

Denmead Junior School - Returning to School Protocol and Procedures

Updated August 2021

In line with the Department for Education's instruction, it is our plan that all pupils, in all year groups, will return to school full-time from the beginning of the autumn term. Term starts on Thursday 2nd September which, along with Friday 3rd September, will be INSET days with all children returning to school on Monday 6th September.

This plan is underpinned by the Department for Education's advice on effective infection protection and control which states the following:

"You (schools) must comply with health and safety law and put in place proportionate control measures. You must regularly review and update your risk assessments – treating them as 'living documents', as the circumstances in your school and the public health advice changes. This includes having active arrangements in place to monitor whether the controls are effective and working as planned. For more information on what is required of school leaders in relation to health and safety risk assessment and managing risk, see the [health and safety advice for schools](#)."

The system of controls are set out below.

Measures include:

1. Ensure good hygiene for everyone
2. Maintain appropriate cleaning regimes
3. Keep occupied spaces well ventilated
4. Follow public health advice on testing, self-isolation and managing confirmed cases of COVID-19.

The following plan outlines relevant detail from the government's guidance with further detail about how Denmead Junior School will adopt measures and ensure compliance to the statutory elements within. The aim of this plan is to minimise the risks, whilst acknowledging that we can't negate them entirely.

All elements of the system of controls are essential. All schools must cover them all, but the way different schools implement some of the requirements will differ based on their individual circumstances...The system of controls provides a set of principles to help them do this and, if schools follow this advice, they will effectively minimise risks.

Within the government guidance, the systems of control that schools should adopt are clearly listed. This document will outline those systems of control and how Denmead Junior School has made them appropriate to our specific context and circumstance.

Tracing close contacts and isolation

Settings only needed to do contact tracing up to and including 18 July 2021. Close contacts will now be identified via NHS Test and Trace and education settings will no longer be expected to undertake contact tracing.

As with positive cases in any other setting, NHS Test and Trace will work with the positive case and/or their parent to identify close contacts. Contacts from a school setting will only be traced by NHS Test and Trace where the positive case and/or their parent specifically identifies the individual as being a close contact. This is likely to be a small number of individuals who would be most at risk of contracting COVID-19 due to the nature of the close contact. The school may be contacted in exceptional cases to help with identifying close contacts, as currently happens in managing other infectious diseases.

Individuals are not required to self-isolate if they live in the same household as someone with COVID-19, or are a close contact of someone with COVID-19, and any of the following apply:

- they are fully vaccinated
- they are below the age of 18 years and 6 months
- they have taken part in or are currently part of an approved COVID-19 vaccine trial
- they are not able to get vaccinated for medical reasons

Instead, they will be contacted by NHS Test and Trace, informed they have been in close contact with a positive case and advised to take a [PCR test](#). We would encourage all individuals to take a PCR test if advised to do so.

Staff who do not need to isolate, and children and young people aged under 18 years 6 months who usually attend school, and have been identified as a close contact, should continue to attend school as normal. They do not need to wear a face covering within the school, but it is expected and recommended that these are worn when travelling on public or dedicated transport.

Settings will continue to have a role in working with health protection teams in the case of a local outbreak. If there is a substantial increase in the number of positive cases in a setting (see [Stepping measures up and down](#) section for more information) or if central government offers the area an enhanced response package, a director of public health might advise a setting to temporarily reintroduce some control measures.

Face coverings

Face coverings are no longer advised for pupils, staff and visitors either in classrooms or in communal areas.

The government has removed the requirement to wear face coverings in law but expects and recommends that they are worn in enclosed and crowded spaces where you may come into contact with people you don't normally meet. This includes public transport and dedicated transport to school.

In circumstances where face coverings are recommended:

If the school has a substantial increase in the number of positive cases (see [Stepping measures up and down](#) section for more information), a director of public health might advise that face coverings should temporarily be worn in communal areas or classrooms (by pupils staff and visitors, unless exempt). The school will make sure their contingency plans cover this possibility.

In these circumstances, transparent face coverings, which may assist communication with someone who relies on lip reading, clear sound or facial expression to communicate, can also be worn. Transparent face coverings may be effective in reducing the spread of COVID-19. However, the evidence to support this is currently very limited. Face coverings (whether transparent or cloth) should fit securely around the face to cover the nose and mouth and be made with a breathable material capable of filtering airborne particles.

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

Face visors or shields can be worn by those exempt from wearing a face covering but they are not an equivalent alternative in terms of source control of virus transmission. They may protect the wearer against droplet spread in specific circumstances but are unlikely to be effective in preventing the escape of smaller respiratory particles when used without an additional face covering. They should only be used after carrying out a risk assessment for the specific situation and should always be cleaned appropriately.

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.

The school has a duty to make reasonable adjustments for disabled pupils to support them to access education successfully. Where appropriate, the school will discuss with pupils and parents the types of reasonable adjustments that are being considered to support an individual.

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

Stepping measures up and down

The school has contingency plans (sometimes called outbreak management plans) outlining what you would do if children, pupils, students or staff test positive for COVID-19, or how you would operate if you were advised to take extra measures to help break chains of transmission. Depending on the circumstance, this may well look like the previous school, COVID-19 risk assessment or iterations thereof. Given the detrimental impact that restrictions on education can have on children and young people, any measures in schools should only ever be considered as a last resort, kept to the minimum number of schools or groups possible, and for the shortest amount of time possible.

Central government may offer local areas of particular concern an enhanced response package to help limit increases in transmission.

For most settings it will make sense to think about taking extra action if the number of positive cases substantially increases. Information on what circumstances might lead the school to consider taking additional action, and the steps it should work through, can be found in the [contingency framework](#).

The contingency framework describes the principles of managing local outbreaks of COVID-19 in education and childcare settings. Local authorities, directors of public health (DsPH) and PHE health protection teams (HPTs) can recommend measures described in the contingency framework in individual education and childcare settings – or a small cluster of settings – as part of their outbreak management responsibilities.

Control measures

You should:

1. Ensure good hygiene for everyone.
2. Maintain appropriate cleaning regimes.
3. Keep occupied spaces well ventilated.
4. Follow public health advice on testing, self-isolation and managing confirmed cases of COVID-19.

1. Ensure good hygiene for everyone

Hand hygiene

Frequent and thorough hand cleaning is now regular practice. We will continue to ensure that pupils clean their hands regularly. This will be done with soap and water or hand sanitiser.

Respiratory hygiene

The 'catch it, bin it, kill it' approach continues to be very important.

The [e-Bug COVID-19 website](#) contains free resources, including materials to encourage good hand and respiratory hygiene.

Use of personal protective equipment (PPE)

Most staff in schools will not require PPE beyond what they would normally need for their work. The guidance on the [use of PPE in education, childcare and children's social care settings](#) provides more information on the use of PPE for COVID-19.

2. Maintain appropriate cleaning regimes, using standard products such as detergents

The school will put in place and maintain an appropriate cleaning schedule. This should include regular cleaning of areas and equipment, with a particular focus on frequently touched surfaces.

PHE has published guidance on the [cleaning of non-healthcare settings](#).

3. Keep occupied spaces well ventilated

When school is in operation, we will ensure it is well ventilated and that a comfortable teaching environment is maintained.

We will identify any poorly ventilated spaces as part of our risk assessment and take steps to improve fresh air flow in these areas, giving particular consideration when holding events where visitors such as parents may be on site.

Opening external windows can improve natural ventilation, and in addition, opening internal doors can also assist with creating a throughput of air. Where necessary, external opening doors may also be used (if they are not fire doors and where safe to do so).

We will balance the need for increased ventilation while maintaining a comfortable temperature.

4. Follow public health advice on testing, self-isolation and managing confirmed cases of COVID-19

When an individual develops COVID-19 symptoms or has a positive test:

Pupils, staff and other adults should follow public health advice on [when to self-isolate and what to do](#). They should not come into school if they have symptoms, have had a positive test result or other reasons requiring them to stay at home due to the risk of them passing on COVID-19 (for example, they are required to quarantine).

If anyone in school develops [COVID-19 symptoms](#), however mild, you should send them home and they should follow public health advice.

The main symptoms of COVID-19 are:

- a high temperature
- a new, continuous cough – this means coughing a lot, for more than an hour, or 3 or more coughing episodes in 24 hours
- a loss or change to sense of smell or taste – this means they cannot smell or taste anything, or things smell or taste different to normal

For everyone with symptoms, they should avoid using public transport and, wherever possible, be collected by a member of their family or household.

If a pupil is awaiting collection, they should be left in a room on their own if possible and safe to do so. A window should be opened for fresh air ventilation if possible. Appropriate PPE should also be used if close contact is necessary. Further information on this can be found in the [use of PPE in education, childcare and children's social care settings](#) guidance. Any rooms they use should be cleaned after they have left. The household (including any siblings) should follow the PHE [stay at home guidance for households with possible or confirmed coronavirus \(COVID-19\) infection](#).

Asymptomatic testing

Testing remains important in reducing the risk of transmission of infection within schools. That is why, whilst some measures are relaxed, others will remain, and if necessary, in response to the latest epidemiological data, we all need to be prepared to step measures up or down in future depending on local circumstances.

Our school will commence testing from 3 working days before the start of term.

Staff will undertake twice weekly home tests whenever they are on site until the end of September, when this will also be reviewed.

Confirmatory PCR tests

Staff and pupils with a positive LFT test result should self-isolate in line with the [stay at home guidance for households with possible or confirmed coronavirus \(COVID-19\) infection](#). They will also need to [get a free PCR test to check if they have COVID-19](#).

Whilst awaiting the PCR result, the individual should continue to self-isolate.

If the PCR test is taken within 2 days of the positive lateral flow test, and is negative, it overrides the self-test LFT test and the pupil can return to school, as long as the individual doesn't have COVID-19 symptoms.

Additional information on [PCR test kits for schools and further education providers](#) is available.

Other considerations

All clinically extremely vulnerable (CEV) children and young people should attend their education setting unless they are one of the very small number of children and young people under paediatric or other specialist care who have been advised by their clinician or other specialist not to attend.

Further information is available in the guidance on [supporting pupils at school with medical conditions](#).

You should ensure that key contractors are aware of the school's control measures and ways of working.

Admitting children into school

In most cases, parents and carers will agree that a pupil with symptoms should not attend the school, given the potential risk to others.

If a parent or carer insists on a pupil attending your school, the school can take the decision to refuse the pupil if, in the school's reasonable judgement, it is necessary to protect other pupils and staff from possible infection with COVID-19. The school's decision would need to be carefully considered in light of all the circumstances and current public health advice.

Attendance

School attendance is mandatory for all pupils of compulsory school age and it is a priority to ensure that as many children as possible regularly attend school.

Where a child is required to self-isolate or quarantine because of COVID-19 in accordance with relevant legislation or guidance published by PHE or the DHSC they should be recorded as code X (not attending in

circumstances related to coronavirus). Where they are unable to attend because they have a confirmed case of COVID-19 they should be recorded as code I (illness).

For pupils abroad who are unable to return, code X is unlikely to apply. In some specific cases, code Y (unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances) will apply. Further guidance about the use of codes is provided in the [school attendance guidance](#).

Travel and quarantine

Those aged 5 to 17 must take a COVID-19 travel test on or before day 2. More information is provided in the government's [quarantine and testing guidance](#).

Parents travelling abroad should bear in mind the impact on their child's education which may result from any requirement to quarantine or isolate upon return.

Remote education

Not all people with COVID-19 have symptoms. Where appropriate, the school will support those who need to self-isolate because they have tested positive to work or learn from home if they are well enough to do so. Schools subject to the [remote education temporary continuity direction](#) are required to provide remote education to pupils covered by the direction where their attendance would be contrary to government guidance or legislation around COVID-19.

The school will maintain their capacity to deliver high-quality remote education for the next academic year.

The school will work collaboratively with families and put in place reasonable adjustments so that pupils with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) can successfully access remote education.

Full expectations for remote education, support and resources can be found on the [get help with remote education service](#).

Pupil wellbeing and support

Some pupils may be experiencing a variety of emotions in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, such as anxiety, stress or low mood. There are useful links and sources of support on [promoting and supporting mental health and wellbeing in schools](#).

School workforce

School leaders are best placed to determine the workforce required to meet the needs of their pupils.

Clinically extremely vulnerable (CEV) people are advised, as a minimum, to follow the same guidance as everyone else. It is important that everyone adheres to this guidance, but CEV people may wish to think

particularly carefully about the additional precautions they can continue to take. Further information can be found in the [guidance on protecting people who are CEV from COVID-19](#).

Social distancing measures have now ended in the workplace and it is no longer necessary for the government to instruct people to work from home. Employers should be able to explain the measures they have in place to keep CEV staff safe at work. The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) has published guidance on [protecting vulnerable workers](#), including advice for employers and employees on [how to talk about reducing risks in the workplace](#).

School meals

The school will continue to provide free school meal support to any pupils who are eligible for benefits-related free school meals and who are learning at home during term time.

More information on [providing school meals during the COVID-19 pandemic](#) is available.

Educational visits

The school will continue to undertake full and thorough risk assessments in relation to all educational visits and ensure that any public health advice, such as hygiene and ventilation requirements, is included as part of that risk assessment. [General guidance](#) about educational visits is available and is supported by specialist advice from the [Outdoor Education Advisory Panel \(OEAP\)](#).