

COVID-19: Guidance and model risk assessment for the safe operation of schools - Step 4 of the roadmap.

School Safety Guide

Document information

Document title	COVID-19 Guidance and model risk assessment for the safe operation of LA schools in Step 4 of the government roadmap		
Owner	SMBC - Corporate Health & Safety Unit		
Status	Draft	Version	0.1
Effective from	August 2021	Approved on	
Last updated	29 th July 2021	Last updated by	HSU/JH
Review date	Weekly, or as and when changes announced		
Purpose	To provide schools guidance and advise on how to update risk assessments for Step 4 road map out of Covid-19 pandemic.		

Introduction

Most legal restrictions to control COVID-19 have been lifted at step 4 in the Government's road map out of Covid-19. However, the government continues to manage the risk of serious illness from the spread of the virus whilst reducing the disruption to children and young people's education.

Government guidance and requirements set out in this School Safety Guide explains the actions that school leaders need to do to reduce the risk of transmission of coronavirus (COVID19) in your school.

Schools will need to be prepared to step measures up or down depending on local circumstances and have outbreak management plans in place if there was an outbreak in your school or the local area.

This school safety guide (SSG) should be read in conjunction with the latest Government guidelines for educational settings/schools:

- [Education and Childcare](#)
- [Schools operational guidance](#)
- [SEND and specialist settings: operational guidance](#)
- [Further education operational guidance](#)
- [Early years and childcare providers guidance](#)

It is important that school leadership make regular visits to the schools pages on the [Government website](#) to check that any of the above guides have been updated or any additional guidance produced.

Risk Assessment

In preparation for the Autumn 2021 term, schools must review their current risk assessment based on the system of controls set out in the latest guidance and summarised in this guide.

To assist schools a model risk assessment is available that schools can adapt and adopt. As with all our model risk assessments, any red font will need to be read and amended where appropriate to ensure that it is specific to your school. The controls listed in the risk assessment are based on the latest guidance for stage 4 of the roadmap.

Any changes to the risk assessment controls must be shared with employees and trade unions and any changes to school processes communicated to parents.

Mixing and 'bubbles'

The government guidance now is that "bubbles" are no longer required. This means that alternative arrangements for lunch, assemblies etc. can be removed. However, it may be necessary to reintroduce "bubbles" for a temporary period as part of any outbreak management plan or on advice from Public Health.

Tracing close contacts and isolation

Schools are no longer required to conduct contact tracing, as close contacts will be identified by NHS Test and Trace following a positive case.

From 16 August 2021, those who have been fully (double jabbed) vaccinated, children below the age of 18 years and 6 months, and other groups will no longer be required to self-isolate if they are contacted by NHS Test and Trace as a close contact of a positive COVID19 case. However, they will be encouraged to take a PCR test and other additional measures.

[Please see Government guidance for full details.](#)

Face coverings

Face coverings are no longer advised for pupils, staff and visitors in classrooms or communal areas. Although, the requirement has been removed in law the wearing of face coverings is still expected in enclosed crowded places where people come into contact with others they do not normally meet. This includes when using public transport and dedicated transport to schools, and if you are exempt from self-isolating but awaiting a PCR test result having been identified as a “close contact”.

Public Health might advise you to introduce the wearing of face coverings on a temporary basis if you have an outbreak at your school. This should also form part of your outbreak management plan.

Stepping measures up or down (outbreak management plan)

Schools should have a contingency/outbreak management plan in place outlining how the school will operate should the number of positive cases substantially increase. Further information on what thresholds might lead you to take further action can be found in the [contingency framework](#) along with what action to consider to help break chains of transmission.

If you have any concerns you should contact your local health protection team who can recommend additional measures to be taken by the school as recommended in the above framework document.

Controls

Government guidance for working safely through Covid-19 outlines the following control measures that schools (excluding maintained nurse schools or pre-reception classes) should take to help protect employees, pupils and visitors.

1. Ensure good hygiene for everyone

Hand Hygiene - schools should continue with frequent and thorough hand cleaning for both staff, visitors and pupils. This can be done with soap and water or an alcohol-based hand rub/hand sanitiser which should be readily available.

Respiratory hygiene using “[catch it, bin it, kill it](#)” continues to be important and this message should continue to be reinforced. The [e-Bug COVID-19 website](#) continues to have free resources to encourage good hand and respiratory hygiene.

2. Maintain appropriate cleaning regimes

Schools should continue with an appropriate cleaning schedule for areas and equipment with a particular focus on frequently touched surfaces using the PHE guidance on the [cleaning of non-healthcare settings](#).

3. Keep occupied spaces well ventilated

Schools should ensure that buildings are well ventilated when occupied and that a comfortable teaching environment is maintained.

You should identify any poorly ventilated spaces in your schools and take steps to improve fresh air flow in these areas. You should give particular consideration to ventilation when holding any events where visitors/parents are on site such as school plays etc.

[Please read the advice on air conditioning and ventilation on the HSE website.](#)

4. Testing, self-isolation and management of confirmed cases

When pupils, staff or other adults develop COVID-19 symptoms or has a positive test they should follow public health advice on [when to self-isolate and what to do](#). They should not come into school if they have had a positive test, have symptoms or need to self-isolate. Anyone developing symptoms should be sent home immediately.

Asymptomatic testing should remain in place for staff and secondary school pupils. At the start of the autumn term all secondary school pupils should receive 2 on-site lateral flow tests 3 to 5 days apart and schools will need to have arrangements in place to manage this. Twice weekly testing for pupils at home and staff on site should continue till the end of September when this will be reviewed.

Staff and pupils with a positive LFD test result should self-isolate in line with the [stay at home guidance for households with possible or confirmed coronavirus \(COVID-19\) infection](#)

Confirmatory PCR tests

Staff and pupils with a positive LFD test will also need to [get a free PCR test to check if they have COVID-19](#). Whilst waiting for 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 LFD test and the individual can return to school, as long as they do not have COVID-19 symptoms.

Further information

If you require any further information, please contact the health & safety unit via our shared email address: health_safety@sandwell.gov.uk.

Risk Assessment for: **Old Park Primary**

Location: **Wednesbury**

Assessment Date: 13.09.2021

Name of Assessor(s): **T Boddington**

Assessment Ref No: **Sept21**

Risk Matrix scoring guide:

Likelihood	
1	Very unlikely
2	Unlikely
3	Likely
4	Very likely
5	Certain

Severity:	
1	No Lost time
2	Under 7-day injury or illness
3	Over 7-day injury or illness (RIDDOR)
4	Specified injury or illness (RIDDOR)
5	Fatality, disabling injury or illness

High (15-25)	These risks are unacceptable; significant improvements in risk control are required. The activity should be halted with immediate effect until risk controls are identified/implemented that reduce the risk to an acceptable level
Medium (5-12)	Additional control measures should be identified and implemented to reduce the risks associated with the activity or workplace so far as reasonably practicable
Low (1-4)	Minimal control measures are required to be implemented to satisfy the level of risk. Maintain current arrangements for risk control

Hazard	Who might be harmed and how?	CONTROL MEASURES (existing workplace precautions/risk control systems in place)	What further action is required?	By Who and When?	Residual Risk rating			Date completed
					L	S	R	
Symptomatic staff or pupils attending school, or becoming symptomatic whilst on site	Teaching, non-teaching staff, children, cleaners, cooks, parents, visitors, contractors Illness – flu like symptoms through to fatality.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pupils, staff and other adults told not come into the school if they have <u>coronavirus (COVID-19) symptoms</u>, are having to self-isolate or have tested positive. Anyone developing COVID-19 symptoms, however mild, 	Optional staff <u>Asymptomatic testing</u> by use of lateral flow tests, introduced in school to identify positive cases more quickly and reduce transmission.	Senior Leadership Team – as and when arises	3	3	9	

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		<p>during the school day will be sent home.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pupils awaiting collection will be isolated in rooms with fresh air ventilation with appropriate supervision. Appropriate PPE will be worn if close contact is necessary. • Any rooms used for isolation will be thoroughly cleaned after use. • Further information on this can be found in the <u>use of PPE in education, childcare and children's social care settings</u> guidance. • Anyone with symptoms should avoid using public or dedicated school transport and wherever possible pupils should be collected by a member of their family or household. • Use of masks by staff when not teaching is optional. 	<p>Parents are able to obtain LFT for <u>Asymptomatic testing</u> family use.</p> <p>Any staff or pupils with a positive Lateral Flow Device (LFD) test result will self-isolate in line with the <u>stay at home guidance</u> and get a free PCR test to confirm if they have COVID19. If a negative PCR test is gained within 2 days of the positive LFD test they can return to school as long as they do not have any COVID symptoms.</p>					

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Lack of hand and respiratory hygiene practices and/or facilities	As above	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All staff and pupils made aware of the “catch it, bin it, kill it” protocol via signage posters around the school. All toilets and handwashing stations have liquid soap available. Additional sink units are in place in each playground for use during playtimes. Additional hand hygiene stations with alcohol-based hand rub (ABHR) available at all entry points and in all communal use areas and offices. Use of <u>e-bug</u> learning resources to promote and teach pupils the importance of good hygiene practices. Reception desk/area has Perspex screen/barrier. Enhanced/regular cleaning schedule in place that concentrates on common 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Briefings during assembly and in class to remind pupils of the importance of good hygiene practices. Regular checks made to ensure there is sufficient stock of soap. Regular checks made to ensure there is sufficient ABHR each day. Checks that cleaning is in place in line with <u>COVID19 - cleaning in non-healthcare settings</u> 	HT Premise Manager & site team	1	3	3	

Hazard	Who might be harmed and how?	CONTROL MEASURES (existing workplace precautions/risk control systems in place)	What further action is required?	By Who and When?	Residual Risk rating			Date completed
					L	S	R	
		<p>touch areas (e.g. door handles, light switches, bannisters, toilets, kitchens etc).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any contaminated waste (used tissues etc) is disposed of appropriately () and regularly taken away. 						
Poor ventilation leading to risks of coronavirus spreading	Teaching, non-teaching staff, pupils and visitors Illness – flu like symptoms through to fatality.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Windows/doors to be opened each morning in classrooms to allow for a free flow of fresh air. In cooler weather windows should be opened just enough to provide constant background ventilation in the day and opened more fully during breaks to purge the air space. Employees will ensure windows and air vents are fully or partially opened to improve natural ventilation. Where any mechanical ventilation systems are in 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any poorly ventilated spaces will be identified as part of the risk assessment, such as areas where there is no mechanical ventilation or natural ventilation such as open windows, doors, or vents and areas that feel stuffy. Steps will be taken to improve fresh air flow in these areas. If this can't be achieved the time and number of people in these areas will be restricted or areas taken out of use. For any events such as school plays particular emphasis should be given to ensuring 	HT/Premise Manager	3	3	9	

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		<p>place they will be set to maximise fresh air and not recirculate air.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Windows will be kept open in toilets wherever possible <p><u>See HSE information on ventilation and air conditioning</u></p>	<p>there is as much ventilation as possible and numbers will be reduced to a minimum.</p>					
<p>Child, young person or other learner becomes unwell with symptoms of coronavirus and requires personal care.</p>	<p>Teaching, non-teaching staff, first aider, etc</p> <p>Illness – flu like symptoms through to fatality.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> PPE is only needed in a very small number of cases including: if a child, young person or other learner becomes unwell with symptoms of coronavirus while in their setting and needs direct personal care until they can return home. A fluid-resistant surgical face mask should be worn by the supervising adult if 2 meters cannot be maintained. If contact with the child or young person is necessary, then disposable gloves, a disposable apron and a fluid-resistant surgical face mask 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> See latest <u>Government guidance for Test & Trace</u> Schools to ensure any PPE ordered meets required <u>specifications</u> 		3	3	9	

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		<p>should be worn by the supervising adult.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> If a risk assessment determines that there is a risk of splashing to the eyes, for example from coughing, spitting, or vomiting, then eye protection should also be worn and PHE guidance followed 						
COVID-19 Virus transmitted to those who are vulnerable	Employees and pupils who fall into the clinically extremely vulnerable or clinically vulnerable groups.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All CEV & CV pupils should attend their school unless they are one of the very small number of pupils under paediatric or other specialist care and have been advised by their clinician or other specialist not to attend. Pupils who live with someone who is CEV should continue to attend school as normal. New and Expectant mothers must follow the specific <u>guidance for pregnant employees.</u> 			2	5	10	

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Pupil wellbeing and support	Pupils experiencing anxiety, stress or low mood in response to the pandemic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Links and sources of support can be found here A therapist is available on site (fortnightly) to support pupils who struggle as a result of the pandemic. Eve Taylor is available on site more frequently to support pupils where needed beyond the child's trusted adults in their year group. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All staff to continue to update log of identified vulnerable pupils via My Concern. These identifications may be from the parent or as a result of staff observations or disclosures. 		2	3	6	
Spread of COVID-19 through Educational Visits	Teaching staff, pupils on trips and members of the public. Illness – flu like symptoms through to fatality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> See separate visit specific risk assessments for all educational visits (taking into account current public health advice, hygiene and ventilation requirements). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Refer to latest OEAP educational visits guidance during COVID prior to visit 		2	3	6	
Spread of COVID-19 through use of dedicated school transport or	Users of school transport for trips and events. Illness – flu like symptoms through to fatality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Where school transport is contracted to a third party. LA/School will regularly check/ensure that all operators are complying with Guidance on transport to school and other educational settings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 		1	3	3	

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public transport		<p>which gives operational guidance to reduce the risk of transmission of COVID-19 during pandemic.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Face coverings are encouraged to be worn by pupils aged 11 and over (who are medically able to) on any dedicated transport to school. • Any school operated transport should also follow the above guidance by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Ensuring good hand and respiratory hygiene by frequent hand washing and ensuring that 'catch it, bin it, kill it' approach is maintained. ○ Maintaining an appropriate cleaning schedule paying particular attention to frequently touched surfaces such as door handles, seat belts, arm rests etc. ○ Ensuring all vehicles are well ventilated when occupied by opening windows and ceiling 						

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		<p>vents whilst balancing need to maintain a comfortable temperature.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pupils should not board dedicated transport to schools if they have symptoms or if they have been required to self-isolate. • Dedicated or public transport will not be used, wherever practicable, if pupils are sent home from school with COVID-19 symptoms. 						
Lack of procedures for dealing with an outbreak	Teaching, non-teaching staff, pupils and visitors Illness – flu like symptoms through to fatality.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School has an outbreak management plan in place that identifies how it will operate if there is an outbreak in school or local area. • If an outbreak occurs school will contact dedicated local health protection team who will advise if any additional controls are needed. This could include the wearing of 			3	3	9	

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		face coverings for a temporary period. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> School will follow the principles set out in the <u>contingency framework</u> for education and childcare settings. 						
Other school specific		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 						

Assessment reviewed [Date]:	Reviewed by [Name/Position]:	Comments:
30.09.2021	Teresa Boddington	Based on LA first draft
13.09.2021	Teresa Boddington	Updated according to LA final draft and school/site specific arrangement