

September guidance for schools

Quick overview 2nd July 2020

(updated 3rd July (red text))



September expectations

- All schools and education settings to open for all pupils
- All schools to follow DfE guidance and PHE system of controls to reduce risk of transmission
- Some flexibility on implementation - “informed judgements” but **no part-time provision or rotas**
- Schools asked to keep pupils in class or year “bubbles” wherever possible but not at expense of accessing full curriculum
- Protective measures to be put in place - emphasis on regular cleaning and hygiene
- Schools to have clear systems for responding to confirmed cases of infection as advised by PHE and local authority
- Schools must be actively engaged with NHS Test and Trace
- Extra-curricular provision to resume



Controls – “sensible, proportionate controls”

- Reduce risks of transmission – “reasonably practical”
- Groups of children - class or year “bubbles” – avoiding mixing where possible but not at expense of curriculum
- Avoid large groupings – assemblies/concerts
- Seating plans – forward-facing desks
- Staff distance from pupils and each other “as much as possible”
- Update risk assessments and monitor arrangements
- No touching where possible
- Staggered starts, breaks, lunch and finish if possible
- Regular and thorough cleaning – avoid shared resources where feasible

Prevention, Response and Containing Outbreaks of Covid-19

- **Prevention**

- All schools to follow DFE/PHE '**hierarchy**' of controls to reduce risk of spread:
 - System in place for preventing symptomatic children and staff coming to school (must)
 - Ensure that all parents are aware of symptoms and how to get tested (see letter on EGFL)
 - <https://www.egfl.org.uk/coronavirus#testing>
 - Hand and respiratory hygiene (must)
 - Enhanced cleaning (must)
 - Reduce contacts and maximise distancing (properly considered)
 - PPE in (specific circumstances)
- Robust risk assessments
- System in place for monitoring effectiveness of above controls

Prevention, Response and Containing Outbreaks of Covid-19

- **Response**

- Identification and management of possible and confirmed cases
 - Use flowchart on EGFL
 - <https://www.egfl.org.uk/coronavirus#testing>
- Engage with the NHS Test and Trace process, including isolation of close contacts

- **Containing outbreaks**

- Work with PHE health protection team (London Coronavirus Response Cell) and Local authority to determine actions.
 - Including need for isolation of larger groups of children
 - If schools are effectively implementing the prevention controls, whole school closure will not generally be necessary, and should not be considered except on advice from health protection team



Groupings

- Secondary – bubbles the size of year groups (or smaller where possible)
- Keep apart from other groups where possible
- Small adaptations to classrooms and desks
- Teachers can operate across different groups
- Adults in secondary schools to try and keep 2m from others or limit closer contact
- No expectation of 2m with younger children or those with complex needs
- Avoid congestion where possible - pupils and adults

Curriculum and assessment

- Broad and balanced curriculum for all – modifications when necessary but full entitlement by Summer latest
- Use existing flexibilities to cover missed content
- Reinforce basics – reading through all subjects
- Assess starting points and plan from there to address gaps in knowledge and skills
- Regular, formative assessment
- Full provision and support for SEND
- Support staff and additional services as usual
- Schools can suspend some subjects – exceptional circumstances
- RHE and RSHE compulsory and expected by summer 2021 latest
- KS4 and KS5 exams – in consultation (Ofqual) but pupils expected to continue to study for exams
- Can discontinue subjects for Y11 if necessary to support focus on core
- Review any plans for early entry Y10
- Music – singing, wind and brass precautions
- PE – outdoors when and wherever possible – cleaning indoors
- Emphasis on pastoral - pupil wellbeing and support

Curriculum and assessment

- Primary statutory assessment will take place summer 2021
- EYFS, KS1, KS2 usual timetable – phonics screening; KS1 TA; Y4 multiplication; KS2 tests and TA; statutory trialling
- Reception baseline assessment postponed until Sept 21
- Reviewing requirements re phonics screening check in Y2
- GCSEs and A Levels scheduled Summer 21 with adaptations
- Opportunity for Autumn exams series
- No performance tables for 2019 to 2020 academic year

Accountability

- Routine inspections suspended for Autumn term
- Visits to schools in Autumn – management of pupils' return – collaborative discussions – letter
- Safeguarding inspections continue

Behaviour

- Review and revise behaviour policy
- Usual powers but consider carefully....
- Plan for pupils who may be most anxious or reluctant to engage – consider context and experiences - reintegration programmes
- Focus on pupil and staff wellbeing

Attendance

- Mandatory
- Usual rules apply
- Early work with parents and families who have concerns about return
- Work with LA in anticipating persistent absence
- Parents' duty to secure that their child attends regularly at their education setting where the child is a registered pupil at school and they are of compulsory school age
- Settings' responsibilities to record attendance and follow up absence
- Availability to issue sanctions, including fixed penalty notices in line with local authorities' codes of conduct
- Under usual circumstances *“schools must meet for at least 380 sessions or 190 days during any school year to educate their pupils. If a school is prevented from meeting for one or more sessions because of an unavoidable event, it should find a practical way of holding extra sessions. If it cannot find a practical way of doing this then it is not required to make up the lost sessions.”*
- As attendance will be mandatory the LA advises school maintain usual term dates and not to plan increases in the number of inset days beyond the usual 5, or extended the summer closure period unless this is unavoidable or can be made up. Usual school processes apply in determining and changing dates with the LA published term dates.
- Relevant guidance:
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/818204/School_attendance_July_2019.pdf

SEND Pupils in mainstream

- All children are expected to start back in provision from September and EHCP are recognised as being particularly vulnerable when not attending school. The government intends to reinstate Section 42 so that 'reasonable endeavours' no longer apply and all provision should be made available by schools.
- Specific support needs to be put in place for children with an EHCP and in some cases a transition plan discussed and coproduced with parents/carers to ensure a successful transition back to school.
- The statutory duties on schools under the equalities legislation remain in place and children with an EHCP having a protected characteristic will have special rights which need to be considered.
- Behaviour policies should not discriminate unfairly against children with an EHCP who by the nature of their needs may find it difficult to socially distance, may spit or behave in other challenging ways and these types of behaviours should be anticipated within return to school planning.

Transport

- **Special school transport** – ‘Dedicated transport’, further guidance expected. Social distancing not a requirement, additional protective measures to continue, working with individual schools to plan for September.
- **Public transport** – limited capacity and social distancing remains 2m and 1m+. Passengers encouraged to walk and cycle. Further information to be published regarding free travel. Guidance on safe travel is found here <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-safer-travel-guidance-for-passengers>
- **LA provided mainstream transport** - may include new commercial travel routes, where they carry pupils or students only. Likely to relate to more rural areas. The government is currently evaluating this position and will set out next steps shortly.

Contingency Arrangements – Remote learning

- Government expects schools to have the capacity to offer immediate **high quality** remote education, where a class, group or small number of pupils need to self-isolate, or there is a local lockdown
- Expect schools to have strong contingency plan in place for remote education provision by the end of September
- Government will explore making a temporary continuity direction in the autumn term, to give additional clarity as to what remote education should be provided.
- Document provides links to a wide range of advice and guidance on remote learning

Risk Assessments

- Revised risk assessments required, LA will update both the generic and individual risk assessments
- Focus on sensible and proportionate control measures
- Consultation with representatives of staff required in good time
- Consider involving parents and pupils, may help to reassure them regarding steps you are taking
- HSE expect Assessment to be published for employers with more than 50 employees
- Monitor and review the preventive and protective measures regularly

Special Schools

- The expectations on special schools are very similar to mainstream settings including remote learning for those who must not attend school
- Co-production and involvement of families and young people expected
- Expect full return to start in Autumn Term, should not be rotas
- Attendance compulsory unless specific exceptions apply detailed in the document
- DfE does not intend to issue any further notices to modify EHC duties in respect of using reasonable endeavours to provide what is specified in plans. Current one expires 31st July

Special Schools and other specialist settings

- There will be no further national notices issued to modify the EHC duties, but consideration will be given to whether any such flexibilities may be required locally to respond to outbreaks.
- All children back to school full time from the start of the autumn term
- Provision of a 'full' educational experience for pupils
- Plan for the possibility of a local lockdown to ensure continuity of education
- Risk assessments may prove useful now and over the autumn term, in identifying what additional support children and young people with EHC plans need to make a successful return to full education
- Review health and safety risk assessments and draw up plans for the autumn term that address the risks identified
- Specialist therapists, clinicians and other support staff for pupils with SEND should provide interventions as usual and can move between settings

Special Schools and other specialist settings

- Classroom based resources can be shared between a bubble, they should be cleaned regularly along with all frequently touched surfaces
- Resources that are shared between classes or bubbles, such as sports, art and science equipment should be cleaned frequently and meticulously and always between bubbles, or rotated to allow them to be left unused for a period of 48 hours (72 hours for plastics) between use by different bubbles.
- Settings will need to make an assessment of the cleanability of equipment used in the delivery of therapies (for example. physiotherapy equipment, sensory equipment), to determine whether this equipment can withstand cleaning and disinfection between each use (and how easy or practical it would be to do so) before it is put back into general use.
- Where cleaning or disinfection is not possible or practical, resources will have to be restricted to one user, or be left unused for a period of 48 hours (72 hours for plastics) between use by different individuals.

Staffing – Workforce in Schools Sept 2020

- Guidance states that **most** staff expected to be back at school from Sept
- Staff in the most “at risk” categories may be able to return but...
 - flexibility in how these staff are deployed and
 - extra care taken to ensure safety e.g. individual risk assessment
 - Cross reference of advice for clinically vulnerable and clinically extremely vulnerable
 - Reference to others at increased risk from Coronavirus
 - Discussion with individuals is encouraged to identify concerns/anxieties and establish if these can be mitigated to the extent necessary to bring staff back
- Those living with at risk groups can return to school
- Emphasis of legal obligations on health and safety
- Employers reminded of need to pay due regard to staff wellbeing and work-life balance
- Supply teachers and peripatetic staff can move between schools
- Specialist and therapists – business as usual



Full guidance

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/actions-for-schools-during-the-coronavirus-outbreak/guidance-for-full-opening-schools>