

Woodloes Operational Plan – September 2021

This guidance explains the actions required to reduce the risk of transmission of coronavirus (COVID-19) in our school. This includes public health advice, endorsed by Public Health England (PHE).

Separate guidance is available for:

- [early years and childcare settings](#)

Schools and trusts should work closely with parents and carers (future references to parents should be read as including carers), staff and unions when agreeing the best approaches for their circumstances.

We use the terms ‘must’ and ‘should’ throughout the guidance. We use the term ‘must’ when the person in question is legally required to do something and ‘should’ when the advice set out should be followed unless there is a good reason not to.

Overview

The government continues to manage the risk of serious illness from the spread of the virus. Step 4 marked a new phase in the government’s response to the pandemic, moving away from stringent restrictions on everyone’s day-to-day lives, towards advising people on how to protect themselves and others, alongside targeted interventions to reduce risk. As COVID-19 becomes a virus that we learn to live with, there is now an imperative to reduce the disruption to children and young people’s education - particularly given that the direct clinical risks to children are extremely low, and every adult has been offered a first vaccine and the opportunity for 2 doses by mid-September.

Our priority is to deliver face-to-face, high-quality education to all pupils. The evidence is clear that being out of education causes significant harm to educational attainment, life chances, mental and physical health.

Changes to the previous version

Changes to the guidance since its 2 July 2021 publication include:

- [update to make clear who is no longer required to isolate if identified as a close contact, including clarifying that this includes young people up to the age of 18 years and 6 months \(it previously said 18 years and 4 months\)](#)
- [added additional detail on what close contacts should do whilst awaiting their PCR test results](#)
- [updated information on contingency planning in schools, with link to update 'contingency framework'](#)

Risk assessment

We must comply with health and safety law and put in place proportionate control measures. We have updated our risk assessments and will treat them as 'living documents', as the circumstances in our school and the public health advice changes. This includes having active arrangements in place to monitor whether the controls are effective and working as planned.

Mixing and 'bubbles'

It is no longer recommended to keep children in consistent groups ('bubbles'). This means that bubbles will not need to be used in schools from the autumn term.

As well as enabling flexibility in curriculum delivery, this means that assemblies can resume, and we no longer need to make alternative arrangements to avoid mixing at lunch.

We will make sure our contingency plans (sometimes called outbreak management plans) cover the possibility that in some local areas it may become necessary to reintroduce 'bubbles' for a temporary period, to reduce mixing between groups.

Any decision to recommend the reintroduction of 'bubbles' would not be taken lightly and would need to take account of the detrimental impact they can have on the delivery of education.

Tracing close contacts and isolation

We will no longer be expected to undertake contact tracing.

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

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

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

Instead, they will be contacted by NHS Test and Trace, informed they have been in close contact with a positive case and advised to take a PCR test.

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

Settings will continue to have a role in working with health protection teams in the case of a local outbreak. If there is a substantial increase in the number of positive cases in a or if central government offers the

area an enhanced response package, a director of public health might advise a setting to temporarily reintroduce some control measures.

Face coverings

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

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

In circumstances where face coverings are recommended

If we have a substantial increase in the number of positive cases in our school a director of public health might advise us that face coverings should temporarily be worn in communal areas or classrooms (by pupils staff and visitors, unless exempt). Our contingency plans cover this possibility.

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

We have a duty to make reasonable adjustments for disabled pupils to support them to access education successfully. Where appropriate, we should discuss with pupils and parents the types of reasonable adjustments that are being considered to support an individual.

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

Stepping measures up and down

We have contingency plans (sometimes called outbreak management plans) outlining what we will do if children, pupils, students or staff test positive for COVID-19, or how we will operate if we were advised to take extra measures to help break chains of transmission. Given the detrimental impact that restrictions on education can have on children and young people, any measures in schools should only ever be considered as a last resort, kept to the minimum number of groups possible, and for the shortest amount of time possible.

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

Control measures

We should:

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

1. Ensure good hygiene for everyone

Hand hygiene

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

Respiratory hygiene

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

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

Use of personal protective equipment (PPE)

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

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

We will put in place and maintain an appropriate cleaning schedule. This will include regular cleaning of areas and equipment (for example, twice per day), with a particular focus on frequently touched surfaces.

3. Keep occupied spaces well ventilated

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

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

Heating systems will be operated as normal as long as they are within a single room and supplemented by an outdoor air supply.

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

You should balance the need for increased ventilation while maintaining a comfortable temperature.

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

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

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

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

If a pupil is awaiting collection, they should be left in a designated room on their own if possible and safe to do so. A window should be opened for fresh air ventilation if possible. Appropriate PPE should also be used if close contact is necessary. Any rooms they use should be cleaned after they have left.

The household (including any siblings) should follow the PHE stay at home guidance for households with possible or confirmed coronavirus (COVID-19) infection.

Asymptomatic testing

Testing remains important in reducing the risk of transmission of infection within schools.

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

Confirmatory PCR tests

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

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

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

Other considerations

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

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

Admitting children into school

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

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

Attendance

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

Where a child is required to self-isolate or quarantine because of COVID-19 in accordance with relevant legislation or guidance published by PHE or the DHSC they should be recorded as code X (not attending in circumstances related to coronavirus). Where they are unable to attend because they have a confirmed case of COVID-19 they should be recorded as code I (illness).

For pupils abroad who are unable to return, code X is unlikely to apply. In some specific cases, code Y (unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances) will apply.

Travel and quarantine

All pupils travelling to England must adhere to [travel legislation](#), details of which are set out in [government travel advice](#).

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

Remote education

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

We should maintain our capacity to deliver high-quality remote education for the next academic year, including for pupils who are abroad, and facing challenges to return due to COVID-19 travel restrictions, for the period they are abroad.

The remote education provided should be equivalent in length to the core teaching pupils would receive in school.

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

Education recovery

We will continue to support pupils to make accelerated progress and there is some additional funding from central government to support school initiatives. More details to follow.

Pupil wellbeing and support

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

School workforce

Clinically extremely vulnerable (CEV) people are advised, as a minimum, to follow the same guidance as everyone else. It is important that everyone adheres to this guidance, but CEV people may wish to think particularly carefully about the additional precautions they can continue to take. Further information can be found in the [guidance on protecting people who are CEV from COVID-19](#).

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

We will also be encouraging vaccine take up and enabling staff who are eligible for a vaccination to attend booked vaccine appointments where possible even during term time.

School meals

We will be returning to a more normal lunchtime service in September (see timetable). We will also continue to provide free school meals

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

Educational visits

We would encourage classes to undertake visits to support the delivery of their planned curriculum. Marle Hall has unfortunately been closed by WCC and no alternative is currently in place. The viability of the Year 6 trip to the Eden Project is also currently uncertain. We are advised to ensure that any new bookings have adequate financial protection in place.

Organising staff should undertake full and thorough risk assessments in relation to all educational visits and ensure that any public health advice, such as hygiene and ventilation requirements, is included as part of that risk assessment.

Wraparound provision and extra-curricular activity

Oscar provision will reopen and offer a pre-pandemic level of service from the Oscar room and small hall.

More information on planning extra-curricular provision can be found in the guidance for [providers who run community activities, holiday clubs, after-school clubs, tuition and other out-of-school provision for children](#).

Inspection

For state-funded schools, it is intended that Ofsted will return to a full programme of routine inspections from September 2021 and will aim to inspect every state-funded school within the next 5 academic years. This will mean an extension of up to 6 terms in the inspection interval for those schools not inspected since the start of the pandemic.

Accountability expectations

Exam and assessment results from summer 2021 will not be published in performance tables and schools will not be held to account for this data.

The DfE will confirm the position on accountability for the academic year 2021 to 2022 in due course.