**Protecting Yourself and Others:**

**Infection prevention advice for those working in education and childcare settings – Cumbria County Council**

1. **Introduction**

Thank you for the wonderful work you are continuing to do during the COVID-19 outbreak. We want to ensure that you and others stay safe whilst you carry out your role.

This guidance aims to provide you with advice on how to minimise the risk of catching or spreading the virus.

1. **Before you go into work**

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| **Before leaving home for essential travel and work, please remember:**  You should NOT be leaving your house if:   * You have had symptoms of a high temperature and/or a persistent new cough at any point in the past seven days   Or   * Anyone you live with has had a temperature and/or persistent new cough within the past 14 days   If this is the case, you should inform your line manager that you, or another member of your household has symptoms. If you feel well enough to work, discuss arrangements with your line manager. If you do not feel well enough to work, ensure you rest. Follow the Government’s COVID-19 self-isolating guidance, which can be found [**here**](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance/stay-at-home-guidance-for-households-with-possible-coronavirus-covid-19-infection) |

1. **In the educational setting**

In all education and childcare 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, creates an inherently safer system, where the risk of transmission of infection is substantially reduced. These include:

## **Good hand and respiratory hygiene**

Hand hygiene:

* Wash your hands regularly with liquid soap and warm water for at least 20 seconds. Use paper towels to dry your hands. Dispose of paper towels in the bin.
* Where there are not hand washing facilities, you can use hand sanitiser if available (this needs to be re-applied regularly)
* Do not touch your face, eyes or mouth with unwashed hands.

Further information on hand washing is available [here](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/877530/Best_Practice_hand_wash.pdf).

Respiratory hygiene:

* Carry tissues, so if you sneeze or cough, you can cover it. Dispose of used tissues immediately. If tissues are not available, cough or sneeze into your sleeve or the inside of your elbow. Always wash your hands after coughing or sneezing.

Ask the children you are working with to maintain good hand and respiratory hygiene too.

## **Follow social distancing guidance**

Wherever possible maintain a distance of 2 metres from people. The implementation of social distancing measures within a school environment is required to help ensure that the risk of virus spread for both staff and children is as low as possible.

It is recognised that the practicalities of this can be very difficult, particularly for those settings with Early Years and Primary age children. However mitigating the spread of coronavirus has to continue to be a top priority. The Government released the guidance document [implementing social distancing in education and childcare settings](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) which provides advice to support staff working in schools and other childcare settings with measures that can be implemented to help limit the risk of the virus entering and spreading within the setting.

It is understandable that social distancing measures within education and childcare settings will be hard to maintain and therefore staff are reminded to implement the measures as far as they are able, whilst ensuring they and the children remain safe within their settings.

In order to continue to manage and reduce the risks it is important to consider what additional measures could be taken and these should be identified and your existing risk assessment reviewed and amended accordingly. If you require any additional support whilst reviewing your risk assessments, please feel free to contact the Health and Safety team for advice.

## **Ventilate shared areas where possible**

Open windows where possible to allow fresh air to circulate in the rooms you are in (check other people are able to maintain a comfortable body temperature and are not sat directly in a draught).

## **Classroom layout and staggering your timetable**

Minimise contact and mixing by altering, as much as possible, the environment (such as classroom layout) and timetables (such as staggered break times).

## **Wipe down hard surfaces**

Wipe down frequently touched surfaces in classrooms and other shared spaces. This can be done using a cloth and detergent (such as washing-up detergent or other household surface cleaner).

## **Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) including face coverings and face masks:**

Wearing a face covering or face mask in schools or other education settings is not recommended. Face coverings may be beneficial for short periods indoors where there is a risk of close social contact with people you do not usually meet and where social distancing and other measures cannot be maintained, for example on public transport or in some shops. This does not apply to schools or other education settings.

Schools and other education or childcare settings should therefore not require staff, children and learners to wear face coverings. Changing habits, 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, young people and students 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.
* if a child, 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. A fluid-resistant surgical face mask should be worn by the supervising adult 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 face mask 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.

**Full government guidance on implementing protective measures in education and childcare settings can be found here -**<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-implementing-protective-measures-in-education-and-childcare-settings/coronavirus-covid-19-implementing-protective-measures-in-education-and-childcare-settings>