic staff member, student teacher or learner has used an LFD and has returned a negative result, they must still self-isolate and arrange a PCR test.
125. Close contacts of any confirmed COVID case are identified through Test and Protect, who will provide appropriate advice on testing in those circumstances, in line with updated policies.
126. Anyone receiving a positive PCR test for COVID will not be able to participate in weekly LFD testing for 90 days.

Staying vigilant and responding to COVID-19 symptoms

127. The whole school community should be vigilant for the symptoms of COVID-19, and to understand what actions they should take if someone develops them, either onsite or offsite. The most common symptoms are:
 - new continuous cough
 - fever/high temperature
 - loss of, or change in, sense of smell or taste (anosmia).
128. All staff working in and with schools, along with the children and young people in their care, should be supported to follow up to date health protection advice on household or self - isolation and [Test and Protect procedures](#) if they or someone in their household exhibits COVID-19 symptoms, or if they have been identified by NHS contact tracers as a close contact of someone with the virus. Guidance on this is available from [NHS Inform](#), [Parent Club](#) and [gov.scot](#).
129. Schools and local authorities should ensure that children, young people and staff are aware that it is essential they do not attend school if symptomatic. Everyone who develops symptoms of COVID-19 – a new, continuous cough; fever or loss of, or change in, sense of smell or taste - should self- isolate straight away, stay at home and arrange a test via the appropriate method (see below).
130. All children, young people and staff must know that they must inform a member of staff or responsible person if they feel unwell with symptoms of COVID-19. Schools may need to ensure

a responsible adult is there to support an affected individual where required. If the affected person has mild symptoms, and is over the age of 16 and is able to do so, they should go home as soon as they notice symptoms and follow the guidance for households with possible coronavirus infection including testing and self-isolation. If the individual affected is a child or young person below the age of 16 (or otherwise unable to travel by themselves), parents/carers should be contacted and asked to make arrangements to pick up the child or young person from school (preferably this should be another adult member of their household and not a grandparent) and follow the national guidance for households with possible COVID-19 infection including testing and self-isolation.

131. If a child or young person is awaiting collection try to find somewhere safe for them to sit which is at least 2 metres away from other people. If possible, and it is safe to do so, find a room or area where they can be isolated behind a closed door with appropriate adult supervision if required, depending on the age and needs of the child or young person. If it is possible to open a window, do so for ventilation. Ensure that guidance on the use of PPE is followed. The individual should avoid touching people, surfaces and objects and be advised to cover their mouth and nose with a disposable tissue when they cough or sneeze, and then put the tissue in the bin. The symptomatic individual should also be asked to wear a face mask or face covering to reduce environmental contamination where this can be tolerated. If no bin is available, put the tissue in a bag or pocket for disposing in a bin later. If there are no tissues available, they should cough and sneeze into the crook of their elbow. Where possible, a separate bathroom should be designated for the individual to use.
132. Those with minor symptoms (staff and young people over the age of 16 and children under the age of 16 accompanied by a parent/carer), should, after leaving the school, minimise contact with others where possible, e.g. use a private vehicle to go home. If it is not possible to use private transport, then they should be advised to return home quickly and directly, and wear a face covering in line with Scottish Government guidance. If using public transport, they should try to keep away from other people and catch coughs and sneezes in a tissue. If they don't have any tissues available, they should cough and sneeze into the crook of the elbow. See the [Health Protection Scotland Guidance for Non-Healthcare Settings](#) for further advice on travel.
133. If an individual is so unwell that they require an ambulance, phone 999 and let the call handler know you are concerned about COVID-19. If it is safe and appropriate to do so, whilst you wait for advice or an ambulance to arrive, try to find somewhere safe for the unwell person to sit which is at least 2 metres away from other people. Ensure that guidance on the use of PPE is followed.
134. Advice on cleaning of premises after a person who potentially has COVID-19 has left the school premises can be found in the [Health Protection Scotland Guidance for Non-Healthcare Settings](#). Assist FM have also produced [complementary guidance](#) on cleaning in schools.
135. Individuals should wash their hands thoroughly for at least 20 seconds after any contact with someone who is unwell (see personal hygiene section).
136. Schools should manage single cases, clusters and outbreaks (i.e if schools have two or more confirmed linked cases of COVID-19 within 14 days) in line with the guidance on outbreak management (below).

137. Schools should also maintain an accurate register of absences of children, young people and staff and whether these are due to possible or confirmed COVID-19. Codes for this have been developed in SEEMiS.
138. Schools and local authorities should also ensure that children, young people and staff are aware of updated guidance on self-isolation of close contacts from 9th August (as summarised in the “Changes to Previous Guidance” section of this guidance). Further guidance on this will be made available via NHS Inform when policy changes take effect from 9th August.
139. The Protect Scotland app from NHS Scotland’s Test and Protect is designed to help people and reduce the spread of coronavirus. The app will alert an individual if they have been in close contact with another app user who has tested positive for coronavirus and can help in determining contacts that may have otherwise been missed while keeping people’s information private and anonymous. Advice from Health Protection Teams may override advice from the app to self-isolate.

Accessing testing

140. Guidance on booking testing through the UK Government test sites can be found on NHS inform and the Scottish Government website. Anyone unable to access these websites can call NHS24 free on 0800 028 2816 or NHS 111. Guidance on testing in health and care settings can be found at: [COVID-19 - guidance for Health Protection Teams \(HPTs\) - version 10.0 - COVID-19 - guidance for Health Protection Teams \(HPTs\) - Publications - Public Health Scotland](#).
141. Symptomatic children, young people and staff can book a test through www.nhsinform.scot, the employer referral portal (for staff only – see below) or, if they cannot get online, by calling 0800 028 2816.
142. Schools, other than in those authorities detailed in the following paragraph, will also be able to register their symptomatic staff as category 3 key workers under the employer referral portal, to ensure priority access to testing. The nature of this portal is to prioritise tests and appointments over the general public. This route directs individuals through to a Regional Test Centre or Mobile Testing Unit (whichever is nearer). For those who cannot access an RTC/MTU (if they do not have access to a car or live too far away), they can order a home test kit.
143. For schools in Orkney, Shetland and Comhairle nan Eilean Siar, there are different routes to accessing a test in these local areas. Education departments in these areas should liaise with their local Health Boards to ensure priority access to symptomatic testing for school staff.

Enhanced surveillance and outbreak management

144. The public health measures set out above will go a long way to ensuring that schools are a safer environment for everyone. There will also be, in parallel, a number of measures designed to monitor developments and allow for rapid response to any cases of COVID-19.

Enhanced surveillance programme

145. Scotland's community surveillance programme allows us to monitor actively trends in the pandemic, both nationally and more locally.
146. There is also specific surveillance in respect of schools and children/young people. This draws on COVID-19 related information from a range of sources and covers all school ages and the ELC phase.
147. Weekly surveillance information is published on the PHS education surveillance dashboards (https://scotland.shinyapps.io/phs-covid19-education/_w_852fb58e/) on PCR testing, positive cases, test positivity and hospital admissions among children, the number and proportion of all cases that are among those who work in education settings; and the uptake and results of LFD testing for these settings. Information is also collated on antibody testing, vaccination, and incidents in education settings.
148. These data will inform decision-makers at different levels as they consider any adjustments to make to arrangements – including this guidance – or any investigations to be conducted at certain localities to explore what local responses are required.

Outbreak management

149. Outbreak management in all settings is led by NHS Health Board health protection teams (HPTs).
150. The procedures for incident management are well established ([Managing Public Health Incidents](#)) and are undertaken in partnership with schools, local authorities and Public Health Scotland (as required).
151. Schools should ensure that they know how to contact their local HPT and their designated person for doing so is often the Head Teacher.
152. Schools should ensure they are aware of the following definitions:

Cluster definition

Two or more unlinked (or link unknown yet) test-confirmed cases of COVID-19 among individuals associated with a specific setting with illness onset dates within 14 days.

Outbreak definition

Two or more linked test-confirmed cases of COVID-19 among individuals, associated with a specific setting within 14 days.

153. Single cases will be identified by Test and Protect and close contacts will be identified through them too – people do not have to do anything unless contacted by Test and Protect or if they become symptomatic. Schools are no longer to contact HPTs to notify of every single confirmed case in a school setting.

154. Schools should contact their local HPT if a cluster is identified. The HPT can provide advice to assess any links between cases, undertake risk assessment and discuss further action. Following this an outbreak may be declared, usually through an IMT.
155. Where necessary an IMT will be established to manage the outbreak. An IMT is a multi-disciplinary, multi-agency group with responsibility for investigating and managing the outbreak. The HPT will chair the IMT and representatives from the school and council will be invited to join.
156. Schools may be asked to support an outbreak investigation by:
- attending an Incident Management Team (IMT) meeting;
 - communicating with children, parents/carers, staff and the media;
 - implementing appropriate enhanced infection, prevention and control measures and support for contact tracing as recommended by the HPT or IMT.
157. Usually schools continue to operate during outbreaks. On occasion it may be necessary to move to remote learning approaches or to temporarily close a school or part of a school in order to implement control measures or for operational reasons. Any decision on this should be determined through the IMT.
158. Schools should maintain records to support outbreak identification and investigation, including attendance records and reasons for absence. When information sharing is needed during management of an incident there is a duty to both protect and share personal information between those participating in the IMT such as test results and contact details. These requirements are set out in Annex E of [Management of Public Health Incidents](#). The sharing of information must be facilitated respecting the principles of confidentiality and relevant legislation. To support this, Data Protection Impact Assessments should be in place for all partner organisations.
159. It is for local Health Protection Teams to consider individual risks for any staff or pupils.
160. There may also be circumstances in which, based on clear evidence and public health considerations, or other relevant factors (e.g. minimum staffing requirements) specific schools require either to close, or to implement remote learning for some children and young people, for a defined period of time. This will closely involve local authorities and local Public Health Teams. All such decisions will continue to be made by local incident management teams working in partnership, and on the independent advice of local Directors of Public Health, who will take full account of school safety and wider public health considerations in line with their statutory duties. Similar decisions may require to be taken by local authorities in conjunction with schools where staffing constraints (e.g. due to self-isolation or shielding) or other matters make such a move unavoidable.

Special considerations for certain groups

People in the highest risk group (previously those on the shielding list)

161. Updated guidance for these individuals is included in the “Changes to Previous Guidance” section of this guidance.

Children and young people with Additional Support Needs

162. Every child and young person will have different levels of required support. It will be important as part of the risk assessments carried out to consider the individual needs of a child or young person. Where there is a need to work in close proximity with adults and children and young people the safety measures to protect adults and children and young people alike should be followed. Staff should wear a face covering or PPE (where appropriate eg when carrying out Aerosol Generating Procedures), and regularly wash their hands before and after contact. Guidance on [supporting children and young people with additional support needs](#) is published by the Scottish Government.

Pregnancy

163. Updated guidance on pregnant women is included in the “Changes to Previous Guidance” section of this guidance.

Support for minority ethnic staff

164. The Scottish Government continues to work with experts from a range of fields, including our Ethnicity Expert Reference Group, to develop actions to help mitigate any disproportionate effects and implications experienced by minority ethnic groups and communities. There is cross organisational work being taken forward to fulfil the recommendations made by the Covid Ethnicity Expert Reference Group.

165. On 27 July 2020 we published COVID-19 Occupational Risk Assessment Guidance. <https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-on-individual-risk-assessment-for-the-workplace/>.

166. This guidance includes an easy to use, individual risk assessment tool that takes into account ethnicity, age, gender, BMI and health conditions to give an overall COVID-19 risk age.

167. Staff and employers in all sectors now use this guidance to determine whether or not, the workplace is safe and it is safe for the individual to be at work. The guidance is based on the latest clinical and scientific advice on COVID-19 and is updated on a regular basis.

168. The clarity this tool brings has been widely welcomed, as we now know that certain minority ethnic groups are more vulnerable to COVID-19 and that simply viewing medical conditions in isolation, does not accurately predict an individual’s vulnerability.

169. The most important part of the process is the conversation that takes places between a manager and a member of staff. It is essential that the outcome from these conversations is agreed by both parties. The conversation should take into consideration, workplace risks, and the control measures that can be put into place, to agree a course of action regarding work duties. The guidance also signposts to further medical advice and support for those with complex vulnerabilities.

Wellbeing of children and young people

170. Local authorities have continued to support vulnerable children and young throughout the period of children and young people whilst learning at home. Given the wider impact of the pandemic, the wellbeing of all children, young people and staff will continue to be the central focus for schools. The Getting it right for every child (GIRFEC) approach is key to that, ensuring that local services are co-ordinated, joined up and multi-disciplinary in order to respond to children and young people who require support, and everyone who works in those services has a role to play.
171. [Guidance on support for continuity of learning](#) and [Curriculum for Excellence in the Recovery Phase](#) both reinforce the importance of wellbeing as a critical focus in recovery. Balancing progress in learning with children and young people's social and emotional needs should be a priority. The guidance on support for continuity in learning also highlights the expected impacts on children and young people who have experienced domestic abuse, and those who are in need of care and protection as a result of lockdown, and an increased need for support for mental health and wellbeing. Children and young people may not immediately disclose these concerns, and therefore there is a need for a sustained approach.
172. Local authority and health board partners must be engaged in local planning to ensure that the health and wellbeing needs of children and young people in school can be met. This will be particularly important in GIRFEC planning, prevention activity including surveillance (vision screening) and immunisations, and health developmental interventions.
173. The psychological impact of the outbreak and the necessary public health control measures are likely to have had significant social, emotional and developmental effects on many children and young people and, consequently, achievement. Many children and young people may experience anxiety about returning to school, many of them will also have enjoyed the experience of spending more time at home. Children and young people may need additional time and support as they return again to the school environment. For some children and young people who were unable to access therapeutic support, the return to that support will have been welcome, but the changes within school environments, and routines, may continue to impact on their wellbeing.
174. It will be important for schools to be able to recognise that children, young people and staff may be affected by trauma and adversity, and to be capable of responding in ways that prevent further harm and which support recovery. The [National Trauma Training framework and plan](#) are designed to support the development of a trauma-informed workforce and may have relevance to school plans. Schools should ensure that all staff, including catering and cleaning staff, are aware of safeguarding procedures.
175. As would be usual, if there are any concerns about a child or young person behaving or acting in a way which doesn't align with school policy or procedure, their behaviour or actions should be discussed with them to resolve those concerns as quickly as possible. If that does not resolve the concerns, then the usual school and authority policy and procedures for dealing with concerns should be implemented, within the context of positive relationships and behavioural approaches, including discussing the matter with the child or young person, parents and carers as appropriate.

Vulnerable children and young people – definition

176. The definition in place since the start of January 2021 continues to apply. Children and young people may be vulnerable because of factors related to their personal development, features of their family life, or because of wider influences that impact on them within their community.
177. Those children and young people who were considered to be vulnerable prior to the pandemic should have been known to services, and are likely to have had a child's plan. The pandemic has brought others into this category, for example through loss of family income.
178. Where a child or young person requires co-ordinated support from more than one agency, this is likely to suggest greater vulnerability, and the plan would be co-ordinated by a lead professional. This would include a range of children and young people, such as those:
- at risk of significant harm, with a child protection plan;
 - looked after at home, or away from home;
 - 'on the edge of care', where families would benefit from additional support;
 - with additional support needs, where there are one or more factors which require significant or co-ordinated support;
 - affected by disability;
 - where they and/or their parents are experiencing poor physical or mental health;
 - experiencing adversities including domestic abuse and bereavement; and those
 - requiring support when they are involved in making transitions at critical stages in their lives.
179. Children, young people and families may also experience adversity because of the impact of poverty and disadvantage (including entitlement to free school meals), and many will be facing this because of the necessary measures to respond to the pandemic. This will include families with loss of income, experiencing social isolation, or otherwise struggling because of the lockdown.

Young people in the senior phase who attend colleges

180. Young people in the senior phase may require to spend time in college environments. They should ensure that they follow the [guidance on the appropriate approach to these specific circumstances while on campus](#). This has now been included in updated guidance for colleges.
181. Colleges are now able to facilitate the return of senior phase school pupils studying at college who require in-person provision for the 2021/22 academic year. All reasonable steps should be taken to ensure the safety and wellbeing students and staff, taking into account local circumstances. It may be helpful for pupils to continue their learning remotely for those course elements where this is possible.
182. Evidence to date suggests there has not been significant transmission in the educational aspects of HE / FE settings, while it is clear that there would be significant disadvantage to young people in these circumstances were they not to be able to attend HE / FE for their courses. On this basis, the COVID-19 Advisory Sub-Group have noted the need for compliance with protective measures to be strongly reinforced.

183. Most Colleges will restart in August. As such, many students under 18 will be entering campus unvaccinated. Institutions should consider other ways of offering protection and adopt additional precautions, where that is possible. For example, postponing the start of in-person learning and maintaining online learning in the first few weeks of term would be one way of achieving this. All public health measures that apply in colleges should be strictly observed, including in circumstances where school students are being taught separately from the wider college population.

184. Schools and local authorities should, in partnership with FE/HE institutions and local public health teams, pay very close attention to any evidence suggesting the potential for emerging bridges of transmission between school and FE/HE settings. In the event that any such evidence is identified, they should consult immediately with local public health teams on any requirement to pause in-person attendance at FE/HE institutions by senior phase students. They should ensure that appropriate contingency measures for remote learning are in place for any required period of time.

Individual risk assessments

185. Local authorities will already have individual risk assessment processes in place to support individuals in the groups above. However, staff in all sectors can still use the [Scottish Government individual risk assessment guidance](#) if they remain concerned about their health condition, or are anxious about returning to work.

SCHOOL OPERATIONS

Promoting attendance and reducing absence

186. It is recognised that some parents and carers may be concerned about their child being in school, and consider withholding their child until reassurance is provided. In these circumstances, schools and local authorities should engage with those parents and carers to provide reassurance on any concerns, overcome any barriers to learning, and support attendance. [National guidance on promoting attendance and managing absence](#) makes clear the importance of relationships with families in promoting good attendance.
187. Parents are required under the [Education \(Scotland\) Act 1980](#) to provide education for their child. It is important that children and young people are able to benefit from their right to education; are able to see their friends and have social contact and benefit from the learning, care and support that schools provide. The ongoing need to reconnect to normal patterns and routines in children's lives will be important and reassuring to them.
188. National guidance is clear that measures of compulsion for attendance should only be used as a last resort once all other approaches to support attendance have been undertaken. Additional codes have been developed within SEEMiS to support the recording and monitoring of attendance and absence, including specific codes relating to COVID-19.

One way systems

189. To support physical distancing requirements, risk assessments should consider the ways in which busy corridors, entrances and exits could be avoided, and could include one way and/or external circulation routes.

Staggered break and lunch times

190. Schools may wish to consider staggered break and lunch times, etc (although these will not be suitable for all schools, and staggering break and lunch times to an extent that they could reduce the overall amount of time children and young people can spend learning in school should be avoided). Localised solutions should be agreed and, as far as possible, children, young people and parents/carers should be involved in these discussions.
191. If children and young people go offsite for lunch, they should follow the rules in place for wider society, for example wearing a face covering when entering a shop. Risk assessments should consider procedures for when children and young people leave and return to school premises, including hand hygiene. Schools may wish to contact local shops in advance to alert them to plans.

Catering

192. [Guidance from Food Standards Scotland \(FSS\), which includes a risk assessment tool and checklist](#) should be followed. Any school or local authority wishing to provide a breakfast service should follow this risk assessment tool and checklist. Further advice around mitigating any

issues identified by the risk assessment can be requested from the local environmental health team. Additionally, this [Q&A from FSS](#) may be useful.

193. In the circumstances where a school has a breakfast club which is organised by the third sector, parents and carers or volunteers, rather than by the school itself, the [guidance on unregulated children's services](#) will apply. That guidance does not apply to breakfast clubs which are provided by a school or authority themselves (these are considered regulated services), and the arrangements set out in this guidance will apply.

Outdoor learning

194. Schools should consider the increased use of outdoor spaces. The Covid-19 Advisory Sub-Group on Education and Children's Issues has commented that there "is consistent evidence that the risk of transmission outdoors is low, and the benefits of outdoor activity are well recognised". The outdoors can provide extra space for distancing between consistent groups of learners, help to decrease the risk of transmission and improve the physical and mental health and wellbeing of young people.

195. Suitable facilities may include school playgrounds, local greenspaces and/or community areas. When enhancing existing outdoor space within their own grounds, schools may find it necessary to consider temporary shelters or the periodic use of established buildings for activities such as handwashing, regrouping or the relaying of instructions. An appropriate cleaning regime should be introduced along with appropriate bins for disposal of any rubbish and hand washing stations/sanitiser to ensure hygiene.

196. Schools should ensure that children and young people with additional support needs are not disadvantaged. In addition, if outdoor equipment is being used, schools should ensure that multiple groups do not use it simultaneously, as well as considering appropriate cleaning between groups of children using it. Appropriate clothing should be worn for the particular outdoor activity.

197. Education Scotland provides a summary of outdoor learning [resources](#) which can support schools and practitioners in taking more learning out of the classroom. The [Outdoor Learning Directory](#) provides links to a variety of resources that can be filtered by subject area and curriculum level and the [Teaching Learning Outdoors](#) and [Supporting Learning Outdoors](#) professional learning courses are available free to all teachers and support staff. Specialist outdoor educators from organisations supporting outdoor learning can also provide advice, training and information, and can work alongside school staff. A [map](#) of outdoor education providers is available as well as a [directory](#) of residential providers - some of whom may be able to provide advice and support to schools. Further support can be accessed through the [Scottish Advisory Panel for Outdoor Education](#) who will be able to put school staff in contact with their local authority outdoor learning lead.

198. Support and guidance in relation to off-site outdoor learning (to be planned in reference to the most up-to-date Scottish Government school visits guidance) can be found on the [Going Out There framework](#).

199. In order to make the best use of outdoor learning opportunities, local authorities should draw on the expertise of their outdoor learning lead officers to share the outdoor learning advice within this guidance. This includes the benefits of learning in the outdoors in relation to reduced Covid-19 transmission, the benefits of outdoor learning on progression across curriculum areas and the health and wellbeing of young people and opportunities for professional development in relation to outdoor provision.

Practical activities, experiments and investigations

200. Practical, “hands-on” learning and activities, experiments and investigations are an important part of the curriculum across all subject areas. We recognise that practitioners may need to adapt their approaches to enable learners to carry out these activities in a safe way. Practitioners should consult Education Scotland’s [practical activities guidelines](#) for further advice. In addition, SSERC has produced [guidance on carrying out practical work in Sciences and Technologies](#) for early, primary and secondary levels, including links to helpful resources.

Home economics

201. Guidelines on safe practice in home economics have been prepared by Education Scotland and were published on 16 February 2021 on the [Education Scotland website](#).

Activities or clubs outside the usual school timetable

202. These are important for wider health and development of children and 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.

Remote and blended learning

203. Schools should continue to invest in digital learning and teaching. This should include having plans in place to be prepared for sudden or partial school closure and to provide continuity in the provision of education for individuals when small groups of learners are unable to attend school. The National eLearning Offer (NeLO) remains in place for session 2021/2022 providing a range of live, recorded and supported learning materials to support schools.

204. Remote learning plans should be regularly reviewed to ensure they are current and appropriate, and updated as required. The following provides an indication of the key issues to consider as part of this ongoing process:

- Ensure that staff and pupils have access to the necessary digital devices and connectivity solutions. Digital infrastructure, both in the classroom and the home environments will need to be considered, including cameras, microphones, laptops, and access to data connectivity, as well as wider considerations around safeguarding and online safety;
- How best to support children and young people with additional support needs, including those with English as an additional language.
- How best to organise staff time and associated resources and arrangements to ensure that staff can access advice and professional development via the local authority, Regional Improvement Collaborative or Education Scotland;

- Communicate relevant updates and information to parents, carers and learners;
- Continue to consider Education Scotland's guidance, advice and additional support relating to remote learning (see below); and
- Continue to consider the findings of the National Overviews of Practice and exemplars of what is working. [National overview of practice: reports | National overviews | Supporting remote learning | National Improvement Hub \(education.gov.scot\)](#).

205. The Education Scotland website includes a [single landing page](#) for all guidance and practical support on remote learning.

206. Resources to support remote learning to complement arrangements and support in place via individual schools, local authorities and Regional Improvement Collaboratives have been developed via [the National e-Learning Offer](#). This offer includes access to live, recorded and supported learning resources, as well as professional development support via Education Scotland's Digital Learning Community [digilearn.scot](#).

207. The National Improvement Hub provides learning resources, webinars and links to Glow Connect, providing information, help and support for Glow. Regional Improvement Collaboratives have further information and support on Curriculum and blended learning for teachers which can be accessed through Glow.

Readiness and assurance

208. In the event of a local outbreak of the virus, a school or a number of schools may be closed temporarily to help control transmission. Schools and local authorities should prepare and maintain clear, strong contingency plans for providing education remotely. Local authorities and schools should ensure that parents/carers are fully informed of the contingency plans in place. It is important to identify the essential items and information that would be needed in the event of a school closure, for example access to contact information, and the correspondence that would be used to inform parents and others of the arrangements for closure and subsequent re-opening. **Annex B** sets out the scenarios, expectations and actions that local authorities are expected to familiarise themselves with.

School transport

209. This guidance is intended to inform local authority planning of school transport services. This includes transport which takes learners between home and school and between school and other places where educational delivery is planned. Local authorities are responsible for implementation of mitigation measures, working with the operators with whom they contract to ensure necessary measures are put in place in line with risk assessments (which should involve appropriate consultation with trade unions and staff). Parents and school staff should all play a role in educating children and young people on acceptable behaviour on school and public transport and in emphasising the need to abide by key mitigations such as the wearing of face coverings.

210. This guidance has been informed by the [scientific advice](#) of the COVID-19 Advisory Sub Group on Education and Children's issues, published on 30 October and by its discussions and advice

during January to March 2021 and its advice published on 3 August 2021. . The key messages from the scientific advice include:

211. Dedicated school transport should be regarded as an extension of the school estate and it is not necessary to maintain distance between children and young people of all ages. However, it remains important to remain cautious and exercise personal responsibility, recognising that, where possible, it is safer to keep a distance from other people. It is acceptable for children from different schools to share dedicated school transport.

- Important mitigations include: hygiene, ventilation, improved cleaning regimes including regular and thorough cleaning of surfaces, and regular handwashing. Hand sanitising should be required for everyone prior to boarding dedicated school transport and schools should also consider a process for children and young people which enables them to wash their hands immediately on arrival (as is the case for all children and young people), dispose of temporary face coverings in a covered bin or place reusable face coverings in a plastic bag they can take home with them, and then wash their hands again. Face coverings should be worn on dedicated school transport (subject to exemptions), in line with public transport.
- Children, young people and adults must not board dedicated school or public transport if they, or a member of their household, have symptoms of COVID-19. If a child or young person develops symptoms while at school they will be sent home. They must not travel on regular home-to-school transport. The school should contact the parent/carer who should make appropriate and safe arrangements to collect the child or young person. In this situation, the wearing of a face covering by the child or young person on the journey home is strongly advised.
- Where public transport (including buses, taxi, trams, subway, trains, ferries and air) is required for school-aged children to attend school, the general [advice and guidance from the Scottish Government and Transport Scotland](#) should be followed including the use of face coverings where required, unless exemptions apply.
- Drivers and staff on public transport, and to a lesser extent on school transport, are at relatively higher risk of exposure and particular attention should be paid to ensuring that they are protected from airborne and surface transmission.
- Compliance with the above should be strongly reinforced

National transport guidance and local authority arrangements

212. Schools should be aware of the latest [guidance](#) on how to remain safe when walking, cycling and travelling in vehicles or on public transport as we transition through and out of the COVID-19 outbreak.

213. Local authorities should ensure that local arrangements and advice to staff, parents/carers and children and young people for travelling to and from their school are consistent with the latest national guidance. Schools should work with their local authority public transport teams to inform their local planning. As part of risk assessments, local authorities should work with schools, transport operators and trade unions as necessary to identify the risks arising from COVID-19 and work through the measures in this section of the guidance to minimise any risks to children, young people and staff travelling on transport to school.

214. Some general points for consideration are:

- local authorities and schools should ensure they maintain an appropriate understanding (e.g. through a survey of families or other engagement) of how children and young people travel to school, to aid in quantifying the potential public transport issues in local authority areas.
- ensure understanding is shown to children, young people, staff and parents/carers who may be delayed in getting to school due to transport issues.
- additional support should be available for vulnerable families for planning their journey to school.
- include colleges and other relevant partners in planning for school transport, as young people in the senior phase may also be doing some of their learning in colleges, on work placements, or through consortium arrangements.
- ensure that all children and young people travelling on dedicated or public transport have access to hand sanitiser. The precise arrangements for doing so are for local authorities to decide in consultation with operators and school communities. Options may include provision of personalised supplies to those travelling on school transport.

215. A strategy for communicating and disseminating clear information about school transport provision to parents/carers and children and young people, drivers and other staff should be developed.

Encouraging active travel

216. As far as it is safe to do so, the use of active travel routes by parents/carers, staff and children and young people should be encouraged. All sustainable and active travel modes should be considered and encouraged, such as, walking and cycling, scooting and wheeling etc. If bikes are stored in bike sheds/racks consideration should be given to the cleaning of these areas and to reducing time spent at the bikes stores/shed.

Dedicated school transport

217. Dedicated school transport is, broadly, transport services which carry children and young people to and/or from their homes and any educational establishment where they receive school education. It is important to note that dedicated school bus vehicles may be used for other purposes before and after transporting children to school – effective implementation of the preventative measures set out below is particularly important in these circumstances.

218. This guidance also reflects the [scientific advice from the COVID-19 Advisory Sub-Group on Education and Children regarding the requirements for the safe travel of children and young people](#) to/from school published on 16 July 2020 and the [updated advice](#) published 30 October 2020:

- Enhanced cleaning: Local authorities should work with transport operators to agree what supplementary arrangements are needed alongside operators' existing programmes for cleaning vehicles. It is recommended that frequently touched surfaces are cleaned appropriately after each journey wherever possible – especially important where vehicles are used for other purposes before and after transporting children to and from school – and that enhanced cleaning takes place at the end of each day. Ensuring an effective enhanced

cleaning regime is in place will play an important role in suppressing transmission and building confidence among parents, children and young people in school transport services.

- Children and young people: face coverings should be worn by children aged 12 years and over on dedicated school transport (unless exemptions apply). See the section on Face Coverings for further information.
- Transport operators should be asked to keep windows on dedicated school transport open, where possible, and to ensure that mechanical ventilation uses fresh rather than recirculated air; or use air conditioning with attention paid to the appropriate frequency for changes of filters.
- Drivers, staff and other adults: particular attention should be paid to ensuring drivers, staff and other adults are protected from the risks of COVID-19 in vehicles. Risk assessments should consider whether changes within a vehicle are required, with changes made on that basis. Drivers and passenger assistants may wish to use alcohol hand rub or sanitiser at intervals throughout the journey, and should always do so after performing tasks such as helping a child into the vehicle or handling a child's belongings. Drivers of school transport services may also have other driving tasks as part of their job role, for example delivering meals to care homes, day centres and sometimes transporting others who may be vulnerable. Local authorities should pay particular attention to effective implementation of the preventative measures set out in this guidance in these circumstances to prevent the spread of infection. As far as possible, windows should be opened.
- Adults travelling with children and young people with Additional Support Needs: Adults travelling with children and young people with Additional Support Needs should be very alert to them displaying symptoms. As a general rule, these adults should wear face coverings. However, this requires to be balanced with the wellbeing and needs of the child: face coverings may limit communication and could cause distress to some children and young people. Advice should be provided to parents/carers to support the effective cleaning of specialist equipment for children and young people with additional support needs who are using school transport. Local authorities should consider the support available for children and young people with complex Additional Support Needs using school transport, and take appropriate actions to reduce risk if adherence to hygiene rules for adults are not possible. As far as possible, windows should be opened.
- All (children, young people, drivers, other adults) travelling on dedicated school transport: All passengers and staff should sanitise their hands prior to boarding dedicated school transport. Schools should regularly reinforce the importance of this key message with all children and young people. Hand washing/hand sanitising should be done regularly throughout the day including on each and every entry to the school building and prior to boarding the school bus. Good respiratory hygiene should be encouraged ("Catch it, kill it, bin it") and children and young people should be encouraged to carry tissues on home to school transport. It is crucial that someone with symptoms does not enter a bus and travel. Drivers and adult passengers must self-isolate and book a test if they display coronavirus (COVID-19) symptoms. Families must get a test for children and young people displaying symptoms.

Taxis and private hire vehicles

219. Some children and young people, including those with additional support needs, rely on taxi transfers to get to school. Physical distancing in private hire vehicles is not required, however, it is important to remain cautious and exercise personal responsibility, recognising that, where possible, it is safer to keep a distance from other people. Young people aged 12 years and over must continue to wear face coverings in private hire vehicles, and it is recommended that in private hire vehicles (which are typically saloon cars) children and young people travel on the back seat only. As far as possible, windows should be opened. There should be careful consideration of how children and young people with additional needs and adults supporting them can be provided with safe, bespoke transport arrangements. This could include the use of Perspex shields in taxis (taking into account relevant safety concerns) or finding larger vehicles for transportation. Local authorities and schools should liaise with their local private hire providers on the measures they are putting in place to protect passengers, including for the arrangements for carrying multiple passengers. Appropriate cleaning and sanitising measures will also be necessary.

Private cars

220. Routes to and from some schools may also be different as areas have made changes to enable physical distancing on pavements and on existing or pop-up cycle routes. While continuing to encourage walking or cycling where they can, parents or carers taking their children to school by car should be encouraged to plan their journey in advance and ensure that their chosen route is accessible. Local authorities may consider introducing park and stride for those children and young people who have to travel by car. [Sustrans guidance on school streets](#) provides advice. Where it is possible to do so, family groups should travel together.

Workforce planning and support

221. Additional workforce capacity will be needed to provide a range of additional support to help with recovery work. The Scottish Government has made additional funding available to local authorities for the recruitment of additional teachers and other staff to support COVID-19 recovery. Local authorities should ensure that these resources are used appropriately to bring additionality into the system to support young people.

222. Local authorities and headteachers, working in close partnership with unions and staff, are best placed to make judgements about how to make best use of available workforce capacity safely and effectively. Many of these decisions will be based on agreements reached within Local Negotiation Committees for Teachers (LNCTs) or local Scottish Joint Council arrangements. This section sets out some high level expectations to ensure consistency, and some information on national initiatives to support local authorities in these efforts.

223. Schools may require additional staffing and the flexibility to deploy staff appropriately over the current school year to best support children and young people whose progress with learning has been impeded during lockdown, as well as to bring much needed resilience to the education system at this time (e.g. to cover for staff absence).

224. Additionally, depending on the course of the pandemic, there may be additional strain on workforce capacity, for example as a result of fit notes for those in the highest risk groups or increased requirements for self-isolation, in the event of a deterioration in the situation with the

pandemic. The need for additional capacity in the teaching workforce should be considered in order to deal with such impacts.

Workforce capacity

225. Local authorities should consider carefully their requirements for additional wider workforce staff, such as cleaners and other facilities management staff to implement enhanced environmental cleaning regimes.

226. Local authorities should work through the following actions as part of any teaching/auxiliary education workforce planning activities for school premises:

- ensure that teachers who have not yet secured permanent employment are considered as an integral part of their planning;
- consider the potential for teachers with strong digital teaching skill sets to support remote learning. This may be an important aspect of maintaining educational continuity;
- ensure that supply lists are as up to date as possible and include the full pool of available staff. Supply staff are an important aspect of maintaining educational continuity and should be fully utilised in local planning around workforce capacity where needed;
- consider at a local level how all staff who are having to stay at home due to self-isolation can support educational continuity, for example by supporting remote learning;
- consider the availability of health and social care and other multi-agency partners as part of planning for support for children and young people; and
- consider any other opportunities to ensure existing qualified teaching staff and wider workforce capacity, such as classroom assistants, cleaners etc, can be effectively deployed.

227. Throughout this process potential workload issues should be carefully considered, and local authorities should be conscious of the wellbeing of all and the need to implement flexible working practices in a way that promotes good work-life balance for all staff.

228. [Covid-19 Guidance: Student Teacher Professional Placements in Scotland](#) was developed by the Scottish Council of Deans, GTCS, SPMG and ADES on the management of student teacher professional placements in school session 20/21 and the beginning of the new school year. A small number of 20/21 students did not have sufficient direct classroom teaching experience in the current session to be recommended for the award of the Standard for Provisional Registration to the GTCS. This guidance, issued on 19 February, sets out the arrangements to be adopted for student placement and observation of students from March and into the beginning of the new session. Agreement has been made as to the treatment of student placements for 21/22 students with the majority of placements planned to take place from October 2021. Some exceptions to this arrangement have been agreed with SPMG and these will be communicated through usual contact arrangements in line with the management of the Student Placement System.

229. Local authorities should ensure that capacity in the wider workforce in the school environment is sufficient to meet the challenges of full-time schooling and keep this under constant review. For example, depending on local circumstances, there may be a particular need to recruit additional classroom assistants to support learning or cleaning staff for enhanced hygiene.

Workforce support

230. The health and wellbeing of staff is a key principle of education recovery and support should be developed collegiately with staff. Local authorities and settings should ensure that appropriate support for professional learning and wellbeing is provided to all staff, some of whom will be working in unusual circumstances. Local authorities, employers and a range of national organisations already provide a wide range of support to the workforce. This includes a range of employee assistance programmes and online professional learning and support that covers the health and wellbeing of the workforce, colleagues/staff and of children and young people.
231. Local authorities and settings may wish to access the [summary of available resources](#), produced by partners working under the Education Recovery Group (Workforce Support Workstream).
232. The Workforce Support Workstream agreed and implemented a package of additional workforce support designed to aid school staff manage Covid-19 in establishments. The package is focused on staff wellbeing and includes new mental health support on reflective supervision from Place2Be and Barnardo's Scotland, greater access to coaching and mentoring and more professional learning for post-probation teachers. The package also confirms continued SG funding for values based leadership with Columba 1400.
<https://education.gov.scot/improvement/learning-resources/strengthening-support-for-school-staff/>

Communications

233. Communication and dialogue with trade unions, staff, parents/carers and children and young people should be carefully considered, to ensure confidence in safety arrangements across all school users. Clarity on what and how these arrangements will work in practice and what is expected of all parties will be key to ensuring things run smoothly.
234. The channels of communication through which trade unions, children, young people, staff and parents/carers can raise concerns about the implementation of safety measures in individual settings should be made clear and the importance of adhering to mitigations should also be reinforced with all members of the school community.
235. A range of information is available to provide clarity for parents, school staff and children and young people on how the scientific evidence/clinical advice translates into Government decisions to keep schools open. This will help to reduce anxiety for children, young people, parents and school staff through positive messaging on what is in place (testing, vaccinations, other mitigations etc). The importance of compliance with all protection measures (in school and in the community) continues to be integral to this.

Parents and carers

236. The main concerns for parents and carers are likely to be the safety and wellbeing of their children in schools and a desire for timely and clear information on the current rules for their child's school and why those arrangements are in place. In line with requirements under the Scottish Schools (Parental Involvement) Act 2006, local authorities and settings should make

arrangements to involve and communicate with all parents and carers (the “parent forum” for the school) as well as the Parent Council. Advice and support are available from those in the local authority who are responsible for parental involvement. Two-way communication is vital, as is ongoing dialogue and gathering of parental feedback.

237. Schools and authorities should consider how they continue to engage parents and families as part of the school community and in school decision making during the pandemic. As part of this, it will be important to consider the impact of parents not being able to go into the school buildings, and to ensure that this does not pose a barrier to open ongoing communication. There are a range of steps that can be taken to continue and support activities such as Parent Council meetings, parents’ evenings and subject choice discussions. In relation to parents’ evenings, the supplementary CERG practice guidance on [parental involvement and engagement](#) states that “[a]lternative methods and approaches to reporting will need to be used”. The guidance points to digital and online approaches as alternatives to face-to-face meetings. In relation to all matters of parental involvement and engagement, including parents’ evenings and reporting to parents, equalities considerations remain key, and may be heightened due to coronavirus restrictions limiting parents’ physical access to school buildings. Consideration should be given to matters such as the needs of separated parents (having regard to the appropriateness of both parents being provided with information), parents for whom English is an additional language and parents/carers with disabilities. Further [guidance](#) on communicating effectively with parents and families during Covid-19 is available from the Education Scotland website.

238. National information, Q&As and other material on Covid-19 arrangements, education recovery, parental communication and home learning can be used to complement any communications locally and at school level. This includes [Parent Club’s](#) dedicated COVID-19 web pages, the [National Parent Forum](#) (website and newsletter), [Education Scotland’s “Scotland Learns” micro site](#), [Parentzone Scotland](#) website and other sources.

Children and young people

239. Schools and settings will wish to develop arrangements for good quality dialogue and communication with children and young people. A variety of methods can help to gather children and young people’s views, questions and issues, and can help to clarify and address difficulties. Examples include Pupil Councils, pupil panels and broader pupil participation methods. [General advice on good principles and methods for learner participation](#) is available from Education Scotland as well as a range of third sector organisations.

240. Schools and local authorities will wish to consider the young person information available via [Young Scot’s Covid-19 micro site](#). This information is updated in line with all key updates to guidance. Young person survey work includes the joint work by [Young Scot](#), [Scottish Youth Parliament](#) and [YouthLink Scotland](#). Further guidance and information is available from [Children’s Parliament](#) and [Children in Scotland](#). Practical support on poverty-sensitive approaches is available via the [Child Poverty Action Group in Scotland’s survey report](#) on the cost of learning in lockdown. Local community learning and development services, Parent Councils and local parent umbrella groups may be able to work with authorities and schools, to ensure that consistent information and advice reaches children and young people.

Access to information

241. Education Scotland have developed an Education Recovery webpage that provides a single point of access to information about education recovery for practitioners and education stakeholders. This resource continues to highlight any published changes to guidance.

Key scenarios - expectations and actions to ensure readiness

Scenarios

Schools and local authorities should ensure readiness for the following key scenarios, in view of the uncertainty around the path of the virus in the future. These actions will help contribute to the development of a “pandemic-proof” education system:

1) Scenario 1 (Removal or reintroduction of mitigations – schools remain open): Ensuring readiness for an outbreak or moving between the protection levels should these require to be reinstated at either the national or local level, introducing or easing mitigations accordingly and within a carefully considered and agreed timeframe in the school environment.

2) Scenario 2 (Partial attendance – school buildings remain open): Partial attendance/remote learning where self-isolation of large numbers of staff/pupils disrupts full-time in-school learning.

3) Scenario 3 (Partial attendance – school buildings remain open): Partial attendance of pupils to facilitate re-introduction of physical distancing where required, e.g. in the event of a beyond-level 4 national lockdown scenario, or where local health protection teams advise this as being necessary to control transmission.

4) Scenario 4 (Full remote learning for all pupils – school buildings closed): No physical attendance at school for pupils except for key worker and vulnerable children, e.g. in the event of a beyond-level 4 national lockdown scenario, or where local health protection teams advise this as being necessary to control transmission.

The table below sets out shared expectations in respect of readiness to deal these four key scenarios, and the actions that should be taken to ensure readiness and minimise education disruption as a result of Covid.

Scenarios: Readiness				
Scenario(s)	Issue	Expectations	Actions to ensure readiness	Complete
1, 2, 3, 4	Risk assessments	All relevant risk assessments are kept up to date for relevant scenarios.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Follow guidance on preparation and maintenance of risk assessments as set out in Reducing Risks Guidance, including in respect of joint working between local authorities, staff and trade unions. 	
1, 2, 3, 4	Communications with staff	All staff are aware of the actions required to reintroduce or remove mitigations, the timescales required, and how they can best support pupils to ensure educational continuity.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Specify responsibility within the school for communications with staff in these circumstances. Provide time for teachers and other school staff to read associated comms and become familiar themselves with any changes. 	
1, 2, 3, 4	Communications with parents and pupils	All pupils and families are aware of the actions required to reintroduce or remove mitigations, the timescales required, and how they will be supported to ensure educational continuity.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Specify responsibility within the school for communications with staff in these circumstances. 	

1, 2, 3, 4	Reducing Risks Guidance and local desk instructions	All key staff and pupils have access to and understand the guidance on which mitigations should be in place dependent on the scenario.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure key people within school have strong understanding of Reducing Risks guidance, and can inform communications to wider staff and pupils on this subject. 	
1, 2, 3, 4	Remote learning lesson plans	Plans for remote learning have been developed and can be deployed in line with Education Scotland guidance, in the event that smaller or larger numbers of pupils and/or staff have to self-isolate. Previously agreed Education Scotland/CERG guidance makes clear that class teachers retain responsibility for planning and organising children's and young people's learning, with learning supported by parents and carers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure awareness of Education Scotland guidance on remote learning expectations. • Ensure awareness of Support for Continuity in Learning guidance, which focuses on ASN. • Maintain (and, where appropriate, revise) previously-developed remote learning lesson plans that can be deployed for relevant year groups and scenarios. • ES and local authorities to ensure schools, learners and parents are aware of the NELO offer* including live, recorded and supported resources for both the BGE and Senior Phase. • Continue to maintain two-way communication arrangements with parents in relation to remote learning, as appropriate. • Bear in mind the additional support and advice that may be needed for parents in particular circumstances, including parents for whom English is an additional language, parents of children in Gaelic Medium Education (where Gaelic may not be the main language used in the home), parents of children with additional support needs and parents with fewer financial resources or time/capacity to support their children's learning. • * Note: Resources to support Gaelic Medium Education are also available via the NeLO by searching "Gaelic" or "Gaelic Medium Education" in the search bar on the main NeLO landing page. Information on e-Sgoil's Gàidhlig Bheò is available via the e-Sgoil website. Education Scotland's Scotland Learns web resource contains a dedicated section on GME. 	
1, 2, 3, 4	Remote learning materials	Children and young people have been provided with the non-IT materials needed to ensure effective remote learning (e.g. writing equipment, notebooks, etc.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure awareness of Education Scotland guidance on remote learning expectations. • Identify which non-digital resources should be provided to pupils to support remote learning and how these will be distributed – 	

			these will usually be similar to those provided under normal classroom settings (e.g. art materials, textbooks, etc.)	
1, 2, 3, 4	IT and connectivity	IT needs of staff and pupils for remote learning for small numbers of pupils self-isolating are met in advance.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure an understanding of IT and connectivity requirements amongst pupils and staff. • Schools and local authorities to liaise on provision of additional devices and connectivity where required. • Ensure staff awareness of relevant support, including tax relief for additional costs for electricity, water and phone calls. 	
1, 2, 3, 4	Professional learning for Remote Learning	Staff have been provided with guidance and training to allow them to support remote learning effectively, particularly in respect of use of IT.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support awareness and uptake of available local and national professional learning opportunities (including via Education Scotland's digilearn.scot) on use of digital technology to support learning and teaching. 	
1, 2, 3, 4	Wellbeing support	Clear wellbeing support arrangements are in place to deal with range of scenarios and their potential impacts on staff and pupils.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure staff awareness of local and national wellbeing support, and encourage uptake. • Ensure pupil awareness of local and national wellbeing support, and encourage uptake. 	
3, 4	Identification of key worker and vulnerable children	Schools and local authorities have identified key worker and vulnerable children in advance, and can update their understanding of this rapidly in the event it is required.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local authorities to agree with schools an approach to identifying key worker and vulnerable children in line with national guidance, and to maintain a regularly updated understanding of this in support of contingency planning. 	
1,2,3,4	Staffing	Sufficient staff are available (via supply lists or additional capacity across system) to support implementation of contingency plans.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LAs and schools to factor in potential contingency requirements when making use of additional central funding for staffing, in line with guidance on workforce planning in Reducing Risks guidance. 	
1, 2, 3, 4	School transport	Requirements for mitigations on school transport in different scenarios are fully understood and can be implemented to required timescales by operators. School transport arrangements support partial attendance where required. Agreements in place with operators on approach to be taken in event of partial attendance.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local authorities to continue joint planning with school transport operators to ensure readiness for these issues. 	

Related guidance/links

- [Coronavirus Act 2020](#)
- [Equality Act 2010](#)
- [Education \(Scotland\) Act 1980](#)
- Health Protection Scotland [COVID-19 workforce education information and resources](#)
- Health Protection Scotland [information and guidance for social or community care and residential facilities](#)
- Health Protection Scotland [non-healthcare settings guidance](#)
- Health Protection Scotland [procedures for outbreak management](#)
- Scottish Government [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): framework for decision making](#)
- Scottish Government [guidance for residential children’s houses, residential schools and secure care facilities on staffing, social distancing and self-isolation](#)
- Scottish Government [guidance for the Early Learning and Childcare \(ELC\) sector](#)
- Scottish Government [COVID-19 guidance for colleges](#)
- Scottish Government [guidance for childminders](#)
- Scottish Government [guidance on “Out of school care”](#)
- Scottish Government [guidance for youth work and the Community Learning and Development Sector](#)
- Scottish Government [guidance on organised outdoor sport for children and young people](#)
- [Scottish Government guidance on individual risk assessment for staff in the workplace.](#)
- Scottish Government [initial summary of key scientific and public health advice](#)
- Scottish Government [Test and Protect advice for employers](#)
- Scottish Government [guidance on promoting attendance and managing absence](#)
- Scottish Government [guidance on support for continuity of learning](#)
- Scottish Government [Curriculum for Excellence in the Recovery Phase](#)
- Scottish Government [scientific advice from the COVID-19 Advisory Sub-Group on Education and Children's Issues regarding the requirements for the safe travel of children and young people](#)
- Scottish Government [scientific advice from the COVID-19 Advisory Sub-Group on Education and Children's Issues regarding physical distancing in schools](#)
- Scottish Government [scientific advice from the COVID-19 Advisory Sub-Group on Education and Children’s Issues - advisory note on face coverings in schools](#)
- Scottish Government [scientific advice from the COVID-19 Advisory Sub-Group on Education and Children’s Issues - advisory note on school trips which include an overnight stay](#)
- Scottish Government [scientific advice from the COVID-19 Advisory Sub-Group on Education and Children’s Issues - advisory note on physical education, music and drama in schools](#)
- Scottish Government [scientific advice from the COVID-19 Advisory Sub-Group on Education and Children’s Issues – advisory note on phased return to in-person learning in schools and ELC settings - next steps](#)
- Scottish Government [scientific advice from the COVID-19 Advisory Sub-Group on Education and Children’s Issues – advice on mitigations to minimise transmission during phased return to in-person learning](#)
- Scottish Government [scientific advice from the COVID-19 Advisory Sub-Group on Education and Children’s Issues – advice on phased return to in-person learning in schools and early learning and childcare \(ELC\) settings](#)

- Scottish Government [scientific advice from the COVID-19 Advisory Sub-Group on Education and Children's Issues regarding face coverings, physical distancing and related matters](#)
- Scottish Government guidance for the safe use of [places of worship](#)
- Scottish Government [guidance for people with underlying health conditions](#)
- Scottish Government guidance for children [unable to attend school due to ill health](#)
- Scottish Government [guidance on unregulated children's services](#)
- GTC Scotland/SCDE/ADES/SPMG Covid-19 Guidance: [Student Teacher Professional Placements in Scotland](#)
- GTC Scotland [Teacher Wellbeing Resources](#)
- [National Transport Guidance portal](#)
- [www.travelinescotland.com](#)
- [Outdoor Learning Directory](#)
- [Going Out There framework](#)
- [Scottish Advisory Panel on Outdoor Education](#)
- [Assist FM Catering guidance](#)
- [Assist FM Cleaning guidance](#)
- Health and Safety Executive [guidance on COVID-19 risk assessments](#)
- Health and Safety Executive [PPE at work](#)
- [Health and Safety Executive coronavirus information](#)
- [Sustrans guidance on school streets](#)
- [School Food and Drink Nutritional Standards](#)
- [Guidance from Food Standards Scotland \(FSS\)](#)
- National Parent Forum Scotland [guidance for parents on the return to school](#)
- SSERC [guidance on carrying out practical work in Sciences and Technologies](#)
- [National Trauma Training framework and plan](#)
- [Parent Club's Coronavirus pages](#)
- [National Parent Forum](#)
- [National Improvement Hub](#)
- National Improvement Hub - [Physical Education guidelines](#)
- [Education Scotland's "Scotland Learns"](#)
- [Parentzone Scotland](#)
- [General advice on good principles and methods for learner participation](#)
- [Young Scot](#)
- [Scottish Youth Parliament](#)
- [YouthLink Scotland](#)
- [Children's Parliament](#)
- [Children in Scotland](#)
- [Child Poverty Action Group in Scotland's survey report](#)
- [Care Inspectorate coronavirus information](#)
- [UK Boarding Schools Association COVID-19 guidance](#)
- [Scottish Council of Independent Schools](#)
- [Independent Schools Council](#)
- [NHS Inform](#)
- [guidance about the latest self-isolation and quarantine requirements](#)
- [COVID-19: guidance for first responders](#)
- [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): school aged childcare services - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](#)