



COVID-19: outbreak management plan

Updated February 2022

The overarching objective is to maximise the number of children and young people in face-to-face education or childcare and minimise any disruption, while protecting those most vulnerable to increased risk from COVID-19.

The impacts of having missed face-to-face education during the pandemic are severe for children, young people and adults. In all cases, any benefits in managing COVID-19 risk should be weighed against any educational drawbacks and the additional measures described in this guidance should be considered only in exceptional circumstances and be time limited, to minimise disruption to face-to-face education and protect the most vulnerable.

Decision-makers will endeavour to keep any additional measures in education and childcare to the minimum number of settings or groups possible, and for the shortest amount of time possible.

Decision-makers will keep all measures under regular review and lift them as soon as the evidence supports doing so.

Attendance restrictions should only ever be considered as a last resort - neither contacts or siblings of positive cases should under normal circumstances be asked to isolate.

The government will try to give as much notice as possible of any changes to the way settings should operate.

1. Introduction

This plan is based on the [contingency framework for managing local outbreaks](#) of COVID-19, provided by the Department for Education (DfE).

On 21 February the Prime Minister set out the next phase of the Government's COVID19 response. COVID-19 continues to be a virus that we learn to live with, and the imperative is to reduce the disruption to children and young people's education.

The contingency framework describes the principles of managing local outbreaks of coronavirus (COVID-19) (including responding to variants of concern) in education and childcare settings, covering:

- good baseline infection prevention and control which can provide protection against infection and associated education disruption
- the types of measures that settings should be prepared for
- who can recommend these measures and where
- when measures should be lifted
- how decisions are made

Local authorities, directors of public health (DsPH) and their teams, and the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) health protection teams should follow the principles and can recommend measures described in this guidance in individual education and childcare 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.

We will only implement the measures in this plan in response to recommendations provided by the DfE, Director of Public Health (DPH), Public Health England (PHE) health protection team or Local Authority (LA).

It may be necessary to implement these measures in the following circumstances, for example:

- ✓ To help manage a COVID-19 outbreak within the school
- ✓ If COVID-19 infection rates in the community are extremely high, and other measures have failed to reduce transmission
- ✓ As part of a package of measures responding to a 'variant of concern' (VoC)

The operational guidance sets out the measures that all education settings should have in place to manage COVID-19 risk day-to-day. For most settings, it will make sense to think about taking extra action if they face severe operational disruption to face-to-face education.

The thresholds, detailed below, can be used as an indication for when to seek public health advice. These include:

- a higher than previously experienced and/or rapidly increasing number of staff or student absences due to COVID-19 infection

- evidence of severe disease due to COVID-19, for example if a pupil, student, child or staff member is admitted to hospital due to COVID-19
- a cluster of cases where there are concerns about the health needs of vulnerable staff or students within the affected group

Should we reach this threshold, the Headteacher (or AHTs in his absences) will contact PHE and our LA School Improvement Partner, to inform and seek advice; the chair of governors will also be informed. Any decisions to make short term changes to our provision in line with this plan will be communicated to Parents/Guardians via Parentmail as soon as possible. Staff and governors will be notified via email.

2. Risk Assessment

Should any of the above thresholds be met, we will immediately review our current Covid risk assessment to review and reinforce the testing, hygiene and ventilation measures already in place, and consider what additional actions might be necessary.

If any additional measures are recommended, the aim is to ensure that these are used in the short term only. The additional measures below are all based on control measures from our 2020/2021 risk assessment, and as such, could be implemented at short notice in school following the plans in place from the previous year.

3. Baseline Measures

The operational guidance sets out the infection prevention and control measures that we have in place as good practice. These measures will help to manage COVID-19 risk.

This includes:

1. Pupils, staff and other adults with COVID-19 symptoms, a positive test result, or who are a close contact of a case should follow the guidance for people with COVID-19 and their contacts.
2. Pupils and staff should return to school as soon as they can, in line with the guidance for people with COVID-19 and their contacts. We will implement remote learning arrangements so that any child who is well enough to learn from home can do so.
3. We will continue to ensure good hygiene for everyone, maintain appropriate cleaning regimes, keep occupied spaces well ventilated, and follow public health advice on testing, self-isolation and managing confirmed cases of COVID-19.
4. We will continue to encourage coronavirus (COVID-19) vaccination uptake for eligible staff.

4. Other measures

If recommended, we will limit:

- ✓ Visitors to the school
- ✓ Parents coming into school
- ✓ Use of volunteers
- ✓ Events such as live performances or open sessions
- ✓ Extra-curricular activities
- ✓ Residential educational visits
- ✓ Contact between different groups of pupils on site

If recommended, we may also re-introduce:

- ✓ Restrictions of numbers of staff permitted to use shared areas such as the staff room at any one time.
- ✓ Increased use of masks for adults on the school site
- ✓ Year group or class 'bubbles' to limit contact between children on site

In accordance with DfE guidance, the school will not be making use of the 'bubble' system to limit contact between pupils / staff from different year groups as part of the Covid risk assessment. However, in the event of a local outbreak, the school may limit contact between children from different classes / year groups for a period of time, particularly if this helps to ensure that pupils are able to remain in school.

For example, break/ lunchtimes could return to the familiar rota system implemented successfully during 2020 / 2021 with allocated play spaces and packed meals taken in classrooms.

Assemblies and wider curriculum activities (clubs) could be held with single year groups at a time; staff mixing could be limited to those within their own year group.

The use of an additional staff room could also be reintroduced.

5. People that are vulnerable to Covid-19

Following expert clinical advice and the successful rollout of the COVID-19 vaccine programme, people previously considered to be clinically extremely vulnerable (CEV) will not be advised to shield again.

The situation is now very different to when shielding was first introduced. We understand a lot more about the virus and what makes someone more at risk from severe disease 13 from COVID-19. The vaccine continues to be successfully rolled out, and other treatments and interventions are becoming available.

Individuals previously identified as CEV are advised to continue to follow the same guidance as the general public on how to stay safe and help prevent the spread of COVID-19. Individuals with a weakened immune system should follow DHSC and UKHSA advice for people whose immune system means they are at higher risk from COVID-19.

The risk to children and young people of severe disease from COVID-19 is very low compared to adults, even for those with chronic conditions. All children and young people over 5, including those who have been identified by their medical team as being at higher risk, are eligible for COVID-19 vaccinations. They should attend their education setting unless advised otherwise by a health care professional or medical team.

Individuals should consider advice from their health professional on whether additional precautions are right for them.

6. Attendance restrictions

High-quality face-to-face education remains a government priority. Attendance restrictions should only ever be considered as a short-term measure and as a last resort:

- on public health advice in extreme cases of operational disruption to staffing or where other recommended measures have not mitigated against risks to face-to-face education
- across an area, on government advice in order to suppress or manage a dangerous variant and to prevent unsustainable pressure on the NHS

In all circumstances, priority should continue to be given to vulnerable children and young people and children of critical workers to attend to their normal timetables. Where measures include attendance restrictions, DfE may advise on any other groups that should be prioritised. We will make sure our contingency plans cover the possibility, if they are advised, to temporarily limit attendance and we will ensure that high-quality remote education is provided to all pupils not attending.

7 Remote education

High-quality remote learning opportunities will be provided for all pupils if:

- they have tested positive for COVID-19 but are well enough to learn from home
- attendance at their setting has been temporarily restricted

On-site provision should in all cases be retained for vulnerable children and young people and the children of critical workers where they are able to attend. If settings have to temporarily stop onsite provision on public health advice, they should discuss alternative arrangements for vulnerable children and young people with the local authority.

8 Safeguarding

If attendance restrictions are needed in our school, we would be vigilant and responsive to all safeguarding threats with the aim of keeping vulnerable children safe, particularly as more children may be learning remotely.

We will continue to have regard to any statutory safeguarding guidance that applies to us, including:

- keeping children safe in education
- working together to safeguard children

We have a trained DSL (or deputy) available on site. And where this is not always operationally possible, they can be available to be contacted via phone or online video, for example working from home. Where a trained DSL (or deputy) is not on-site, a senior leader will take responsibility for co-ordinating safeguarding on site.

9 Vulnerable children and young people

Where vulnerable children are absent, we will:

- follow up with the parent or carer, working with the local authority and social worker (where applicable), to explore the reason for absence and discuss their concerns
- encourage the child to attend educational provision, 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 the discussions on the welfare of the child or young person and ensuring that the child or young person is able to access appropriate education and support while they are at home
- have in place procedures to maintain contact, ensure they are able to access remote education support, as required, and regularly check if they are doing so

If we have to temporarily stop onsite provision on public health advice, we will discuss alternative arrangements for vulnerable children and young people with the local authority.