

Schools Autumn Term Ventilation Planning Strategy

Background:

Current guidance from Public Health England (PHE) states that Covid-19 is assumed to be primarily transmitted through respiratory droplets from coughing and sneezing, which come into contact with others directly or via contaminated surfaces. There is emerging evidence for the role of aerosols in Covid-19 transmission. Aerosols are small droplets and droplet nuclei which remain suspended in the air for longer than large droplets. The government's Chief Scientific Advisor has acknowledged that airborne transmission is a route, particularly in poorly ventilated spaces. As a result, organisations including CIBSE, ASHRAE, REHVA and BESA are advising that workplaces boost ventilation so indoor air is sufficiently diluted to eliminate the potential for airborne viral transmission. The most important precautions schools should take to reduce spread are detailed in the [DFE guidance full opening: schools](#) and the [Schools Autumn Planning Framework](#) on [EGfL](#).

Healthy building strategies that improve air quality and clean surfaces should be incorporated as part of a layered defence against COVID-19. For improving indoor air quality, we recommend prioritising control strategies – ventilation, filtration, supplemental air cleaning – and verifying system performance regularly.

Recommended actions to improve ventilation:

Ventilation is an important factor in preventing the virus that causes COVID-19 from spreading indoors. Below are steps to consider which can improve indoor ventilation. These steps should be considered in consultation with the schools heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) professional/contractor.

Key Points

- Natural ventilation is the most reliable and efficient, opening windows and doors if possible and safe to do so.
- For mechanical systems, disable all recirculation and heat recovery systems and increase the percentage of outdoor air to 100%.
- Increase total airflow supply to occupied spaces, if possible.
- Disable demand-control ventilation controls that reduce air supply based on temperature or occupancy.
- Improve central air filtration:
 - Increase air filtration to as high as possible without significantly diminishing design airflow.
 - Inspect filter housing and racks to ensure appropriate filter fit and check for ways to minimize filter bypass.
- Consider running the HVAC system at maximum outside airflow for 2 hours before and after spaces are occupied, in accordance with manufacturer recommendations.

- Ensure exhaust fans in restroom facilities are functional and operating at full capacity when the building is occupied. If possible, run the exhaust fans for at least 2 hours before and after occupancy.
- For further guidance and advice contact:
- Steve Dunham – Schools Property: dunhams@ealing.gov.uk or Tel: 07940 546 263
- Raj Chowdhury – Schools H&S Advisor: Raj Chowdhury ChowdhuryR@ealing.gov.uk or Tel: 07568 130 165
- Detailed guidance can also be found at:
- [Risk Reduction Strategies for Reopening Schools](#)
- [HSE - Air conditioning and ventilation during the coronavirus outbreak](#)
- [CIBSE COVID-19 EMERGING FROM LOCKDOWN SAFELY RE-OCCUPYING BUILDINGS](#)