

**Frequently Asked Questions Relating to
Support Pupils with SEN and Learning Support Classes During Covid 19 Restrictions**

Question	Response
Should children who were previously shielding or live with someone who was previously shielding attend school?	Health have advised that no children need to shield at the current time. If parents/carers of learners with significant risk factors are concerned, we recommend schools/settings discuss their concerns and provide reassurance of the measures they are putting in place to reduce the risk in school/setting. Schools and settings should be clear with parents/carers that pupils of compulsory school age must be in school unless a statutory reason applies (for example, the pupil has been granted a leave of absence, is unable to attend because of sickness, is absent for a necessary religious observance, etc.). The Council's Equality and Diversity Team can assist with any queries in relation to protected characteristics, for example disability or BAME and the provision of reasonable adjustments.
Should children with dual placements attend both settings?	This applies to pupils attending, nurture, SEBD and PRU provision. Where a learner routinely attends more than one setting on a part-time basis, for example because they are dual registered at a mainstream school and a pupil referral unit (PRU), or other education otherwise that at school (EOTAS), setting or special school, the settings should work through the system of controls collaboratively, enabling them to address any risks identified and allowing them to jointly deliver a broad and balanced curriculum for the learner. (WG Guidance)
Children In the class do not understand social distancing, how do we work with them, do we/the pupils need to wear PPE?	In LSCs we recognise that it may not practicable to expect learners to maintain consistent social distancing of two metres. Staff should however seek to ensure some distancing between learners. This is based on medical advice and evidence which suggests that the risk of infection and transmission for children is likely to be lower. Practitioners should recognise that younger learners will not be able to maintain social distancing at all times. Schools should continue to teach children how to social distance using methods appropriate to the child's additional needs. E.g. Snail and hedgehog https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IBFn3hp05ok https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3nQgTywKmvQ

	<p>Risk assessments should be undertaken to determine the need for the use of PPE, See Appendix 4 RCT guidance, Coronavirus (COVID-19): Guidance for the safe re-opening of schools – September 2020 Version 5A</p>
<p>Staff wish to wear PPE or parents wish children to wear PPE for their own reassurance, are they allowed to?</p>	<p>No PPE is required when undertaking routine educational activities in classroom or school settings for children under 11 years of age. Non-medical face coverings are recommended where social distancing cannot be observed.</p> <p>Face coverings (or any form of medical mask where instructed to be used for specific clinical reasons) should not be worn in any circumstance by those who may not be able to handle them as directed (for example, young children, or those with special educational needs or disabilities) as it may inadvertently increase the risk of transmission</p> <p>RCT will provide PPE where a risk assessment or guidelines deem it is required. In all other circumstances, anyone wishing to wear PPE should provide their own. Staff should consider how this might impact on effective communication with learners with SEN.</p> <p>Social distancing and good hand hygiene should be promoted and observed at all times as the most effective methods to reduce the risk of infection. See also RCT guidance, Coronavirus (COVID-19): Guidance for the safe re-opening of schools– September 2020 Version 5A</p>
<p>What do we do about intimate care?</p>	<p>Children and young people whose care already routinely involves the use of PPE due to their intimate care needs should continue to receive their care in the same way; Staff using PPE should be made aware of the correct procedures for putting on and removing PPE.</p> <p>Intimate care plans should be updated to specify if additional PPE should be used. Gloves and aprons should 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. See also RCT guidance, Coronavirus (COVID-19): Guidance for the safe re-opening of schools – September 2020 Version 5A</p>

Who should undertake risk assessments?	Each school is required to submit a COVID-19 risk assessment to the local authority. If there are separate individual risk assessments or positive handling plans in place, these should be revised in the light of RCT guidance.
What do we do if staff risk assessment places them at high risk?	Staff members whose risk assessment dictates that their duties should be amended will be expected to undertake alternative duties under the direction of the Head Teacher in consultation with the co-ordinator responsible for the LSC . School may wish to reassign teaching assistant support so that those at lowest risk are able to support children who may struggle to maintain social distance. Please speak with the SEN Co-ordinator responsible for your LSC if there are difficulties in staffing the class See also RCT guidance, Coronavirus (COVID-19): Guidance for the safe re-opening of schools– September 2020 Version 5A
What happens with staff who are employed to support 1:1 if the pupil is unable to attend due to self isolation?	Staff will continue to be paid if there is funding in place for the post to continue. The support staff should continue to attend school and help the class teacher with the preparation and provision of blended learning for the child and carry out other roles at the school. By completing the Covid 19 Statement Review Assessment schools should proactively plan for blended learning of the statement provision should periods of self isolation occur so there is no delay or disruption in the delivery of the stated provision
How do we adapt provision identified in the statement for blended learning?	Statutory duties relating to SEN have not been relaxed. School will need to review the provision in the statement to consider how it can practically deliver this through a combination of face to face and blended learning. Schools should bear in mind that in the majority of cases the provision in a statement is written to be delivered in a full-time face to face educational context. Schools will need to be creative in considering how this provision can be delivered in a blended learning approach. Schools should identify how they will deliver the statement provision through the Covid 19 Statement Review Assessment and should also consider the impact of Covid 19 during the subsequent annual review. A question has been added to the annual review paperwork to prompt this discussion. The Learner Support Service and Educational Psychology Service can provide advice and direct to resources.

	Schools should manage parents' and carers' expectations so that they understand what learning will look like and why.
What do we do with SNSA hours in the statement if a child needs to self isolate?	Schools should provide support hours when the child attends school. During periods of self isolation the SNSA should be used to support teachers in the preparation of distance learning and could provide support to the pupil and family, for example explaining the methods they use when presenting a task or ensuring the family has the IT equipment they need and can use it. Schools should follow the most up to date safeguarding guidance on safe use of online learning approaches.
The child will not undertake any activity without hand over hand support. What do we do?	It is acknowledged that ensuring social distancing for children with additional learning needs/special educational needs can be challenging. It is also recognised that in some circumstances, there will be instances where it may not be reasonable or appropriate to maintain this degree of social distancing. Individual risk assessments should be carried out if there are significant health and safety concerns in relation to individual children or young people. Hand hygiene is critical before and after all direct contact with a child or young person, and after cleaning equipment and the environment. There is therefore no need to use personal protective equipment (PPE) when undertaking routine educational activities in classroom/school settings.
Are pupils expected to access subject specific lessons?	Yes, Schools should use their 'best endeavours' to take all reasonable steps to ensure learners can continue to access the full curriculum and access mainstream integration opportunities. This is particularly important for learners in LSCs undertaking examination courses.
What do we do if children become physically aggressive?	Risk assessments should already exist for learners with more complex needs, including those with emotional and behavioural needs. These risk assessments will require updating as a matter of priority in light of changes to provision such as environment and staffing, while also remaining mindful of the additional distress learners may be experiencing due to COVID-19. Fluid-resistant surgical mask and 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.

	Please see the additional guidance on challenging behaviour and use of RPI.
What do we do about supporting transition for pupils into and out of the setting?	Schools and settings are best placed to ascertain the most appropriate ways of working in order to support learners during the transition process, in particular from primary to secondary school. Ensuring the well-being of all learners is integral to this process, recognising the needs of individuals and supporting continuity in their learning and progression. For learners moving schools, the transfer of information between schools will be essential. Physical visits should be carefully managed to reduce the risk of cross contamination, Ideas schools could employ to support transition include virtual tours, with introductions to the building and key staff members, the use of photographs and social stories.
How can I contact Access and Inclusion?	You can continue to contact the service by either telephoning 01443 744333/01443 744344, by using the direct email for the member of staff you usually work with or via global inbox accounts ALNAS@rctcbc.gov.uk for queries regarding statutory work or A&IServices@rctcbc.gov.uk for queries regarding non-statutory work.
Can I request Statutory Assessment?	Yes you can. Please submit electronic paperwork to ALNAS@rctcbc.gov.uk
Can we get help to make provision in the statement?	Yes, please make a referral through LSS SPA or discuss with your EP
Can I still make a referral?	Yes – all referral routes are back open through the Portal, with SEN SPA running as it did previously.
What will happen to the support allocated through learner Support service?	The member of staff the pupil is allocated to will make contact with the school to provide advice and support and the best way to provide that support either through school visits or virtually. The Access and Inclusion School Visit protocol sets out how we will undertake visits to schools.
Can I access an EP?	The EPS has developed it's pathway to reflect a different way of working under the current restrictions. Details have been shared with schools and can be found here https://www.rctcbc.gov.uk/EN/Resident/SchoolsandLearning/AccessandInclusiontoEducation/AccessandInclusiontoEducation.aspx

	Schools can request a Phase A discussion via the Education Portal. Parents are able to request telephone support through the EPS helpline EPS@rctcbc.gov.uk .
What about pupils who are CLA?	Schools will continue to need to contribute to CLA reviews and PEPs and all statutory requirements around CLA pupils have remained in place. Any questions around CLA pupils and their education can be shared by contacting the CLA Ed team on email at LACReferrals@rctcbc.gov.uk
Is training available?	The Access and Inclusion Training offer for the new academic year is now available here https://www.rctcbc.gov.uk/EN/Resident/SchoolsandLearning/AccessandInclusiontoEducation/AccessandInclusiontoEducation.aspx . Where possible training has been transferred to online deliver, with many new short courses being developed to support staff working with learners with additional needs.