



## **RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**MUNICIPAL YEAR 2020/21**

**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**9<sup>th</sup> DECEMBER 2020**

**REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF HUMAN  
RESOURCES**

<b>'FIRE RISK ASSESSMENTS' A REVIEW OF PROCEDURES FOR COUNCIL OWNED/OCCUPIED BUILDINGS.</b>
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### **1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to present Members with an update on the Council's Fire Safety Risk Assessment process, as requested at the Overview and Scrutiny meeting on 12<sup>th</sup> November last year.

### **2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1 It is recommended that Members:

Determine whether the information contained within this report provides sufficient evidence that the Council's arrangements and processes for fire safety are adequate.

### **3. BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 Overview and Scrutiny Committee, at its meeting on 12<sup>h</sup> November 2019, considered a report, (link below) detailing the additional actions taken since December 2018 to improve the Council's procedures and processes for managing the risk from fire, primarily the introduction of 2 fire safety e-learning modules.

<https://www.rctcbc.gov.uk/EN/Council/CouncillorsCommitteesandMeetings/Meetings/OverviewandScrutinyCommittee/2019/11/12/Reports/AgendaItem7FireRiskAssessments.pdf>

Following discussion with officers, Members resolved:

- To acknowledge the contents of the report;
  - To build the newly developed E-Learning modules into all new employees induction courses;
  - That 'spot checks' are carried out on schools and Council owned buildings, in addition to the regular pre-arranged fire safety assessments, to ensure full compliance;
  - That the Council's fire risk assessors are tasked with undertaking fire risk assessments on schools and Council buildings on a rotational basis to prevent complacency; and
  - That a further report is brought back to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in four months to ensure implementation of the actions raised by Scrutiny Members.
- 3.2 Since the last report to Committee, the Coronavirus pandemic has had a major impact on the Council, with many of its buildings being closed, or operating at reduced capacity. Where possible, Council employees are currently working from home in line with Welsh Government guidance. Essential services have however continued to be delivered, and to enable these to operate as safely as possible, workloads and work priorities have had to be flexible to ensure support has been available where most needed. Throughout the pandemic, building compliance issues, such as fire safety maintenance programmes and fire safety risk assessments, have continued as planned.

#### **4. SUMMARY OF CURRENT FIRE SAFETY ARRANGEMENTS**

- 4.1 Members will be aware from previous reports to this Committee, of the current arrangements the Council has in place to manage fire risks at its portfolio of buildings. However, for Members convenience, these are summarised below:

**Policy** – the Council has an approved Fire Safety Policy (copy attached at appendix 1) which clearly defines the roles and responsibilities of all relevant parties in ensuring fire is appropriately managed. The policy is subject to regular review.

**Site Management** – every Council building will have a designated site / building manager (together with a deputy / deputies) appointed, who have specific responsibility for ensuring suitable controls are in place to manage the fire safety risks. To support these individuals the Council: has developed a number of Site Manager Guides (attached at appendix 2 is the guide for offices); provided various training; ensures advice and on-going support is available from a number of sources, including the Health and Safety Team, Corporate Estates and external fire safety consultants. In addition, there are various documents and templates available, including for example, a fire log book (which also gives guidance on tests etc. to be undertaken), example fire procedures and an example Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan together with guidance.

**Fire Risk Assessment** – every Council building has been assessed for fire safety by an external fire safety specialist. There is an on-going risk based programme of review for these assessments, for example, higher risk premises, such as residential homes, are re-assessed annually, whereas lower risk premises, such as offices, are re-assessed every 3 years. This programme of review meets (or exceeds) the recommended review periods contained in industry guidance. In addition, the designated site manager is responsible for undertaking an annual review of the current fire risk assessment to ensure it remains valid. The fire risk assessment is a comprehensive assessment that entails a detailed inspection and considers all relevant factors including current engineering controls and management systems in place at each location. Following each assessment, a report is produced and made available through an on-line system. Where actions are identified as being necessary they are included in an action plan, and compliance with these actions is monitored by key officers within the service areas, with regular (quarterly) performance reports produced.

**Fire Safety Working Group** – the Council has established a fire safety working group with representatives from each service area. A key function of this group is to receive fire risk assessment compliance reports and monitor performance, ensuring suitable action is taken where necessary. The group also considers all other fire safety matters including, for example, training needs, emerging trends and concerns. The group last met on the 28<sup>th</sup> November 2019, and was scheduled to meet on 19<sup>th</sup> March 2020, but this meeting was cancelled because of the coronavirus pandemic. Although the group has not physically met since, the representative officers have continued to receive compliance reports and been consulted on various fire safety matters. Regular communication has taken place with key members of the group to ensure the Council has

continued to meet its fire safety obligations during the pandemic, for example, appropriate fire safety procedures for schools and other Council premises. Formal meetings of the group are scheduled to resume early in the new year, via 'Teams'.

**Fire Safety Audits** – the Council's Health and Safety Team has a planned programme of fire safety audits. The programme is risk based and currently targets a minimum of 2 premises per month. Since the last meeting of Overview and Scrutiny Committee in November 2019, there have been 8 such audits completed. No formal audits have been undertaken since the middle of March. The fire safety audit programme initially targeted school premises and whilst schools will continue to be a priority, the Council's residential establishments will also be included in the next financial years programme.

## 5. UPDATE

- 5.1 Detailed below is an update for Members regarding the resolution at the November 2019 meeting of this Committee:

### **New e-learning modules to be built into all new employees' induction.**

The Council has introduced a new induction programme and the fire safety e-learning modules are included as part of the process. Fire safety has always been a compulsory part of induction although, as different service areas have different arrangements for fire safety training, the completion of the e-learning modules is not compulsory at this time. For example, within the social care setting, the Cwm Taf Social Care Workforce Development Partnership, based at Rock Grounds, Aberdare, arranges a number of different fire safety training events and approximately 500 staff were trained in 2019.

As of 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2020, 364 employees had completed the e-learning fire safety awareness course and 67 completed the e-learning Fire Safety for Site Managers course.

The Corporate Induction sessions are currently being held virtually on a bi-monthly basis, and a representative of the Council's Health and Safety Team attends each session. The e-learning fire safety modules are promoted to all attendees, and these include not only new employees but also any current employee that has changed position within the Council

**Spot checks are carried out on schools and other Council owned buildings in addition to pre-arranged fire safety assessments / audits**

Spot checks have always been an integral part of the Council's health and safety monitoring system and fire safety has been one of the priority areas for a number of years.

However, the majority of spot checks undertaken by the Health and Safety Team were ad-hoc (for example, when a visit is made to any Council building the officer would routinely check for compliance with fire safety requirements such as exit doors not blocked, fire doors not wedged open, extinguishers in place etc.). However, fire safety spot checks are now programmed into the Health and Safety Team's workload.

Fire safety spot checks are also undertaken by various other officers (other than from the Health and Safety Team). For example, within the Education Department there are officers that regularly visit schools and monitor compliance with a number of different areas, one of which is fire safety.

During the summer, the South Wales Fire and Rescue Service undertook an audit of school premises, initially concentrating on those schools open as hubs.

### **Fire risk assessors are tasked with undertaking FRA's on a rotational basis**

The Council has a contract with a fire safety specialist company, 'Riskmonitor' for the undertaking of its Fire Risk Assessments. Discussions have taken place with Riskmonitor and they have confirmed that they will allocate fire risk assessments to their assessors on a rotational basis. There may be rare occasions where this is not possible, due to timing and resource capacity issues, for example, the Council requires an urgent review or re-assessment of a building and the only available assessor is the one that completed the previous assessment.

## **6. IMPACT OF CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC**

- 6.1 Due to the changes in the way the Council delivers many of its services during the coronavirus pandemic, the fire safety risks may have changed, for example, where buildings are open, there may be fewer people in them and the need for social distancing needs to be considered when planning evacuations, etc. Site managers and Head Teachers have been provided with guidance and support to help them ensure the safety of their buildings and building users, including their fire safety arrangements. Appendix 3 is the 'Re-Occupation of Buildings during Coronavirus (COVID-19) – Guidance for Managers' and Appendix 4 is the 'Coronavirus (COVID-19) – Guidance for the safe re-opening of schools – September 2020 (version 6)'.

6.2 Due to the need to limit physical visits to premises, the Health and Safety Team are devising a format for undertaking desktop audits. Initially these audits will measure compliance with the management of 3 safety critical areas, Coronavirus, Fire Safety and Legionella. The desktop auditing programme began week commencing 23<sup>rd</sup> November with 12 premises targeted. Questionnaires have been sent to the relevant site manager with a 3 week date for return.

## **7. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS**

7.1 This is an information report, therefore, no Equality and Diversity Assessment is required.

## **8. CONSULTATION**

8.1 This is an information report, therefore, no consultation is required.

## **9. FINANCIAL IMPLICATION(S)**

9.1 There are no financial implications at this time.

## **10. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED**

10.1 The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 requires employers to have due regard to fire safety arrangements in the work place, including the need to assess the risk from fire.

## **11. LINKS TO THE COUNCIL'S CORPORATE PLAN / OTHER CORPORATE PRIORITIES/SIP**

11.1 The effective management of fire safety risks supports the Council's Corporate Plan by protecting assets, including staff and premises, which are required to deliver essential services well, and will also assist the Council live within its means by minimizing avoidable losses.

## **12. CONCLUSION**

12.1 Fire safety will continue to be a priority for the Council. The development and roll out of e-learning modules for site managers and staff to better understand the processes in place for fire safety, will further add to the robust management practices for ensuring the risks from fire are adequately controlled.



Version	2
Last Revision Date	October 2019



## HS 20

### Fire Policy

Mae'r ddogfen yma ar gael yn y Gymraeg  
This document is available in Welsh

<b>DOCUMENT CONTROL</b>	
<b>POLICY NAME</b>	<b>Fire Policy</b>
Department	Human Resources
Telephone Number	01443 425536
Initial Policy Launch Date	October 2017
Reviewing Officer	Mike Murphy
Review Date	October 2021
Date of Equality Impact Assessment	11 <sup>th</sup> September 2017
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Date:	Revised By:
October 2019	Mike Murphy
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## **1. INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 This policy has been produced as a result of the legal requirements set out in the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 (hereafter referred to in this policy as ‘the Order’).
- 1.2 In this policy, references to premises are references to sites and buildings, including any part of a site or building, for which the Council is responsible.

## **2. POLICY STATEMENT**

- 2.1 The Council's statement of intent is, so far as is reasonably practicable, to prevent an outbreak of fire in any premises in the first instance, and to put in place measures to ensure the safety of its employees and any visitors in the unlikely event that a fire does break out.
- 2.2 The Council intends to achieve this by complying with its duties under the Order which, for every premises, will include:
- taking the following general fire precautions:
    - measures to reduce the risk of fire, including the risk from arson;
    - measures to reduce the risk of the spread of fire;
    - measures in relation to means of escape;
    - measures for securing that, at all material times, the means of escape can be safely and effectively used;
    - measures in relation to the means for fighting fires;
    - measures in relation to the means for detecting fires and giving warning in the case of fire;
    - measures in relation to the arrangements for action to be taken in the event of fire, including:
      - (i) measures relating to the instruction and training of employees;
      - and
      - (ii) measures to mitigate the effects of a fire.
  - undertaking suitable and sufficient fire safety risk assessments;
  - making and giving effect to appropriate fire safety arrangements;
  - where necessary, eliminating or reducing the risks from, and establishing and implementing additional emergency measures in respect of, any dangerous substances;

- where necessary, equipping the premises with appropriate firefighting equipment and fire detectors and alarms;
- providing and maintaining appropriate emergency routes and exits that are suitably indicated by signs and, where necessary, provided with adequate emergency lighting;
- establishing and, where necessary, giving effect to appropriate procedures for serious and imminent danger and danger areas;
- ensuring that the premises and any facilities, equipment and devices provided in respect of fire safety are subject to a suitable system of maintenance and are maintained in an efficient state, in efficient working order and in good repair;
- appointing one or more competent persons to assist in undertaking the preventive and protective measures determined as necessary;
- providing employers of any employees working in or on the premises with appropriate comprehensible and relevant information on the risks to their employees and the preventive and protective measures taken in respect of fire;
- providing employees located in the premises with suitable and sufficient fire safety information, instruction and training;
- ensuring that, where premises are shared with any other organisation(s), the person responsible for fire safety for the Council cooperates and coordinates with any person appointed by the other organisation(s).

2.3 Relevant Group Directors are to ensure that a site or building manager, as appropriate, is appointed to take responsibility for fire safety arrangements for each premises (if necessary, in consultation with other Group Directors, such as when service areas belonging to different Groups occupy the same premises).

For a school, the person responsible for fire safety is the Head Teacher.

2.4 The responsibility for implementing the requirements of this policy and the preparation of an implementation strategy rests with each Director or Head of Service.

## **POLICY GUIDANCE**

### **3. FIRE SAFETY RISK ASSESSMENTS**

- 3.1 As part of the process of ensuring that it complies with its duties under the Order as described in paragraph 2.2, the Council will arrange for suitable and sufficient fire safety risk assessments (FSRAs) to be undertaken by a competent person at every premises, and for the premises to be periodically re-assessed where considered necessary.

This will help to ensure that all fire safety issues are properly assessed and that, where necessary, any required improvements are identified and implemented.

- 3.2 In order to ensure that FSRAs are suitable and sufficient, the Council will employ a specialist consultant to undertake them and, where necessary, periodically re-assess them.

The Council, in consultation with the specialist consultant, will determine the appropriate period between the FSRA and the intended periodic re-assessment for any particular premises.

- 3.3 The responsibility for determining which specialist consultant to employ to undertake FSRAs/re-assessments, and for appointing that consultant, arranging all necessary contract specifications and associated documentation and monitoring compliance with contracts, lies with the Council's Corporate Maintenance Section.
- 3.4 Before making the decision on which specialist consultant to employ to undertake FSRAs/re-assessments, the relevant officer(s) in Corporate Maintenance will consult with the Council's Corporate Health and Safety Team.
- 3.5 Site/building managers are responsible for ensuring that their premises has had a FSRA undertaken and that any periodic re-assessment is undertaken when due, liaising with Corporate Maintenance and/or the specialist consultant, as necessary.
- 3.6 Site/building managers are to liaise with the FSRA consultant regarding safety procedures that must be followed by the consultant's assessors whilst they are on site/in the building.

- 3.7 On completion of the FSRA for their premises, the site/building manager is to develop a prioritised action plan (where necessary, in consultation with technical officers in Corporate Maintenance) identifying any work/management duties required to be undertaken, names of persons or departments with the responsibility for their completion, timescales where applicable, etc.

It is the responsibility of the site/building manager to ensure that required actions are addressed and that the web-based FSRA is updated.

The web-based FSRA system utilised by the specialist consultant currently employed by the Council is called the RAMIS system.

- 3.8 Site/building managers must notify the FSRA consultant of any significant change to their premises that could affect the FSRA and which could require a re-assessment before any intended periodic re-assessment date.

Such a change could be, for example, an extension to a building, alterations to the internal layout of a building, a change of use of a building or a significant increase in the number of occupants in a building.

- 3.9 Site/building managers must review the FSRA annually using the re-assessment referral questionnaire form, and file the form appropriately on RAMIS.
- 3.10 Site/building managers must inform occupants of premises, both permanent occupants and any visitors, of any significant risks identified by the FSRA.
- 3.11 Where the Council only occupies part of a premises, the site/building manager must inform any person(s) responsible for the other part(s) of the premises of any significant findings that could affect the other part(s).

#### **4. FIRE SAFETY EQUIPMENT, DEVICES AND SYSTEMS, ETC.**

- 4.1 The Council will employ specialist contractors to install in premises all fire safety equipment, devices and systems, including signage, determined as necessary by the findings of the relevant FSRA.

- 4.2 The Council will employ specialist contractors to test, service and maintain to statutory requirements all appropriate fire safety equipment, devices and systems installed in premises, including any illuminated signs, to ensure that they are maintained in an efficient state, efficient working order and in good repair.
- 4.3 The responsibility for determining which specialist contractors to employ to install and/or test, service and maintain appropriate fire safety equipment, devices and systems, and for appointing those contractors, arranging all necessary contract specifications and associated documentation and monitoring compliance with contracts, lies with the Council's Corporate Maintenance Section.
- 4.4 Site/building managers must monitor to ensure that the specialist contractors are undertaking the necessary testing, servicing and maintenance of all appropriate fire safety equipment, devices and systems, and that records of the same are entered in the fire log book and/or on RAMIS.
- 4.5 Site/building managers must ensure that all required in-house checks/tests of appropriate fire safety equipment, devices and systems are undertaken and that records of the same are entered in the fire log book and, where appropriate, on RAMIS.

In-house checks/tests are also to include ensuring that:

- escape routes are kept clear of obstructions and can be easily used in the event of a fire;
  - any devices fitted to fire doors, such as door hold-open devices, work properly;
  - locking mechanisms to final exit doors, such as panic bolts and electronic door releases, work properly.
- 4.6 Where checks/tests indicate a fault, site/building managers must take appropriate action to remedy the fault and record details of the action taken in the fire log book and, where appropriate, on RAMIS.

False alarms are to be considered as a fault.

- 4.7 Where site/building managers delegate the duty of undertaking in-house fire safety checks/tests to other employees, they must monitor to ensure that those checks/tests are being properly carried out and that details are recorded in the fire log book and, where appropriate, on RAMIS.

In addition to undertaking such monitoring, site/building managers must evidence that they are doing so (one means of evidencing monitoring would be to periodically sign the fire log book record sheets).

## **5. FIRE-RELATED INCIDENTS**

- 5.1 Site/building managers must report fire-related incidents to relevant officers in Corporate Maintenance, and also to the Council's Corporate Health and Safety Team using the Council's Incident/Accident Investigation and Injury Record form HS 5(A).

## **6. FIRE SAFETY PROCEDURES**

- 6.1 Site/building managers must ensure that suitable fire safety procedures, including an evacuation plan, are developed and implemented for their premises.

Fire procedures must be appropriate to the particular premises and take into account the findings of the fire safety risk assessment.

- 6.2 Where premises include occupants that require assistance to evacuate, such as some mobility or sensory impaired disabled people for example, site/building managers must ensure that suitable personal emergency evacuation plans (PEEPs) are developed for those occupants, including both permanent occupants and visitors.
- 6.3 Evacuation plans, including those for disabled people, must not rely on the assistance of the Fire and Rescue Service to be effective.
- 6.4 Site/building managers are to ensure that fire safety procedures are documented and copies kept in the fire log book.
- 6.5 Site/building managers must ensure that fire safety procedures are brought to the attention of the occupants of their premises, both permanent occupants and visitors, including any contractors.

The posting of 'what to do in case of fire' fire action notices in strategic locations throughout a building can assist in informing people, particularly non-employees, about the fire procedures for a premises. Any such fire action notices must be consistent in the information provided and reflect the fire procedures developed for the premises.

- 6.6 Where the Council only occupies part of a premises and the fire safety procedures could affect occupiers of any other part(s), for example having to use the same escape route(s) in the event of a fire, the site/building manager must cooperate and coordinate with any person(s) responsible for the other part(s) of the premises.
- 6.7 Employees are not expected to try and fight a fire unless it is safe to do so and they have been trained in the use of firefighting equipment, or if they need to do so to make their escape from a building.

**Employees must not put themselves at risk to fight a fire – their personal safety must always be the priority.**

## **7. FIRE SAFETY INFORMATION, INSTRUCTION AND TRAINING**

- 7.1 Site/building managers must ensure that employees located in their premises are provided with all necessary fire safety information, instruction and training, and that records of the same are kept in the fire log book.

Training provided to employees is to be suitable for their roles and responsibilities.

- 7.2 Employees nominated to undertake additional duties in respect of fire safety, such as people appointed to undertake in-house checks/tests of equipment, devices or systems, people appointed to act as fire marshals to help ensure the safe evacuation of occupants in the event of a fire, or similar, people nominated in a personal emergency evacuation plan (PEEP) to provide assistance to a disabled person in an evacuation, or similar, will require training over and above that provided to employees in general.

Any employees nominated to undertake additional fire safety duties, such as to act fire marshals, must be competent for the role.

- 7.3 Training is to include carrying out fire drills to test the efficiency and suitability of fire procedures and evacuation plans.

A minimum of two fire drills a year should be carried out at each premises (at some premises it may be advisable to carry out more, for example, in schools it may be advisable to carry one out near the start of each term).

## **8. EMPLOYEES' DUTIES**

- 8.1 Employees are required to comply with all fire safety procedures.
- 8.2 Employees have a duty to report to their line manager any issues they become aware of that may adversely affect fire safety.
- 8.3 Employees are not permitted to misuse any equipment, system, device or similar provided in respect of fire safety.

## **9. RECORDS**

- 9.1 It is essential that appropriate fire safety records are kept and that they can readily be made available for inspection by, for example, visiting Fire Officers, since they are a means of evidencing that the Council is complying with its duties under the Order.
- 9.2 The following records must be kept, together with any others deemed appropriate for the particular premises:
  - details of any visits by Fire Officers;
  - the fire safety risk assessment, together with any measures implemented as a result;
  - in-house checks/tests of fire safety equipment, devices and systems, such as fire alarm call points, emergency lighting and firefighting equipment;
  - in-house checks/tests of escape routes, including devices such as door-hold open devices and locking mechanisms to final exit doors, such as panic bolts and electronic door releases;
  - details of action taken when checks/tests reveal faults;
  - periodic tests/servicing by specialist contractors on fire safety equipment and systems, such as fire alarm and emergency lighting systems and firefighting equipment;
  - details of any false alarms and action taken to prevent recurrences;
  - fire safety arrangements and procedures including, where appropriate, any personal emergency evacuation plan (PEEP) prepared in respect of the evacuation of a disabled person;

- details of any people given additional responsibilities in respect of fire safety, such as someone appointed to the role of fire marshal;
- details of fire safety information, instruction and training provided to employees;
- details of fire drills, including subsequent debriefing meetings, any issues identified in such meetings and the measures implemented to address those issues;
- evidence of monitoring by site/building managers to ensure required in-house checks/tests are being properly undertaken (where they do not undertake such checks/tests themselves).

## **10. ADVICE**

10.1 Advice on the implementation of this policy can be obtained from the Health and Safety Team, Human Resources, Ty Elai, Williamstown, CF40 1NY, telephone 01443 425531.

**SITE/BUILDING MANAGERS CHECKLIST**

	✓ As Appropriate		
	N/A	Yes	No
• Has a fire safety risk assessment (FSRA) been undertaken for the premises?			
• Are you arranging for any measures identified as necessary in the FSRA to be addressed?			
• Are you aware of any intended FSRA re-assessment date and that you are required to liaise with Corporate Maintenance and/or the FSRA consultant, as necessary, to arrange for the re-assessment to be undertaken?			
• Are you aware that you will need to notify the FSRA consultant of any significant change to your premises?			
• Are you aware that you need to complete an annual FSRA review questionnaire?			
• Are you aware that you need to report fire-related incidents to Corporate Maintenance and the Corporate Health and Safety Team?			
• If you share a premises with any other employer, are you aware that you must consult and cooperate with the person appointed by the other employer to be responsible for fire safety?			
• Are there appropriate fire safety arrangements and procedures in place including, where necessary, personal emergency evacuation plans (PEEPs) for disabled people?			
• Are there suitable and sufficient escape routes and exits, suitably indicated by signs, and are these inspected, tested and maintained in efficient working order?			
• Is any emergency lighting inspected, tested and maintained in efficient working order (including in-house checks/tests)?			
• Is any fire detection and alarm system inspected, tested and maintained in efficient working order (including in-house checks/tests)?			
• Is firefighting equipment inspected, tested and maintained in efficient working order (including in-house checks/tests)?			
• Is any other fire safety device, equipment or system inspected, tested and maintained in efficient working order (including in-house checks/tests)?			

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have employees been provided with comprehensible and relevant information on fire safety?</li> </ul>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have any outside employers or self-employed people working on the premises been provided with comprehensible and relevant information on the risks identified by the FSRA, the preventive and protective measures put in place and the identities of the person appointed to take charge of those measures?</li> </ul>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have employees, including any given additional responsibilities, been provided with appropriate fire safety training?</li> </ul>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are fire drills held at least twice a year?</li> </ul>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are debriefing meetings held after fire drills and are measures implemented to address any issues identified in such meetings?</li> </ul>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is there a fire log book for the premises?</li> </ul>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is all relevant fire safety information recorded in the fire log book?</li> </ul>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do you update the RAMIS system as required, and do you check that specialist contractors do so as well and inform Corporate Maintenance if there are any issues?</li> </ul>			

Completed by: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Signature)

Confirmed by: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Signature)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Print)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
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Site and Building Managers'  
Guide to Health and Safety  
in  
**Offices**





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Author(s): Health and Safety Team, Human Resources, Ty Elai, Williamstown

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Contact Number: 01443 425546



## Introduction

This guide has been developed to assist site managers understand and fulfil their duties under health and safety legislation. It draws attention to the main hazards found in offices, and provides information and guidance to safeguard employees and other persons who may visit or share the site e.g. members of the public, contractors, etc.

It is the responsibility of the relevant group directorates to appoint site managers, and deputies if necessary. Group directorates should contact Corporate Estates Asset Management Team who will coordinate and maintain an up to date database of site managers. Site managers must be provided with relevant information, instruction and training regarding their role and responsibilities. In large multi-occupancy or shared sites it is likely that the site manager will have a coordinating role for the management of health and safety throughout the site. In general, the site manager will have responsibility for communal areas and ensuring that the relevant maintenance and servicing of equipment and systems is carried out in accordance with set standards e.g. fire extinguishers, emergency lighting, portable appliance testing etc. The day-to-day management of individual offices, storage areas and kitchens etc., used by individual sections will be the responsibility of the relevant section head.

In large multi-occupancy or shared sites it is possible that the site manager will need assistance and cooperation from other site users on issues such as fire, first aid, traffic management, accident reporting and security. These arrangements should be documented and agreed with the relevant section heads. Please note, there is a legal requirement that where different employers share a workplace they must cooperate and coordinate with each other on health and safety matters.

Self Audit/Inspection Checklists are provided at the end of the guide and should be used by the site manager to direct their attention to areas that require regular examination.

## Legal Duties

As an employer, the Council has duties under the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 (the Act) to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare at work of all their employees, and others who might be affected by its undertaking. This includes the provision and maintenance of:

- a safe and healthy place of work and working environment;
- safe plant, equipment and working systems;
- safe handling, transport and storage of materials and substances;
- information, instruction, training and supervision to enable employees to recognise and minimise hazards;
- adequate welfare facilities.

Employees of the Council also have duties under the Act, the most important of which are to take care of their own health and safety and that of others who might be affected by their work activities, and to cooperate with their employer in all matters of health and safety.

In order to assist in the process of managing health and safety, the Council has developed Health and Safety Policies covering a host of specific topics. The policies can be viewed and downloaded from the Council's intranet site at [Council Policies](#).

The following pages provide information and guidance concerning the management of the main health and safety hazards likely to be encountered in an office environment.

Further advice and guidance can be found by either contacting the Health and Safety Team based at Ty Elai Williamstown and/or Corporate Estates based at Valley's Innovation Centre, Navigation Park, Abercynon.



## Asbestos

Asbestos is a naturally occurring fibrous material that has been a popular building material since the 1950s. It is used as an insulator (to keep in heat and keep out cold), has good fire protection properties and protects against corrosion. Asbestos is found in many products used in buildings, including ceiling tiles, pipe insulation, boilers and sprayed coatings, and because asbestos is often mixed with another material, it is hard to know if you are working with it or not. Some offices will have asbestos containing materials (ACMs) in some areas of the building, but generally speaking, if the building was built from the year 2000 onwards then this is unlikely.

The Council has a legal duty to control and manage the presence of asbestos in all properties under its control. To this end, Corporate Estates have undertaken surveys of Council premises and have developed a framework for managing ACMs that includes:

- the identification of ACMs in the building;
- the assessment of the condition of the ACMs;
- either removal, or management in situ which would include the development of an Asbestos Management Plan;
- providing information to employees and contractors;
- training for employees where required; and,
- appropriate record keeping.

The site manager will follow the Asbestos Management Plan provided by Corporate Estates and will:

- ensure they are aware of the emergency arrangements;
- keep the Asbestos Management Plan readily available and use it to manage and control any ACMs that may be present in the building;
- inform anyone who may work in the vicinity of the ACMs of their presence (e.g. maintenance staff);
- report any ACMs that might, or have become damaged to Corporate Estates for immediate action;

- contact Corporate Estates when any building works are planned including, refurbishments or demolition, running computer cables, electrical cables, plumbing etc.

If your premise has not received an asbestos survey, or as the site manager you have not received training/instruction regarding your responsibilities, please contact Corporate Estates.

### Additional Information/Guidance

- [Council Policy—HS24—Control and Management of Asbestos](#)
- The Site Asbestos Management Plan\*

\*Contact Corporate Estates for copy

**Two workers installing computer equipment were exposed to dangerous asbestos fibres after drilling into asbestos containing material. Although an asbestos survey had been carried out, this was not communicated to the contractor, and the contractor had not requested to see the asbestos survey report prior to the work commencing. Both the landlord and the contractor were prosecuted by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) following the incident.**



## Communication

It is the site manager's responsibility to ensure that there are clear and effective channels of communication throughout the site for information and guidance relating to its health and safety management, particularly in multi-occupancy/shared sites.

This can be achieved by holding regular meetings with other site users to discuss site based issues, circulating written information to ensure site users are kept appraised and ensuring safety signage is appropriate and adequate. Notice and information boards should be kept up to date.

The site manager must ensure that the HSE's health and safety law poster is completed appropriately and displayed where employees can easily read it. The poster includes basic health and safety information and lets people know who is responsible for health and safety on site.

Current legislation requires the employer to consult with employees on health and safety matters. Consultation involves not only giving employees information, but also listening to and taking account of what they say, particularly when they report problems, and before making any health and safety decisions. The Council's Employee Suggestion Scheme and Hazard Reporting Scheme can assist in this process.

Where building or maintenance issues arise, the site manager must inform Corporate Estates. Communication and/or co-ordination with Corporate Estates should ideally be done via an identified "single point of contact" for the site. It is the responsibility of the site manager to inform Corporate Estates immediately of any changes or contact details in respect of this person.

### Additional Information/Guidance

- [The Council's Employee Suggestion Scheme](#)
- [The Council's Hazard Reporting Scheme](#)

## Control of Contractors

The control of contractors within a site is very important. Contractors in an office environment may be involved in long-term major refurbishment work or everyday maintenance, such as servicing of the heating system, repairing damaged guttering, maintaining the emergency lighting system etc.

The site manager should always liaise with Corporate Estates and also follow the Council's Policy HS23 Managing Contractors, for the planning, selection, appointment and monitoring of anyone undertaking works. This includes:

- having clearly identified personnel who are points of contact for contractors and visiting workers;
- having all significant and unusual hazards and risks on site clearly identified;
- exchanging information on hazards and risks.

The site manager will ensure effective communication is established and maintained through:

- regular workplace meetings with contractors;
- providing contractors with copies of appropriate hazard registers, such as the asbestos register;
- informing employees and visitors about hazards on site;
- having effective signing in and out procedures for contractors;
- informing contractors of emergency site procedures e.g. fire evacuation plan
- sharing findings of risk assessments with contractors;
- asking contractors about the hazards and risks which they are bringing on site (e.g. creating noise, dust, fumes);
- informing employees and visitors about any possible interference with normal working practices (e.g. re-routing of emergency escape routes);
- monitoring the work against agreed methods.

Any issues or unsafe practice concerning the work of contractors must be reported to Corporate Estates.

### Additional Information/Guidance

- [Council Policy HS23—Managing Contractors](#)
- [Using Contractors—A brief guide—HSE](#)



## Control of Substances Hazardous to Health

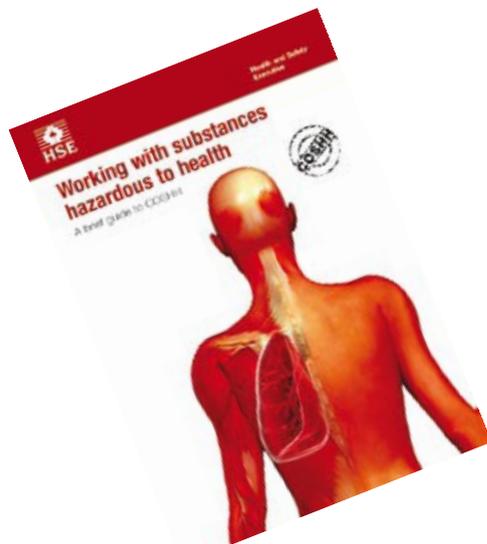
The Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002 (COSHH) require employers to prevent or control exposure to hazardous substances. This would include substances listed as: very toxic; toxic; harmful; corrosive; irritant; and, microorganism. They can be in the form of a solid, liquid, gas, vapour or microorganism, and can endanger life by being: inhaled; ingested; or, absorbed/injected through the skin or mucous membranes.

In offices these substances could include general cleaning materials, adhesives, photocopier toner, etc. In general, these types of product are used by cleaners and caretakers. Responsibility for the undertaking of COSHH Assessments and the development of appropriate control measures is the responsibility of line managers.

The site manager must liaise, where required, with the line managers to ensure materials are stored and used appropriately.

The site manager must report back any issues to those responsible.

All substances must be stored in their original containers and in accordance with manufacturers' requirements, and kept secured away from vulnerable persons.



### Additional Information/Guidance

- [Council Policy—HS3—Control of Substances Hazardous to Health](#)

## Electricity

Electricity can kill. It can also cause shocks and burns and can start fires. The Electricity at Work Regulations 1989 cover the use of electricity in offices. These regulations require employers to maintain electrical systems and electrical equipment within their control.

Electrical systems include the lighting and power circuits, and portable electrical equipment such as vacuum cleaners, power tools etc. All work carried out on electrical circuits and equipment such as installation work, inspection, testing and maintenance, must be carried out by a competent person. Fixed electrical installations must be inspected and tested at regular intervals. Corporate Estates have contracts in place for both fixed and portable electrical equipment.

All portable electrical equipment should be subject to periodic portable appliance testing (PAT). The frequency of the testing varies according to the appliance and its usage, although it is generally undertaken on an annual basis for office type equipment such as printers, computers etc. You will find stickers or labels on the equipment indicating when it was last inspected and the date when the next inspection is due. Residual Current Devices must be used where required. If you are unclear as to when the fixed electrical systems or portable equipment was last checked you should contact Corporate Estates.

Employees using portable equipment must visually check it prior to use, and report any damage or defects. For example broken plugs, frayed flex, discoloured or overheated cables. Defective or unsuitable equipment should be immediately withdrawn from service and labelled until it is either repaired or destroyed.

**Employees must not bring their own electrical equipment into the Council's offices.**

**Electrical switch-rooms must be kept free from combustible materials and never used as storage areas.**

### Additional Information/Guidance

- [Council Policy HS10—Electricity at Work](#)
- [Electrical Safety at Work—HSE](#)



## Fire Safety

The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 places a duty on the “responsible person” to ensure that a Fire Safety Risk Assessment (FRSA) is completed and regularly updated. If a current FRSA is not available on site, the site manager should liaise with their direct line manager to establish whether or not an assessment has been undertaken, and to request a copy of the resulting report. In the absence of a report, arrangements must be made for a FRSA to be completed. Corporate Estates can assist in this matter.

The site manager is responsible for overall management of the day-to-day fire precautions on site and will ensure that systems and arrangements are developed to:

- identify any significant findings from the FRSA and implement any actions required;
- check escape routes to ensure they can be used and are not obstructed;
- check the emergency exit devices on doors to ensure they work correctly;
- test fire alarm systems, including weekly alarm tests and periodic maintenance by a competent person;
- test and maintain emergency lighting systems, fire extinguishers, hose reels and fire blankets etc., including periodic maintenance by a competent person;
- record the training of relevant people;
- ensure a coordinated site based emergency evacuation plan is developed;
- liaise with other site users to ensure personal emergency evacuation plans (PEEPS) are developed for disabled persons;
- maintain the fire log book.



### The site manager must also:

- update the FSRA as required;
- liaise with Corporate Estates on building and maintenance issues; and,
- undertake an annual review of the FRSA.

As stated previously, in large multi-occupied or shared sites many of the fire related maintenance and procedural arrangements will need to be coordinated with other site users.

### The current fire related maintenance contracts in place and managed through Corporate Estates include:

- fire fighting equipment e.g. extinguishers - 1 service per year;
- fire detection and alarm systems e.g. smoke/heat detectors, alarm repeater - 4 visits per year;
- emergency lighting - 4 visits per year;
- gas heating systems - 2 visits per year (summer/winter) (the summer visit will include a gas safety check); and,
- gas safety check – annual (see reference to gas heating systems above).

The site manager must ensure that the maintenance is undertaken in line with the above contracts. Any discrepancies or uncertainties must be reported to Corporate Estates.

### Additional Information/Guidance

- Council Policy HS20—Fire Safety Policy (Draft)
- [Fire Risk Assessment Guide—Offices and Shops—HSE](#)
- [Fire Risk Assessment Guide—Means of Escape for Disabled People—HSE](#)
- Fire Log Book



## First-Aid

Under the Health and Safety (First-Aid) Regulations 1981 “Employers have a legal duty to make arrangements to ensure their employees receive immediate attention if they are injured or taken ill at work. It doesn’t matter whether the injury or illness is caused by the work they do. What is important is that they receive immediate attention and that an ambulance is called in serious cases.” The extent of first-aid provision will depend on a number of factors, such as the types of hazards present, the number of employees, the history of accidents, the proximity of medical services etc. This can be determined by carrying out a first-aid needs risk assessment. The approved code of practice (ACoP) for the regulations provides guidance to help employers meet their obligations.

The site manager will liaise with other site users to ensure that the required numbers of first-aid trained persons or appointed persons are available during the hours of work.

Sufficient and adequately stocked first-aid boxes must be provided and maintained by authorised personnel. The location of the first-aid boxes and the name(s) of the person(s) responsible for their up-keep must be clearly displayed throughout the site.

Records should be kept by the first-aiders/appointed persons of all treatment administered, and should include the name of the injured person, date, time and circumstances of the accident, and details of the injury sustained. This information must also be recorded on the incident/accident form.

The Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992 cover a wide range of basic health, safety and welfare standards. These regulations aim to ensure that workplaces meet the health, safety and welfare needs of all employees, including people with disabilities. The Regulations cover factors such as:

- **Health** - ventilation, temperature, lighting, cleanliness, waste materials, room dimensions and space, workstations and seating.
- **Safety** - maintenance, floors and traffic routes, doors, gates, walls, windows.
- **Welfare** - sanitary conveniences, washing facilities, drinking water, accommodation for clothing, changing facilities, facilities to rest and eat meals.

It is probable that the majority of queries received by site managers will be in some way related to these areas. The site manager should therefore make themselves aware of these regulations.

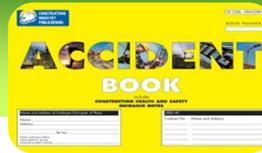
### Additional Information/Guidance

- [Council Policy HS12—Workplace Health, Safety and Welfare](#)
- [Workplace Health, Safety and Welfare—A Short Guide for Managers—HSE](#)

### Additional Information/Guidance

- [Council Policy HS9—First Aid at Work](#)
- [First Aid at Work—Guidance on the Regulations—HSE](#)
- [First Aid at Work—Your Questions Answered—HSE](#)

## General Working Environment



## Incidents/Accidents

It is the responsibility of all employees to report incidents and accidents that occur on Council premises or which arise from work carried out on behalf of the Council. Incidents and accidents must be reported on the Council's Incident/Accident Investigation and Injury Record form HS5 (A).

Certain incidents/accidents are also reportable to the Health and Safety Executive under The Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013 (RIDDOR).

The following are reportable if they arise 'out of or in connection with work':

- accidents that result in the **fatal injury** of an employee or member of the public;
- accidents that result in an employee suffering a **major injury** (fracture, dislocation etc.)
- accidents that result in an employee being **absent from work or unable to do their normal duties for more than seven days**;
- accidents that result in a member of the public suffering an injury and being **taken to hospital directly from the scene of the accident**;
- an employee **diagnosed with one of the specified work-related diseases**; or,
- one of the specified 'dangerous occurrences' – these do not necessarily result in injury but have the potential to do significant harm.

## Reporting Arrangements

In the event that a work-related accident occurs on the site, the relevant manager must notify the health and safety team in line with the timescales identified in the Accident Reporting Arrangement Guidelines.

Where an incident/accident occurs on site and involves an employee, it is the direct line manager's responsibility to investigate. However, the site manager must be notified in order that hazardous areas and trends can be identified and any repairs or remedial work can be organised. Where the incident/accident involves a visitor, member of the public or contractor then the site manager should investigate unless there are obvious reasons why the responsibility rests with a different manager.

### Additional Information/Guidance

- [Council Policy HS5—Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences](#)
- [Accident Reporting Arrangement Guidelines—May 2012](#)
- [Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013—HSE](#)

## Interview Rooms

Interview rooms have an important role within the Council's office facilities as they provide an area of privacy where employees and members of the public can meet.

Where possible it is important that the interview room is in a location that prevents unauthorised access by the visitor(s) to the rest of the building. The design of the room should be such that it affords the employees a means of removing themselves from any violent situation, should it occur.

It is equally important that, where necessary, the interview room is fitted with a panic alarm for employees to summon assistance if needed. Arrangements should be developed for employees to follow in the event of the alarm sounding, and all employees must be aware of these procedures. Arrangements should include the need for the interviewer to check the room prior to the interview for any objects that could be used as weapons.

### Additional Information/Guidance

- [Council Policy HS13—Violence at Work](#)



## Legionella

Legionnaires' disease is a potentially fatal type of pneumonia, which is contracted by inhaling tiny airborne droplets or particles containing viable Legionella bacteria. Although healthy individuals may develop Legionnaires' disease, the elderly, smokers, alcoholics, and those with cancer, diabetes or chronic respiratory or kidney disease would be more at risk. Legionella bacteria are common and can be found in water systems, wet air conditioning plant, whirlpool baths and hydrotherapy baths.

Corporate Estates have undertaken Legionella Surveys of the water systems within Council premises and developed site specific Legionella Site Log Books.

The site manager will follow the Legionella Survey/Site Log Book and will:

- keep the Log Book updated and readily available and use it to manage and control the water systems in the building;
- carry out the monthly temperature monitoring as instructed in the Log Book;
- carry out weekly flushing of any low-use water outlets as instructed in the Log Book and record actions accordingly; and
- record the findings and report any failings to the Legionella Team for investigation/rectification.

If your premise has not received a Legionella Survey/Site Log Book, or you as the site manager have not received training/instruction regarding your responsibilities, please contact Corporate Estates.

### Additional Information/Guidance

- The Council's Legionella Survey/Site Log Book\*

\* Produced by Corporate Estates

There are always occasions when employees working in an office will need to move equipment, furniture, boxes etc. It is therefore essential that before undertaking these tasks, a risk assessment is undertaken that considers the factors below:

- avoiding hazardous manual handling operations where reasonably practicable —
  - is the job necessary?
  - can it be done in a different way?
  - can it be mechanised?
- assess any hazardous operations that cannot be avoided;
- reduce the risk of injury as far as is reasonably practicable -
  - add specialist sliders or wheels to furniture that has to be moved
  - provide sack trucks or trolleys
  - spread moving and handling tasks throughout the day
- ensure employees have received suitable and sufficient training.

The most useful assessments are set out in a simple format so that it is possible to quickly assimilate what equipment, techniques and numbers of employees are required to carry out the task safely. Simple tasks only require simple assessments, e.g. dividing large boxes into smaller loads. More complex tasks will require detailed assessment and will need to be recorded. In some instances generic assessments are acceptable, however, all assessments should consider the task, the load, the working environment and the individual's capabilities.

Clothing, footwear and protective equipment are other factors that have a direct impact on movement and the ability to adopt the correct posture while moving and handling. They should allow employees to perform a full range of unrestricted movements.

### Additional Information/Guidance

- [Council Policy HS4—Manual Handling](#)
- [Manual Handling at work - A brief guide—HSE](#)

## Moving and Handling



## Passenger Lifts

All passenger lifts must be thoroughly examined by competent persons, at least every six months. As well as the lift, the inspection/maintenance programme should include any release mechanism, alarm and communication device installed. Corporate Estates have contracts in place for the examination and maintenance of lifts, and the site manager should consult and cooperate with them, the lift manufacturer and/or the lift servicing/maintenance company regarding matters concerning the lift.

Site managers are responsible for ensuring:

- notices are appropriately displayed instructing that the lift is not to be used in the event of a fire (unless it has been designed as a fire evacuation lift);
- sufficient people are designated and suitably trained to act as “responsible persons” in the event of a lift breakdown;
- appropriate procedures are in place for responsible persons to follow in the event the lift fails, trapping someone inside it;
- notices are prominently displayed in/on/adjacent to the lift giving:
  - the names and contact details of the responsible persons
  - clear instructions on how to isolate the electrical supply to the lift
  - details of where any access panel and emergency manual lift door release keys are located
- only trained and competent individuals have access to lift machinery, and that unauthorised access to the manual cranking mechanism/lift electronics etc. is prevented;
- notices are displayed inside the lift explaining what to do in an emergency;
- any emergency telephone, bell or other device, fitted in the lift for summoning help, is functioning correctly and can be heard where assistance is available; and,
- emergency operating procedures are periodically tested.

### Additional Information/Guidance

- [Thorough Examination and Testing of Lifts - A simple guidance for lift owners —HSE](#)
- Council's Safety Bulletin—Lift Breakdowns—14 February 2012

## Site Security

Crime does sometimes occur in public buildings and usually involves the “opportunist” theft of property from unlocked or unattended offices, but it can occasionally involve physical or non-physical violence against employees. By ensuring that security, like safety, is non-negotiable, opportunity for crime can be substantially reduced. The site manager is responsible for ensuring that on-site security is effective and sustained at an appropriate level.

Procedures should be developed for locking and unlocking the building and for receiving and supervising visitors, and, where assessed as necessary, CCTV and magnetic swipe/proximity card access systems installed. All procedures and systems should be periodically reviewed to assess their efficiency.

All site-based employees should be made aware of security procedures and informed of their responsibility to follow them. Steps should be taken to monitor employee compliance with those procedures.

### Additional Information/Guidance

- [Council Policy HS13—Violence at Work](#)



## Slips, Trips and Falls

Most slips occur when the flooring or ground is wet or contaminated. Most trips are due to poor house-keeping. These types of accidents are seen by many as inevitable and many people may not take them seriously. However, the statistics prove that slip, trip and fall accidents cost employers and the NHS millions of pounds each year, notwithstanding the pain and suffering of those injured.

The solutions are often simple and cost effective. A suitable assessment of the risks should identify the necessary control measures. For example:

### Internal Areas

- floor surfaces should be kept free from obstructions and holes and defects repaired promptly, particularly those on staircases;
- handrails should be fitted on stairs;
- stairs should be maintained in a safe condition, kept free of obstructions and well lit;
- spillages should be cleaned up immediately;
- section heads are responsible for ensuring that the work areas under their control are kept clean, tidy and free from defects.

### External Areas

- steps and paths in outdoor areas should be kept in good condition and free from obstructions that could lead to slips or trips;
- changes in surface levels such as on ramps and steps should be clearly marked and lighting should be suitable and sufficient;
- steps should have a suitable handrail, and paths that are used during the hours of darkness should be provided with outdoor lighting.

During the winter months it is likely that the risk of slips, trips and falls will increase. Arrangements should be developed to ensure that the increased risk is managed appropriately. For example:

- undertaking a pre-winter risk assessment/ inspection of pipes, guttering, drainage channels, traffic routes etc., to ensure leaks are identified and repaired before the onset of winter;

- ordering supplies of salt/grit, and developing procedures to ensure adequate stocks are maintained;
- prioritising pedestrian and vehicle routes for gritting;
- agreeing the timing and frequency of gritting; and,
- informing other site users of these arrangements.

### Additional Information/Guidance

- [Workplace Health, Safety and Welfare—A Short Guide for Managers—HSE](#)
- [Council Guidance—Snow & Ice Management—A Guide for Site Managers](#)
- [Preventing slips and trips at work—A brief guide—HSE](#)



## Smoking

The Smoke-Free Premises (Wales) Regulations 2007 prohibit smoking in enclosed or substantially enclosed public places, including workplaces. There is no obligation on employers to provide designated areas where employees can smoke. However, if designated smoking areas are provided, they should be located outside the building and away from doorways, windows and pedestrian routes. Arrangements must be made to remove all smoking debris.

"No smoking" signs must be placed in prominent positions at or near each entrance, so that people entering can see them.

Please note that the Council's 'Smoking in the Workplace' Policy imposes restrictions on smoking over and above those required by the aforementioned legislation. For example:

- employees can only smoke in their own time;
- the restrictions on smoking apply equally to both tobacco products and e-cigarettes;
- employees or visitors are not permitted to charge e-cigarettes in the workplace and/or in vehicles owned, leased, hired or rented by the Council.

Every year about 70 people are killed and 2500 seriously injured in accidents involving vehicles in the workplace. Being struck or run over by moving vehicles are the most common causes of these accidents. Although the likelihood of being struck by a vehicle in an office site is low, the potential still exists. Vehicles likely to be encountered on an office site include cars, vans, delivery vehicles etc. Additionally, there may be occasions where building or refurbishment works may impact on the regular traffic management arrangements on site.

It is therefore essential that a risk assessment be undertaken to identify the potential hazards and to ensure that appropriate control measures are adopted.

The risk assessment should take into account items such as: the type of vehicles accessing the grounds; reversing vehicles; access for emergency vehicles; parking; pedestrian routes; vulnerable visitors; unsecured gates etc. Control measures could include: speed limits; adequate lighting; separate access/egress for pedestrians and vehicles; clearly marked and/or designated parking bays; assistance for reversing vehicles; close supervision of visitors; one-way systems etc.

### Additional Information/Guidance

- [Council Policy HS18—Smoking in the Workplace](#)
- [Smoking Guidance and signage—Welsh Assembly Government](#)

### Additional Information/Guidance

- [Managing Traffic Safety on Council Premises](#)
- [Workplace Transport Safety—A brief guide—HSE](#)



## Traffic Management



## Visitors

Visitors to Council offices could include members of the public, contractors and other visiting Council employees. To protect visitors from harm, it will be necessary to know they are on site.

The simplest way of recording visitors' presence is by using a register and/or issuing a visitor's badge. Where practical, visitors must sign in and out indicating who they are visiting, the time they arrived and the time they leave.

Visitors must be informed of the risks to which they may be exposed whilst on site and any emergency arrangements, including the location of assembly points. Where an emergency arises, measures must be taken by the responsible person to ensure the visitor is accompanied to a place of safety. The responsible person may not necessarily be the site manager, but is likely to be the person who is meeting the visitor. Adequate supervision must be maintained while the visitor is on site.

Where disabled persons access the site, the responsible person must ensure, where necessary, that personal emergency evacuation plans (PEEPs) are developed for these individuals (See Fire Safety).

### Additional Information/Guidance

- [Council Policy HS15—Visitors in the Workplace](#)

The Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998 (PUWER) require the risk to people's health and safety, from equipment that is used at work, be prevented or controlled. Generally any equipment which is used at work is covered by PUWER. Work equipment in an office environment includes items such as, shredders, stepladders, trolleys, and photocopiers.

Work equipment provided must meet the requirements of PUWER, and in doing so it must be:

- suitable for use, and for the purpose and conditions in which it is used;
- maintained in a safe condition; and
- in certain circumstances, inspected to ensure that it is, and continues to be, safe for use.

Any inspection/maintenance must be carried out by a competent person and records kept. Where appropriate, employees will be expected to undertake visual inspections of equipment before use, and report to their line manager, any defects noted.

Risks created by the use of the equipment must be assessed, and eliminated where possible or controlled.

Employees using work equipment must receive adequate training, instruction and information for the equipment they are using.

Section heads are responsible for work equipment used solely by their employees.

### Additional Information/Guidance

- [Council Policy HS21—Work Equipment](#)
- [Providing and using work equipment safely - A brief guide - HSE](#)

## Work Equipment

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## **Self Audit/Inspection Checklists**

**(To be completed by the site/building manager)**



Policies and Procedures	Yes	No	Comments/Action Required
Have you access to all the current Corporate H&S Policies?			
Have you access to all current H&S Guidance? (Available on Intranet)			
Have you on display the completed Health and Safety Law Poster?			
<b>Asbestos</b>			
Have you a current Asbestos Register and Management Plan for your premise?			
Have you received training/instruction in its use including the emergency arrangements?			
Do you inform all contractors/maintenance staff / surveyors of the requirement to read and sign the register?			
Do you inform everyone who may work near asbestos of its presence?			
Have you arrangements in place that when you are not available a competent member of staff manages this process?			
<b>Communication</b>			
Are all site-based employees made aware of site safety arrangements?			
Are meetings with other occupiers held regularly?			
Has Corporate Estates been provided with current site contact information?			
<b>Control of Contractors</b>			
Have you arrangements in place to risk-assess how building work / maintenance / refurbishment works will affect the safety at the premise?			
Are Corporate Estates consulted and involved before and during construction/maintenance/ refurbishment works?			
Have you identified in-house personnel who are points of contact for contractors and visiting workers?			
Do you have arrangements in place to exchange information regarding hazards and risks with the contractors?			
Do you have arrangements in place to regularly communicate and meet with contractors?			
Are arrangements in place to ensure all site-based employees and visitors are made aware of hazards and risks associated with the contractor's work?			



<b>COSHH</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Comments/Action Required</b>
Is there an inventory of all hazardous substances used/stored on site?			
Have appropriate COSHH assessments been undertaken?			
Are substances stored safely away from vulnerable people?			
Are arrangements in place for liaising with cleaner/caretaker's line managers?			
Are arrangements in place to liaise with contractors regarding hazardous substances?			
Have all relevant employees been suitably trained concerning safe methods of work?			
Has suitable personal protective equipment been issued, and employees trained in its correct use?			
Are procedures for dealing with spillages in place?			
Are new employees trained before using substances?			
<b>Electricity</b>			
Have the electrical systems been checked by competent persons?			
Are appliances in good condition?			
Are plugs, sockets and leads in good condition?			
Are electrical leads prevented from trailing across floors?			
Are there enough sockets (i.e. sockets not overloaded)?			
Are RCDs used where required?			
Are regular visual checks of equipment carried out?			
Do only competent people check and maintain equipment?			
Are employees trained in the safe use of equipment?			
Are there mechanisms in place to safely deal with faulty equipment?			



<b>Fire Safety</b>				Refer to rear of fire risk assessment folder for annual fire safety self audit.
<b>First-aid</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Comments/Action Required</b>	
Has a first-aid needs risk assessment been carried out to determine the number of first-aiders and appointed persons required?				
Where required, are all shifts covered by suitable numbers of first-aiders and appointed persons?				
Are notices displayed detailing the location of the first-aid provision on site, including the identity and location of the first-aiders and/or appointed person(s)?				
Are all first-aid kits clearly marked?				
Are all first-aid kits, fully stocked, and regularly checked and replenished when necessary?				
<b>General Working Environment</b>				
Are floor surfaces suitable, flat, free from trip hazards and properly maintained?				
Have you arrangements for cleaning up spillages?				
Are carpets in good condition?				
Are stairs well lit?				
Is the stair covering in good condition and clean?				
Are stairs free from obstructions?				
Are lighting levels sufficient including those in corridors and stairs?				
Is there sufficient ventilation?				
Is glazing in good condition ?				
Are window restrictors in place, where required?				



Incidents/Accidents	Yes	No	Comments/Action Required
Are all incidents and accidents investigated and reported appropriately within set timescales?			
Are records kept at the premise of all incidents and accidents?			
Are incidents / accidents reviewed to identify trends?			
<b>Interview Rooms</b>			
Is the interview room appropriately located to prevent unauthorised access to the rest of the building?			
Has the room been designed to allow employees to safely leave if they feel threatened?			
Is there a panic alarm installed?			
Are procedures in place for employees to follow in the event the alarm is activated?			
Are alarms regularly tested?			
Is the room free of objects that could be used as weapons?			
<b>Legionella</b>			
Have you a Legionella Survey/Site Logbook?			
Have you received training/instruction regarding your responsibilities?			
Do you undertake weekly flushing of low-use water outlets as instructed in the Legionella Survey/Site Log Book?			
Do you carry out monthly water temperature checks as instructed in the Legionella Survey/Site Log Book?			



Moving and Handling	Yes	No	Comments/Action Required
Is moving and handling avoided where possible?			
Have all manual handling tasks been assessed and preventative measures implemented?			
Do assessments cover the load, work method, workplace, working environment and individual capability?			
Are appropriate lifting and handling aids available and used?			
Are employees trained in use of equipment and handling techniques as appropriate?			
<b>Passenger Lifts</b>			
Are all passenger lifts maintained and inspected in accordance with set contract (contact Corporate Estates)?			
Is there signage outside the lift indicating that it must not be used in the event of a fire?			
Are there emergency procedures in place if the lift fails and people are trapped?			
Are there notices inside the lift stating what to do in the event of an emergency?			
If fitted, are checks made on the emergency telephone, bell or other device to call for assistance?			
Are drills carried out periodically to test the efficiency of the emergency operating procedures?			
<b>Site Security</b>			
Have suitable assessments of security needs been undertaken, and are periodic reviews carried out?			
Are there procedures in place for locking/unlocking the premises?			
Are there procedures in place for receiving and supervising visitors?			
Have all site-based employees been informed of these procedures, and is compliance with them monitored?			



Slips Trips and Falls	Yes	No	Comments/Action Required
<b>Internal Areas</b>			
Are floors in good condition?			
Are pedestrian routes free from obstruction and trip hazards?			
Are changes to surface levels clearly marked?			
Are work areas kept clear of trailing cables and other trip hazards?			
Are pedestrian routes appropriately and adequately lit?			
<b>External Areas</b>			
Are all steps and pathways in good condition and free from obstructions?			
Are suitable handrails in place for steps?			
Is there lighting for paths used after dark?			
Are procedures in place for clearing snow and gritting traffic routes?			
Have traffic routes been prioritised for clearing/gritting?			
Have sufficient supplies of salt/grit been ordered?			
Has suitable training and instruction been provided to relevant staff?			
<b>Smoking</b>			
Are appropriate "No Smoking" signs suitably displayed?			
If provided, are designated smoking areas located away from doors and windows?			
Have arrangements been made to remove all smoking debris?			
Have all site-based employees and others been informed of the restrictions on the use of both tobacco products and e-cigarettes?			
Are procedures in place to monitor compliance?			



<b>Traffic Management</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Comments/Action Required</b>
Has a Traffic Management Risk Assessment been undertaken?			
Where possible, are pedestrians segregated from vehicles?			
Is the car park adequately lit?			
Is all relevant signage clear and visible?			
<b>Visitors</b>			
Have you arrangements in place to account for all visitors?			
Are steps taken to inform visitors of any known risk?			
Do you inform visitors of the fire evacuation procedures?			
Have you "Personal Emergency Evacuation Procedures" in place for disabled visitors?			
<b>Work Equipment</b>			
Is the equipment in good condition?			
Is the equipment inspected in accordance with the relevant legislation?			
Are appropriate service/inspection records maintained?			
Have suitable and sufficient risk assessments been carried out?			
Have employees received appropriate training?			
Are records kept of employee training?			

Signature:

Date:







**RHONDDA CYNON TAF**

**CORPORATE ESTATES**

## **GUIDANCE FOR MANAGERS**

### **RE-OCCUPATION OF BUILDINGS DURING CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19)**

**Taking all reasonable measures to maintain physical distancing in the workplace:  
Guidance under regulation 7A of the Health Protection (Coronavirus Restrictions)  
(Wales) Regulations 2020**

**This document is available in Welsh or English and other formats are available when  
requested**

#### **Version Control**

<b>Version</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Author</b>	<b>Checked</b>	<b>Approved</b>
<b>C19.01</b>	<b>May 2020</b>	<b>Hilary Reid</b>	<b>Mike Murphy</b>	<b>David Powell</b>

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# **RE-OCCUPATION OF BUILDINGS DURING CORONAVIRUS** **(COVID-19)**

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## **1. BACKGROUND**

1.1 The Health Protection (Coronavirus Restrictions) (Wales) Regulations 2020 ("Coronavirus Restrictions Regulations") have been amended with effect from 7 April 2020 to introduce general restrictions on places of work, which were not previously covered.

1.2 Certain businesses were closed down and people were told to 'stay at home', protect the NHS and save lives. Employers were required to take every possible step to facilitate their employees working from home, including providing suitable IT and equipment to enable remote working.

1.3 It was recognised that not everyone can work from home and certain jobs require people to travel to their place of work. Everyone attending a place of work must take all reasonable measures to maintain physical distancing in the workplace to comply with guidance under regulation 7A of the Health Protection (Coronavirus Restrictions) (Wales) Regulations 2020, wherever possible.

1.4 A breach of the above regulation may result in a fine (the amount of which is unlimited) or fixed penalty. This is a change in law in Wales which is in force until 26 September 2020, with ability to extend.

1.5 As the restrictions are eased over the coming weeks/months and businesses re-open, the Council needs to be ready to respond to buildings being opened such as Libraries, Schools, Offices etc whilst still complying with the physical distancing rules until such time as the restrictions are fully lifted and there is no further threat of contracting the virus.

## **2. PURPOSE**

2.1 This guidance document sets out Rhondda Cynon Taf's approach to open buildings whilst applying consistent measures to protect staff and visitors in accordance with guidance under regulation 7A of the Health Protection (Coronavirus Restrictions) (Wales) Regulations 2020.

2.2 The guidance is specific for our built assets and does not attempt to deal with open spaces, parks or town centre facilities.

2.3 The guidance sets out practical measures for managers to use in the various workplaces and is intended to be used in conjunction with signage/specialist equipment for each building based upon specific risk assessments/building requirements.

2.4 Each section covers particular 'spaces' within the building and any spaces not included below specific to a building such as a classroom, will need to be assessed and similar principles applied to ensure compliance with the physical distancing within the workplace.

### **3. KEY THEMES**

#### 3.1 Managers must:

Ensure a suitable risk assessment for Covid-19 in the workplace is undertaken and implement any necessary controls. To ensure the risk is reduced as far as reasonably practicable managers will need to:

- Take reasonable measures to **ensure a 2m physical distance** is maintained between all staff, whenever possible
- Provide **hand sanitiser/wipes/ handwash arrangements** in appropriate locations
- **Not exceed** the max number of staff in the office, kitchen and toilets
- Ensure an **enhanced cleaning regime** is introduced for the office and workstations
- **Use virtual meetings where practical**, if physical distancing is not possible
- Ensure a **clear desk policy** is maintained
- Ensure staff **do not cross on stairs** – use one way travel wherever possible
- Restrict use of **lifts to 1 person** (and a carer) at a time
- Mark out **2m exclusion zones** in appropriate locations
- Use Kitchens for individual beverages only with **no food preparation**
- Consider having **staggered start/finish times** for staff to avoid gatherings in confined spaces
- **Communicate effectively with staff** and ensure they also adhere to the regulations and any site specific rules

#### 3.2 Staff must:

Inform their manager if they (or someone in their household) are in an 'at risk' category, and

- Ensure they are **symptom free** while working from the office
- Maintain a **2m distance** between themselves and colleagues wherever reasonable and practicable to do so
- **Regularly wash hands** with soap for a min. of 20 seconds
- Make use of **hand sanitiser/wipes** as appropriate if hand washing facilities not available
- Adhere to the **max number of staff** in the office, kitchen and toilets
- Adhere to the **clear desk policy** and ensure individual workstations are cleaned/sanitised before re-use
- **Use common sense** when moving around the workplace and be courteous to colleagues when waiting to enter spaces/use equipment

## **4. RECEPTION**

4.1 Objective: to ensure the safety of both visitors and staff

- Where possible, visitors should arrive only by appointment and the organiser should make arrangements with reception staff to achieve the smallest turn around time possible
- Use of temperature sensing equipment may be required
- Clear plastic (or existing glass) protective screens must be used to separate staff and visitors and allow for safe interaction
- Areas must operate on a one in/one out basis and if possible, the use of one way systems
- Where possible a separate waiting area should be provided
- Use of floor and wall signage both internally and externally (see section on signage) will help to remind staff and visitors of distancing requirements
- Doors may be propped open (subject to advice on fire restrictions) to allow for better visibility and reduced contact with door handles
- Sanitiser should be provided at reception counters
- Appropriate exclusion zones marked out
- Encouraging visits via remote connection/working where this is an option.
- Limiting visitor times to a specific time window and restricting access to required visitors only
- Maintaining a record of all visitors

## **5. DELIVERIES**

5.1 Objective: to reduce transmission through contact with objects that come into the workplace and staggering arrival and departure times at work to reduce crowding into and out of the workplace, taking account of the impact on those with protected characteristics.

Steps that will usually be needed:

- Cleaning procedures for goods and merchandise entering the site.
- Cleaning procedures for vehicles.
- Introducing greater handwashing and handwashing facilities for workers handling goods and merchandise and providing hand sanitiser where this is not practical.
- Regular cleaning of vehicles that workers may take home.
- Restricting non-business deliveries, for example, personal deliveries to workers.

## **6. CIRCULATION SPACE**

6.1 Objective: to maintain social distancing while using common areas.

- Staff/visitors must not cross on stairs wherever possible – most buildings can accommodate one way travel
- Staff will need to be alert at all times of distancing ability being compromised in these areas
- Good use of signage (see section on signage) will help to remind staff of distancing
- Doors may be propped open (subject to advice on fire restrictions) to allow for better visibility
- Opening windows and doors frequently to encourage ventilation where possible
- Appropriate exclusion zones marked out

## **7. LIFTS**

7.1 Objective: to reduce transmission by allowing for social distancing outside or inside a lift

- To be operated as one in/one out basis (with a carer if required)
- Signage to be clearly visible
- Queuing system to be utilised
- Appropriate exclusion zones marked out

## **8. FIRE RECORD SIGNING IN/OUT BOOKS**

8.1 Objective: to operate the procedure safely whilst still complying with fire safety regulations

- Sanitiser should be provided at the station
- Signage should be easily visible
- Appropriate exclusion zones marked out
- Staff to use personal pen to sign in /out (rather than communal pen)

## **9. SPACE/DESK UTILISATION**

9.1 Objective: to reduce transmission by creating an office space allowing for desk users to achieve relevant distances between them

- The advised maximum number of staff should not be exceeded
- Desk occupation should be allocated to achieve the appropriate space/distance between people this can be done in various ways often depending upon the desk layouts for example: diagonally, straight line, alternating etc
- If desk need to be used by more than one person then the clear desk guide will be explicit in this and user must clean desk after use
- Staff rotas may be needed in order to achieve safe distancing
- Moving desks apart may be possible to assist
- Use of screens between people/desks could assist
- Increase number of air changes/hr in rooms by adjusting ventilation and/or opening windows

## **10. CLEAR DESK POLICY**

10.1 Objective: to reduce transmission between desk users and allow for cleaning of desks to be achieved easily and consistently

- No personal items/paperwork etc are to be kept on desks at any time
- Pedestals must be locked or secured with tape and no items put back and forth onto/from the desk
- Desks, keyboards and telephones must be wiped clean before and after use
- Staff must not share desk phones and shall try at all times to use mobile phones

## **11. SHARED EQUIPMENT**

11.1 Objective: to reduce transmission by managing the use of these

- MFD's and similar equipment such as plotters should be operated on the basis of one user at a time
- Space for queuing should be identified
- Sanitiser should be made available
- Appropriate exclusion zones marked out
- Wipes to be provided for cleaning after each use

## **12. MEETINGS**

12.1 Objective: To reduce transmission due to face-to-face meetings and maintain social distancing in meetings.

- Using remote working tools to avoid in-person meetings, wherever possible
- Only absolutely necessary participants should attend meetings and should maintain 2m separation throughout.
- Avoiding transmission during meetings, for example avoiding sharing pens and other objects.
- Providing hand sanitiser in meeting rooms.
- Holding meetings outdoors or in well-ventilated rooms whenever possible.
- For areas where regular meetings take place, using floor signage to help people maintain social distancing.
- Limiting or restricting use of high-touch items and equipment, for example, printers or whiteboards

## **13. KITCHEN USE**

13.1 Objective: to reduce transmission and maintain social distancing while allowing staff to use the facilities

- The advised maximum number of staff should not be exceeded
- Only hot drinks to be made or cold drinking water from the dispenser
- Drinks must only be made for the individual needing/wanting one
- No food preparation is to be carried out in the space
- Food and drink which needs refrigeration can be placed in the refrigerators but must be placed in and removed swiftly and removed from the kitchen area for consumption
- Space for queuing should be identified
- Regular checks on the supply of sanitiser/soap should be undertaken
- Cupboards will be sealed so that no items can be held in the kitchen
- The advised maximum number of staff should not be exceeded
- Appropriate exclusion zones marked out

## **14. TOILETS**

14.1 Objective: to allow safe use of facilities while reducing transmission and maintaining social distancing

Toilets must be operated on a safe space distancing basis

- The advised maximum number of staff should not be exceeded
- Distance between hand basins and door cubicles must be able to accommodate staff passing whilst maintaining appropriate distancing
- A one staff in/one staff out policy may need to be implemented
- Where possible visibility of persons in the ancillary toilet area should be achieved
- Space for queuing should be identified
- Suitable hand wash facilities at the sink
- Regular checks on the supply of sanitiser/soap should be undertaken
- The advised maximum number of staff should not be exceeded
- Appropriate exclusion zones marked out

## **15. SHOWERS**

15.1 Objective: to reduce transmission and maintain social distancing while allowing staff to use the facilities

Where possible, showers must not be used unless they are required because of the work activity so in the event that they are needed;

- Users will need to provide their own soap etc...
- Nothing to be left in the space after use
- Ensure lockers and changing rooms are kept clean and clear of personal items
- Appropriate exclusion zones marked out
- Wipes to be provided for cleaning surfaces after each use

## **16. STATUTORY MAINTENANCE COMPLIANCE**

167.1 Objective: to ensure buildings that have been closed are maintained appropriately prior to staff returning

Prior to opening buildings, building managers should;

- Undertake a full building inspection for any obvious health and safety issues noting any degradation of the site including access and egress routes and car parking areas
- Liaise with Corporate Maintenance regarding all corporate statutory inspections and testing compliance undertaken during the building closure
- Ensure all routine Legionella flushing and/or testing has been completed
- Ensure all routine fire alarm testing has been completed
- Whilst testing of fire alarms and systems must be maintained, building managers are advised to resume fire drills and will need to consider what arrangements may be needed for social distancing, for example, perhaps additional assembly points. Managers will need to periodically remind staff of the procedures to ensure they are fully familiar with arrangements
- Inspection of the fire escape routes to ensure that they remain adequate and clear of any obstructions
- Physical check of all Internal & External fire doors to ensure that they open and close as intended
- Recommission any specialist plant/equipment in accordance with manufacturers recommendations

## **17. ACCIDENTS, SECURITY AND OTHER INCIDENTS**

17.1 Objective: to prioritise safety during incidents.

- In an emergency, for example, an accident or fire, people do not have to stay 2m apart if it would be unsafe.
- People involved in the provision of assistance to others should pay particular attention to sanitation measures immediately afterwards including washing hands.

## **18. SIGNAGE/EQUIPMENT**

18.1 Objective: to reduce transmission by means of the provision of multiple targeted message signs and the erection of physical barriers.

- Signage to be displayed in the following locations using signage as listed in Appendix A

<b>Locations</b>	<b>Sign Type</b>
Reception/waiting areas –signs	A,B,C,D, F,H,I,J,K
Kitchens	A,B,C,E,J, M
Toilets	A,B,C,E,J
Lifts	D,J
Staff notice boards and prominent locations on walls	A,E,K
Hand sanitiser stations	F,J
Hand washing locations	E,
Floor distance/direction markers	J
Doors to identify direction of travel	B,G,H,I,J
Hazard Marker tape to be used in front of lift doors to indicate distance spacing and in Entrance Foyers/Receptions to keep back/queuing	L

- Specific equipment will also be provided as listed in Appendix A
  - Additional bins for disposal of wipes
  - Additional temporary clear plastic screens for reception counters
  - Suitable quantities of sanitiser/wipes

## **19. FURTHER INFORMATION**

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19/offices-and-contact-centres>

<https://gov.wales/taking-all-reasonable-measures-maintain-physical-distancing-workplace>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-guidance-launched-to-help-get-brits-safely-back-to-work>

<https://gov.wales/coronavirus-social-distancing-guidance>

## **CONTACTS**

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[mike.murphy@rctcbc.gov.uk](mailto:mike.murphy@rctcbc.gov.uk)

# APPENDIX 1 – RCT APPROVED SIGNAGE/EQUIPMENT

**Type A** - Covid posters to be erected in prominent locations around the building including office notice boards, kitchens, toilets and communal areas;

**(COVID-19) - Coronavirus**  
**Physical Distancing in the workplace**  
**Office Accommodation Standards**  
**A guide for managers/staff**

Everyone attending a place of work **MUST** take all reasonable measures to maintain physical distancing in the workplace to comply with guidance under regulation 7A of the Health Protection (Coronavirus Restrictions) (Wales) Regulations 2020.

**Managers must:**

- Take reasonable measures to ensure a 2m physical distance is maintained between all staff
- Provide hand sanitiser/wipes in appropriate locations (e.g. entry/exit points, sign-in/sign-out, shared ICT kit)
- Not exceed the max number of staff in the office, kitchen and toilets
- Ensure an enhanced cleaning regime is introduced for the office and workstations
- Use virtual meetings if physical distancing is not possible
- Ensure a clear desk policy is maintained
- Ensure staff do not cross on stairs - use one way travel whenever possible
- Restrict use of lifts to 1 person (and a carer) at a time
- Mark out 2m exclusion zones at lift doors, entrance to building, the signing in book, etc.
- Use lockers for individual beverage only **NO food preparation**
- Consider having staggered start/finish times for staff to avoid gatherings in confined spaces

**Staff must:**

- Ensure they are symptom free while working from the office
- Maintain a 2m distance between themselves and colleagues whenever reasonable and practicable to do so
- Regularly wash hands with soap for a minimum of 20 seconds
- Make use of hand sanitiser/wipes as appropriate
- Adhere to the max number of staff in the office, kitchen and toilets
- Adhere to the clear desk policy and ensure individual workstations are cleaned/sanitised before reuse
- Use common areas when moving around the workplace and be courteous to colleagues when waiting to enter specialist equipment

**Should you have any queries please contact:**  
**Head of Operational Property:**  
 01443 281188  
 Corporate Estates will provide the maximum number of occupants.  
**Health and Safety Advisor:**  
 01443 425536  
 Corporate Health and Safety will be able to address concerns.

**RHONDDA CYNON TAF**

**(COVID-19) - Y Coronafeirws**  
**Cadw pellter corfforol yn y gweithle**  
**Safonau ar gyfer swyddfeydd**  
**Canllaw i reolwyr/staff**

**RHAID** i bawb sy'n bresennol mewn gweithle gymryd mesurau rheoli rhesymol i gadw pellter corfforol yn y gweithle er mwyn cydymffurfio â chanllawiau o dan reoliad 7A o Reoliadau Diogelu Iechyd (Cyfyngiadau Coronafeirws) (Cymru) 2020

**Rhaid i reolwyr:**

- Cynydd masnach a thodi rhesymol i storhau bod pellter o 2 fetr yn cael ei gynnal rhwng pob aelod o staff
- Parhau glanwydd, weipis dweipis mewn lleoliadau parhau, sicrhwyddhysoddiadau, wrth yrradi, llosgi, dylawiau amddiffydd, offer TOSH a'ya'n cael ei nannu
- Sicrhau bod nifer y staff yn y awyddfau, y gegin a'r toiledau ddim yn fwy na'r uchafswm
- Sicrhau bod system lathiau ffyn sy'n gwrthwyl yn cael ei ddyfynw ar gyfer y awyddfau a'r manau gwaith
- Cynnal cyfarfodydd arlein a'u ddaos dim modd caedw pellter corfforol
- Sicrhau bod gollod desglaw gllin yn cael ei gynnal
- Sicrhau bod staff ddim yn croesi ar y grisiau - ddefnyddwch system unffordd i'w bod hysbryth bobol
- Sicrhau bod dim mwy naag 1 person (a chynhaliwr) mewn lifft ar unrhyw oedeg
- Nodi a'ya' llaw i'w masnach cadw pellter o 2 fetr wrth yrradi, llosgi, mynachdwydd i gyfnewid, llyfr llofnod i'w newn, ac ati
- Sicrhau bod heud DDIM yn cael ei bennu gan unigolion yn y gegin - dim ond ddydddydd yn newn a'u hunan
- Ystyried bod staff yn dechrau gorfion ar wahand i amgoreiddi bi eu bod newn ddim yn ymgwgu newn llydddydd

**Rhaid i staff:**

- Sicrhau bod dim symptomau gyda newn pan maen newn gweithle yn y awyddfau
- Caedw pellter o 2 fetr rhwyngdy'n newn a'u cydwelthwylle bod hysbryth rhesymol a'u yrradi
- Glynu wrth y gollod desglaw gllin a sicrhau bod manau gwaith unigol yn cael eu glanhau/dihebio cyn eu ddefnyddio
- Deffnyddio awyrryryr offedrin wrth yrradi dweip gwaith a dangos cerbydau i gydwelthwylle wrth a'ya' llydd newn i llydddydddydddydddydd

**Os oes gyda chi ymholiadau:**  
**Pennaeth Eiddo Gweithleddol:**  
 01443 281188  
 Bydd modd i'w garfan Eiddo Corfforol nodi'r uchafswm o bobol mewn lleoliad.  
**Cyngorydd Iechyd a Diogelwch:**  
 01443 425536  
 Bydd modd i'w deud pryderon i'w garfan Iechyd a Diogelwch Corfforol.

**RHONDDA CYNON TAF**

**Type B** - Sign to be erected outside of kitchens, toilets and all/any small areas or rooms and reception areas

**UN I MEWN**  
**UN ALLAN**

**ONE IN**  
**ONE OUT**

**RHONDDA CYNON TAF**

**Type C** - Sign to be erected in prominent locations around the building including office notice boards, kitchens, toilets, reception and communal areas



**Type D** - Sign to be erected outside of the lift and at appropriate entry/exit locations



**Type E** - Sign to be erected in prominent locations around the building including office notice boards, kitchens, toilets, reception and communal areas



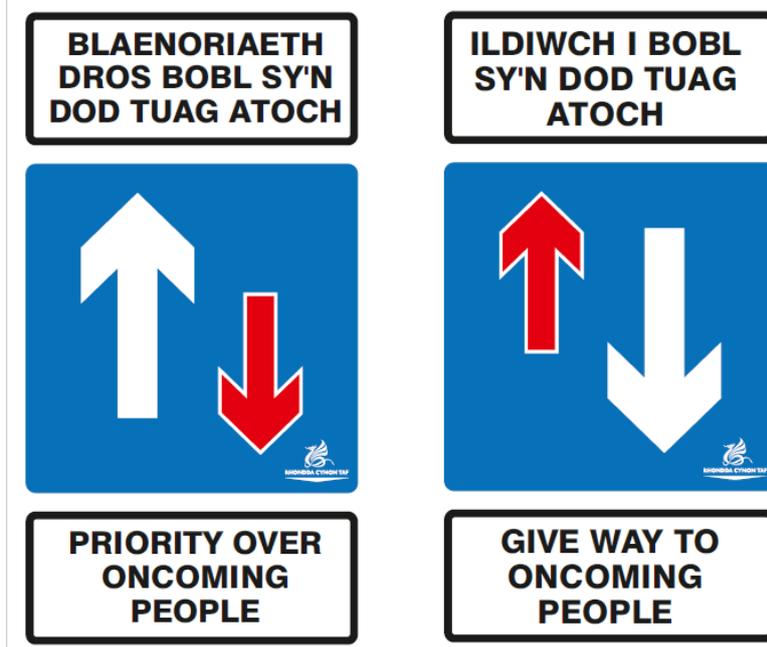
**Type F** - Sign to be erected at all sanitiser locations



**Type G** - Signs to clearly indicate one way systems around office areas including stairwells and on doors into rooms where one way in and one way out can be achieved



**Type H** - Signs to be erected at appropriate locations around the building to clearly indicate travel systems around office areas on doors and on walls in stairwells



**Type I** – Floor sign to be placed at appropriate locations around the building to clearly indicate travel systems around office areas



Type J – Floor signs to be placed at appropriate locations around the building to clearly indicate where safe distance queueing can take place around office areas to access kitchens, WCs, printers ,lifts, filing rooms and outside reception areas



**Type K** – Sign to be placed at locations where wipes can be disposed of in appropriate bins



**Type L** – Hazard tape to be used at appropriate locations around the building to clearly indicate travel systems around office areas, no-go zones such as clear areas outside lifts and to separate travel directions in corridors and stairwells.



**Type M** – Sign to be erected in kitchens/tea making facilities.

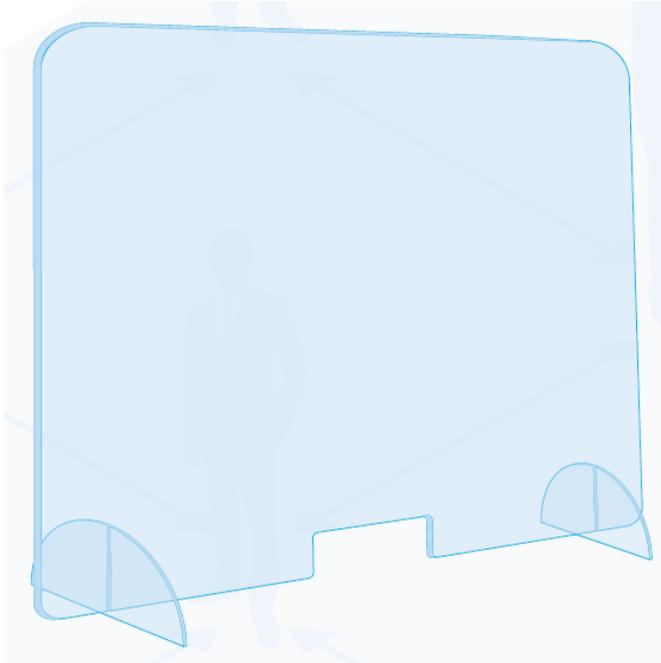


## Equipment

### 5L Sanitiser



Clear plastic screens for reception counters, manufactured to site specific measurements



## **APPENDIX B – FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQ's)**

Q1 Who is guidance aimed at? Building Managers or all Managers?

A1 The guidance is aimed at managers but managers with responsibility for buildings also have an over-arching responsibility. Staff will also need to read/understand the guidance to ensure compliance while attending the workplace.

Q2 How is the guide going to be distributed to staff regarding their responsibilities?

A2 It is anticipated that an e-version of the COVID poster will be issued to staff via one of the regular staff updates together with a link to a document on 'Source' for managers/staff to access and acknowledge they have read/understood it.

Q3 Is there specific guidance for spaces such as lounges in Care Homes and classrooms in schools?

A3 This guidance does not cover all eventualities and/or spaces, it is designed to provide guidance for the 'workplace'. It will be for Service Groups address specific spaces in their unique settings by adopting the principles set out in the guidance for the workplace. Corporate Estates and Health and Safety officers will be happy to assist as and when requested.

Q4 How will I get to know what new site procedures are in place?

A4 Managers are responsible for undertaking specific risk assessments before staff return to their workplace and a mini induction process will be adopted by Service Groups to ensure that all site/building/behaviour related changes are communicated to all staff.

Q5 Are staff being subjected to unnecessary risk by being asked to attend work/the office?

A5 No, as occupation of offices and work places will have been subject to a risk assessment where mitigation processes have been identified and incorporated into the return to work procedure, i.e. distancing at desk locations, sanitising, controlled movement to ensure distancing.

Q6 Are we only testing visitor temperatures to buildings - why not all staff?

A6 Staff should only attend the workplace if they are not displaying symptoms. It is possible to check everyone but this would be time consuming and will take up dedicated resources.

Q7 What will happen if I develop Covid-19 symptoms while at work?

A7 You will be asked to leave immediately and obtain a test/self isolate as appropriate. Your immediate working area will need to be thoroughly cleaned before anyone else is permitted to use it.

Q8 Managers are responsible for ensuring enhanced cleaning regimes are adopted - what are they? A8 Corporate Estates have liaised with Cleaning Services and enhanced cleaning regimes have been agreed, managers need to check they are content with the regimes and request additional measures if required.

Q9 What are the cleaning procedures for deliveries to site?

A9 This depends upon specific site circumstances and the type of deliveries. Where possible, pre-determined knowledge of impending delivery which will assist in this process. Protective gloves and wipes may be used by recipients.

Q10 Who will inform Service Groups how many staff would be in a building/room/kitchen and toilet? A10 Corporate Estates will identify the maximum numbers in readiness for re-occupation.

Q11 Who will supply the new signage and equipment needed to re-occupy buildings?

A11 Corporate Estates have worked closely with Procurement colleagues and will be providing a pack of signs/equipment to Building Managers. Any additional signs required in the future can be obtained by contacting the Head of Operational Property.

Q12 Who is going to install the signage/equipment?

A12 Managers will be responsible for their 'spaces' and building managers will also have an over-arching responsibility. Corporate Estates staff will be available to assist wherever requested.

Q13 Will staff have to bring their own sanitiser/wipes to work?

A13 Sanitiser/wipes will be provided at relevant locations for example; receptions, entry/exit points, kitchens, printers, etc. All sanitiser wipes to be disposed of in clearly marked specific bins.

Q14 What if more than one person uses the same desk/workstation?

A14 Workstations/desks should be cleaned by the member of staff using it prior to commencing any work, and at the end of the working day. Cleaning materials will be provided in each office.

Where desks are shared, the most straightforward way of managing this would be to assign one workstation/desk to no more than two people, and label both the workstation/desk and chair with the name of the two allocated individuals. In this situation, the attendance of the two individuals who share a workstation/desk will need to be managed so that they do not attend the workplace at the same time. For such shared workstations/desks, the requirement for members of staff occupying the desk to clean at the outset and end of the working day should be very strictly adhered to.

Q15 How will I achieve and maintain the clear desk policy requirement?

A15 Upon request from a manager, appropriate numbers of recycling and confidential waste bags will be provided. Items left on desks at the end of the day should be cleared into bins for removal.

Q16 Have the buildings been suitably maintained during the period of closure?

A16 Routine statutory maintenance/testing and weekly checks have been undertaken to ensure compliance. Building managers must liaise with the Head of Corporate Maintenance prior to re-opening a building/site.

Q17 Will the ventilation system increase the risk of passing Covid-19?

A17 No, ventilation systems will be set to 'by-pass' which will ensure air is not re-circulated. Increasing the number of air changes in offices by opening windows will also reduce risks.

Q18 Will vending machines be in use?

A18 No

Q19 How will building opening and closing arrangements work with staggered staff arrival/departure time?

A19 Building opening and closing times will be amended if necessary by dialogue between building managers and the Head of Operational Property.

Q20 Will there be new first aid kits?

A20 First aid kits will be replaced at each location.

Q21 Will the hot desk sites still operate?

A21 All dedicated hot-desking areas will remain closed and not available for agile working.



## Coronavirus (COVID-19)

# Guidance for the safe re-opening of schools - September 2020

Mae'r ddogfen yma ar gael yn y Gymraeg  
This document is available in Welsh

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## 1. Introduction

This guidance outlines the proposed phased approach to all schools opening on the 1<sup>st</sup> of September 2020, as outlined by the Education Minister Kirsty Williams, on the 9<sup>th</sup> of July 2020.

Further information is provided at

<https://gov.wales/technical-advisory-group-advice-return-school>

This technical and scientific evidence suggests ‘that the risk to children themselves of becoming severely ill from coronavirus (COVID–19) is very low’ and that the ‘balance of risk is now overwhelmingly in favour of children returning to school. Being out of school is detrimental for children’s cognitive and academic development and their health and wellbeing, particularly for disadvantaged children; and, can have an impact both in the short and longer term’.

Further information is provided at

<https://gov.wales/operational-guidance-schools-and-settings-autumn-term-covid-19>

This information aims to support schools to develop and maintain ‘reasonable measures’ to keep learners safe, and this information is provided as a framework to help school leaders to plan for the safe return of children to their local schools from September 2020.

Underpinning this guidance is the expectation that schools work in partnership with the local authority and parents and carers to ensure that approaches are adopted to ensure the safe return of all learners to school. This will build on the robust risk assessment planning and control measures put in place during the check in, catch up and prepare phase. These risk assessments will need to be reviewed in light of this new guidance, and revised risk assessment and business continuity plans shared with staff before the start of term and submitted to the local authority by the **31<sup>st</sup> of August 2020** at the very latest. Risk assessments should also include containment measures to be adopted in the event of a local lockdown and how continuity of education would be maintained in these circumstances.

There is an expectation that schools operate within the parameters of the guidance documents provided by the local authority, although there is recognition that headteachers, in partnership with their governing bodies, need to make strategic and operational judgements based on their individual contexts and the presenting challenges faced on a daily basis.

The safety of children and staff is of utmost importance and this advice seeks to support staff working in schools to deliver education in the safest way possible, focusing on measures that can be put in place to help limit the risk of the virus spreading in schools. These measures should aim to enable all learners to receive a broad and balanced



curriculum, which will enable all learners to learn and progress, both academically and from a wellbeing perspective.

## 2. Return of Learners to School

Our priority in Rhondda Cynon Taf is to ensure that we get all of our learners back into school as quickly and as safely as possible so that the positive benefits of being back in school can be achieved from September and to ensure the relevant safety measures continue to be in place thereafter.

Risk assessments should be regularly updated.

Nursery age pupils should also return from September with no modifications to access.

Post-16 consortia arrangements should continue but must be explicitly referenced in all risk assessments and planned in partnership with other schools involved.

Further guidance on post-16 learning delivery from September 2020 is provided at: <https://hwb.gov.wales/distance-learning/post-16-learning-and-skills/blended-learning-guidance-for-post-16-providers>

Risks should be mitigated through the appropriate use of preventative and reactive strategies

### Prevention

- Minimise contact with individuals who are unwell by ensuring that those who have COVID-19 symptoms, or who have someone in their household who does, do not attend school (Section 3: Symptomatic Learners and Staff).
- Minimise contact between individuals wherever possible. For younger learners the emphasis will be on separating groups, and for older learners it will be on physical distancing where possible. (Section 4: Social (Physical) Distancing).
- Clean hands thoroughly more often than usual, ensure good respiratory hygiene by promoting the 'catch it, bin it, kill it' approach and promote effective ventilation (Section 6: Effective Hygiene).
- Continue enhanced cleaning, including cleaning frequently touched surfaces often, using standard products such as detergents and bleach (Section 7: Effective Cleaning).
- Where necessary, in specific circumstances (set out later in the guidance), wear appropriate PPE (Section 15: PPE).

### Reactive Approaches

- Engage with the Test, Trace, Protect (TTP) strategy (Section 20: TTP).
- Manage confirmed cases of COVID-19 among the school community and contain any outbreak by following local health protection team advice (Section 21: Potential Outbreaks).



The updated list of Frequently Asked Questions is at [www.rctcbc.gov.uk/schoolfaq](http://www.rctcbc.gov.uk/schoolfaq) to support parental/carers queries.

**Key actions:**

- Regularly update risk assessments.
- Plan the content and timing of communications to parents and pupils (including discussing attendance expectations and other specific things that parents should do to help prepare returning pupils, for example, arrangements for drop-off/collection).
- Aim to ensure an effective range of preventative and reactive measures and that these are included in the risk assessment.
- Ensure that learners with statements of SEN have support in place as specified in their statement of SEN and alert the local authority of any staffing capacity challenges.
- Put in place provision for pupils with SEN in conjunction with families and other agencies and engage with the LA/agencies to provide support.
- Agree what arrangements should be put in place for dual-registered or collaborative post 16 arrangements with the other educational settings.

### 3. Symptomatic Learners and Staff

In accordance with Public Health Wales advice, under no circumstances should learners or staff attend schools/settings if they:

- feel unwell with any of the four identified COVID-19 symptoms (a new continuous cough, or a high temperature or loss of or change to their sense of taste or smell), or
- they have tested positive to COVID-19 in the past 10 days, or
- they live in a household or are part of an extended household with someone who has symptoms of COVID-19 or has tested positive for COVID-19 in the past 14 days, or
- they have been identified as a contact of a case by Test, Trace and Protect and advised to self-isolate, or
- they have returned from a country specified by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office as being subject to quarantine.

Schools and settings should have clear procedures if learners or staff begin to show symptoms on site. These need to be fully understood by both staff and parents/carers. Those showing symptoms during the school day should be kept separate until they can be collected and taken home. Ideally, this should be in a separate room, supervised at a distance of two metres (**if 2 metres cannot be maintained then PPE should be used – please refer to Section 15**). If they need clinical advice, they (or a member of



staff or their parent/carer) should go online to **111 Wales** (or call 111 if they don't have internet access).

Surfaces that learners or staff with symptoms have come into with should be carefully and thoroughly cleaned.

Anyone displaying symptoms of COVID-19 should stay at home and begin to self-isolate for at least **10 days** from the date of symptom onset while making arrangements to be tested. If the test result is negative the individual with symptoms will not be required to complete the full **10 days** self-isolation period. Anyone who lives with someone displaying COVID-19 symptoms, or is in an extended household arrangement (where they had contact in the two days before the person had symptoms) with someone displaying symptoms must stay at home for 14 days from the day the first person became ill or until the outcome of the COVID-19 test is known. Individuals who are isolating because they have been contacted as part of the Test, Trace and Protect must continue to self-isolate for 14 days even if a negative test result is received. The same applies for individuals who have to quarantine after returning from abroad.

All schools have been provided with temperature checking devices although it is not a mandatory requirement to screen for a temperature. Care should be taken to ensure that PPE in the form of a visor is worn if devices require close contact.

#### **4. Social (Physical) Distancing**

Minimising contacts and mixing between people reduces transmission of COVID-19. These practices need to be embedded across all schools to ensure that staff and children are safe and well, and every effort is made to break the chain of infection. Schools will need to ensure that policies reinforce the importance of a range of preventative measures as outlined in section 2, including social distancing of adults at all times and of pupils where possible outside of the classroom. This should be reflected in school wellbeing/behaviour policies, intimate care and healthcare needs policies. These should be widely shared with stakeholders and expectations made clear in relation to requirement for all members of the school community to adhere to social distancing requirements, where possible. A school's response to a deliberate refusal to comply with social distancing should be reflected in the school's wellbeing/behaviour policy and the position communicated to all stakeholders prior to learners returning to school.

Schools should aim to minimise contact between individuals and maintain social distancing of adults at all times and of pupils where possible.

##### **Minimising contacts and social distancing**

In order to reduce transmission of COVID-19, schools must consider how to best minimise contacts and promote social distancing whilst delivering a broad and balanced curriculum. It is acknowledged that schools will have constraints relating to buildings, rooms and staffing resources and an element of flexibility may be needed in order that children can be accommodated to return to school.



The overarching principle to apply is reducing the number of contacts between learners and staff by keeping groups separate and maintaining distance between individuals. Potential barriers to achieving this in practice include learners' ability to keep distance; layout of schools; and the feasibility of keeping distinct groups separate while offering a broad curriculum, especially at secondary school. For younger learners, the emphasis will be on separating groups, and for older learners it will be on maintaining some social distancing where possible and discouraging physical contact with others.

Consistent grouping should be maintained where possible to limit the number of learners and staff in contact with each other to only those within the contact group. Young learners often struggle to socially distance and consistent grouping provides an additional protective measure. Maintaining distinct contact groups that do not interact will ensure that the identification and isolation of contacts will be swifter in the event of a confirmed case.

Maintaining small contact groups will be challenging, particularly at secondary level, when full national curriculum delivery is resumed. Risk assessments and control measures should be revised to reflect the growth in contact groups in September. In secondary schools, key stage 4 and key stage 5 contact groups are likely to be the size of a full year group to ensure access to specialist teaching and resources. Where smaller class size contact groups can be accommodated in secondary schools then this is recommended, particularly in key stage 3. At primary level, implementing class size contact groups is recommended where possible.

If class-sized groups are not compatible with offering a full range of subjects or managing the practical logistics within and around school, then consideration should be given to establishing year or half-year group sized contact groups. Whatever the size of the contact group, they should be kept apart from other contact groups where possible and older learners should be encouraged to keep their distance within groups. Schools with the capacity to do so should also limit interaction, sharing of rooms and social spaces between groups as much as possible. When using larger groups, other preventative measures become even more important, to minimise transmission risks and the need to self-isolate. Welsh Government recognise that younger learners will not be able to maintain social distancing, and advise that it is acceptable for them not to distance within their group.

Even when it is challenging to fully separate groups and to maintain distance, partial implementation can still provide benefits. For example, schools may robustly adhere to limiting contact groups for the majority of the day, but might allow mixing for specialist teaching, wraparound care and transport. Siblings may also be in different groups. Making efforts to keep these groups at least partially separate and minimising contacts between learners will still offer public health benefits as it reduces the network of possible direct transmission opportunities.

Staff responsible for younger learners should remain with set groups rather than



interchange between different/a number of groups. Again, Welsh Government recognises this is not always possible with younger learners and teachers in primary schools can still work across groups if that is needed to enable a full educational offer.

All staff should adhere to the social/physical distancing measures as far as possible with younger learners, but must adhere to those measures in their interactions with older learners, other staff members and visitors to the school.

Teachers and staff can operate across different classes and year groups where required in order to facilitate the delivery of the school timetable. This will be particularly important for secondary schools. Where staff need to move between classes and year groups, they should try to keep their distance from learners and other staff as much as they can, and ideally 2 metres from other adults.

Where mixing between groups cannot be avoided, schools and practitioners should run the *approach to risk estimation and management* process to reduce the risk of transmission between contact groups. Further consideration of the process outlined in Annex A of the attached document should be given.

<https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2020-07/operational-guidance-for-schools-and-settings-from-the-autumn-term.pdf>

### **Classroom measures**

Maintaining a distance between people and reducing face to face to contact lowers the risk of transmission. Public Health Wales strongly advise that secondary staff should maintain distance from their learners, staying at the front of the class, and away from their colleagues where possible. Ideally, adults should maintain 2 metre distance from each other, and from learners where possible.

When working with young pupils, it can be more challenging to maintain social distance, adults should avoid close face-to-face contact and minimise time spent within 1 metre of both children and adults. Similarly, when working with many learners who have complex needs or who need close contact care measures should be taken to minimise risks and to keep learners in smaller, class sized contact groups. Where there are capacity constraints steps should be taken to exploring different spaces to eat lunch, including classroom settings. The portability of school meal provision will be an important consideration in this regard.

Classroom layouts should support social distancing where possible (although it is recognised this may be very challenging when all learners return to school). Arrangements should include seating learners side by side and facing forwards, rather than face to face or side on, and might include moving unnecessary furniture out of classrooms to make more space.

### **Use of other school spaces**

Contact groups should be kept apart where possible, and large gatherings such as assemblies or collective worship with more than one group should be avoided. When timetabling, groups should be kept apart and movement around the school site kept to



a minimum. While passing briefly in the corridor or playground is low risk, schools should avoid creating busy corridors, entrances and exits. Schools should also consider staggered break times and lunch times (and time for cleaning surfaces in the dining hall between groups).

Schools and settings should also plan how shared staff spaces are set up and used to help staff to distance from each other. Use of staff rooms should be minimised, although staff must still have a break of a reasonable length during the day.

To help social distancing, staff should consider as many activities outside as practicable. This will require children to have appropriate clothing for the weather.

### **Staggered start and finish times**

Where possible, schools should consider staggered starts or adjusting start and finish times to keep groups apart as they arrive and leave school. These should not reduce the overall teaching time and this could be achieved by condensing/staggering free periods or break time, or starting or finishing later. Changes should be clearly outlined to parents and expectations in relation to drop off and collection made explicit, including not gathering at the school gate or attending without an appointment.

For dual placed learners, including post 16 consortia arrangements, schools 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.

### **On-Site Visitors**

Supply teachers, peripatetic staff and/or other temporary staff can move between schools. They should ensure they minimise contact and maintain as much distance as possible from other staff. Specialists, therapists, clinicians and other support staff for learners with SEN should provide interventions as usual. Schools should consider how to manage other visitors to the site, such as contractors and ensure site guidance on social/physical distancing and hygiene is explained to visitors on or before arrival. Where visits can happen outside of school hours and/or meetings can take place remotely, they should. A record should be kept of all visitors. Whilst visitors will be required to follow hygiene standards, including use of sanitiser, they will not be mandated to wear any PPE (unless identified as required by a risk assessment).

### **Signage and layouts**

Appropriate signage has been provided for all settings prior to schools opening and examples of the signage can be seen Appendix 4. A guidance document has also been distributed to all schools – ‘Signage and Layout – Guidance for Schools – Re-occupation of school buildings during coronavirus (COVID-19)’.

#### **Key actions:**

- Plan for how social (physical) distancing will be achieved and implement plans

- Decide the physical and organisational structures needed to limit risks and limit movement around the building(s) (for example, classroom layouts, entry and exit points, staggered starts and break times, class sizes, lunch queues, toilet timetabling, use of communal staff areas).
- Access rooms from the outside where possible.
- Use one-way circulation, or place a divider down the middle of the corridor to keep groups apart as they move through the setting where spaces are accessed by corridors.
- Agree how safety measures and messages will be implemented and displayed around school.
- Maintain continuity in grouping and staffing where possible, and minimise interaction and transmission risks across contact groups and individuals.
- Whatever the size of the contact group, they should be kept apart from other contact groups where possible and older learners should be encouraged to keep their distance within groups.
- Secondary staff should maintain distance from their learners, staying at the front of the class, and away from their colleagues where possible. Ideally, adults should maintain 2 metre distance from each other and from learners where possible.
- When working with young pupils, adults should avoid close face-to-face contact and minimise time spent within 1 metre of both children and adults.
- When working with learners with complex needs where PPE is routinely used, consideration should be given to keeping learners in smaller, class sized contact groups.
- At key stage 4/5 contact groups are likely to be a year group or smaller so contacts are minimised and physical distancing reinforced where possible. Care should be taken to ensure that years 12/13 are kept as discrete contact groups.
- In key stage, 3 contact groups should be class size where possible. Where it is not possible, consideration should be given to half-year (or full year) group sized contact groups.
- Contact groups in primary schools should be class sized.
- Schools should aim to adhere to limiting contact between groups for the majority of the day, but might need to allow for wider mixing for specialist teaching, wraparound care and transport.
- Schools with the capacity to do so should also limit interaction, sharing of rooms and social spaces between groups as much as possible.
- Undertake individual risk assessments for high-risk learners and ensure that they are well supported to mitigate risks.
- Update behaviour policies to reflect new procedures and protocols aimed at reducing risks in settings and agree how to communicate this to school staff, students and parents.
- Stagger drop off and collections to promote social distancing.
- Plan parents' drop-off and pick-up protocols that minimise social contact.
- Ensure that all are aware that anyone displaying symptoms does not attend school and immediately self-isolates.

- Where appropriate, organise seating for that learners are facing the front and are not face to face or side on, where this is age appropriate (for younger age groups a combination of control measures should be implemented to mitigate risks)
- Avoid sharing of resources or equipment.
- Utilise outdoors for lessons and classroom activities.
- Encourage outside play but not contact or other risky sports and games.
- Remove unnecessary equipment and furniture if possible, to maximise social distancing opportunities.
- Stagger the use of staff rooms and offices to limit occupancy and ensure social distancing.
- Plan arrangements with your suppliers and check they are following appropriate social distancing and that hygiene measures (for example, food suppliers, grounds maintenance, transport providers) are in place.
- Allow access of professionals who work across other schools and ensure compliance with preventative measures.
- Parents/carers should attend on a pre-appointment basis only.

## 5. Nursery education

There is a need to ensure that our youngest children who are at a critical stage of cognitive development get the very best start to their educational life, and one that they can build on for the future.

### Transition

This September schools and funded non-maintained settings will have the added responsibility of transition for more new learners than usual, with summer term children that have not yet started. In addition, existing learners will need to re-transition due to the length of time they have been away and some learners will also transition from settings to schools.

Schools and settings should follow their normal transition processes for our youngest learners, where possible, to ensure a positive, and safe experience within the overall aim of all children accessing education as soon as is practical.

If a child is accessing both education and childcare across two sites, it is essential that schools and settings understand the transition arrangements and are clear on when the child will be in each setting and what collection and transport arrangements are in place. Attendance at more than one setting is highly likely in this age group, and is not an issue where appropriate risk management measures are taken.

### Resources



Having different sets of equipment and resources for different groups of children in nursery, **if possible**, will help minimise transmission, particularly where more than one group of learners needs to access the same space during a single day – for example, in schools with morning and afternoon nursery provision. This should not replace the stringent cleaning measures required, but would reduce the amount of cleaning needed to be undertaken in relation to resources during the change-over period with the focus then being on fixed furniture, larger equipment and high touch points.

### **Social distancing**

The level of social (physical) distancing within indoor childcare settings with young children will be harder to maintain than in other settings. Settings should therefore implement the social distancing and mixing in childcare settings measures set out in the revised **Protective measures in childcare settings: Keep Childcare Safe** guidance to minimise the number of contacts that children and adults have when inside, while ensuring children are kept safe and well cared for.

The time learners spend outdoors should be maximised. This has important physical, mental and educational benefits and helps combat transmission of COVID-19.

### **Foundation Phase Practice**

The evidence shows that youngest learners are in the least at risk group. Early years' educational practitioners are experienced in caring for the needs of young children and will apply professional judgement.

We recognise that provision and learning experiences may not be exactly the same as they were in March, however, early years' educational practitioners are experienced in caring for the needs of young children. Continuing with a child centred approach means a high-quality delivery of the Foundation Phase and the same learning outcomes of social and personal development and well-being can still be achieved with safe modification and adaptation of learning spaces and resources.

#### **Key actions:**

- Ensure effective communication with childcare settings (where a child is accessing education and childcare across more than one site) and ensure risk management measures are identified and implemented.
- Ensure effective communication with parents regarding procedures for pick up / drop off and settling in arrangements.
- Give due consideration to having different sets of equipment and resources for different groups of children in nursery (as required).
- Maximise outdoor learning opportunities.

## 6. Effective Hygiene

It is recommended that learners limit the amount of equipment they bring into school each day, to essentials such as lunch boxes, bags, hats, coats, books, stationery and mobile phones. Learners and staff can take books and other shared resources home, although unnecessary sharing should be avoided, especially where this does not contribute to learners' education and development. Similar rules on hand washing, cleaning of the resources and rotation should apply to these resources.

For individual and very frequently used equipment, such as pencils and pens, it is recommended that staff and learners have their own items that are not shared. Classroom based resources, such as books and games, can be used and shared within the contact group; these should be cleaned regularly, along with all frequently touched surfaces. Resources that are shared between contact groups, such as sports, art and science equipment should be cleaned frequently and meticulously and always between contact groups, or rotated to allow them to be left unused and out of reach for a period of 48 hours (72 hours for plastics) between use by different contact groups.

Schools and settings should ensure outdoor playground equipment is more frequently cleaned. This would also apply to resources used inside and outside by wraparound care providers.

There are important actions that children and young people, their parents and those who work with them can take during the coronavirus outbreak, to help prevent the spread of the virus. In all education settings, preventing the spread of coronavirus involves dealing with direct transmission (for instance, when in close contact with those sneezing and coughing) and indirect transmission (via touching contaminated surfaces). A range of approaches and actions should be employed to do this. These can be seen as a hierarchy of controls that, when implemented, create an inherently safer system, where the risk of transmission of infection is substantially reduced. For further information, please refer to:

<https://phw.nhs.wales/services-and-teams/harp/infection-prevention-and-control/guidance/>

Staff must ensure that all staff and children regularly wash their hands. They should be washed with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Staff should also ensure that children understand effective handwashing techniques. Regular handwashing should include on arrival and when leaving the school or childcare setting; before and after handling food; before and after handling objects and equipment that may have been used by others; where there has been any physical contact and after people blow their nose, sneeze or cough, and before and after visiting toilets to avoid contamination of toilet cubicles.

Ensuring that help is available for children and young people who have trouble cleaning their hands independently should be encouraged. Handwashing is preferable to the use of hand sanitisers but hand sanitisers must also be provided in all school settings. These should be available at entrances to the childcare/school settings and strategically



positioned in places that takes into consideration the health and safety of children and staff.

Please raise any issues relating with the supply of hygiene products with your local authority lead. Sufficient supplies of sanitiser and PPE will be delivered to your schools prior to schools opening. If further supplies are needed, then please order as follows:

- Sanitiser - [ProcOrders@rctcbc.gov.uk](mailto:ProcOrders@rctcbc.gov.uk)
- PPE – [paula.griffiths@rctcbc.gov.uk](mailto:paula.griffiths@rctcbc.gov.uk) / [ProcOrders@rctcbc.gov.uk](mailto:ProcOrders@rctcbc.gov.uk)

Learners must wash their hands (or use sanitiser) immediately on arrival and then wash their hands again before heading to their classroom. If learners and staff on arrival at school wish to remove a face covering they should be advised to take care and avoid touching their face when they do so, although some may choose to continue to wear them throughout the school day. Any disposable face coverings should be placed in a pedal operated waste bin. Reusable face coverings should be placed in a plastic bag when not in use and taken home by learners / staff for washing.

Children and staff should cough into their elbow. Staff and children, insofar as it is possible, should be encouraged not to touch their face, especially when using a tissue or elbow to cough. Bins for tissues should be emptied throughout the day and any used tissues deposited in bins, including pedal bins. Consideration should be given to encouraging young children to learn and practice these good habits through games and different activities.

There is no need for anything other than normal personal hygiene and washing of clothes following a day in an educational or childcare setting.

All spaces should be well-ventilated using natural ventilation (opening windows) or ventilation units. Doors should be propped open, where safe to do so (bearing in mind fire safety and safeguarding), to limit use of door handles and aid ventilation.

**Key Actions:**

- Decide the approach to be adopted to enhance hygiene (for example, toilet use, hand washing) and ensure this is consistently implemented.
- Decide on policy related to usually shared items (for example, books, toys, practical equipment) and implement.
- Limit the amount of items that children bring into schools.
- Resources that are shared between contact groups should be cleaned frequently and meticulously and always between contact groups, or rotated to allow them to be left unused and out of reach for a period of 48 hours (72 hours for plastics) between use by different contacts.
- Ensure that there is sufficient sanitiser disseminated throughout the building.
- Install pedal bins.
- Reusable face coverings should be placed in a plastic bag when not in use and taken home by learners / staff for washing.



- Teach good hygiene habits through different games and activities.
- Ensure good ventilation and keep doors open where it is appropriate to do so, and does not present as a fire or safeguarding risk.

## 7. Effective Cleaning

Current information relating to cleaning in non-clinical settings is provided at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-decontamination-in-non-healthcare-settings/covid-19-decontamination-in-non-healthcare-settings>

Points to consider and implement includes putting in place a cleaning schedule that ensures cleaning is generally enhanced and more frequent cleaning of rooms/shared areas after they have been used by different groups. Frequently touched surfaces being cleaned more often than normal and separate toilets should be provided for different contact groups, where possible. Where this is not possible, using hand sanitiser before entering the toilet and ensuring toilets are cleaned regularly will help. Learners must be encouraged to clean their hands thoroughly after using the toilet

School building(s) will need to be cleaned regularly and at least once a day. Hard surfaces should be cleaned with warm soapy water or disinfected with the cleaning products normally used. Particular attention should be given to 'high-touch' areas and surfaces, which should be cleaned at least once a day and more frequently in high use areas based on local assessment, including washrooms, railings, tables, toys, equipment and door handles.

The handling of objects between individuals, including staff, parents/carers and children, should be minimised. Handling of objects by multiple individuals without cleaning should be avoided.

An additional clean will be required when a contact group is changed within any area or classroom. This will include canteen facilities and staggered lunch breaks. Cleaning staff should aim to maintain social distancing with adults and children, and mitigate risks by deploying a range of preventative measures.

Tissues should be placed in a separate bin/pedal operated waste bin and disposed of safely. Used antibacterial surface wipes should also be placed in a separate bin/pedal operated waste bin and disposed of safely on a daily basis. If schools are not able to obtain antibacterial wipes from their normal suppliers, then they are advised to contact the Procurement Service.

Additional cleaning hours will be commissioned on the schools' behalf with all cleaning providers. Primary schools will receive an additional 6 hours per day, special schools 9 hours, secondary schools 12 hours, and all through schools and larger secondary schools 18 hours daily. These are minimum requirements, some sites will receive additional hours based on building size and the number of pupils. The frequency and effectiveness of daily cleaning will be reviewed and adjusted as necessary. The



additional cleaning hours will be invoiced and paid for centrally. Concerns relating to the standard of cleaning should be escalated to the service manager.

### **Managing Symptomatic Cases of COVID-19**

Once someone with symptoms has been identified all areas where this person has been, must be identified and kept clear. Management of the area should be physical where possible, i.e. barriers with suitable signage or behind locked doors. An immediate clean down should take place before reoccupation following the following guidance:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-decontamination-in-non-healthcare-settings/covid-19-decontamination-in-non-healthcare-settings>

Particular attention should be given to any specific area where the person has been in contact with, i.e. allocated desk as well as all other 'high-touch' areas. Any soft toys should be removed and stored securely for 72 hours before reintroducing to the area if not already removed as a preventative control. If any waste is suspected of being in contact with someone showing symptoms of COVID-19, it should be placed in a waste bag, held in a secure place for 72 hours then disposed of with other waste.

Cleaning staff should fully understand the cleaning requirements, and schools should work with LAs to ensure that cleaning staff have appropriate training, products and equipment available to them in a timely manner.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-decontamination-in-non-healthcare-settings/covid-19-decontamination-in-non-healthcare-settings>

### **Actions Following Confirmed Case of COVID-19**

Following a confirmed case, all areas known to have been accessed should be quarantined until it can be confirmed that a deep clean has been completed (this will be dependent on when the setting was last accessed by the confirmed case). Management of the area should be physical where possible, i.e. barriers with suitable signage or behind locked doors. A deep clean can consist of an intense general clean followed by a clean down with disinfectant or an approved vapour or ozone decontamination system. If a decontamination system is not used any soft furnishings should be steam cleaned.

#### **Key actions:**

- Review the enhanced cleaning schedule and liaise with the local authority to request assistance to adapt any necessary changes to the current service provision.
- Ensure that frequent cleaning is undertaken throughout the day for high touch areas.
- Organise deep clean in the event of a confirmed case (depending on when the confirmed case last attended the setting).
- Ensure consistent responses are adopted to a suspected or confirmed cases.
- Review uniform expectations.
- Sensitively communicate to parents the need to wash uniforms frequently.

## 8. Transport

The headline messages from the latest guidance issued by the Welsh Government in relation to school transport stated that:

- Local authorities remain under a statutory duty to provide free home to school transport for all eligible learners of compulsory school age over certain distances from their education centres.
- Local authorities, working with schools, education establishments, education institutions and transport operators as necessary, should identify the risks arising from COVID-19 and must then work through the system of controls set out below and adopt measures in a way that addresses the identified risk, work in the local circumstances, and allows learners to attend school or their educational establishment.
- Social distancing guidance to passengers on public transport (<https://gov.wales/travelling-safely-during-coronavirus-pandemic-guidance-public-html#section-42710>) will not apply on dedicated home to school transport from the autumn term because:
  - the overall risk to learners from COVID-19 is very low
  - they do not mix with the general public on those journeys
  - dedicated school transport often carries the same group of learners on a regular basis, and those learners may also be together in school.
  - the predictability of those travelling, which public transport does not offer, will allow for planning so that protective measures can be put in place.
- Allowing space between passengers, or groups of passengers, is still helpful where possible, but transport capacity means that there are many circumstances in which this will not be feasible. Where it is not possible, other measures from the system of controls become more important.
- There is no requirement for learners to sit on school transport with the group of learners with which they are educated, but it is one of the measures that can be adopted if possible/appropriate.

Welsh Government guidance groups the system of controls for home to school transport into 'prevention' and 'response to any infection'. The way in which these controls are implemented will need to vary according to local circumstances.

### i. Minimise contact with individuals who are unwell

Parents must be advised that learners must not board home to school transport if they or a member of their household has any of the four identified COVID-19 symptoms (a new continuous cough, a high temperature or loss of taste or smell).



Learners should also not attend school if they are in a household that is required to self-isolate as contacts of a case under Test, Trace, Protect or in quarantine if returned from a country specified by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

If a learner develops symptoms whilst at school/setting or their educational institution, they will be sent home. They must not travel on home to school transport. The school or setting should contact the parent/carer who should make arrangements for the learner's journey home.

In exceptional circumstances, where it is not possible for the parent to make arrangements for the learner's journey home, transport may be provided. The guidance on '[safe working in education, childcare and children's social care settings](#)' sets out what must be done.

Anyone with symptoms must follow the guidance; <https://gov.wales/self-isolation-stay-home-guidance-households-possible-coronavirus>

Learners, drivers and passenger assistants who have been in contact with someone who has developed symptoms whilst at school/setting or education establishment or on home to school transport do not need to go home to self-isolate unless they develop symptoms themselves (in which case, they should arrange a test) or the symptomatic person subsequently tests positive (see below) or if they have been requested to do so by Test, Trace and Protect.

Learners, drivers and passenger assistants must perform hand hygiene by washing their hands thoroughly for 20 seconds with soap and running water or use hand sanitiser after contact with someone who has symptoms. If a person with symptoms has been in a vehicle that provides school transport, the vehicle must be cleaned and disinfected with appropriate disinfectant with special attention to touch points e.g. rails, arm rests etc to reduce the risk of passing the infection on to other people. See the COVID-19: [cleaning of non-healthcare settings guidance](#) for information, including carrying out cleaning procedures and adjusting ventilation

## **ii. Clean hands thoroughly more often than usual**

COVID-19 is an easy virus to remove when it is on skin. This can be done with soap and running water or killed with hand sanitiser. Learners should clean their hands, before boarding home to school transport and when arriving at school or home. It should not normally be necessary for learners to clean their hands during the journey.

## **iii. Ensure good respiratory hygiene by promoting the 'catch it, bin it, kill it' approach**

The 'catch it, bin it, kill it' approach is very important. Schools/settings and education establishments will be reinforcing this message with learners.



Learners should be encouraged to carry tissues on school transport.

Some learners with complex needs will struggle to maintain as good respiratory hygiene as their peers due to their additional learning needs. This should be considered when deciding what safeguards should be put in place in order to support these learners and the staff working with them.

**iv. Introduce enhanced cleaning, including cleaning frequently touched surfaces often using standard products, such as detergents and bleach**

COVID-19 is easy to kill on surfaces. The Integrated Transport Unit (ITU) will work with transport operators to agree the arrangements for cleaning vehicles.

**v. Minimising contact and mixing**

The guidance recommends that schools and educational settings should minimise contact and mixing by implementing contact groups of learners between which interaction is minimised.

The guidance for schools and settings acknowledges that implementing contact groups will still bring benefits even if implemented partially, and that schools may need to allow mixing into wider groups in certain circumstances including on transport. Siblings may also be in different groups.

The ITU will work with schools and transport operators to consider how mixing might be minimised on school transport. However, we know that vehicle capacity and the geographic nature of home to school transport arrangements, mean there are limits to the extent to which mixing can be minimised. Nevertheless, there is a consistent group of learners travelling on the same vehicle each day they attend, making it easy to identify potential contacts if any member tests positive. Therefore it is important that records are kept of who is on what vehicle.

**vi. Other measures for schools to consider:**

- Communicate transport arrangements clearly to learners, parents and carers. Be aware that some may feel concerned about the risk of infection on school transport and may want to be reassured about the safeguards that are in place;
- Encourage children to adopt active travel opportunities where reasonable and practical.
- Remind parents/carers that their learner must not travel if they or anyone in their household has symptoms of COVID-19;
- Work with the ITU and transport operators to draw up seating arrangements so that learners understand where they need to sit on school transport, ensuring the same children always sit together will help further to minimise the number



of contacts each child has. Such arrangements will require clear communication between schools and families/children. Drivers are unable to 'police' seating arrangements. Their role is to focus on driving the vehicle safely

- Ensure that records are kept of who routinely travels on what vehicle and that passes or lists of passengers travelling are checked as learners board school transport. These contact groups would need to be identified as potential contacts if any member tests positive.
- Work with the ITU and transport operators to put in place appropriate queuing or other arrangements needed for picking up and dropping off learners at school, or young people at educational institutions.
- Provide clear information for parents/carers, learners about the arrangements needed for picking up and dropping off learners people at their home destination.
- Face coverings must be used by secondary aged pupils travelling on dedicated school transport. Not only will this measure help reduce the risk of spreading COVID-19 but also common colds and flu, which will also be a benefit.

Face coverings should not be worn 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 (those under 11 years are exempt from requirements to use face coverings on public transport).

One re-usable face covering per learner was initially delivered to the schools to be handed to those in year 7 and above for their first return trip home **on school transport (for the initial trip into school, drivers issued a disposable face covering for pupils to wear until they collected their reusable face covering)**. Further face coverings are available. They will be replaced as required. Stock has been made available to schools to enable replacements to be provided.

Schools and settings should have a process in place for learners who wear face coverings to be able to remove them safely. This means hand hygiene before and after removal of the face covering. Facilities for the disposal of temporary face coverings in a covered bin will be needed. Reusable face coverings should be placed in a plastic bag when not in use and stored safely by the individual pupil in their school bag where possible.

Face coverings are not a substitute for other protective measures such as good hand and respiratory hygiene and social distancing where possible.

- Close partnership working with the ITU will be key, and information relating to school's plan for the first two weeks of the autumn term will be essential.



Information relating to which year groups and groups of learners (e.g. learning support class learners) will be targeted for school attendance in the days leading up to the 14<sup>th</sup> of September and should have already been submitted to the ITU.

Transport will run on existing routes every school day to avoid major re-scheduling, with similar arrival and departure times. Schools should aim to stagger times to allow walkers, parental transport and those on school transport to arrive/depart separately.

- Every effort will be made to reinstate the crossing patrol service in September, in line with the most up to date guidance on social distancing but parents and carers should be reminded of their responsibilities to get their children to school safely. Active travel should be encouraged where possible and parents/carers advised to access transport only if they have no other alternative.

**Key actions:**

- Drop off and pick up times to be agreed with between schools and ITU to ensure staggered starts and collections. Where schools stagger their times, they should aim to allow walkers and those on school transport to arrive/depart separately.
- Schools to communicate transport arrangements and behaviour/safety measures and expectations to parents/carers and learners.
- Distribute face coverings to secondary age learners.
- Advise parents/ carers/ pupils of the requirement for secondary age learners to wear a face covering on school transport and that these will be provided by the school.
- Advise parents / carers / pupils that school transport may be compromised for secondary age learners who fail to comply with the requirement to wear a face covering.
- Sensitively advise parent/carers of washing requirements for reusable face coverings. Daily washing should be undertaken.
- Provide covered bins for disposal of temporary face coverings.

## **9. Clinically Vulnerable Children and Young People**

### **Extremely vulnerable or previously 'shielding staff' or learners**

The Chief Medical Officer (CMO) for Wales took the decision to pause his advice to shield from 16 August, because the infection rate in Wales is very low. Staff and learners who were shielding will be able to return to work or school in the autumn term if the environments are risk assessed to be 'COVID-controlled' (having taken reasonable measures to minimise risk to employees and learners). Staff who return to



school should strictly follow the social distancing measures in addition to what other safety measures are put in place for their return.

The CMOs from across the UK recently accepted the guidance published by Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health (RCPCH) in relation to children and shielding. According to the RCPCH guidance, the majority of children currently on the Shielding Patients List (SPL) no longer need to shield. Over the summer paediatricians and GPs were to review the records of children who have been shielding to assess whether they need to remain on the SPL. Once a child is removed from the SPL because they do not need to shield, they can behave in the same way as any other child in the school/setting. Whilst shielding advice is paused, those who remain on the SPL should follow the same advice as those children in the 'at risk' group.

### **Clinically vulnerable staff or learners at 'increased risk'**

In the context of COVID-19 individuals at 'increased risk' are at a greater risk of severe illness from COVID-19. This category includes people aged over 70, those who are pregnant and those who have a range of chronic health conditions. As the advice to shield has been paused people in this category can go out to work and return to school as long as the workplace is 'COVID-controlled'. It is essential that guidance on social and physical distancing and hand and respiratory hygiene is closely followed.

Every school should continue to carry out risk assessments and put in place controls to minimise those risks, such as the frequent hand washing, surface hygiene and one-way systems we have seen work well at the end of the summer term.

Pregnant women after 28 weeks' gestation are specifically advised to work from home or in a non-public-facing role in a COVID-controlled workplace where 2 metre physical distancing can be maintained at all times.

### **Living with a person who was shielding or is at increased risk**

If a learner lives in a household with someone who is at increased risk or was previously "shielding", as the advice to shield has been paused, learners in this category can return to school.

### **Parents/carers and learners who are anxious about returning to school and settings**

Schools should bear in mind the potential concerns of pupils, parents/carers who may be reluctant or anxious about returning and put the right support in place to address this. This may include learners who have themselves been shielding previously but have been advised that this is no longer necessary, those living in households where someone is clinically vulnerable, or those concerned about the comparatively increased risk from coronavirus (COVID-19), including those from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) backgrounds or who have certain conditions such as obesity and diabetes.



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.

## 10. Staffing Considerations

The Council has been supportive of staff with underlying health conditions; who are pregnant; living with a person who is pregnant or with an underlying health condition; or had childcare issues and enabled them to remain off from work whilst still delivering services where appropriate. Moving forward, as key services start to re-open, advice and guidance should be sought from HR and the following principles applied:

### **Extremely vulnerable staff including those who were previously shielding (very high risk)**

From 16 August 2020, the Welsh Government paused shielding for everyone on the shielding list (children and adults), subject to whether the number of Covid-19 cases in the community starts to rise significantly. This means that staff who were shielding can now return to work. However, it is important to recognise that whilst shielding is necessary to protect vulnerable peoples' physical wellbeing, it may also have had an unintended impact on their mental wellbeing and you should reflect this in your discussions with staff. Staff that fall into this category should provide a copy of their shielding letter if they have not already done so.

Where practical to do so, staff should work from home, however, there will be instances where this is not practical, and in these cases shielded staff must complete the Covid-19 self-reporting Risk Assessment Tool shown in Appendix 1. Alongside the risk assessment tool headteachers must complete a workplace health and safety risk assessment. In determining whether a shielding member of staff can return to the workplace, both the working environment and the activities performed should be considered in conjunction with the Covid controlled measures, for example, 2m physical distancing, enhanced PPE.

Line managers should refer to advice already circulated on global email and available on RCT Source. Further advice can be sought from human resources and occupational health where questions about the suitability or safety of a return to work arise.

### **Staff who are pregnant**

Pregnant women over 28 weeks should be regarded as at increased risk and are recommended to stay at home. For pregnant women with underlying health conditions and those who are BAME, a precautionary approach is prudent. According to public health guidelines, women who are pregnant with 'significant heart disease, congenital



or acquired' are in the shielding group. If a shielding letter has been received, staff should remain off work for now. However, if no letter has been received and homeworking is not a practical option, the Medical Risk Assessment provided in Appendix 1 should be completed by the line manager and advice sought from occupational health before any return to work can be considered. Health & safety risk assessments will also need to be undertaken by headteachers to ensure a safe return to work and the effective use of preventative and social distancing approaches.

### **Clinically vulnerable staff with other COVID risk indicators (moderate risk)**

Current research suggests that there are several other indicators that, when combined, may mean that an individual is at a higher risk level. A list of these indicators can be found in section 3 of the Medical Risk Assessment in Appendix 2. Where appropriate, the Medical Risk Assessment in Appendix 2 will be undertaken by the member of staff so as to inform decision making in relation to whether it is safe for them to return to work. If the individual concerned does not complete the medical risk assessment form it would be reasonable to assume that the member of staff considers themselves to be fit for a return to work. Where the risk is deemed to be low, or can be mitigated, then the member of staff will be required to return to the workplace. A health & safety risk assessment should also be undertaken by headteachers to ensure a safe return to work and the effective use of preventative and social distancing approaches.

### **Staff who live with someone at high risk, pregnancy and moderate conditions from coronavirus**

Employees in this category have been able to refrain from attendance in work to protect them. Moving forward, if home working is not feasible, then this category of staff must now return to duty and adhere to social distancing principles. A health & safety risk assessment should also be undertaken by headteachers to ensure a safe return to work and the effective use of preventative and social distancing approaches.

### **Staff with childcare issues, including responsibilities for children with ALN**

If homeworking is not a practical option, staff with these responsibilities must now return to work using the social distancing principles, wherever practical to do so. In respect of childcare matters, if staff feel that they have extenuating circumstances then these should be shared with the line manager in the first instance, who can then seek advice from the Occupational Health, Equalities and Employee Relations teams.

Please note, that further detailed and precise guidance should be sought from HR prior to implementing the above actions.

#### **Key actions:**

- Decide content and timing of staff communication(s) including if bringing staff in to their place of work in advance of pupils returning to school.
- Ensure that all staff absences are swiftly updated on vision to inform accurate reporting.
- Undertake a staff audit of teaching and non-teaching staff (including availability and location) to identify any gaps or pressures in essential posts, including

leaders, teachers, support staff, first aiders, designated child protection staff, caretakers, crossing patrols, etc.

- Take corrective steps if necessary staffing levels are inadequate.
- Inform your allocated local authority lead if you are experiencing significant staffing challenges that are likely to restrict learner numbers.
- Identify staff who cannot return to school at this point and identify how they can work from home (e.g. supporting distance learning).
- Put in place measures to check on staff wellbeing (including for leaders) and ensure appropriate sign posting as detailed in HR communication.
- Ensure access to testing where appropriate, and engagement in the test, track and protect interventions.

## 11. Staff Deployment/Recruitment

Schools and pupil referral units may need to alter the way in which they deploy their staff, and use existing staff more flexibly to welcome back all learners during the autumn term. Managers should discuss and agree any changes to staff roles with individuals, and where appropriate with Human Resources. It is important that planning builds in the need to avoid increases in unnecessary and unmanageable workload for staff. School leaders should raise any concerns about staffing capacity with Human Resources.

Recruitment should continue as usual. Further information on interviewing teachers remotely can be found at:

<https://teaching.blog.gov.uk/2020/05/29/recruiting-during-lockdown-how-we-did-it/>  
<https://teaching.blog.gov.uk/2020/06/12/attending-your-first-remote-interview/>

When recruiting, schools must continue to adhere to the legal requirements regarding pre-appointment checks. Should headteachers experience any issues around these checks they should contact Human Resources.

Initial Teacher Education (ITE) partnerships have worked flexibly to ensure this year's NQTs are ready and prepared to enter the classroom. They will be supported by the ITE partnerships and regional consortia as they embark on their induction programmes. Changes have been made to the Regulations governing induction to ensure that NQTs will not be disadvantaged during the Coronavirus pandemic. The amended Regulations came into force on the 15<sup>th</sup> of July and will remain in place until the 31<sup>st</sup> of August 2021.

### Supply Teachers

Schools can continue to engage local supply teachers and other supply staff during this period. To minimise the numbers of temporary staff entering the school premises, and secure best value, schools may wish to use longer assignments with supply teachers/agency staff and agree a minimum number of hours across the academic year. This advice for supply teachers also applies to other temporary staff working in schools.

## 12. Attendance

Schools and settings should work with learners, parents and carers to secure regular school attendance from the start of term as this will be essential to help learners catch up on missed education, make progress and promote their well-being and wider development.

Schools/settings must:

- communicate clear and consistent expectations around attendance to parents and carers throughout the summer ahead of the new school year;
- identify learners who are reluctant or anxious about returning or who are at risk of disengagement and develop plans for re-engaging them. This may include meeting to discuss the barriers to returning. This should include disadvantaged and vulnerable learners and young people, especially those who were persistently absent prior to the pandemic or who have not engaged with school regularly during the pandemic;
- work closely with other professionals such as the Attendance and Wellbeing Service, youth workers, mental health support as appropriate to support the return to school, including continuing to maintain regular contact with the child's social worker if they have one, informing of attendance patterns.

All learners, including those that were previously shielding, returned to their school or setting from the 3<sup>rd</sup> of September. Those learners who had been advised that they no longer need to shield should be supported in returning back to school. Support to transition back to school will be crucial for this cohort, as their level of anxiety may be greater due to the length of period many have had to shield.

The Welsh Government's view is that it would not be appropriate for a local authority/school to issue a Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN) or commence proceedings for non-attendance at the school. The Welsh Government will monitor the situation over the first half term before reviewing its position.

If a learner is unable to attend the physical setting of the school for any reason it is vital the school continues to engage regularly with the learner remotely. [Learning guidance](#) is available to support schools and settings in doing so.

Schools and settings should keep a record of attendance and families should notify their school if their child is unable to attend and explain the reason for this to enable the school to record attendance correctly. This will help schools, settings and local authorities plan for, and understand any barriers to, learners returning to school and identify any further support needed. It will be critical that all learners engage with the school and any concerns about engagement, or the welfare of a learner, are followed up immediately by the school. Concerns should only be escalated to the Attendance and Wellbeing Service after the school has made every attempt to engage the family.



Following consultation, the Welsh Government has revoked the School Performance and Absence Targets (Wales) Regulations 2011 (in force from 7 August 2020). As a result schools are not required to set targets for the academic year 2020/21.

Schools should record attendance and absence in keeping with the codes below until further notice.

Code	Meaning	Statistical Category
/	Attending school in the am	Present
\	Attending school in the pm	Present
C	Unable to physically attend the school due to medical/health risks or caring responsibilities agreed with the school. Also for a staggered return in the first 14 days when some age groups return.  Should also be used for individuals who are self-isolating under preventative measures	Authorised absence
#	Planned school closure for all pupils which may take place in the first 14 days, eg planning days.	Not required to attend
Y	Not expected to attend due to unexpected school closure (in the event of subsequent forced school closures).  Should also be used for groups of children self-isolating at the request of the school following a confirmed positive result	Not required to attend
I	Illness, including Covid 19.	Authorised Absence
All other codes apply as per the guidance on school attendance:	<a href="https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2018-03/guidance-on-school-attendance-codes.pdf">https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2018-03/guidance-on-school-attendance-codes.pdf</a>	

∧: The code for learners who attend school

All children in the expected intake for that day or in a priority group (children of critical workers and vulnerable children) should be recorded as present / \ upon arrival at their school or education setting.



**C:** The code for learners who are unable to attend

This includes learners who are unable to physically attend school for reasons understood and agreed by the school. They should be recorded as code C (Other authorised circumstances (not covered by another appropriate code/description)).

This code would be used for learners who have medical or health reasons preventing them from physically attending or they may have exceptional circumstances such as caring responsibilities.

This code would be used for learners who are self-isolating as set out in the preventative section of this guidance.

This code will also be used during the first 14 days of term when some year groups will have staggered returns.

This code should be used for individuals who are self-isolating under preventative Covid 19 measures.

Schools must engage with parents/carers to understand why they are not attending and ensure there are not any concerns about their well-being or alternative support options that could be arranged to enable them to attend. Any concerns should be followed up by the school or education setting and where relevant the local authority. The school should review the situation with the learner and parents or carers on a regular basis to avoid any prolonged absence.

**#:** The code for planned school closures for all pupils

Code # should be used for planned days where pupils are not required to attend such as planning days in the first weeks of term.

**Y:** The code for enforced school closure.

Code Y should be used for enforced school closure in the event of further requirements due to Covid 19.

This code can also be used where groups of children are requested to self-isolate by the school following a confirmed Covid 19 contact case.

Using other authorised absence and attendance codes

Where other specific authorised absence and attendance codes are more appropriate schools should use these as usual.

**Key actions:**

- Schools to communicate clear and consistent expectations around school attendance to parents/carers prior to the summer and ahead of the new school year.
- Schools should identify learners who are reluctant or anxious about returning or who are at risk of disengagement and develop plans for re-engaging them. This

may include meeting to discuss the barriers to returning. This should include disadvantaged and vulnerable learners and young people, especially those who were persistently absent prior to the pandemic or who have not engaged with school regularly during the pandemic.

- Schools should provide additional support to ease transition back to school for pupils who may have been shielding.
- Schools should work closely with other professionals such as the Attendance and Wellbeing Service, Youth Engagement and Participation Service and/or the Educational and Psychology Service to support the return of learners to school, including continuing to maintain regular contact with Children's Services if they have involvement.
- Schools to work closely with learners and parents/carers to secure regular school attendance from the start of term.

### 13. Estates

Based on current scientific and medical advice Welsh Government did not consider it necessary for schools and settings to make significant adaptations to school sites and to acquire additional sites to enable them to welcome all learners back. In classrooms, it is important that schools improve ventilation (for example, by opening windows where it is safe to do so). Good ventilation is essential at all times in classrooms and particularly during this period. Schools should ensure all systems are working in their normal operating mode. Natural ventilation via windows or vents, where it is safe to do so, should be used as far as possible. Where centralised or mechanical ventilation is present, circulatory systems should be adjusted to full fresh air, if this is not possible systems should be operated as normal. Where ventilation units have filters present ensure enhanced precautions are taken when changing filters and advice must be sought from the Council's Corporate Estates Maintenance Team.

It is important that all the usual building checks are undertaken to make the school safe. If buildings have been closed or had reduced occupancy during the COVID-19 outbreak, water system stagnation can occur due to lack of use, increasing the risks of Legionnaires' disease. Further information relating to necessary statutory check are included in Section 14 and the associated Health and Safety Risk Assessments.

#### Swimming pools

Notwithstanding the Welsh Government's announcement that swimming pools can consider opening from 10th August, all school swimming pools, jacuzzis, sauna/steam rooms and hydrotherapy pools must remain closed until the necessary risk assessments and maintenance programmes are put in place. This applies to use of such school facilities by the school or by any other external organisations.

We will write separately to schools with swimming pools and similar facilities in relation to risk assessments required to be completed prior to such facilities being brought into use.



## Closomat toilets

Public Health Wales have advised that these are likely to be considered an aerosol generating procedure and therefore carry a higher level of risk of transmission and thus a higher level of control is needed. There is no specific guidance available for this type of facility at present and so the options for control for schools that have these facilities (on the limited information available currently) are:

1. Do not use
2. Risk assess the use - Use with PPE and allow time for air to settle before disinfection/cleaning and any further use (current dental guidance for Wales is 1 hour of allowing air to settle unless there are 12 air exchanges per hour - <https://gov.wales/providing-aerosol-generating-procedures-agp-non-covid-19-dental-patients-guidance> )

Schools with these toilets should include the use (or non-use) of such facilities in their risk assessments accordingly.

### Key actions:

- Ensure mechanical ventilation systems are suitably set, checked and maintained.
- Make use of natural ventilation where possible.
- Ensure all statutory building checks are undertaken.
- Risk assess the use of swimming pools and such facilities prior to bringing them back into use.
- Risk assess closomat toilet use.

## 14. Health & Safety Risk Assessments

All schools are required to undertake COVID-19 specific Health & Safety Risk Assessments. The governing body has a duty to consult their workforce regarding health and safety matters and should involve them in the assessment and development of relevant control measures. Employers must consult with the health and safety representative selected by a recognised trade union or, if not available, a representative chosen by staff. The employer must ensure that the risks are controlled so far as is reasonably practicable. This will include ensuring that a relevant risk assessment is undertaken, and control measures are implemented and monitored to ensure that they are effective. Schools and settings should share the results of their risk assessment with their workforce. Once this is reviewed by the Health and Safety team, consideration should be given to publishing it on their website to provide transparency of approach to parents, carers and pupils (HSE would expect all employers with over 50 staff to do so).



The Health and Safety Team can provide support and guidance to school leaders when required.

Schools and settings should take a risk-benefit approach when making decisions about learners' social interaction and play in schools. The Health and Safety Executive advises a risk-benefit approach, which aims not to eliminate all risk but to strike a balance, maximising benefit while ensuring that learners are not exposed to unnecessary risk. Schools should work with the Health and Safety team in the local authority to develop risk assessments around increasing operations and to seek support and guidance where required.

Schools must carry out an appropriate COVID-19 risk assessment, as they would for other health and safety related hazards. This is a risk led approach and is not about creating unnecessary documentation, but rather about identifying sensible measures to control the risks. Records of the assessment should be simple and focused on controls. Outcomes should explain to others what they are required to do and help staff with planning and monitoring.

Compliance in any school will depend upon the suitability and sufficiency of the risk assessment and the arrangements to implement and maintain sensible, proportionate and effective controls. The risk assessment should translate into the specific actions that will need to be taken and will be influenced by site-specific factors. The risk assessment should be undertaken in collaboration with a relevant person with the necessary skills, knowledge and experience to give sensible guidance about managing the health and safety risks at the school. Controls should be considered following the hierarchy of control approach and the assessment should consider what measures need to be implemented to protect the health and safety of all staff, learners, visitors and contractors.

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) provides more information on the role of local authorities and schools as employers in the following guidance:

<https://www.hse.gov.uk/services/education/sensible-leadership/school-leaders.htm>

The HSE will be undertaking spot checks on the measures schools have taken in order to open. Spot checks will take the form of an initial phone call to review the measures taken for reopening, to minimise spread of the virus causing COVID-19.

Calls made to schools will evaluate the school's knowledge and awareness of the relevant government guidance – 'Operational guidance for schools and settings from the autumn term (Wales)' - and the control measures required under health and safety legislation. (Additional COVID-19 guidance for school science and technology activities is provided by CLEAPSS).

If a telephone call is received from the HSE, schools needs to demonstrate that they have an accessible risk assessment at hand, that they know the content of that risk assessment and have shared their risk assessments with the governing body and all stakeholders. Initial contact will be by telephone to discuss the processes and risk



assessments and responses will decide if a site visit will follow or not. Where the initial call raises concerns about a school's approach, it will be referred for a further intervention (which may include a visit to the school).

Inspectors will check that the school has carried out a suitable and sufficient risk assessment and put in place measures to ensure the school COVID-controlled in line with the latest government guidance.

The HSE appreciate that guidance is being updated regularly, and schools are working hard to respond to the changes. HSE inspectors are experienced at applying professional judgement and discretion and will seek to take a proportionate approach, focussing on what is reasonable and achievable in an evolving situation.

The HSE recognise that schools are working extremely hard to put in place safety measures. Most of the time advice from HSE inspectors will be enough to resolve any issues found, however if inspectors encounter serious risks, they will take enforcement action to ensure people's health and safety is protected.

It is imperative that all schools liaise fully with HSE inspectors regarding the spot checks to ensure they are COVID-controlled.

These calls were to start week commencing 7<sup>th</sup> September. If you are contacted by the HSE, please advise the Council's Health and Safety team.

To support schools a template has been devised and appropriate strategic risk assessments **MUST** be undertaken using the **COVID 19 School Re-opening and Risk Assessment Template Document in Appendix 2**.

**(Note – this Template Document has been updated to reflect the latest guidance from Welsh Government. Updates are in red typeface. Schools who have already submitted their Risk Assessments do not need to resubmit – they will receive feedback from Health and Safety requesting the incorporation of these updated / additional items. Schools who have not yet submitted their Risk Assessments should use the attached updated Template Document).**

Where required, further information can be obtained from the Council's Corporate Health & Safety team to assist you. Once your school's risk assessment has been completed, please ensure that this is shared with staff so that risks can be mitigated, ideally before the end of the summer term. Headteachers are encouraged to ensure that consultation on any changes to risk assessments that will be in place for the start of the autumn term commence with staff before the summer break, to ensure that those that are on term-time only contracts have adequate time to contribute.

Your school's completed COVID-19 risk assessment should be approved and signed off by the headteacher, the relevant subgroup of your governing body and your chair of governors and should have been sent to [HealthandSafetyTeam@rctcbc.gov.uk](mailto:HealthandSafetyTeam@rctcbc.gov.uk) by the **31<sup>st</sup> of August** at the very latest. These risk assessments will be reviewed by the Health and Safety Team, who will provide any necessary feedback, recommendations or



comments directly to the headteacher. To support swift feedback, please ensure that you provide suitable contact details and direct queries to the email address provided.

The designated planning days on the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> of September should have enabled all schools to plan for the term ahead and ensure that all staff are familiar with the risk assessments, and any revised processes and procedures, and control measures.

Schools must ensure that they comply fully with this requirement and seek further advice from the Council's Health and Safety team where this is needed. Further guidance is routinely disseminated to schools from Education, Human Resources and Public Health and Protection Directors to ensure that our headteachers have the most up to date information available.

Risk assessments should already exist for learners with more complex needs, including those with emotional and behavioural needs. These risk assessments should be updated 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. If risk assessments are not in place, then they must be undertaken in accordance with this guidance and local risk assessment guidance.

**Key actions:**

- Ensure that any amendments to the appropriate signage and demarcation lines installed for the June restart are checked against the new guidance.
- Engage with the Council Health and Safety teams to complete a revised COVID risk assessment.
- Ensure that Headteacher/governing body approved risk assessments are submitted to the local authority for approval
- Seek support from the Council's Health and Safety team if unclear about health and safety requirements.
- Ensure that all statutory compliance checks are undertaken e.g. legionella and fire alarm testing (please refer to the checklist in Appendix 3 for further information and ensure that this is completed and returned urgently to [schoolplanning@rctcbc.gov.uk](mailto:schoolplanning@rctcbc.gov.uk))
- Review fire safety arrangements and put in place additional controls if different layout and movement restrictions affect evacuation.
- Update all traffic management plans to ensure that they are safe and promote social distancing
- Notify the Council's Health and Safety Team of any contact made by the HSE.



## 15. Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

It is important to note Welsh Government currently recommends more extensive use of personal protective equipment (PPE) for health and social care workers. Current guidance states that educational staff do not require PPE but apron and gloves should be used for intimate care. The advice for settings is to follow steps on social distancing (wherever practical to do so), handwashing, hygiene measures, and cleaning of surfaces. Please refer to the guidance issued by the Council and Welsh Government for further detail:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-implementing-social-distancing-in-education-and-childcare-settings/coronavirus-covid-19-implementing-social-distancing-in-education-and-childcare-settings>

<https://gov.wales/coronavirus-and-personal-protective-equipment-ppe>

The current advice from the Chief Medical Officer for Wales is that face coverings are recommended for all members of the public over 11 years in indoor settings where social distancing cannot be maintained. Welsh Government has now extended that policy to include secondary schools, **in communal areas only**. This does not apply in the classroom where contact groups and other mitigating measures are in place to help minimise the risk of transmission. Please also refer to the 'Transport' section and 'Face Coverings' section of this guidance document for further information. Evidence suggests that changing habits, social distancing, cleaning and hygiene are effective measures in controlling the spread of the virus.

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.

The majority of staff in education settings will not require PPE beyond what they would normally need for their work, even if they are not always able to maintain a distance of 2 metres from others. PPE is only needed in a very small number of cases including:

- Children and young people whose care routinely already involves the use of PPE due to their intimate care needs should continue to receive their care in the same way;
- Due to the individual needs of some learners, it may be the case that specific types of PPE will need to be used at different times of the day and for different activities. Settings must make clear the agreed arrangements for the use of PPE for each individual learner, which should be noted in their individual learning plan to ensure all staff are aware and use of PPE is consistent for individual learners by all staff.
- If a child or 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, the supervising adult should wear a fluid-resistant surgical facemask



if a distance of 2 metres cannot be maintained. If contact with the child or young person is necessary, then disposable gloves, a disposable apron and a fluid-resistant surgical facemask should be worn by the supervising adult. 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.

When undertaking intimate care the following should be undertaken:

- 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.
- 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.
- Gloves, fluid repellent gown, FFP3 mask and eye protection are indicated when undertaking aerosol-generating procedures such as suction.
- Gloves and aprons should be used when cleaning equipment or surfaces that might be contaminated with body fluids such as saliva or respiratory secretions

The local authority have supplied all schools with PPE for use when somebody displays symptoms. Additional PPE can be requested from the Council's Procurement team:

- PPE – [Paula.griffiths@rctcbc.gov.uk](mailto:Paula.griffiths@rctcbc.gov.uk) / [ProcOrders@rctcbc.gov.uk](mailto:ProcOrders@rctcbc.gov.uk)

It is important to remember that physical distancing, hand hygiene and respiratory hygiene (catching a cough or sneeze in a tissue or covering the mouth and nose with an elbow or sleeve) are scientifically proven to be the most effective ways to prevent the spread of coronavirus. 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, other than the wearing of face coverings in communal areas of secondary schools

If a member of staff wishes to wear their own face covering then they are at liberty to do so.

**Please refer to Appendix 3 - General Guidance to School Staff Working - PPE & social distancing for further information.**

**Key actions:**

- Ensure that there is adequate PPE, including emergency PPE. This must be collected from the central store in Ty Elai Council offices, once confirmation of your order is e-mailed to you.
- Ensure that sanitiser is distributed at key strategic points through the setting

- Make arrangements to ensure that there are adequate supplies of personal protective equipment (PPE) supplies for dealing with the small numbers of children and young people.
- If your staff provide intimate care for any children or young people and for cases where a child becomes unwell with symptoms of coronavirus PPE must be used (please see Appendix 3 for further detail).

## 16. Face Coverings and Face Visors

### 16.1 Face Coverings

#### Within the school setting

On the 26<sup>th</sup> August additional advice from the Welsh Government's Technical Advisory Group (TAG) was published following its review of the use of face coverings in schools. <https://gov.wales/technical-advisory-group-face-coverings-children-and-young-people-education-settings>. TAG advise that while face coverings are likely to be of little value in children under the age of 11 years, the rates of infection and transmission increase from the age of 11 onwards and therefore face coverings could have a role in risk mitigation.

The Chief Medical Officer recommends, but does not mandate, the risk assessed use of face coverings in secondary schools in a range of settings where other physical controls cannot be or are unlikely to be maintained. This may include communal areas of schools where the physical layout means that contact groups cannot remain separated to the same degree. This will be a local decision for the school or setting depending on their assessment of the risk and in context of the local circumstances.

The Council strongly recommended that from the 10th September 2020, face coverings be worn by all secondary school based staff and secondary mainstream pupils when moving around common areas of school buildings including corridors, lifts, stairwells, toilets, canteen areas. Primary school staff are also strongly recommended to wear a face covering in communal areas (corridors, lifts, stairwells, toilets, canteen areas). This does not apply in the classroom where contact groups and other mitigating measures are in place to help minimise the risk of transmission. However, if learners or staff wish to wear a face covering in a classroom then they can do so. In respect of staff, face coverings can be removed when at their desk and when teaching, or in attendance at essential face to face meetings, where 2m social distancing arrangements are in place. For secondary school pupils, face coverings can be removed when seated in the classroom, participating in lessons and when outside of the school building. **The wearing of face coverings will not remove the need for employees and pupils to adhere to 2m physical distancing wherever possible and good hand hygiene but is an added safety measure to prevent virus transmission.** Individual schools will determine local arrangements for the wearing of face coverings to support infection



control, to be documented in the school's risk assessment. Further guidance is contained within the attached schools update document.

As part of the risk assessment process it is recommended that staff, learners, families and unions are engaged as a key stakeholder. There are some risks and harms of face coverings to be considered, including the potential for inadvertent virus spread when putting on or taking off, the need for supply, safe wearing, storage and disposal, and the risk of stigmatisation or bullying of those with medical exemptions, especially neurodiverse students, problems for those who lip-read, and adverse effects on learning, emotional engagement and communication of the masking of facial features. The following points should be considered.

- Some children and young people may need to be able to lip-read, or see people's faces, in order to communicate. . [The National Deaf Children's Society](https://www.ndcs.org.uk/blog/the-impact-of-face-masks-on-deaf-children) have provided [communication tips](#) which staff may find useful - <https://www.ndcs.org.uk/blog/the-impact-of-face-masks-on-deaf-children>
- Some children and young people with special educational needs may be distressed if the people around them wear face coverings.
- Face coverings are not a substitute for other protective measures such as good hand and respiratory hygiene and social distancing where possible.
- In some instances, learners with medical or mental health needs, disability or impairment may not be able to tolerate wearing a face covering and this will require further discussions with parents/carers and more bespoke arrangements.

Learners must not touch the front of their face covering during use or when removing face coverings. They must wash their hands immediately on arrival at school or home, dispose of temporary face coverings in a covered bin or place re-usable face coverings in a separate plastic bag (within their school bag) for washing.

Not everyone will be able to safely wear a face covering and it is acceptable for such individuals to not wear a face covering (subject to discussions the school should hold with their parents / carers):-

Welsh Government guidance details that the requirement to wear a face covering applies to everyone aged 11 and over unless an exception applies. A reasonable excuse (exception) for an individual not to wear a face covering includes the following:-

- A person is not able to put on or to wear a face covering because of a physical or mental illness, or because of a disability or impairment;
- A person is accompanying somebody who relies on lip reading where they need to communicate;
- A person is escaping from a threat or danger and doesn't have a face covering;
- A person for whom the wearing of a face covering or mask triggers flashbacks to traumatic experiences.



Schools, in discussions with parents / carers and pupils, can consider whether an exemption does apply. In the event that an exemption is applicable, a face covering exemption card is available via the Welsh Government's website –

<https://gov.wales/face-covering-exemption-card>.

Schools should personalise and laminate these for their setting for the learners who are exempt from wearing a face covering.

The overall interests of the young person must be given priority in any assessments and there must be no risk of exclusion for any failure to wear a face covering as this is not currently mandated by Welsh Government.

Three-layer reusable face coverings for secondary schools (including home to school transport) will be supplied directly by the Council.

### **When using public transport or school transport**

Secondary age learners travelling on dedicated school transport must wear a face covering, as learners cannot sit together in their year groups, but they are not a substitute for good hygiene. Not only will this measure help reduce the risk of spreading COVID-19 but also common colds and flu, which will also be a benefit.

**A persistent refusal to comply with this requirement may result in a child's place on school transport being compromised. Schools should reinforce this message with parents/ carers and pupils.**

One re-usable face covering per learner was initially delivered to the schools to be handed to those in year 7 and above for their first return trip home **(for the initial trip into school, drivers issued a disposable face covering for pupils to wear until they collected their reusable face covering)**. Replacements for lost or damaged face coverings are to be made available from a stock in schools.

Learners who travel to school or college on public transport must wear a three layer face covering as mandated by the Welsh Government. Further information can be found here <https://trc.cymru/school-transport>.

Learners must not touch the front of their face covering during use or when removing them. They must wash their hands immediately on arrival at school or home, dispose of temporary face coverings in a covered bin or place re-usable face coverings in a plastic bag for washing.

## **16.2 Face Visors**

Outside the formal PPE guidelines, staff may request to utilise face visors during the school day. Where schools determine to allocate face visors to staff, appropriate supplies can be ordered from the following companies direct:



[https://www.shop.screenotec.co.uk/?utm\\_source=Banner](https://www.shop.screenotec.co.uk/?utm_source=Banner)

<http://www.beatuscartons.co.uk/about-us/>

**Key actions:**

- Organise the school environment to ensure that social distancing can be maintained throughout a routine day.
- Distribute face coverings to secondary age learners.
- Advise parents/ carers/ pupils of the requirement for secondary age learners to wear a face covering on school transport and within the communal areas of secondary schools and that these will be provided by the school.
- Ensure that reasonable adaptations are made for learners that have medical or mental health issues, disability or impairment that would make wearing a face mask a challenge
- Advise parents / carers / pupils that school transport may be compromised for secondary age learners who fail to comply with the requirement to wear a face covering.
- Sensitively advise parent/carers of washing requirements for reusable face coverings and of the requirement for them to be stored in a plastic bag when not in use.
- Provide covered bins for disposal of temporary face coverings.
- Remind learners not to touch the front of their face covering during use or when removing them.
- Provide facilities for learners to wash or sanitise their hands immediately on arrival at school and regularly throughout the day.

## **17. School Uniform**

All schools should encourage learners to wear a school uniform, although this is a matter for the governing body to determine. Eligible families should be reminded of their eligibility for the PDG Access grant.

## **18. Suspected Cases**

If anyone becomes unwell with a new, continuous cough or a high temperature or a loss of taste and smell in an education or childcare setting, they must be sent home and advised to follow the stay at home guidance:

<https://gov.wales/self-isolation-stay-home-guidance-households-possible-coronavirus>



When a child, young person or staff member develops symptoms compatible with coronavirus, they should be sent home and advised to self-isolate for **10 days**. Their fellow household members should self-isolate for 14 days. Please refer to Annex C in the following guidance for further information

<https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2020-07/operational-guidance-for-schools-and-settings-from-the-autumn-term.pdf>

All children and young people eligible to attend, and members of their households, will have access to testing if they display symptoms of coronavirus, and are encouraged to be tested in this scenario. Where the child, young person or staff member tests negative, they can return to their setting and the fellow household members can end their self-isolation. However, if self-isolation is the result of contact with a confirmed case, direction from Track, Trace and Protect or quarantine then isolation for the full self-isolation period should be adhered to for 14 days even if a negative test result is received.

A one page flowchart for schools outlining the actions to be taken in the event of a suspected or confirmed case within a school, or within the household of a pupil or member of staff is at Appendix 6C. (This was developed by colleagues in Caerphilly County Borough Council and has been adapted, with their consent, for use in Rhondda Cynon Taf).

## Testing

Avenues for symptomatic individuals to obtain a test are outlined below:-

- i. **Testing information details can be found at <https://gov.wales/apply-coronavirus-covid-19-test> or by calling the free phone number 119 between the hours of 7am to 11pm.** Welsh Government officials have developed an information [leaflet](#) specifically for education settings which provides detail regarding the wider Trace, Track and Protect programme at <https://gov.wales/education-settings-coronavirus-testing-and-contact-tracing-guidance>
- ii. The Department for Health and Social Care (DHSC), UK Government have provided each school and setting in Wales with a supply of home testing kits. Home test kits should **only** be offered to individuals in exceptional circumstances and when it is considered that an individual may have barriers to accessing testing elsewhere. Please see appendix 5 - Coronavirus (COVID-19): WG guidance for schools and FE providers – using home test kits for further information.
- iii. Symptomatic critical workers, including teachers and education staff, may access tests at LHB run Community Testing Units (CTUs). The route through which tests can be accessed differs depending on the Local Health Board area. For Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board staff can contact 01443 443151 to request a test. **(Please DO NOT share this number). Staff must only use this route if they are symptomatic or living with an individual who has symptoms, and are unable to access a test through the online booking portal.**



- iv. A dedicated COVID-19 test booking line has also been created for symptomatic Council key workers and their household family members, through the Council's Occupational Health and Wellbeing Unit.

In order to access testing via this route you must :

- Have COVID-19 symptoms or be living with an individual who has COVID-19 symptoms; **and**
- Be a key worker for RCTCBC (you will be asked to provide your employee / staff number which is available on your payslip).

Key workers (which will include their household members) are defined as those who work in an:

- education setting e.g. teachers, caretakers, cleaners etc
- health and social care environment e.g. carers, social care workers etc
- Children or adults waiting placement
- Areas that require business continuity

If you meet the above criteria, a test can be booked by calling:

- 01443 494004 or 01443 494007 (Monday to Friday – 9am to 5pm)  
Or
- 07385389546 / 07385389571 / 07385389598 (Saturday 9am to 1pm and Sunday 9am until midday)

Personal details will need to be shared by Occupational Health with the NHS Test booking Team. Test results will come back directly to the person that has been tested and Occupational Health will not be able to chase up test results.

In the unlikely event of a pupil or member of staff refusing to take a test, advice should be sought from the Council's Public Health and Protection Department [CoronavirusCouncilAdvice@rctcbc.gov.uk](mailto:CoronavirusCouncilAdvice@rctcbc.gov.uk).

### **Symptomatic pupils**

If a child displaying symptoms is awaiting collection, they should be moved, if possible, to a room where they can be isolated behind a closed door, depending on the age of the child and with appropriate adult supervision if required. Ideally, a window should be opened for ventilation. If it is not possible to isolate them, move them to an area, which is at least 2 metres away from other people.

If they need to go to the welfare facilities while waiting to be collected, they should use a separate welfare facility if possible. The welfare facility should be cleaned and disinfected using standard cleaning products before being used by anyone else. They should not travel home on school transport or public transport.



Gloves, aprons and a fluid-resistant surgical mask should be worn if a child or young person becomes unwell with symptoms of COVID-19 and needs direct personal care. 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. Gloves and aprons should be used when cleaning the areas where a person suspected of having COVID-19 has been.

In an emergency, call 999 if they are seriously ill or injured or their life is at risk. Do not visit the GP, pharmacy, urgent care centre or a hospital.

If a member of staff has helped someone who was unwell with a new, continuous cough or a high temperature, they do not need to go home unless they develop symptoms themselves or if the child subsequently tests positive. They should wash their hands thoroughly for 20 seconds after any contact with someone who is unwell. Cleaning the affected area with normal household disinfectant after someone with symptoms has left will reduce the risk of passing the infection on to other people. Please see the cleaning section for further information.

**Key actions:**

- Plan the school level response should someone fall ill on site (in line with relevant government guidance) and ensure compliance.
- Ensure appropriate PPE is used if there is a suspected case.
- **Provide parents / carers with the following link to the testing process:- <https://gov.wales/apply-coronavirus-covid-19-test> or simply call the free number 119 between the hours of 7am to 11pm.**
- Provide symptomatic key workers (see definition above) with the Occupational Health contact numbers to facilitate them booking a test.
- Provide symptomatic teaching and education staff, with the LHB contact number only if they are unable to access a test through the online booking portal.

## 19. Confirmed Cases

In the event of a confirmed case, contact tracing will commence.

Contact tracing is done on an anonymised basis as default. Contact tracers will get in touch with contacts only if identified from a positive case and will only share who that person is, if permission is given. If the contact tracers deem other learners or staff as contacts (utilising the definition of a contact), they will request that information from the school and take forward that contact tracing (which includes informing others that they are contacts) as the experts.



It is not appropriate for schools to share information on potential COVID-19 cases in the school to wider staff, pupils or parents. Under the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) this is personal health information which is highly sensitive and shouldn't be widely shared. From a contact tracing perspective, contact tracers' actions are covered under the health specific article of GDPR, which is why they are able to request that information from sources such as schools (and also handle appropriately and sensitively in health-specific systems).

Contact tracers will get in touch with the school if there is a suspected cluster or potential outbreak, where they will ask for contact information from the school.

Pupils and staff should only request a test if they are symptomatic, not if they suspect contact with a potentially positive case.

**In the event of a confirmed case in a school, contact tracing will be initiated by the Test, Track and Protect Service. Communication should only be sent to parents/carers following discussions with Public Health Wales and the Education and Inclusion Service Directorate. A process for submitting information for confirmed cases and template letters have been sent to all headteachers. The processes map for primary and secondary schools can be found at Appendix 6a and 6b respectively. The submitted form to the local authority ensures that all relevant departments are informed of confirmed cases and the case details are reviewed by senior officers in the Education and Inclusion Services Directorate and Public Health and Protection on a daily basis, and all proposed decisions by schools are signed off and appropriate advice and guidance provided in a timely manner.**

Where the child, young person or staff member tests **positive**, the rest of their class or group within their childcare or education setting (i.e. **potential close contacts**) must be sent home and advised to self-isolate for 24 hours – this 24 hour period allows in-depth contact tracing to take place and deep cleaning to be undertaken to relevant areas. The other household members (including other children in the household) of that wider class or group / potential close contact do not need to self-isolate unless the child, young person or staff member they live with in that group subsequently develops symptoms: <https://gov.wales/self-isolation-stay-home-guidance-households-possible-coronavirus>

Any child, young person or member of staff identified within the abovementioned 24-hour period by the contact tracing process as being a **close contact** of a confirmed case will be contacted by a contact tracer from the Test, Track and Protect Service to provide further advice and guidance relating to self-isolation. Any child, young person or member of staff identified as a close contact **must** self-isolate for a minimum period of 14 days since the last contact with the confirmed case. This is because it can take up to 14 days for the symptoms to develop.



A **close contact** is:

- someone within 1 metre of you with whom you have had a face-to-face conversation, had skin-to-skin physical contact, you have coughed on, or been on other forms of contact within 1 metre for 1 minute or longer;
- someone within 2 metres of you for more than 15 minutes;
- someone you have travelled in a vehicle with, or seated near you in public transport.

Family household members of the close contacts (including other children in the close contact's household) are not required to self-isolate, but should follow the general social distancing guidance during the isolation period.

If a child is well at the end of the self-isolation period, they can return to school.

However, if anyone in the household of a close contact of a confirmed case develops any Covid-19 symptoms, however mild, they need to stay at home (10 days for the person with symptoms and 14 days for the rest of the household), seek a test as soon as possible and follow the guidance at <https://gov.wales/self-isolation-stay-home-guidance-households-possible-coronavirus>.

Further detail on **how to apply for a test** is provided at <https://gov.wales/apply-coronavirus-covid-19-test> or simply call the free phone number 119 between the hours of 7am to 11pm. Parent/carers should be asked to keep the school informed.

A **negative** test result does not always mean that a return to school is appropriate. For example, direct/close contacts with a confirmed case will still need to isolate for 14 days.

Where a child or member of staff is an **index case** (i.e. they developed symptoms independently of direct contact with a confirmed case), and they test negative then they can return to their setting and their fellow household members can end their self-isolation. If they test positive, they can return after 10 days isolation and their household and other contacts identified through contact tracing will have to remain in isolation for 14 days. Confirmation of their diagnosis should be requested and further advice sought from [CoronavirusCouncilAdvice@rctcbc.gov.uk](mailto:CoronavirusCouncilAdvice@rctcbc.gov.uk).

**Key actions:**

- **Provide parents / carers with the following link to the testing process:-**  
<https://gov.wales/apply-coronavirus-covid-19-test> or simply call the free number 119 between the hours of 7am to 11pm.
- **Ensure compliance with the self-isolation period in the event of a confirmed case or close contact with a confirmed case**
- **Submit the confirmed case notification form to the local authority and use template letters issued to notify parents / carers (following discussions with Public Health Wales and the Education and Inclusion Services Directorate).**

- **Ask parents/carers of any close contacts to monitor their child for symptoms during the isolation period and keep the school informed.**

## 20. Test, Trace and Protect

The [Test, Trace, Protect strategy](#) published on 13 May was implemented across Wales from 1 June.

This strategy set out the next phase of Welsh Government's approach to tackling coronavirus; testing people with symptoms in the community, tracing those who have come into close contact with people who have tested positive for coronavirus, and protecting family, friends and our community by self-isolating.

Test, Trace, Protect works by:

- testing those people who have coronavirus symptoms, asking them to isolate from family, friends and their community while taking a test and waiting for a result. People can apply for a test for themselves or someone in their household with symptoms. This includes adults and children including the under 5's. Information and [guidance](#) for staff and how to apply for a test can be found on the [Welsh Government website](#);
- tracing those people who have been in close contact with people that have tested positive for the virus, requiring them to take precautions through self-isolation. Further information on contact tracing and how it operates can be found on the [Welsh Government website](#);
- ensuring that if the symptoms are not due to coronavirus, individuals and their contacts can get back to their normal routines as soon as possible;
- providing advice and [guidance](#), particularly if the person who has symptoms or their contacts were previously in the 'shielding group' or the [increased risk](#) group.

By reducing transmission in our communities, and quickly identifying and isolating those at risk of developing COVID-19 following their close contact with a positive individual (e.g. a known contact or family member) we will support the wider opening of schools, colleges and early years settings.

Schools and settings should reinforce these messages and in particular, remind all those who show any of the symptoms to self-isolate immediately and book a test. Those living with someone showing symptoms should also self-isolate.

In the event of a positive test, a contact tracer will contact the person tested to help identify potential contacts. A second contact tracer will then get in touch with those



contacts and advise them to self-isolate for 14 days from their last contact with the person who tested positive. **These people will only be required to take a test if they develop symptoms.**

People are considered as potential contacts if they were in contact with the person who has tested positive during a period beginning up to two days before symptom onset and ending when the case entered home isolation. This is based on current understanding of the main period of infectivity.

A contact is defined as someone who has had **close contact** during this period, specifically:

- within one metre of the person who has tested positive and has been coughed on, had a face-to-face conversation, had skin-to-skin physical contact, or been in other forms of contact within one metre for one minute or longer;
- within two metres of the person testing positive for more than 15 minutes;
- having travelled in a vehicle with, or sat next to on public transport, the person who has tested positive.

Where staff have maintained social/physical distancing rules and adhered to hygiene measures during work and where required have used personal protective equipment (PPE) or worked behind an appropriate screen or partition, they would not be regarded as part of a contact tracing exercise for these purposes.

A positive test on site therefore does not require closure of that site. The process of testing and contact tracing is part of the 'new normal' and where schools and settings follow these guidelines carefully, there is no cause for alarm. The latest information can be found on the [Welsh Government website](https://gov.wales/guidance-testing-and-contact-tracing-education-settings-html).

<https://gov.wales/guidance-testing-and-contact-tracing-education-settings-html>

### **NHS COVID-19 app**

The NHS COVID-19 app was launched on 24<sup>th</sup> September and people across Wales and England are encouraged to download the app to help stop the spread of coronavirus and protect themselves, their loved ones, colleagues and those who live in our communities. The app is free to download and is available to those aged 16 and over, and forms a central part of the NHS Wales Test, Trace, Protect programme identifying contacts of those who have tested positive for coronavirus.

The NHS leaflet is available via the following link:

<https://wales.assetbank-server.com/assetbank-wales/images/assetbox/6ee2935c-f2c3-42ee-9d38-ad8b3b24d1f1/asset1284.html>



The app works by logging the amount of time an individual spends near other app users, and the distance between them, so it can alert a person if someone they have been close to later tests positive for COVID-19 – even if the people do not know each other.

The app will advise individuals to self-isolate for 14 days if they have been in close contact with a confirmed case. It also has a check-in scanner to alert individuals if a venue they have visited is found to be an outbreak hotspot. It also enables individuals to check symptoms, book a test if needed and get their test results.

The app has been designed with user privacy in mind, so it tracks the virus, not people and uses the latest in data security technology to protect privacy. Nobody, including the Government, will know who or where a particular user is.

The app does not hold personal information such as name, address or date of birth, and only requires the first half of an individual's postcode to ensure local outbreaks can be managed.

This will help the NHS understand if the virus is spreading in a particular area in order for local authorities to respond quickly to stop it spreading further and save lives.

As the app applies to people aged 16 and over, pupils in Years 11 (depending upon date of birth), 12 and 13 will be eligible to use the app.

If a pupil aged between 16 and 18 receives a notification during school hours that they have been in contact with a positive case, it will advise them to show the message to a trusted adult – usually a member of staff. Schools should tell app users to inform a member of staff if they get such an alert.

Staff need to follow the school's COVID-19 procedures if a pupil using the app is notified whilst at school that they have been in close contact with a positive case. The school should then follow its COVID-19 procedures as if that pupil had been present with another child in a class who had shown symptoms (see Section 19 above).

There is no need to change existing policies on the use of mobile phones by pupils due to the use of the app.

QR posters are optional and only need to be considered if schools host an event with external guests on their premises. A QR poster can be downloaded from the following link:

**<https://gov.wales/nhs-covid-19-app-guidance-businesses-and-organisations>**.

**Key actions:**

- **Engage with the Test, Trace, Protect process**
- **Encourage staff, parents / carers and pupils aged 16+ to download the NHS COVID-19 app**
- **Advise pupils who use the app to notify a member of staff if they receive an alert that they have had close contact with a person with symptoms**
- **Follow procedures regarding confirmed cases (Section 19 above)**

## **21. Potential Outbreaks**

If there are multiple cases of COVID-19 in a school then experts from across the NHS and local authority will work together to prevent ongoing transmission within the school. This will involve identifying those exposed, and any child or staff member who is at increased risk and provide tailored infection control advice. Advice based on the assessment of each individual situation will be provided to support the school in preventing further spread.

The process should be handled sensitively and in confidence, for instance identities should not be revealed by senior leaders.

Building upon the Disease Outbreak Plan for Wales (2020) Public Health Wales has provided specific advice regarding the investigation and management of clusters and outbreaks of COVID-19 in educational settings so as to reduce the spread to other communities. Further information is provided at:

<https://phw.nhs.wales/topics/latest-information-on-novel-coronavirus-covid-19/information-for-healthcare-workers-in-wales/>

The advice outlines what steps should be taken to protect individuals and communities where clusters and incidents are occurring, as well as reducing spread to other communities.

1. Identification of cases in possible cluster.
2. Gathering of minimum information.
3. Initial cluster management and risk assessment.
4. Identification of incident.
5. Incident management.
6. Escalation.



### **Identifying clusters and incidents of COVID-19**

A potential **cluster** is defined as two or more cases of COVID-19 among learners or staff in an educational setting within 14 days or; an increased rate of absence due to suspected or confirmed cases of COVID-19.

A potential **incident, needing further investigation**, is defined as two or more confirmed cases of COVID-19 among learners or staff who are direct close contacts, proximity contacts or in the same 'bubble'\* in the school/setting, within 14 days". \* (This may be a class, year group or other defined group).

It is important to highlight that if only one person has been identified with a case of COVID-19 in a school or setting the regular Test, Trace, Protect (TTP) contact tracing process should be followed.

Cases in schools and settings will be identified by:

- Notification ('flagging') of individual confirmed cases who attend a school or setting through the national CRM contact tracing system;
- Direct notifications from other sources, such as schools and settings themselves, clinicians such as school nurses, local authorities, laboratories and the PHW Communicable Disease Surveillance Centre (CDSC) Team;

After notification of a confirmed case who attends a school or setting the TTP team will contact the school/setting to assess whether the positive case attended during their infectious period and/or if it is likely the setting was the source of the infection for this case.

### **Gathering of minimum information and managing a cluster**

Regional TTP teams will appoint a clear lead for the investigation of a cluster who work with the head of the school or setting (or nominated deputy) to gather a range of information related to the unique nature of the school/setting, the context and situation in which the cases have occurred and to establish if the Welsh Government advice for schools and settings is being implemented correctly alongside guidance on infection control measures/social distancing measures for staff and students (including the use of PPE if learners require personal care). A risk assessment will be undertaken and if an incident is not declared the regional TTP team will continue to work with the school/setting to manage and review the cluster.

### **Identification of an incident**

If an incident is suspected in a school/setting, the PHW Consultant in Communicable Disease Control/Consultant in Health Protection (CCDC/CHP) will make urgent contact with designated senior colleagues in the local authority, PHW and Health Board (HB), in line with existing health protection arrangements. An urgent incident meeting (Incident Management Team (IMT)) is likely to be convened to which key individuals who are needed to investigate and manage the situation will be invited. Any immediate control measures needed will be implemented prior to this meeting. Urgent actions to



control the situation (such as class closures or whether widespread swabbing is required) will be agreed at this meeting.

The IMT will also consider whether, in rare circumstances, a formal outbreak needs to be declared.

### **When an outbreak is declared**

Most clusters and incidents will be comprehensively dealt with using the steps outlined in this document however in rare circumstances a school / setting incident will be so complex it will require management under the formal structures of an Outbreak Control Team and managed as per the Communicable Disease Outbreak Plan for Wales 2020.

- a. adjustments to how the school/setting is operating to facilitate infection prevention and control measures and social distancing;
- b. if further groups need to be asked to self-isolate (e.g. class groups, other functional groups or year groups);
- c. whether to undertake an enhanced investigation including testing of a wider group.

### **Management of an incident in a school or setting.**

The management of an incident will be taken forward by the IMT based on the individual circumstances of the incident and the school / setting. The IMT will consider:

- a. whether to undertake an enhanced investigation including testing of a wider group;
- b. adjustments to how the school/setting is operating to facilitate infection prevention and control measures and social distancing;
- c. if further groups need to be asked to self-isolate (e.g. class groups, other functional groups or year groups);
- d. more detailed follow up of households of positive cases and/or further testing;
- e. targeted communications strategy including shielding messages for vulnerable contacts.

An incident will be declared over when there has been 28 days since the onset of the last confirmed case in the school/setting and the results of any possible cases in learners or staff in that time have tested negative.

## **22. PCR Antigen Testing**

The rapid deployment of swabbing/testing is available to support outbreaks in schools/settings. The NHS Wales TTP Programme and Local Health Boards will facilitate PCR antigen testing for everybody in the school/setting contact group that are affected by the outbreak and everyone in the school/setting if it has been established that the setting has not followed Welsh Government guidelines for schools and/or Infection Prevention and Control measures.



The method for delivery and sampling of rapid antigen tests can be executed in a range of ways such as the deployment of Mobile Testing Units (MTUs), temporary testing satellites and drop off and collection routes. The most appropriate testing channel will be discussed and agreed between all stakeholders.

Further information can be found at:

<https://gov.wales/welsh-national-covid-19-test-approach-may-2020>

### **23. Antibody Testing**

A programme of antibody testing started in a number of Rhondda Cynon Taf Schools. However, at present antibody testing for all school staff has been suspended. Updates are awaited regarding when or if this will be resumed.

### **24. School-based vaccination programmes**

The UK's childhood immunisation programmes are highly successful in reducing the incidence of serious and highly infectious diseases such as measles and meningococcal infections. It is important that high levels of vaccination are maintained to prevent a re-emergence of these, and other, preventable diseases.

This autumn, preventing co-infection with flu and COVID-19 is a key priority to protect public health. Flu vaccination for primary school children will be especially important. Children are 'super spreaders' of flu and the nasal spray vaccine offered in this age group has been highly effective. Flu vaccination provides benefits to individual children and indirect protection this offers to the rest of the population. Increasing uptake in all eligible children would have a significant impact on reducing transmission of flu across all groups in the community.

A concerted effort is needed to substantially increase uptake in order to prevent unnecessary added pressure on the NHS and social care.

Headteachers and school staff across Wales have always been very supportive of school vaccination programmes. Maintaining these programmes during the COVID-19 pandemic has, and will continue to, present many challenges. The practical support offered by schools to allow access to school premises for all school age immunisation sessions has never been more valued and important.

#### **Key actions:**

- Schools should engage with their local immunisation teams to provide immunisation programmes on site, ensuring these will be delivered in keeping with the school's control measures.



## 25. Learning

Welsh Government guidance on learning in the autumn term can be found at <https://gov.wales/guidance-learning-schools-and-settings-autumn-term-covid-19>

Further local authority guidance will follow in due course.

Guidance on COVID-19 and Physical Activity in Schools has also been issued by the NHS and Public Health Wales –

<https://phw.nhs.wales/topics/latest-information-on-novel-coronavirus-covid-19/educational-and-childcare-settings/gui-003-guidance-on-covid-19-and-physical-activity-in-schools-final-version-2-0/>

It will be important that distance learning provision will continue to be made for learners who cannot attend school due their vulnerability or self-isolation requirements and that schools have well established contingency plans in the event of a further peak in COVID-19 or a more local lockdown.

During this time the Consortium will continue to support schools in curriculum delivery and recovery planning to help meet the needs of all learners. This work will be carried out in partnership with the challenge advisors and strategic improvement teams and will be centred around enabling schools to effectively deliver a ‘broad and balanced curriculum.’ The blended learning approach will be a model retained for implementing should there be a further national or local lockdown due to any further outbreak of Covid-19, which should be reflected in school Business Continuity Plans.

Every school must plan for the possibility of a local lockdown and how they will ensure continuity of education within a broader framework of local restrictions. Welsh Government’s Learning Guidance clearly set out the priorities for schools and the need to provide teaching and learning in all operational scenarios, and schools’ planning must cover all the relevant elements of this (including RRRS). Schools could incorporate this planning as part of their Business Continuity Plans or as part of their School Improvement Plans; what is important is that this thinking and planning has been done and that it is in a format that is accessible and understood by the school and the wider school community.

### **Key actions:**

- Ensure that well established contingency plans are in place in the event of a further peak in COVID-19 or a more local lockdown and that these are reflected in Business Continuity Plans and / or School Improvement Plans.

## **26. Learners with Additional Learning Needs (ALN)**

Specialist schools, PRUs and learning support classes should follow the same principles and guidance as mainstream schools. As much as possible, protective measures should be adhered to and class or contact group sizes should be small. Staff should use differentiated language to explain safety measures, and reiterate and reinforce key messages. Safe routines for access to toilets, hand cleaning, break, and lunch times should be put in place. Teaching resources should be used to aid understanding.

Risk assessments should already exist for learners with more complex needs, including those with emotional and behavioural needs. These risk assessments need to be kept updated 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. If risk assessments are not in place, then they must be undertaken in accordance with this guidance and other key guidance documents e.g. LA guidance on complex health needs, positive restrictive intervention, etc.

For dual placed learners, schools 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.

Further information relating to learners with ALN can be found at on the service website. All learners with statements of SEN should access their statutory entitlement as specified in their statement of SEN albeit that the method of delivery of statement provision may need to be modified in line with social distancing requirements and in consideration of the need for blended learning opportunities where appropriate. Access and Inclusion Services will be able to advise on the above.

## **27. Supporting the Wellbeing of Learners**

These challenging and uncertain times have undoubtedly placed children and parents/carers under significant pressure. The support and guidance provided and the approaches adopted should take this into account so that children's physical, emotional and mental wellbeing is taken into consideration. Helping learners feel safe will be critical and this can be achieved through the provision of appropriate support, ensuring that learners are clear about operational arrangements and by ensuring that their voice is heard. Supporting children to adapt to a new and unfamiliar environment will be important and they should be encouraged to express any worries and concerns they have so that they can be supported in a developmentally appropriate manner. For children and young people who have experienced significant trauma and loss, appropriate pastoral support and guidance should be provided, including external agency support or school based counselling where appropriate. A range of resources is available on the Access and Inclusion Service website:

<https://www-staging.rctcbc.gov.uk/Preview/1/EN/Resident/SchoolsandLearning/AccessandInclusiontoEducation/COVID19AccessandInclusionServiceAdvice.aspx>



The Attendance and Wellbeing Service have issued separate operational guidance on a changed approach for the service which will hopefully address issues of non-attendance quickly and efficiently in order to identify learners or families in need of wellbeing support via 'Wellbeing Response Visits'.

Resources are available to support children and young people's wellbeing. A Young Person's Mental Health Toolkit can be found on Hwb. This comprises a variety of online resources, which can help them through lockdown and beyond. It contains information on websites, apps, helplines, and more, which support mental health and well-being.

- Anxiety: <https://hwb.gov.wales/go/agg9pn>
- Coronavirus and your well-being: <https://hwb.gov.wales/go/ffkbs1>
- Crisis: <https://hwb.gov.wales/go/4ypw1s>
- Keeping health: <https://hwb.gov.wales/go/nz95en>
- Loss: <https://hwb.gov.wales/go/lvy6hx>
- Low mood: <https://hwb.gov.wales/go/bi4vbc>

<https://hwb.gov.wales/repository/resource/e53adf44-76cb-4635-b6c2-62116bb63a9a/en>

## **28. Staff Wellbeing**

As a local authority, Rhondda Cynon Taf is committed to supporting the well-being of all staff and senior leaders. It is natural that some staff may require more support than others during this period. Senior leaders will need to consider that some staff members might find it difficult to re-adjust following a period at home and may have developed anxious behaviours relating to the pandemic or their own health and wellbeing, or family members. Those with pre-existing issues that may have increased as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and others may well have experienced loss and bereavement.

COVID-19 makes it more important than ever that we acknowledge the need to provide a reflective space for staff to deal with and process the more challenging experiences of working with children, young people, their families and the systems around them. Leaders in schools need to provide opportunities for staff to discuss issues with them or their colleagues. Sharing experiences and discussing their feelings and emotions can identify areas where additional support is needed, and may well provide an opportunity for individuals to support their own well-being. Staff involvement in risk assessments and control measures will be important in reducing anxiety and ensuring a consistent approach. Effective communication, avoiding duplication of work and unnecessary demands on staff will be important to supporting staff wellbeing.

To support staff, the Council has already put in place the wellbeing helpline, which can give you support and guidance for both your mental and physiological wellbeing. The



wellbeing helpline can provide access to coaching, counselling, exercise programmes and physiotherapy to help you to stay as well as possible during these difficult times.

The helpline is available Monday-Friday (Excluding Bank Holidays) 8:30 to 18:00 hours. You can access the Wellbeing Helpline service by either:

- emailing [WellbeingHelpline@rctcbc.gov.uk](mailto:WellbeingHelpline@rctcbc.gov.uk)
- calling any of the following numbers:

Craig	<b>07384 910 525</b>	David	<b>07384 910 527</b>
Sian	<b>07384 910 524</b>	Carys	<b>07384 910 491</b>
Kylie	<b>07799 116 571</b>	Luke	<b>07824 496 496</b>
Emma	<b>07769 164 673</b>	Nikki	<b>07384 910 488</b>
Gareth	<b>07385 086 789</b>	Corinne	<b>07385 086 111</b>
Kayleigh	<b>07385 086 830</b>		

There is also a whole host of wellbeing information and learning and development programmes on the RCTSource that can help you to plan your work, gain new knowledge and develop new skills ( <https://rct.learningpool.com/>). This is in addition to all the usual support you can access through all the HR teams.

The Education Workforce Council's Code of Professional Conduct and Practice also provides good practice guides which may be of further assistance to staff: <https://www.ewc.wales/site/index.php/en/>

Additional information on wellbeing support can also be accessed via the <https://www.educationsupport.org.uk/coronavirus-support>

**Key actions:**

- Ensure a good work-life balance for school staff and ensure that rotas and timetables are appropriate.
- Ensure that there are clear processes and opportunities for raising concerns should they arise.
- Provide support for staff who have experienced particular trauma or who are experiencing enhanced anxiety as a result of the pandemic.
- Provide a reflective space for staff when this is required and provide opportunities to discuss feelings and emotions when appropriate.
- Ensure that communication is effective and involve staff in risk assessments so that risks can be effectively mitigated.
- Signpost staff to support mechanisms and guidance.
- Seek HR or occupational health involvement where required.



## 29. Safeguarding

Learners will have encountered different experiences and home environments during lockdown and all staff should be reminded of their safeguarding duties within the statutory safeguarding guidance for education settings Keeping Learners Safe and the Wales Safeguarding Procedures.

The role of the designated safeguarding person (DSP) will be vital and all staff and learners should be informed of who the DSP is and how to contact them. Accessing a trusted adult, or the DSP, may be more difficult with social distancing so schools and settings should consider how learners could talk privately. Safeguarding children is a critical area of business and Emergency and Duty Teams will remain in operation to receive calls about children at risk of harm, abuse or neglect. Please report concerns to MASH and escalate in accordance with agreed local procedures.

## 30. Catering

School kitchens were fully open from the start of the autumn term and normal legal requirements apply regarding provision of food to all pupils who want it, including for those eligible for free school meals. Schools are required to deliver meals in accordance with the Healthy Eating in Schools (Nutritional Standards and Requirements) (Wales) [Regulations 2013](#).

The eating area should be regularly cleaned in-between sittings and eating areas zoned. Staff should ensure that social distancing is maintained at mealtimes and that children should remain in their contact groups where possible. Where school numbers are such that staggered lunchtimes are likely to be very difficult to achieve in practice, more context specific catering solutions should be explored with catering teams. Possible solutions could include some portable lunchtime options and opportunities to eat within classroom and outside settings where appropriate.

Food should not be shared and lunch and break times could be staggered to support social distancing.

Young people should not be allowed to go off site unsupervised during lunch breaks.

To minimise the risk of transferring infection via cash handling, schools are encouraged to become “cash and cheque free” once reopened with the aim of becoming cash free during the autumn term. This will apply to all items purchased for cash or cheque within a school and includes (but not limited to) purchases such as schools meals, uniform, kit and equipment. Online payments are well established within Rhondda Cynon Taf CBC with all schools being enabled for dinner money payments. Please contact [bankrec@rctcbc.gov.uk](mailto:bankrec@rctcbc.gov.uk) to set up appropriate options. Biometric systems (for schools that have them) will be in use for payments at the point of purchase.



## **Free School Meals**

Details of arrangements for pupils who are entitled to Free School Meals but are required to self-isolate are awaited from Welsh Government.

The Education Minister, Kirsty Williams announced on 15<sup>th</sup> October that the Welsh Government will guarantee free school meal provision for eligible pupils for all school holiday periods, up to and including Easter 2021. Provision in Rhondda Cynon Taf Council will be by means of a BACs payment as has previously been undertaken.

### **31. School Milk (n/a for secondary schools)**

Schools should ensure that they contact Woosnam Dairies to advise them of order volumes.

Please email order volumes to: [sian@woosnamdairies.co.uk](mailto:sian@woosnamdairies.co.uk)

### **32. Breakfast Clubs/After School Clubs/ Childcare Provision**

#### **32.1 Breakfast Clubs / After School Clubs**

In line with Welsh Government guidance consideration was given to the recommencement of breakfast clubs and after school provision (both school based after school activities and fee paying childcare clubs) following the phased return of all learners to school over a two week period in September. A staged approach to the re-introduction was to be adopted from 14<sup>th</sup> September following a review of the capacity of schools to meet demand whilst maintaining discrete contact groups and safe social distancing, where possible.

#### **Breakfast Clubs**

Following the closure of the online application period for breakfast club places a health and safety review was undertaken taking into account - the size of school halls, staffing provision and the high numbers of applications for breakfast club provision. The outcome of this evaluation raised concerns in relation to the additional challenges of breakfast clubs and the difficulties of keeping large numbers of pupils within their contact groups. This, when considered in light of the rise of COVID-19 cases within Rhondda Cynon Taf led the Council to conclude that it was not possible to safely re-open breakfast club provision from Monday 14<sup>th</sup> September as was originally intended.

We re-opened provision on the 28<sup>th</sup> September 2020 with a significantly reduced capacity. Places were allocated on a 'first come - first served' basis in relation to online applications which had already been made, and unsuccessful applicants were notified.



In the event of regular non-attendance by a pupil (**excluding** self-isolation and sickness absences), please reallocate the place to a pupil on the waiting list.

A further application process will be undertaken for the new Spring Term and parents will receive further details at the end of November 2020 regarding how to re-apply on-line.

#### After School Clubs

After 14<sup>th</sup> September, schools should only restart after school clubs or community usage of school buildings once appropriate risk assessments have been undertaken. Full and suitable additional cleaning regimes must also be in place in relation to such activities.

If a learner attends more than one setting, for example school and wrap-around or after school provision, the learner should remain in the same, small group across both settings wherever possible. Where that is not possible, they should remain in small consistent groups within both settings. Childcare providers in RCT have received guidance on how to manage social groupings and interactions with schools. We encourage all schools to liaise directly with childcare providers that cater for their pupils, so that risk assessments and other safety measures can be discussed and agreed.

### 32.2 Childcare

Childcare settings in RCT have been issued with operational guidance which supports them to fully reopen their childcare settings from September. They have been advised to engage with schools to ensure that everyone is clear on the measures in place to protect children and staff as far as reasonably practicable. There are two types of childcare settings that schools should be particularly aware of:

#### Childcare settings in dedicated buildings/spaces on school sites

These settings have been advised:

- To share their risk assessments and plans with the school to ensure synergy with school risk assessments
- To request a copy of the school plans/risk assessments, again to ensure that there are common measures
- To liaise with the school and agree a plan to ensure that there is access to their childcare building for children/parents/visitors when the setting is open
- To stagger opening/closing times where possible so that their children/parents are not on site at the same time as school pupils/parents

#### Childcare settings that use school halls/classrooms

These settings have particular challenges due to using shared spaces. Along with the points above, additional guidance includes:

- To be clear which items of school furniture/equipment can be used by the childcare setting and which areas of the school are accessible
- To ensure that all shared furniture and high usage items (such as light switches, door handles) are cleaned before and after every session

- To liaise with the school to ensure that sufficient time is allowed for this additional cleaning to take place. This may mean the school allowing access slightly earlier than previously, or the setting amending their operational times if possible
- To agree with the school if additional storage is required to ensure that all cleaning materials, resources, toys, equipment are stored separately to that of the school

**Key actions:**

- Re-allocate available Breakfast Club spaces to pupils on the waiting list.
- Potential challenges in delivery should be raised with the local authority so that these can be resolved to support families and carers to access wrap around care at either end of the school day at the earliest opportunity.
- Undertake risk assessments prior to any after school club or community use of school buildings re-commencing and ensure appropriate cleaning regimes are in place.
- Where possible, keep learners who attend more than one setting, for example school and wrap-around / after school provision, in the same, small group across both settings. Have appropriate discussions with parents and other settings regarding risks and the management of them.

### 33. Educational visits

National guidance for the management of outdoor learning, off-site visits and learning outside the classroom is provided by the Outdoor Education Advisers' Panel. This guidance is endorsed by Welsh Government and is produced by a partnership of experts to help ensure that educational visits and activities are safe. Further information can be found at <https://oeapng.info/>

**In accordance with Welsh Government advice, there should be no overseas education trips for children under 18 organised by educational settings.**

Non-overnight domestic educational visits can resume in the autumn term (subject to local COVID-19 restrictions). Protective measures, such as COVID-controlled measures in places at the destination must be adhered to and visits should be thoroughly risk assessed to ensure they are safely undertaken.

As part of the risk assessment, schools will need to consider what control measures need to be used and ensure they have taken into account wider advice on visiting indoor and outdoor venues. Schools must consider the needs of all learners taking part in an educational visit, including their ability to comply with COVID safety measures at the venue, as well as being mindful in all instances of the safety of supervising staff. Schools



will also need to have contingencies in place should there be changes to national (Wales), regional or local coronavirus measures.

**Key actions:**

- Undertake appropriate risk assessments prior to arranging any educational visits.
- Take account of any local COVID-19 restrictions.

### 34. Effective Communication

Ensure early and effective communication with parents/carers.

**Key actions:**

- Tell children, young people, parents, carers or any visitors, such as suppliers, not to enter the education setting if they are displaying any symptoms of coronavirus.
- **Provide parents / carers with the following link to the testing process:- <https://gov.wales/apply-coronavirus-covid-19-test> or simply call the free number 119 between the hours of 7am to 11pm.**
- Tell parents/carers that if their child needs to be accompanied to the education setting, only one parent should attend.
- Advise parents/carers, children and young people of the drop off and collection arrangements, including protocols for minimising adult to adult contact (for example, which entrance to use).
- Make clear to parents/carers that they cannot gather at entrance gates or doors, or enter the site (unless they have a pre-arranged appointment, which should be conducted safely).
- Ensure parents/carers are aware of recommendations in relation to transport and the active travel recommendation, especially the requirement for all secondary age pupils to wear a face covering on school transport (unless exemptions apply).
- Ensure parents/carers are aware of the school's requirements in relation to the wearing of face coverings within the school building (unless exemptions apply).
- Ensure parents/carers are reminded of their responsibility to get their children to school safely.
- Communicate to staff about the plans (for example, safety measures, timetable changes and arrangements relating to arrival and departure times).
- Communicate early with the local authority and suppliers your support needs - for example, cleaning, catering, food supplies, PPE.
- Discuss with cleaning contractors or staff the additional cleaning requirements and agree additional hours to allow for this.

- Keep your governing body abreast of developments and ensure that all risk assessments have appropriate sign off.

### 35. Role of governing bodies

The governing body is responsible for its school at a strategic level. The headteacher has delegated responsibilities for the day to day operational management of their school. The governing body will need to be aware of the operational decisions being taken by the headteacher, and should be assured that an adequate risk assessment has been conducted, and that protective measures are in place to reduce risks to children, young people and staff. The headteacher and governing body must work collaboratively in deciding how the school will reopen the provision to all registered pupils.

Further advice for governing bodies is provided at

<https://gov.wales/information-school-governing-bodies-coronavirus>

The school should work together with the local authority and, where appropriate, diocesan authorities to ensure the services they will need to support their operation are in place.

### 36. Support

Regular updates will be provided but if you require further advice please do not hesitate to contact:

Nature of Concern	LA Officer
Strategic queries or significant concerns	Gaynor Davies
School organisation issues/emergency planning	Andrea Richards
Secondary school/all through school queries	Sarah Corcoran
Primary school or all through school queries	Tim Britton
ALN/special school and PRU queries	Ceri Jones
Attendance and Wellbeing Service	Daniel Williams

Staff, trade union and procurement issues	Richard Evans
Data, secondary finance or digitally excluded learners	Catrin Edwards
School finance queries, efsm payments	Stephanie Davies
Governing Body queries/emergency planning	Non Morgan
School catering and cleaning queries	Lisa Gorringe
0-4 childcare queries (excluding Flying Start)	Denise Humphries
Flying Start/YEPS queries	Jess Allen
Health and safety issues	Mike Murphy
Public health and protection matters	<a href="mailto:CoronavirusCouncilAdvice@rctcbc.gov.uk">CoronavirusCouncilAdvice@rctcbc.gov.uk</a>



## **APPENDIX 1**

### **COVID-19 STAFF SELF-REPORTING RISK ASSESSMENT**

**This risk assessment tool has been developed for you and your line manager to understand whether you may be at a greater risk of COVID-19. It will also help you and your manager to choose the right actions based on your level of risk.**

**We recognise that some questions on the toolkit are extremely personal. Therefore, you will only be required to advise your manager if you meet one of the categories of pregnancy OR to provide your overall score to your manager.**

**If you require support to complete this form your manager can refer you to Occupational Health.**

**In Wales, shielding will be paused from 16<sup>th</sup> August, this means that those staff that had previously been shielding may be able to return to the workplace. The decision to pause shielding has been taken by the Welsh Government (WG) on advice from the Chief Medical Officer for Wales, as the level of the coronavirus in our communities is now low. The situation will be kept under review and the advice may change if transmission levels increase. The advice now is that people in the shielding category can return to work from 16 August, but they should continue to take steps to protect themselves from coronavirus by keeping a 2-metre distance from others and washing their hands frequently.**

**Wherever possible, you should work from home, however, there will be instances where due to your role this is either or no longer practical and in these cases your line manager will complete a workplace risk assessment, considering both the working environment and the activities you perform, and discuss the next steps with you. If your workplace is adequately COVID controlled, it will be appropriate for you to return to work; it may be that additional controls will be needed to the workplace and/or your activities to ensure the risk is acceptable. In some cases, it may not be appropriate for you to return to your normal workplace/work activities and alternative duties may be allocated/undertaken.**

**A COVID controlled workplace is where it is as safe as reasonably practical, where physical distancing arrangements are in place and effective, and there are adequate arrangements for regular cleaning and hygiene. \***

**Please be aware guidance for employers from Welsh Government is changing all time, this form will change in response to those changes.**

Section 1: PREGNANCY	
Are you 28 weeks pregnant or over?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
If YES, to the above do you fall into the 'very high risk' category if so, your manager will discuss suitable home working arrangements where possible	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Are you BAME and pregnant?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
<p><b>NB For pregnant women, with underlying health conditions at any stage of pregnancy a more precautionary approach is prudent and women who are BAME should be included in the consideration and discussed between the employee and manager.</b></p> <p>Please complete Section 2 on the COVID – 19 Risk Assessment Return – Employee Declaration If NO, continue to section 2.</p>	

Section 2 – OTHER RISK FACTORS	
Please tick the score for any of the criteria that applies to you:	
Age 50-59	1 <input type="checkbox"/>
60-69	2 <input type="checkbox"/>
70+	4 <input type="checkbox"/>
Are you Black, Asian or Minority Ethnic (BAME)	1 <input type="checkbox"/>
Sex at Birth - Male	1 <input type="checkbox"/>
Cardiovascular disease (on treatment for Hypertension, Irregular Heartbeat, Heart Failure, Previous Heart Attack, Stroke, TIA etc.)	1 <input type="checkbox"/>
Diabetes Mellitus Type 1 or 2	1 <input type="checkbox"/>
Chronic pulmonary disease (including asthma, COPD, interstitial lung disease)	1 <input type="checkbox"/>
Chronic kidney disease (any stage 1-5)	1 <input type="checkbox"/>
Sickle cell/Thalassaemia trait or other haemoglobinopathies	1 <input type="checkbox"/>



Section 2 – OTHER RISK FACTORS	
Please tick the score for any of the criteria that applies to you:	
Obesity (BMI >30 or waist circumference >33 (BAME female) > 34.5 (White female), >35 (BAME male), 40 (White male)	1 <input type="checkbox"/>
Has any member of your immediate family died from COVID-19 or been admitted to ITU for COVID-19	1 <input type="checkbox"/>
Were you previously shielding and you had a letter from either the Chief Medical Officer, your consultant or GP advising you to shield.	7 <input type="checkbox"/>
Please add up the numbers that you have circled and enter the Total Score here:	

### Assessing your risk

Your total score will be used to assess your level of return to work risk in line with the following:

0-3 Low risk – Manager to review the Managers decision tree guide and continue current duties with adherence to best physical distancing and public health guidance
4-6 Moderate to High risk – Managers MUST Review the Manager’s decision tree guide -Consider COVID controlled workplace and/or enhanced PPE & reasonable adjustments to job role, wherever practical
>7 Very High- Managers MUST Review the Manager’s decision tree guide- consider if the employee can work from home, lone working role or work in an environment that is COVID controlled. These should be NON frontline –Strictly adhere to the physical distancing guidelines

Please now complete the COVID–19 Risk Assessment Return – Employee Declaration which you should return to your manager.



## COVID-19 Risk Assessment Return – Employee Declaration

**Please complete this section and return to your line manager. Your line manager can then discuss this with you when planning your return to the workplace**

<b>Employee Name</b>		<b>Payroll No:</b>	
<b>Department</b>		<b>Employee Tel No.</b>	
<b>Manager’s Name</b>		<b>Manager’s Tel No.</b>	
<b>Section 1– Are you 28 weeks pregnant?</b>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Section 2 – Please enter the score for your Risk Assessment hear:</b>	

### Assessing risk

The total score section should be used to assess the level of return to work risk in line with the following:

<b>0-3 Low risk – Manager to review the Managers decision tree guide and continue current duties with adherence to best physical distancing and public health guidance</b>
<b>4-6 Moderate to High risk – Managers MUST Review the Manager’s decision tree guide -Consider COVID controlled workplace and/or enhanced PPE &amp; reasonable adjustments to job role, wherever practical</b>
<b>&gt;7 Very High- Managers MUST Review the Manager’s decision tree guide- consider if the employee can work from home, lone working role or work in an environment that is COVID controlled. These should be NON frontline –Strictly adhere to the physical distancing guidelines</b>

**If the employee or line manager has any questions or concerns regarding the individuals score, and what this means in relation to a return to the workplace, then contact should be made with the following colleagues for advice:**



1. **If you wish to discuss the score in connection with the work environment or work tasks you can contact a member of the Health and Safety team.**
2. **For queries regarding a medical condition or health concerns please contact the Occupational Health Unit. The manager may refer the individual employee to Occupational Health for a more in-depth assessment to validate their score and to seek advice on workplace adjustments.**
3. **If you have queries relating to a protected characteristic for example disability or BAME or would like information about reasonable adjustments, please contact the Equality and Diversity Team.**
4. **Any other employment matters can be discussed with your Employment Relations Team.**



## RETURN TO WORK AGREEMENT

**PLEASE NOTE - This form ONLY needs to be completed if the individual is unable to return to the workplace or needs workplace adjustments to return.**

**To be completed by the Line Manager in consultation with the Individual Employee**

**If the individuals risk assessment indicates that they are not able to return to the workplace or that adjustments (for example PPE) need to be provided, then this should be recorded in this document.**

**N.B. Due to the changing nature of advice surrounding the COVID-19 virus the individuals' ability to return to the workplace should be reviewed monthly OR when changes to guidance changes.**

<b>Section 2: AGREED ACTIONS - THIS WILL NEED TO BE REVIEWED MONTHLY</b>			
Please record the agreed work plan and ensure you review these each month.			
Please outline what workplace adjustments have been made to minimise risk (this could include redeployment):			
Please state when new working arrangements will begin from:			
These arrangements should be reviewed monthly in line with Public Health Wales guidance.			
<b>Employee Signature</b>		<b>Date</b>	
<b>Manager Signature</b>		<b>Date</b>	



## **COVID Controlled Workplace**

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) give guidance on measures that may need to be taken to ensure a workplace is COVID controlled, and this includes having arrangements in place to ensure physical distancing is maintained wherever possible and adequate cleaning and hygiene practices are adopted.

Some examples of the measures the Council has adopted to ensure its workplaces are as safe as reasonably practicable include:

- Instructing staff and others not to attend if they (or anyone in their household) has symptoms;
- Actively participating in Test, Trace, Protect;
- Reducing the number of people in a workplace at any given time;
- Introducing one-way systems etc. and the use of signs and floor markings;
- Limiting the movement of people in a building;
- Increased cleaning regimes for regularly touched items such as door handles;
- Provision of hand sanitiser at entrances and other key locations;
- Provision of screens and or barriers;
- Encouraging good hygiene practices with supporting signage;
- Ensuring adequate ventilation;
- Where people must work together, forming fixed teams;
- Providing additional personal protective equipment (PPE) such as face shields.

**Note:** this list is not exhaustive, there may be other controls adopted, and not all controls will be relevant in all workplaces. Each workplace is unique and will have its own specific control measures in place.

## **FAQ's**

Appendix 1 provides FAQ's relating to the Risk Assessment



**COVID-19 STAFF SELF-REPORTING RISK ASSESSMENT**  
**Frequently Asked Questions**

**Background**

This risk assessment tool has been developed for you and your line manager to understand whether you may be at a greater risk of COVID-19. It will also help you and your manager to choose the right actions based on your level of risk. It is based on the All Wales COVID-19 Workforce Risk Assessment Tool which was developed in collaboration with clinicians, equality practitioners, community groups and workforce colleagues. Whilst these FAQs set out some of the areas, they do not cover everything.

<b><u>FAQs</u></b>	
<b><u>Access to Online Tool</u></b>	
<b>Q1 How do I complete the risk assessment?</b>	<b>A1 The Risk Assessment has been forwarded to all staff with email addresses (both work and personal).  For staff that do to have an email address their line manager will be able to provide a copy of the Risk Assessment document.</b>



<b><u>FAQs</u></b>	
<b><u>Previous Risk Assessments</u></b>	
<b>Q2 If I have already discussed with my line manager what my risks are and/or had a formal risk assessment, can I have another one?</b>	<b>A2 Yes, if any risk factors such as health conditions or the way you work, or your workplace setting have changed in any way we urge you to complete the risk assessment again.</b>
<b><u>Risk Assessment Score</u></b>	
<b>Q3 What if I don't agree that the risk assessment adequately represents my level of risk?</b>	<b>A3 If you are unhappy with the outcome of the risk assessment then this needs to be discussed with your line manager. It may also be appropriate for you to discuss your concerns with Occupational Health or seek advice from any of the HR support routes available, which are outlined in the Risk Assessment. If you are a member of a Trade Union, they will also be in a position to advise you.</b>
<b>Q4 I fear that my risk score will lead to me being discriminated against now or in the future, what should I do?</b>	<b>A4. Employers have a duty of care to their staff and a legal duty to act upon the outcome of a risk assessment by taking appropriate mitigating steps to protect you from harm.  The Risk Assessment is intended to protect you in the workplace, and we would advise that you complete the risk assessment and then have an open and honest discussion with your line manager to outline your concerns.  If you feel as though you are being discriminated against in any way, then please contact the Equality and Diversity team for advice and support.</b>



<b><u>FAQs</u></b>	
<b>Q5 I have been identified as high risk, but I want to carry on working he same situation?</b>	<b>A5 We understand why you would want to do this, it is commendable, but as your employer we have a duty of care to protect you in the workplace. Therefore, it is important to discuss with your line manager if your workplace can be made safe and if it practical for you to continue. Please remember, it is to protect you and other staff in the working environment.</b>

<b><u>FAQs</u></b>	
<b><u>Discussion on your Risk Assessment</u></b>	
<b>Q6 I do not wish to disclose my health concerns to my manager.</b>	<b>A6 The Risk Assessment is in place to protect you as a member of staff from potential harm from COVID-19. It is a personal self-assessment and it is important you discuss the outcome with your line manager. Every individual has a personal responsibility and managers have a duty of care to ensure their staff are safe within the workplace, but without you sharing this information, that will prove difficult for them to adhere to.  If for any reason have issues in supplying this information to your manager, please contact any of the HR support routes available which are outlined in the Risk Assessment. In addition, if you are a member of a Trade Union, they will also be in a position to advise you.</b>
<b>Q7 I have filled in the risk assessment, when should my manager meet with me to discuss it. What should I do?</b>	<b>A7 It is important that the results are acted on quickly. You may wish to raise directly with your line manager once you have completed the assessment, it is recommended that you e-mail your line manager with your concerns and arrange a date to meet. The discussion with your line manager is an important part of the risk assessment process.</b>



	<p>If you are unhappy with the outcome of the risk assessment, then this needs to be discussed with your line manager. It may also be appropriate for you to discuss your concerns with Occupational Health or seek advice from any of the HR support routes available which are outlined in the Risk Assessment. If you are a member of a Trade Union, they will also be in a position to advise you.</p>
<p><b>Q8</b> I have filled in the risk assessment but am having difficulty in arranging a meeting with my manager to discuss it. What should I do?</p>	<p><b>A8</b> As your employer we have a duty of care to protect your health and safety at work and this includes understanding if you are at extra risk from COVID-19. If your line manager is unwilling to meet with you, it is recommended that you e-mail or phone your line manager with your concerns and arrange a date to meet. If following this your line manager is still unwilling to meet, you should seek advice from any of the HR support routes available which are outlined in the Risk Assessment.</p>

<p><b><u>FAQs</u></b></p>	
<p><b><u>Discussion on your Risk Assessment</u></b></p>	
<p><b>Q9</b> How could I raise concerns if I disagree with the conclusions reached at the risk assessment discussion?</p>	<p><b>A9</b> Your HR team will also be able to support you as will your trade union representative</p>
<p><b>Q10</b> How often should I undertake an assessment?</p>	<p><b>A10</b> You should complete a new risk assessment whenever anything material changes such a change to a health condition or change to your working environment/tasks.</p>
<p><b><u>Allaying Staff Fears</u></b></p>	



<p><b>Q11 What if my risk relates to mental health?</b></p>	<p><b>A11 Arrange to meet with your line manager to discuss a stress risk assessment. More information can be obtained here:</b></p> <p><a href="#">HS 19 Workplace Stress Policy</a></p> <p><a href="#">You can also contact the Wellbeing helpline on any of the following numbers:</a></p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td>Craig: 07384 910 525</td> <td>David: 07384 910 527</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Sian: 07384 910 524</td> <td>Carys: 07384 910 491</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Kylie: 07799 116 571</td> <td>Emma: 07769 164 673</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Luke: 07384 496 496</td> <td>Gareth: 07385 086 789</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Nikki: 07384 910 488</td> <td>Angelea: 07385 086 830</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Corinne: 07385 086 111</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	Craig: 07384 910 525	David: 07384 910 527	Sian: 07384 910 524	Carys: 07384 910 491	Kylie: 07799 116 571	Emma: 07769 164 673	Luke: 07384 496 496	Gareth: 07385 086 789	Nikki: 07384 910 488	Angelea: 07385 086 830	Corinne: 07385 086 111	
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Luke: 07384 496 496	Gareth: 07385 086 789												
Nikki: 07384 910 488	Angelea: 07385 086 830												
Corinne: 07385 086 111													
<p><b><u>FAQs</u></b></p>													
<p><b>Q11 What if my risk relates to mental health? (cont'd)</b></p>	<p><b>There are a range of resources that are available to support your health and wellbeing:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Covid-19 Compassion Starts with Me – HEIW</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Public Health Wales – help and advice on looking after yourself and your loved ones during isolation.</a></li> <li>• <a href="https://socialcare.wales/service-improvement/health-and-well-being-resources-to-support-you-during-the-coronavirus-covid-19-pandemic">https://socialcare.wales/service-improvement/health-and-well-being-resources-to-support-you-during-the-coronavirus-covid-19-pandemic</a></li> </ul>												



<p><b>Q12 Do I need PPE to keep me safe?</b></p>	<p><b>A12 The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) has stated ‘PPE for protection against coronavirus is generally only required for certain healthcare activities. In a non-clinical setting, there is no need to provide different PPE than you would normally have provided before the outbreak started.</b></p> <p><b>Your manager will have undertaken a risk assessment of your workplace and work activities and if additional PPE has been identified as being necessary, it will be provided, and you will be given information on how and when to use. If you have any concerns you should raise these with your line manager.</b></p>
<p><b>Q13 What if I am unable to physical distance in my role?</b></p>	<p><b>A13 Government advice on physical distancing is constantly being reviewed and the rules in Wales may be different to those in other parts of the UK. Our guidance will operate in line with Welsh Government guidance at the time.</b></p>
<p><b>Q14 A friend or family member has been seriously affected by COVID and this has heightened my concern and the need to shield, where can I get support?</b></p>	<p><b>A14 It is understandable that you will be concerned. It is important that you complete the Risk Assessment, to consider your own health and wellbeing status – your personal score gives an indication of your likely level of risk and the safeguards you should expect in your workplace setting. Then arrange a time to discuss any concerns you may have, with your line manager. It may also be appropriate for you to discuss your concerns with one of HR support routes available which are outlined in the Risk Assessment.</b></p>

<p><b><u>FAQs</u></b></p>	
<p><b>Q15 I have read conflicting news reports around the role of children as ‘super-spreaders’ am I placing my own and my family at risk by returning to work?</b></p>	<p><b>A15 The additional guidance and support below provides the latest up to date scientific advice on the risks associated with social contact and Covid19, to dispel some of the myths circulating in the news and elsewhere.</b></p>

<p><b><u>Additional Guidance and Support</u></b></p>	
<p><b>Q16 Where can I seek guidance and support?</b></p>	<p><b>A16 Further guidance is available from</b></p> <p><a href="#">Information on antibody testing, prevalence and the low risk of children spreading Covid19</a></p> <p><a href="#">SAGE</a></p> <p><a href="#">Welsh Government:</a></p> <p><a href="#">Guidance for employers and employees</a></p> <p><a href="#">Operational guidance for schools and settings from the autumn term</a></p> <p><a href="#">Guidance on learning in schools and settings from the autumn term</a></p> <p><a href="#">Guidance on protective measures in childcare settings</a></p> <p><b>Swansea YMCA and the Urdd have also produced guidance detached and outreach; and operation guidelines for youth work:</b></p> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; align-items: center;"> <div style="text-align: center;">  <p>YMCA detached and outreach youth Work</p> </div> <div style="text-align: center;">  <p>for WG Urdd COVID operation Guidelines</p> </div> </div>
	<p><a href="#">HSE - General information and advice on health and safety and coronavirus</a></p>

## APPENDIX 2

### COVID 19 SCHOOL RE-OPENING AND RISK ASSESSMENT TEMPLATE DOCUMENT

RCT Corporate Health and Safety Team
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<b>Version 3 – 18.08.20</b>
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#### 1. Introduction

Since 29 June, schools in Wales have been offering their learners the opportunity to attend sessions to 'check in, catch up and prepare'. The Minister for Education announced on the 9th July that all learners would now return to school in the autumn term. Employers, schools and settings must comply with health and safety law, which requires them to assess risks and put in place proportionate control measures.

Essential measures include:

- a requirement that people who are unwell with symptoms of COVID-19 stay at home;
- robust hand and respiratory hygiene including ventilation;
- continue increased cleaning arrangements;
- active engagement with Test, Trace, Protect **strategy**;
- formal consideration of how to reduce contacts and maximise **social and physical** distancing between those in school wherever possible and minimise potential for contamination so far as is reasonably practicable;

How contact **between learners, learners and staff and between staff** are reduced will depend on the school's circumstances and should include:

- grouping learners together;
- avoiding contact between **separate** groups as much as possible;
- arranging classrooms with forward facing desks, recognising this may not be possible or appropriate in all schools/settings;
- staff maintaining distance from learners and other staff as much as possible.

#### 2. Guide to the document

This document has been produced to assist School Management with the development of a risk assessment and the introduction of controls to prevent the spread of COVID 19 in Educational settings. It is important that Headteachers /Managers go through and adapt the risk assessment for their own school or setting.

The existing/new controls listed are not mandatory but are provided as guidance on reducing the risk of transmission. Each school/setting must consider their own situation and adapt the assessment by editing the measures where appropriate and



adding any school specific controls. The hazard and controls listed are not an exhaustive list and can be amended to suit the individual circumstances within the setting.

The risk assessment template is intended for the control of the spread of COVID 19 only, there may be other site issues to consider prior to re-opening the setting. With this in mind, we have also included a brief 'Site Management Checklist' to assist you (see [page 59](#)).

### 3. Further Support and Guidance

Further advice and support in the preparation of the risk assessment can be obtained from the Council's Corporate Health and Safety Team:

[Healthandsafetyteam@rctcbc.gov.uk](mailto:Healthandsafetyteam@rctcbc.gov.uk)

The Council has also produced a number of documents that have been previously circulated and can be accessed via the Source. These include:

- RCT Coronavirus (COVID-19): Guidance for the safe re-opening of schools September 2020 VERSION 3
- **Manager's Guide to reoccupy buildings - Version 1 – May 2020 – Produced by Corporate Estates**
- **Managers Guide to Pausing of Shielding Requirement from 16<sup>th</sup> August 2020**

Advice and guidance regarding the management of COVID 19 is changing rapidly and it is essential that the most up to date guidance is followed. Welsh Government operational guidance can be found at:

- <https://gov.wales/coronavirus>
- [Welsh Government - Operational-guidance-schools-and-settings-autumn-term-covid-19 V2 - 11-08-2020](#)

Subject specific COVID 19 risk assessment guidance e.g. D&T, Science and PE can also be accessed using the links provided below. Department Heads will be familiar with the various resources:

- <http://www.cleapss.org.uk/> - CLEAPSS Site (Username: **solar** password: **system20**)
- <http://science.cleapss.org.uk/> - CLEAPSS Science Site
- <http://dt.cleapss.org.uk/> - CLEAPSS Design and Technology Site



- <https://www.afpe.org.uk/physical-education/afpe-launch-new-support-document-covid-19-interpreting-the-government-guidance-in-a-pesspa-context/> - Association for Physical Education



Some statutory inspections and building maintenance checks may have lapsed since the start of the pandemic. The checklist below provides a list of those items that may require attention prior to the site opening, any responses generating a 'No' response may require further action by School Management:

**Site Management Checklist:**

Site issue		Yes/No N/A	Further Action
1	Gas Boiler/Heating systems - Serviced/Inspected by a competent person?		
2	Fire Protection Systems – Alarms & Emergency Lighting maintained quarterly by Contractor? Fire protection systems are also checked by school management.		
3	Sprinkler Systems inspected/maintained by a Contractor? (as per frequency set out by the system) - Also checked by school management if necessary.		
4	Fire Extinguishers (FFE) – Have they been serviced annually by a competent person? Inspect FFE for any damage/discharged or removed units <b>on a monthly basis.</b>		
5	Fire Evacuation Procedures/Drills – Have any fire evacuation arrangements been revised to take account of revised site layouts/personnel?		
6	Legionella – Low use systems flushed/temperatures monitored by school management and maintained by Contractors?		
7	LEV Units (in D&T) – have they been inspected by a competent person? (required annually).		
8	Traffic Management – Review arrangements to account for social distancing and supervision/increase in private vehicles?		
9	First Aid – Do you have adequate no's of first aiders in view of possible staff shortages or alternative layout of the site?		
10	Lifting Equipment (e.g. lift hoists) have they been inspected by a competent person?		
11	Arrangements are in place for dealing with contractors when they arrive on site?		
12	Kitchen areas may have been unused since the start of the pandemic. Have the relevant statutory inspections and regular maintenance requirements been considered? (for example extraction units)		

For further information on statutory inspections in relation to the building, contact the **Council's Corporate Maintenance Section.**

**Please complete this form and return to [schoolplanning@rctcbc.gov.uk](mailto:schoolplanning@rctcbc.gov.uk)**



## COVID 19 Risk Assessment



**Subject:** COVID-19 School Premises Risk Assessment

**Date of Assessment:** Date

**Assessor:** Headteacher

**School Name:** SCHOOL NAME HERE

Hazard	People at Risk	Existing Control / New Controls	Additional Comments/Control Measures – School Specific
<b>School drop off/Pick up</b> – Infection control	All Persons	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parent/carer pick up and drop off protocols have been considered to minimise adult to adult contact and avoid gatherings e.g. at the school gates (signs and floor markings made available from RCT)</li> <li>• Arrangements in place to supervise pupils arriving/leaving on contracted transport to ensure social distancing.</li> <li>• Arrangements in place to identify possible contacts on home to school transport provision for Track and Trace purposes.</li> <li>• Early Years classes will arrange for children to be dropped off and collected at the door/threshold of the setting where possible.</li> <li>• One parent encouraged to drop off/pick up.</li> <li>• Stagger drop off/collection times for contact groups.</li> <li>• Additional entrances/exits used to reduce gatherings at peak times where possible.</li> <li>• Parents/carers instructed not to attend school if symptomatic.</li> <li>• Temperature checks taken at arrival.</li> <li>• Where necessary, the School has a process for removing face coverings when learners and staff who use them arrive at school, e.g. a bin for disposal.</li> <li>• Handwashing/hand sanitiser available at all entrances.</li> </ul>	
<b>Circulation Routes</b> – Infection control	All Persons	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Where large numbers of pupils still need to move around the setting, alternative external routes have been provided where</li> </ul>	

		<p>available and consideration is given to implementing a one-way system.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Floor markings and signage is provided to assist with social distancing.</li> <li>• Doors kept open to encourage ventilation and to reduce physical contact. (where safe to do so – and not compromising fire safety, you may need to check the fire risk assessment to identify doors that can remain open).</li> <li>• Times for using stairs and corridors have been planned to ensure that use of common areas does not encourage gatherings.</li> <li>• Class times have been staggered to prevent large numbers moving around the premises at the same time.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Classroom/Teaching Environment –</b> Infection control</p>	<p>All Persons</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>For Welsh Government Guidance on control measures within the classroom for the various settings, use the link below:</b> <a href="#"><u>Welsh Government - Operational-guidance-schools-and-settings-autumn-term-covid-19 V2 - 11-08-2020</u></a></li> <li>• Pupils will stay in their class/group wherever it is possible throughout the day.</li> <li>• <b>Whatever the size of the group, they should be kept apart from other groups where possible and those age 11+ should be encouraged to keep their distance within groups.</b></li> <li>• Where possible pupils use the same desk and resources each day. Resources are placed in individual trays/bags and only essential items are brought in from home.</li> <li>• The use of outdoor space is utilised wherever possible.</li> <li>• Rooms have been organised to encourage social distancing, tables and chairs arranged to enable sitting side to side facing forward and not face to face.</li> <li>• Early years settings that host more than one contact group in a single room should consider the physical means that can be used to separate each group e.g. utilise furniture or screens</li> <li>• Arrangements put in place to avoid mixing with other groups.</li> </ul>	

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unnecessary items have been removed from learning environments where there is space to store elsewhere.</li> <li>• Resources which are not easily washable or wipeable have been removed.</li> <li>• Arrangements in place for the use of the playground, including playground equipment.</li> <li>• Arrangements are also in place for social distancing in staff rooms and prep rooms.</li> </ul>	
<b>Pupil and Staff Toileting</b> – Infection control		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Times are staggered where possible and consider the increased handwashing times that have been introduced.</li> <li>• Where possible, provide separate toilets for different contact groups. Where this is not possible, using hand sanitiser before entering the toilet and ensuring toilets are cleaned regularly.</li> <li>• Signage is in place in each toilet to encourage adequate hand washing takes place.</li> <li>• Similar arrangements are also in place for staff toilets.</li> <li>• Automated soap dispensers should be used where possible and hands should be thoroughly dried, preferably using paper towels. Hand dryers should be avoided where possible. Paper towels should be disposed of in a lidded bin and not allowed to overflow. Bins should be emptied daily.</li> </ul>	
<b>Spread of COVID - 19/Social Distancing</b> Infection Control (General)	All Persons	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Windows and doors are open to increase ventilation (where safe to do so and not compromising fire safety).</li> <li>• Where necessary, Corporate Estates have been consulted regarding safe use of mechanical ventilation systems.</li> <li>• Contact groups are kept apart where possible, meaning that schools should avoid large gatherings such as assemblies or collective worship with more than one group.</li> </ul>	

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Movement of whole classes is avoided where pupils can stay in the same room and staff can move to different classes instead. Rooms used have been selected to enable this.</li> <li>• Appropriate signage is in place throughout the setting.</li> <li>• Arrangements are in place to manage break times including staggered times, alternative entrances, demarcation.</li> <li>• Staff responsible for younger learners should remain with set groups rather than interchange between different/a number of groups, although WG recognises this is not always possible with younger learners and teachers in primary schools can still work across groups if that is needed to enable a full educational offer. All staff should adhere to the social/physical distancing measures as far as possible with younger learners, but should adhere to those measures in their interactions with older learners, other staff members and visitors to the school.</li> </ul>	
<b>Staffing</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff who are clinically vulnerable have been assessed and suitable measures have been put in place to manage the risk e.g. ensure extra care is taken in observing social distancing. Refer to the Council guidance <b>'Update for Chairs of Governors, Headteachers, Managers &amp; Staff – Shielding and Childcare Responsibilities' &amp; Staff COVID19 Risk Assessment Tool.</b></li> <li>• Daily review of staffing levels takes place, including those in key safety roles to ensure the safe supervision and operation of the setting including premises management.</li> <li>• The use of shared staff spaces and staff rooms is minimised.</li> </ul>	
<b>Catering/Lunchtime Arrangements – Infection control</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Groups of children can eat packed lunch or school meals within their own classroom setting.</li> <li>• Different groups mixing together during lunchtimes is avoided through staggered times with several sittings and/or use of additional areas and to help reduce queues.</li> </ul>	

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Time/resource provision for cleaning surfaces between groups in the dining hall.</li> <li>• Hand sanitizer gel is provided for pupils and staff to use immediately before collecting their lunch.</li> <li>• Social distancing is employed at meal collection points (the use of floor tape to demarcate areas may be useful) where this is not possible screens are installed where required between pupils and serving staff.</li> <li>• Additional meal collection points have been put in place to reduce queuing where necessary.</li> <li>• Alternative payment methods are being used to eliminate cash handling.</li> <li>• Tables and seating are moved apart to allow social distancing within the group. Where furniture is fixed and cannot be moved space is created by taping off/taking out of use alternate seating or placing screens.</li> <li>• A different entry and exit route are being used at dinner times where more than one door is available.</li> </ul>	
<b>Pupils/Staff displaying symptoms whilst at school</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Arrangements in place to deal with pupil/staff who develop symptoms whilst at the setting – Follow the WG guidance</li> <li>• <a href="https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2020-07/operational-guidance-for-schools-and-settings-from-the-autumn-term.pdf">https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2020-07/operational-guidance-for-schools-and-settings-from-the-autumn-term.pdf</a></li> <li>• An isolation room is available for pupils/staff.</li> <li>• <b>If a learner develops symptoms whilst at school/setting, they should be sent home. However, they must not travel home on dedicated school transport.</b></li> </ul>	
<b>Cleaning/Waste Disposal</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All contact surfaces which are fixed to the premises have been identified and are disinfected on a daily basis e.g. door handles, toilets, taps, handrails, external gates and dining room equipment.</li> <li>• Enhanced cleaning regime in place across the setting.</li> </ul>	

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adequate cleaning supplies and facilities around the school are in place.</li> <li>• A Clear desk policy in place for all pupils and staff.</li> <li>• Tissues should be placed in a separate waste bin and disposed of safely. All rubbish should be removed daily. If any waste is suspected of being in contact with someone showing symptoms of COVID-19, it should be placed in a waste bag, held in a secure place for 72 hours then disposed of as other waste is.</li> </ul>	
<b>Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PPE is not required for routine class activities.</li> <li>• PPE may be required when carrying out intimate care, dealing with body fluids or a suspected case of COVID 19. For further guidance on PPE requirements refer to the <b>RCT Schools COVID 19 PPE Guidance Matrix</b> and associated links within the document.</li> </ul>	
<b>Visitors</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Information about visitor arrangements is displayed in a suitable place where necessary, including information about social distancing, hygiene and not attending if the person has symptoms.</li> <li>• Handwashing/hand sanitiser available at all entrances.</li> <li>• Reception areas have been reviewed to take account of infection control and allow social distancing including floor markings/barriers/reception screens.</li> <li>• Where possible, visitors are signed in/out by the receptionist.</li> <li>• A record should be kept of all visitors <b>as this may be needed at a future point to assist the Welsh Government's Test, Trace, Protect strategy.</b></li> </ul>	
<b>Fire Safety</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fire safety arrangements and evacuation procedures have been reviewed to take account of the new COVID measures at the site, including the layout and possible changes in staff.</li> <li>• Procedures have been reviewed to include hygiene and distancing at assembly points.</li> </ul>	



		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Any new fire safety arrangements and procedures have been communicated with all staff and pupils (including new pupils and staff). See link below for specific fire safety advice for specific advice during the outbreak. <a href="https://www.southwales-fire.gov.uk/app/uploads/2020/04/NFCC-advice.pdf">https://www.southwales-fire.gov.uk/app/uploads/2020/04/NFCC-advice.pdf</a></li> </ul>	
<b>Training</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Staff have been instructed on the nature of COVID-19 and its transmission.</li> <li>The risk assessment together with any COVID 19 control measures have been brought to the attention of all teaching staff.</li> <li>Any staff briefings are also conducted with social distancing considerations.</li> </ul>	

The risk assessment should be signed by the Headteacher and the Chair of Governors:

Position	Name	Signature	Date
Headteacher			
Chair of Governors			



## Appendix 3

### GENERAL GUIDANCE TO SCHOOL STAFF WORKING - PPE & SOCIAL DISTANCING

#### 1. PPE - Rhondda Cynon Taf Council - Schools COVID-19 Personal Protective Equipment Guidance Matrix – V2 – 11-06-20

##### Introduction

It is important to remember that physical distancing, hand hygiene and respiratory **hygiene** (catching a cough or sneeze in a tissue or covering the mouth and nose with an elbow or sleeve) remain strongly evidenced to be the most effective ways to prevent the spread of coronavirus. 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. The list below covers when PPE may be required. Further guidance is available at:

<https://gov.wales/keep-education-safe-operational-guidance-schools-and-settings-covid-19>

Activity/Task/ Circumstance	Context	Disposable Gloves	Disposable Plastic Apron	Fluid Resistant Surgical Mask	Eye Protection
Routine Activities	<b>No PPE</b> is required when undertaking routine educational activities in classroom or school settings.				
Suspected coronavirus (COVID-19)	If a child or young person becomes unwell with symptoms of COVID-19 and needs direct personal care.	√ <b>Single use</b>	√ <b>Single use</b>	√ <b>Single use</b>	<b>X – Risk Assess</b>
	When cleaning the areas where a person suspected of having COVID-19 has been.	√ <b>Single use</b>	√ <b>Single use</b>		

Activity/Task/ Circumstance	Context	Disposable Gloves	Disposable Plastic Apron	Fluid- resistant Surgical Mask	Fluid Repellent Gown	FFP3 Mask	Eye Protection
Intimate Care	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.	√ <b>Single use</b>	√ <b>Single use</b>	<b>X – Risk Assess</b>			<b>X – Risk Assess</b>
	When undertaking aerosol generating procedures such as suction.	√ <b>Single use</b>			√ <b>Single use</b>	√ <b>Single use</b>	√ <b>Single use (clean &amp; re-use)</b>
	When cleaning equipment or surfaces that might be contaminated with body fluids such as saliva or respiratory secretions.	√ <b>Single use</b>	√ <b>Single use</b>				

**X Risk Assess = If a risk assessment determines that there is a risk of splashing to the eyes such as from coughing, spitting, or vomiting.**



## Guidance

The use of PPE by staff within education settings should be based on a clear assessment of risk, taking into account each individual setting and the needs of the individual learner. Schools, settings and local authorities already have risk assessments processes in place which should be used to identify the need for the use of PPE. Following any risk assessment, where the need for PPE has been identified, it should be readily available and provided. Further information has been provided by the [Health and Safety Executive](#).

### Using PPE at work during the coronavirus outbreak

All staff should understand how to put on or remove PPE in the right order, safely dispose of the waste and use correct hand hygiene steps to reduce the risk of onward transmission of infection. Further guidance is available in Appendix 6 of the [Infection Prevention and Control for Childcare Settings Guidance](#).

**In any case, hand washing should always be practiced before putting on and after removing PPE. Schools and settings should contact their local authority to obtain PPE to cover the above.**

**NB – For pregnant staff or those staff who have been off with Moderate Health Risks the above PPE guidance may be adjusted to take account of any medical risk assessment process that has been undertaken prior to a staff member returning to work.**

Please refer to the link below for the full version of the Welsh Government Guidance – Keep Education Safe: Operational Guidance for Schools and Settings (COVID-19):

<https://gov.wales/keep-education-safe-operational-guidance-schools-and-settings-covid-19>

## **2. Social Distancing**

Under Regulation 7a of the Health Protection (Coronavirus Restriction) (Wales) Regulations 2020, Welsh Government have chosen to impose a legal requirement on workplaces to ensure that everything reasonably practicable is done to minimise transmission of



coronavirus. The key purpose of the Regulations is to minimise the risk of transmission of Coronavirus. Where contact or closer working is required, it is important that other measures are considered, for example:

- Washing hands thoroughly for 20 seconds with soap or use of hand sanitiser after close contact;
- Minimising the level of interaction;
- Physical barriers (including wearing Personal Protective Equipment that has been provided when required);
- Improved personal hygiene and reminders about the importance of good hygiene;
- Ensuring those with symptoms are isolated from other person's onsite until they can be collected.

Although the duty falls on the person responsible for management control, everybody in a workplace has a personal responsibility to comply with the 2 metre distance requirement wherever possible and practical to do so, to ensure that the risk of transmission of Coronavirus across Wales is reduced. WG have made it clear that while there is a requirement to take all reasonable measures to maintain a physical distance, it is about taking proportionate action where it is practicable to do so.

### **What constitutes a reasonable measure?**

It will be for the duty holder of the school/childcare setting to justify the reasonable measures that they have adopted, and to demonstrate how they have considered that these are proportionate and minimise the risks faced by all persons who have to continue to attend work in their setting.

If physical distancing can be achieved, this would be considered a reasonable measure and this will play a part, along with other actions, to minimise community transmission. Where possible a 2 metre distance should be maintained between staff and any visitors. If practical to do so, staff should also maintain a 2 metre distance from pupils at the school or childcare setting.

However, it is recognised that due to the age and personal requirements of some pupils this will undoubtedly be difficult to achieve and therefore physical distancing is not in these cases considered a reasonable measure. If for any reason a member of staff cannot maintain suitable distance, PPE would need to be worn as per the above table, to provide a level of protection.

Appendix 4

SIGNAGE – description of signage to be received by schools July 2020

		
		
		 <p>White Tac</p>
		 <p>Double sided tape</p>

		 <p>Screens</p>
		 <p>Fence 2mtr banner</p>
		 <p>Gate no access sign</p>
		 <p>Cable ties</p>



## Appendix 5

### Coronavirus (COVID-19): WG guidance for schools and FE providers – using home test kits

#### Overview

It is essential that any pupil, teacher or staff member who have COVID-19 symptoms, or who share a household with someone who has symptoms, does not attend the school / setting and follows the self-isolation guidance and access a test at a testing site or at home using the [online booking portal](#).

The main symptoms of COVID-19 are:

- a high temperature: this means you feel hot to touch on your chest or back (you do not need to measure your temperature)
- a new, continuous cough: this means coughing a lot for more than an hour, or 3 or more coughing episodes in 24 hours (if you usually have a cough, it may be worse than usual)
- a loss or change to your sense of smell or taste: this means you've noticed you cannot smell or taste anything, or things smell or taste different to normal

In July we set out a commitment that by the autumn, all schools and FE providers will be provided with a small number of home testing kits to complement these main access routes. From 3 September onwards, all schools, settings and FE providers will receive an initial supply of 10 home test kits **which will be sent from the Department for Health and Social Care (DHSC), UK Government**. Home test kits should **only** be offered to individuals in the exceptional circumstance that you believe an individual may have barriers to accessing testing elsewhere.

The best and fastest way for students or staff to access a test is to visit a testing site.



## Purpose

This guidance is intended to support schools, settings and FE providers in offering home test kits. This commitment applies to all mainstream, PRUs, special, alternative provision and FE providers. It should be read alongside the rest of this guidance document.

## Usual testing options

We recommend testing for those with a continuous cough, fever, or loss of or change in the sense of taste or smell.

If an individual has other cold-like symptoms, such as a runny nose, they do not need to be tested or to self-isolate.

When advising FE students to get tested, or advising parents/carers to get a school pupil tested you should advise them of the points below. You cannot require a child, young person or member of staff to get a test.

Booking a free coronavirus (COVID-19) test is done through the [online booking portal](#). This will then give you a range of testing options available in your local area. These will usually be:

- **Test centre** - Booking a test at a drive-in test centre is likely to be the fastest way to get a test. You should be aware of local test centres in order to advise staff, students and parents/carers.
- **Home test kit** – Staff, parents/carers and FE students can order a home test kit for themselves or up to three members of their household.

New ways to make accessing a test as quick and easy as possible are being added continually by NHS Test, Trace, Protect. Walk in local testing centres are shortly being opened in a number of locations. This network is continuing to expand to make it easier for people without cars to get a test.

Where these, or other testing options, are available in the local area, the portal will provide those options.



If a parent /carer, staff member or FE student does not have access to a computer or mobile phone/tablet, kits can also be ordered by calling 119. 119 can also be contacted for support at any point throughout the testing journey. 119 are able to provide support in up to 650 languages.

Individuals should self-isolate until they receive a negative result or, in the case of a positive result, for the period advised by the contact tracing team. You should ask parents/carers, FE students staff members to inform you immediately of the results of a test.

### **When to provide a test kit**

Home test kits should **only** be offered in the exceptional circumstance that you believe an individual may have barriers to accessing testing elsewhere.

Anyone who displays symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19) can and should get a test. The Welsh government is making it as easy as possible to get a test through a wide range of routes that are locally accessible, fast and convenient.

These testing routes are set out above, and should be used as the normal channels for accessing testing. If a child or staff member in your education setting becomes symptomatic, you should advise them to access testing through these routes.

However, in exceptional circumstances when you do not think a child or staff member would be able to access testing by these routes, you should consider using one of the provided home test kits to improve the chances that the individual will get tested.

Kits are suitable for people of all ages over the age of one. Members of staff should not carry out the sampling, parents/carers will be required to administer the test to those under 11. Full instructions on how to administer the test and what to do next are provided within each kit.



Kits should not be given directly to children; only to adults over the age of 18 or a child's parent/carer.

Kits should be stored securely at ambient room temperature (5-22°C).

## **Making an order for additional coronavirus tests**

Schools and FE providers should order additional test kits if they have run out or are running out of test kits.

You can [order additional tests kits online](#)

<https://request-testing.test-for-coronavirus.service.gov.uk>.

Kits will be supplied in boxes of 10.

You will be able to make a new order for test kits 21 days after you receive a delivery confirmation email telling you that your previous supply of test kits has been sent.

Schools and FE providers will need a Unique Organisation Number (UON) to place orders for test kits. This will be emailed to you by the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC). Please call the Test, Trace, Protect helpdesk on 119 if you have not received your UON.