

COVID-19 Educational Settings – Outbreak Management/Contingency Planning

Contents

Introduction..... 2
 Initial Considerations..... 2
 Testing..... 3
 Face coverings 3
 Bubbles/Cohorting 4
 Social distancing and reducing gathering and mixing 4
 Maintain records of contacts..... 4
 Events and parent attendance..... 4
 Educational visits..... 5
 Outline of Attendance Restrictions 5
 Education Workforce..... 6
 Safeguarding and designated safe guarding leads..... 6
 Vulnerable children and young people 6
 Shielding 7
 Meal options..... 7
 Contingency planning arrangements 8

Document Updates

For ease of reference, changes that are made to this document are detailed below:

Date of change	Section, Page and Change
15-07-2021	New document
17-08-2021	Added initial considerations section, and reintroducing contact records . Updated terminology and reference to management of Cases guidance and testing
20-10-2021	Testing section updated on page 3.
03/11/2021	Minor updates to initial considerations, testing and attendance sections relating to the use of CO ₂ monitoring, PCR testing and wraparound care. Addition of a section on social distancing and in setting gatherings
23/11/2021	Asymptomatic Testing Sites renamed onsite LFD testing Updated section – face coverings Updated contingency planning arrangements table – face coverings
03/12/2021	Educational visit considerations for international travel.



COVID-19 Educational Settings – Outbreak Management/Contingency Planning

Introduction

Following the relaxation of a number of COVID-19 related control measures in educational settings, it may be necessary to reintroduce some measures as a result of an increase in cases either in the setting or in the community more generally. For example:

- to help manage a significant COVID-19 outbreak within a setting ([see Management of Cases Guidance](#))
- if there is extremely high prevalence of COVID-19 in the community and other measures have failed to reduce transmission
- as part of a package of measures responding to a Variant of Concern (VoC)

This guidance provides an outline of the measures to consider in a contingency plan and template for recording. The plan should include how you will ensure every pupil receives the quantity and quality of education and care to which they are normally entitled.

All settings should make sure their contingency plans cover how they would operate if any of the measures described were recommended for their setting or area.

It is important to consider that the information in this guide reflects the broad requirements. More specific details may be provided at the time of receiving instruction to apply measures by Public Health. Whilst Public Health will work in partnership with you to discuss and agree the likely controls needed and the timescales for implementation it may be necessary to 'step up' changes at short notice. Settings should plan how they will communicate this information to parents, carers and pupils.

Local authorities, the Director of Public Health and the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) health protection teams can recommend implementing the contingency measures described in this document for individual settings or a small cluster of settings as part of their outbreak management responsibilities. Where there is a need to address more widespread issues across an area, ministers will take decisions on an area-by-area basis.

Initial Considerations

At the point of reaching a threshold outlined in the [Management of Cases Guidance](#) settings should review the control measures they have in place as identified by their risk assessment and ensure these are being consistently applied. In addition, settings should consider:

- if they can make increased use of outdoor spaces for activities, particularly those involving large groups e.g. assemblies or activities that increase the generation of aerosols e.g. sport or exercise and singing .
- if fresh air ventilation in indoor spaces can be increased further without causing detriment to thermal comfort particularly where singing, shouting or exercise may be taking place.



COVID-19 Educational Settings – Outbreak Management/Contingency Planning

- utilising CO₂ monitoring to provide reassurance regarding ventilation including for different uses of spaces e.g. where capacity is increased or singing, shouting or exercise takes place.
- instigating a deep clean of the setting
- reviewing and reinforcing all infection control measures, giving particular consideration to those where maintaining hygiene standards may be difficult.

Testing

All settings should ensure their contingency plan reflects the possibility of staff and pupils needing to increase testing frequency. This may include:

- Issuing advice on to increase participation in twice weekly LFD home testing for secondary aged pupils (for example, directly communicating with parents and pupils on the importance of regular testing). This may be directed towards an identified group or cohort or the whole setting as appropriate.
- The reintroduction of onsite LFD testing to individual secondary schools and colleges in response to an outbreak, or to a group of settings linked in a single outbreak or for settings across an area as part of an enhanced response package for example due to a variant of concern or where they are in an enduring transmission area.
- Issuing advice on more frequent LFD testing at home to daily testing in response to an outbreak or in areas of high prevalence. This may be advised:
 - For close contacts/households while they await the result of PCR testing in all types of setting
 - For a group or cohort in secondary schools or further education where cases are very high, for a minimum of 5 days, increasing to 7 days as necessary to ensure the final test is taken on a school day
 - As a one off for a wider group or cohort in a secondary schools or further education
- Issuing advice to particular contact groups on undertaking a PCR test

Continued importance of vaccination

Respond to and work with public health teams where requested, to include communications on the vaccination programme

Face coverings

Settings may be asked to re-introduce the use of face coverings. This may include face coverings in communal areas or classrooms for pupils over 11 years old and staff (unless they are exempt or have a reasonable excuse).

Face coverings in communal areas may be temporarily advised: for an individual setting, for settings across areas of high or rapidly increasing prevalence, where increased LFD testing and actions to increase vaccination update among eligible staff and pupils are being advised.



COVID-19 Educational Settings – Outbreak Management/Contingency Planning

Face coverings in classrooms may be temporarily advised for individual settings, for settings across areas that have been offered an enhanced response package or are in an enduring transmission area.

In all cases any educational and wellbeing drawbacks in the recommended use of face coverings should be balanced with the benefits in managing transmission.

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

No pupil should be denied education on the grounds of whether they are, or are not, wearing a face covering.

Bubbles/Cohorting

It may become necessary to reintroduce bubbles for a temporary period in order to reduce mixing between groups. Educational Settings will need to consider both staff and pupils and can choose to apply the approach that was previously applied in their setting.

Social distancing and reducing gathering and mixing

Reintroduction of 2 metre distancing may be required where there is significant transmission within the setting. This could also include reducing the number of children gathering together and returning to online approaches for school assembly, staff meetings and similar activities as well as limiting visitors to the setting.

Staggered start and finish times may need to be reintroduced in secondary settings as well as staggered drop off/pick up times in primary and early years to support distancing and reduce gatherings.

Maintain records of contacts

Educational settings may be asked to reintroduce maintaining records of contacts on a daily basis, noting that it may need to be retrieved for the previous 21 days. If required, this must include recording all visitors to the setting and include:

- Accurate details of pupils and staff contacts on a daily basis (including residential information, wraparound care, or transport where applicable).
- Seating plans (where possible)

Please note: settings will need to consider how they will record activities where there are increased numbers including lunchtime and breaks.

Events and parent attendance

The need to change planned events such as Open Days, Transition Days, Parent attendance, performances may be required. This could include delaying events or providing an alternative arrangement such as remote activities and livestreaming.

COVID-19 Educational Settings – Outbreak Management/Contingency Planning

Educational visits

Where restrictions are being introduced to a setting, visit risk assessments should be reviewed and settings should consider if the visit is still appropriate and safe. Only children who are attending the setting should go on an educational visit.

Contingency plans must consider the possibility of restrictions relating to travel being reintroduced for example requirements relating to international visits that impact on the educational value of the trip and disruption to education resulting from the need to isolate and test on arrival back into the UK.

Outline of Attendance Restrictions

Attendance restrictions will be a last resort, in extreme circumstances. The cohorts described in this section should be used to guide decisions about restricting attendance, as well as prioritising groups for face-to-face education and childcare:

- **Early years settings:** vulnerable children and children of crucial workers should be prioritised.
- **Primary schools:** as above and children in reception, year 1 and year 2 should be prioritised.
- **Secondary schools:** all vulnerable children and young people, children of critical workers, pupils in years 10, 11, 12 and 13, and other pupils who were due to take external exams this academic year should be prioritised. If, by exception, attendance is restricted further, vulnerable children and young people and children of critical workers should be prioritised.
- **16 – 19 academies:** follow the guidance for either sixth forms or FE, according to which type of provision their provision most closely reflects.
- **Boarding:** follow guidance for primary and secondary for determining which children should be taught in the classroom. Pupils not in these groups who cannot return home should continue to receive their education in their boarding house.
- **Special schools and special post-16 institutions:** remain in line with the equivalent age groups in main stream schools. In exceptional circumstances, special schools and special post-16 institutions may encounter circumstances where they cannot provide their usual interventions and provision at adequate staffing ratios, or with staff with vital specialist training. In these circumstances, they should seek to resume as close as possible to the specified provision for the child or young person as soon as possible. Where attendance is mandatory, full-time provision should be provided.
- **Alternative provision:** should continue to allow all children or pupils to attend full time. On occasion AP will encounter circumstances where they cannot provide their usual interventions and provision at adequate staffing ratios, or with staff with appropriate specialist training. In these circumstances they should seek to resume as close as possible to full-time provision, as soon as possible.
- **Hospital education:** hospitals should continue to provide full-time education where safe and feasible to do so in line with hospital infection prevention and control measures.



COVID-19 Educational Settings – Outbreak Management/Contingency Planning

- **Holiday clubs** where face to face provision is not deemed appropriate and the purpose of the provision includes support for vulnerable children and young people, this provision should be continued in another way e.g. the provision of free meals or access to online support
- **Wraparound care:** it may be necessary to limit access to those that need it most.

Where attendance is restricted educational settings will need to reintroduce remote education. Full details on remote education expectations and support available to schools is provided [here](#)

Please note: Transport services to education settings should continue to be provided as normal.

Education Workforce

If restrictions on pupil attendance is needed, leaders will need to determine the workforce required on site and if it is appropriate for some staff to work remotely.

Consideration will need to be given to clinically extremely vulnerable members of staff as part of these arrangements.

All education settings must continue to have regard to statutory safeguarding guidance that applies to them and should review their child protection policy that it reflects the local restrictions and remains effective.

Safeguarding and designated safe guarding leads

It is expected that settings will have a trained designated safeguarding lead (DSL) or deputy available on site. However, if there are operational challenges the following two options can be considered:

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

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

Vulnerable children and young people

Where vulnerable pupils are absent the setting should explore the reason for absence and discuss concerns. They should:

- encourage pupil to attend, working with the local authority and social worker (where applicable), particularly where the social worker and the Virtual School Head (where applicable) agrees that the child or young person's attendance would be appropriate
- focus on their welfare and ensure that they can access appropriate education and support while they are at home



COVID-19 Educational Settings – Outbreak Management/Contingency Planning

- Have procedures to maintain contact, ensure they are able to access remote education support, as required, and regularly check if they are doing so

If settings are advised to temporarily stop onsite provision, they should discuss alternative arrangements for vulnerable children and young people with the local authority.

Shielding

In the event of a major outbreak or a variant of concern that poses a risk to individuals on the shielding patient this, the requirement to recommence shielding may be reintroduced by national government. Consideration will need to be given to staffing levels as a result of staff needing to shield and remote learning for the small number of pupils that may be notified.

Meal options

Meal options should continue to be provided for pupils who are in the setting and they must also continue to provide free school meal support for pupils who are eligible and are not attending because they: are self-isolating, have had symptoms or positive test or are a close contact of someone who has COVID-19.

Please refer to Case Management Guidance for information about action to take:

- When staff and pupils have a positive test result
- When positive test numbers reach a threshold
- Tracing and isolation requirements
- Action to take for close contacts of a positive case

COVID-19 Educational Settings – Contingency Planning guide and template

Contingency planning arrangements

Measure	Related contingency planning information	Actions that will be taken
Communicating requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Produce template communications that can be tailored depending on the specific measures being introduced. • Assigned responsibility for updating, approving and disseminating communications in preparation for use • Consider who may need communicating with in the event that measures need to be reintroduced e.g staff, visiting professionals, parents/carers, transport providers • Consider where whole setting communications will be beneficial including where low levels of transmission are occurring 	✓
Reintroduction of onsite LFD testing) – Secondary and FE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify an area for testing • Identify the staff that will run the site and ensure they have undertaken the relevant training. • Ensure you have the equipment necessary to set up the site • Complete and review your site risk assessment as part of the set up process • Consider and mitigate for the education areas removed for provision of onsite LFD testing 	N/A

COVID-19 Educational Settings – Contingency Planning guide and template

<p>Increase the use of home tests (staff and where relevant pupils)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify how you will increase your supply of and access to test kits • Consider how you will distribute an increased number of test kits • Complete and review your risk assessment for the storage and distribution of test kits 	<p>✓ Ordered more for start of Spring term, and messaging to staff about balance between having enough for themselves, but not taking for family.</p>
<p>Face coverings – staff (all settings) Students (secondary and FE)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure communication material includes how to put on, store and take off coverings • Ensure you have signage prepared and available to assist with reminders regarding face coverings around the setting. • Maintain a supply of face coverings to offer to those who do not have access to them or have forgotten them. • Consider how you will mitigate for the educational drawbacks in the use of face coverings including identification of staff and pupils who should not wear a face covering due to the need for visual communication cues • Ensure you have additional bins available for disposal of discarded face coverings 	<p>✓</p>
<p>Bubbles/Cohorting</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain plans for bubbling staff and pupils in line with previous approaches • Discuss with dedicated transport providers how they would reintroduce this where applicable 	<p>✓</p>
<p>Distancing, reducing gatherings and mixing</p>	<p>Maintain plans to reintroduce distancing including reduce gathering and mixing in line with previous approaches to areas such as arrival and leaving,</p>	<p>✓</p>

COVID-19 Educational Settings – Contingency Planning guide and template

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> returning to online class assembly and staff meetings and limiting visitors to the setting. 	
Contact records	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduce daily contact records, including visitors noting that it may need to be retrieved for the previous 21 days 	✓
Events and parent attendance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> When planning events etc include a plan for cancelling or revising the event for example how you will set up virtual tours or live streaming performances. 	✓
Educational visits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> When planning an educational visit include a plan to cancel or modify the visit in line with attendance and other restrictions in the setting. Review the settings insurance to understand what is covered in relation to cancellations or modifications Develop plans to respond to changes in travel restrictions that impact on the educational value of visits and disruption to education e.g. resulting from the need to isolate and test on arrival back into the UK. Plans to include the introduction of new restrictions during your visit and that the travel list may be subject to change during your visit. 	✓
Attendance restrictions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider how you will reintroduce remote education for individuals and groups of pupils or students including those that are isolating, shielding, in hospital or who are not in a priority group for in 	Deputy head has shared updated remote learning plan with staff on 4 th Jan 2022. Also DSLs have updated list of vulnerable pupils.

COVID-19 Educational Settings – Contingency Planning guide and template

	<p>person education. Settings will need to be prepared to implement the requirements at short notice.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure you have access to the Local Authority contacts to discuss and provide alternative arrangements for vulnerable pupils where necessary 	
Education workforce	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain a list of clinically extremely vulnerable and other staff at increased risk to understand the impact of shielding requirements and other arrangements that may need revised control measures • Consider the core staff that will be required to provide on site education to the priority groups • Consider where and how remote working can be applied • Consideration given to and individual assessments reviewed where appropriate. • Consider how you will access supply and temporary staff should you need to 	Yes, reviewed and revised risk assessments for more vulnerable staff at the start of the Spring term.
Safeguarding and designated safe guarding leads	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review child protection policy to reflect the possible local restrictions and ensure it remains effective (led by the designated safeguarding lead or a deputy) • Ensure you have an adequate number of trained DSL or deputies so that you can maintain an on site presence. 	✓

COVID-19 Educational Settings – Contingency Planning guide and template

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plan for access to a DSL or deputy in circumstances where an on site presence cannot be maintained for example through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A trained DSL from the setting can be available via phone or online video Shared trained DSLs or deputy with other settings are available Identify a senior leader to take responsibility for co-ordinating safeguarding on site 	
Vulnerable children and young people who are absent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify a person(s) responsible for following up with the parent or carer, working with the local authority and social worker (where applicable), to explore the reason for absence, discuss concerns, welfare arrangements and encourage attendance or provision of alternative education. Develop a procedure to maintain contact and ensure they are able to access remote education support 	Headteacher, and in her absence the deputy head.
Holiday clubs	Where planning holiday clubs consider how essential elements to vulnerable children will be continued where it may need to be cancelled or modified	N/A
Wraparound care	Identify the priority groups for wraparound care should you need to limit access	✓
Meal options	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider alternative options to sourcing and providing meals where restrictions or staffing shortages prevent the usual offer to be provided 	✓

COVID-19 Educational Settings – Contingency Planning guide and template

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Develop plans for the provision of free school meals to eligible pupils/students and who are not attending school because they:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ are self-isolating○ have had symptoms or a positive test result themselves○ are a close contact of someone who has COVID-19	
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