# Health and Safety Update May 2021

## School COVID-19 Risk Assessments

PHE advice remains the way to control the virus is with a system of controls, even with the current new variants

The school operations risk assessment should be regularly reviewed and the control measures already in place must be robustly reinforced and all staff reminded of the main controls to help minimise risks of viral transmission.

## Face Coverings

From 17th May face coverings will no longer be recommended for pupils in communal areas in all schools. Face coverings will no longer be recommended for staff in classrooms but should still be worn by staff and visitors outside classrooms where social distancing is not possible such as communal areas and corridors.

**Transparent face** **coverings** which may assist with communication and facial expressions can be used. Whilst use of these type of face coverings may be effective in reducing the spread of the virus, evidence to support this is limited

**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 control of virus transmission.

**Exemptions** still apply to some people and school should be sensitive to this and note that some people are less able to wear face coverings and the reasons for this may be less visible.

You should still keep a small supply of face masks in case they are required by staff and visitors who may have forgotten their own.

## Maintaining social distancing

Minimising contact and mixing between people is still to be considered and you must continue to do everything possible to minimise contact and mixing while delivering a broad and balanced curriculum

## Lateral Flow Testing

Staff in primary schools will continue to test with LFDs twice a week at home, as per existing guidance on testing for staff in primary schools and nurseries.

Secondary Schools staff and pupils now carry out home testing.

[Additional guidance on testing in specialist settings](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-for-full-opening-special-schools-and-other-specialist-settings/rapid-asymptomatic-testing-in-specialist-settings)

Testing remains voluntary but is strongly encouraged.

## School workforce

School leaders are best placed to determine the workforce that is required in school, considering additional guidance for those staff who are Clinically Extremely Vulnerable (CEV).

Staff in schools who are CEV are advised to work from home where possible, but can attend their place of work if they cannot work from home.

## Pregnancy

Guidance for pregnant women has not changed and can be found at the following links:

* [Coronavirus (COVID-19) advice for pregnant employees](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-advice-for-pregnant-employees/coronavirus-covid-19-advice-for-pregnant-employees)
* [COVID-19 vaccination: a guide for all women of childbearing age, pregnant or breastfeeding](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-vaccination-women-of-childbearing-age-currently-pregnant-planning-a-pregnancy-or-breastfeeding/covid-19-vaccination-a-guide-for-women-of-childbearing-age-pregnant-planning-a-pregnancy-or-breastfeeding)
* [Coronavirus infection and pregnancy (rcog.org.uk)](https://www.rcog.org.uk/en/guidelines-research-services/guidelines/coronavirus-pregnancy/covid-19-virus-infection-and-pregnancy/)

## Supporting staff

All employers have a duty of care to their employees, and this extends to their mental health. Make sure you have explained to all staff the measures you are putting in place.

Discuss with all staff any changes in place as part of these measures. Some staff may remain anxious and you may need extra systems in place to support staff wellbeing.

The following resources are available online:

* [Education Support - the mental health and wellbeing charity for education staff](https://www.educationsupport.org.uk/) provides a free helpline for school staff and targeted support for mental health and wellbeing and the
* [Our Frontline](https://www.mentalhealthatwork.org.uk/toolkit/ourfrontline-education/): Wellbeing toolkit for educators brings together a range of resources and support for staff.
* [Mental health resources for children, students, parents, carers and school/college staff - The Education Hub (blog.gov.uk)](https://dfemedia.blog.gov.uk/2021/02/01/mental-health-resources-for-children-parents-carers-and-school-staff/)

## Ventilation

Good ventilation reduces the concentration of the virus in the air, which reduce the risk of airborne transmission. This happens when people breathe in small particles (aerosols) in the air after someone with virus has occupied an enclosed area.

The HSE has issued guidance on [Ventilation and air conditioning during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic](https://www.hse.gov.uk/coronavirus/equipment-and-machinery/air-conditioning-and-ventilation.htm?utm_source=govdelivery&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=coronavirus&utm_term=air-con-headline&utm_content=digest-3-dec-20) and [CIBSE COVID-19 advice](https://www.cibse.org/coronavirus-covid-19) provides more information. This guidance will help identify poorly ventilated areas and provide steps that can be taken to improve ventilation.

Where possible ventilation should be provided by opening windows and allowing fresh air to circulate.

* **Natural ventilation** – opening windows (in cooler weather windows should be opened just enough to provide constant background ventilation and opened more fully during breaks to purge the air in the space).
* **Mechanical ventilation systems** – these should be adjusted to increase the ventilation rate wherever possible, and checked to confirm that normal operation meets current guidance (if possible, systems should be adjusted to full fresh air or, if not, then systems should be operated as normal as long as they are within a single room and supplemented by an outdoor air supply)
* **Fans and Air cleaning units -** desk and ceiling fans can be used provided the area is well ventilated.

**NOTE**: You would need to check your fire risk assessment if you are using desk fans and make sure they have been tested and are safe to use- avoid trailing cables

Heating should be used as necessary to ensure comfort levels are maintained particularly in occupied spaces.

If you have significant concerns that your heating/ventilation systems are not COVID safe you should seek further input from a competent Building Services Engineer in line with [CIBSE guidance](https://www.cibse.org/coronavirus-covid-19/emerging-from-lockdown#1)

## Fire Safety

Regular fire safety checks must continue as normal. Emergency drills are to be carried out as normal following social distancing as appropriate.

## First Aid

First Aid providers have resumed first aid training and assessment, however there are backlogs and limited availability of most courses for First Aid at Work and Emergency First aid at Work certificates requalification.

Current guidance from the HSE can be found at this link (it is however due to be reviewed on the 31st May 2021 [First aid during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic](https://www.hse.gov.uk/coronavirus/first-aid-and-medicals/first-aid-certificate-coronavirus.htm#non-healthcare)

Face to Face First Aid training is currently not available through Traded Services.

## Educational visits

Domestic residential educational visits will resume from the 17th May.

International visits are not recommended for this academic year up to and including the 5th September 2021.

**All details regarding the guidance for educational visits can be found on EVOLVE**

## Wraparound care

From 17 May, in line with the commencement of Step 3 of the roadmap, where wraparound and other extra-curricular activities for children are taking place indoors, they will be able to take place in groups of any number. However, it remains important to continue to minimise mixing between children, where possible.

This can be achieved by continuing to keep children in consistent groups every time they attend the setting. Smaller groups should be considered when it is not possible to do this.

When considering appropriate group sizes, it will be important to consider factors such as the recommended occupancy levels of the premises you are operating from and levels of ventilation. For example, guidance for [Providers of grassroots sport and sport facilities](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19/providers-of-grassroots-sport-and-gym-leisure-facilities) recommends that the maximum occupancy of an indoor facility should be limited by providing a minimum of 100sqft per person.

The guidance [for providers who run community activities, holiday clubs, after-school clubs, tuition and other out-of-school provision for children](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/protective-measures-for-holiday-or-after-school-clubs-and-other-out-of-school-settings-for-children-during-the-coronavirus-covid-19-outbreak) may help you to plan extra-curricular provision, including appropriate group sizes.

## Performances

If planning an indoor or outdoor face-to-face performance in front of a live audience, you should follow the latest advice in the [working safely during COVID-19 in the performing arts](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19/performing-arts) guidance, which provides details of how to manage audiences as well as carry out performing arts safely.

If planning an outdoor performance you should also give particular consideration to the guidance on delivering [outdoor events](https://www.eventsindustryforum.co.uk/index.php/11-features/14-keeping-workers-and-audiences-safe-during-covid-19).

## Contact details

The County Council provide access to the advice and support of the Health and Safety Team, Property Team, Public Health and Learning Improvement Service Whatever your query we encourage you to contact us for help and support full contact details for the Health and Safety team can be found on the Schools Portal.

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| **Education Infection Control Call Centre** | EducationIPC@cumbria.gov.uk | **0800 783 1968** |
| **DfE Helpline** |  | **0800 046 8687** |
| **Health and Safety Team** | [healthandsafety@cumbria.gov.uk](mailto:healthandsafety@cumbria.gov.uk)  [Judith.chandler1@cumbria.gov.uk](mailto:Judith.chandler1@cumbria.gov.uk)  [Kevin.hewitson@cumbria.gov.uk](mailto:Kevin.hewitson@cumbria.gov.uk)  Judy.hutchinson@cumbria.gov.uk | 01228 221616  07584 534670  07788396193  07825340473 |
| **Property repairs Portal** | [Property Repairs Portal](https://cumbria.concerto.co.uk/content/helpdesk_external_abc2.aspx?type=ba98cba4-bb06-4347-a70a-86555149cb7c)  [Building.maintenance@cumbria.gov.uk](mailto:Building.maintenance@cumbria.gov.uk) | 01228 221106 |

**Further support can be obtained from your Trade Union and Health and Safety Representatives.**

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| **Representative** | **Trade Union** | **Email address** |
| Brendan McManus | NASUWT | [fbmcmanus@icloud.com](mailto:fbmcmanus@icloud.com) |
| Ann Kay | National Education Union | [81gil@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:81gil@tiscali.co.uk) |
| Stephen Wilkinson | Association of School & College Leaders | [stephen.wilkinson@ascl.org.uk](mailto:stephen.wilkinson@ascl.org.uk) |
| Brian Pearson |  | [brian.pearson8@btinternet.com](mailto:brian.pearson8@btinternet.com) |
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