**Covid19 Guidance for schools on protecting staff and children from Coronavirus**

**Introduction**

This guidance is for schools that have remained open to support the children of key workers and children who are classified as vulnerable as defined in the [Government guidance](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#qa).

**What is Covid19?**

Covid19 is transmitted from person to person through droplets from coughs and sneezes and by touching objects and surfaces that have been touched by other infectious people.

Most people are asymptomatic (no obvious symptoms) which means that they may not know that they are infectious. This is why it’s important that everyone follows good hygiene practices at all times.

The most common symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19) are recent onset of:

* **new continuous cough and/or**
* **high temperature**

The scientific advice shows that the risk of Covid19 in education settings is low due to the small number of children that will continue to attend. Asymptomatic people (people with the virus but not displaying symptoms) have a reduced viral load and so risk of transmission is considerably reduced. For the vast majority of children and staff, coronavirus (COVID-19) will not cause serious illness.

**When should children and staff come to school?**

Children and staff who are ‘shielding’ because they are extremely vulnerable should stay at home. Children and staff with symptoms of Covid-19 should stay at home.

If a child lives in a household with someone who is in the most vulnerable health groups, as set out in the [guidance on shielding](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-on-shielding-and-protecting-extremely-vulnerable-persons-from-covid-19), they should only attend an education or childcare setting if stringent social distancing can be adhered to, and the child is able to understand and follow those instructions. This may not be possible for very young children and older children without the capacity to adhere to the instructions on social distancing.

**How can I protect myself and others from Coronavirus?**

The most effective methods of reducing the risk of infection are **regular and effective handwashing and social distancing**.

* Stay more than 2 metres (6 feet) away from others where possible
* Ensure that you wash your hands with soap and water for 20 seconds regularly. Handwashing is one of the most important ways to reduce infection
* Supervise and provide support to children to ensure they wash their hands for 20 seconds more often than usual with soap and water or hand sanitiser and catch coughs and sneezes in tissues
* Avoid touching your mouth, nose and eyes
* Cough or sneeze into a tissue or bent elbow and then immediately dispose of the tissue
* Clean and disinfect regularly touched objects and surfaces more often than usual using your standard cleaning products (see guidance on cleaning in non-clinical settings below)
* Staff, young people and children should stay at home if they are unwell with a new, continuous cough or a high temperature to avoid spreading infection to others
* If staff, young people or children become unwell on site with a new, continuous cough or a high temperature they should be sent home

See Department of Health and Social Care [guidance for educational settings](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-to-educational-settings-about-covid-19/guidance-to-educational-settings-about-covid-19)

**How can I implement social distancing?**

To help ensure that the risk of virus spread for both staff and children is as low as possible, education and childcare settings that remain open should:

* tell children, parents, carers or any visitors, such as suppliers, not to enter the education or childcare setting if they are displaying any symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19)
* consider how children arrive at the education or childcare setting, and reduce any unnecessary travel on coaches, buses or public transport
* ensure class sizes reflect the numbers of teaching staff available and are kept as small as possible
* stagger lunch times, break times, and the movement of pupils around the school, to reduce large groups of children gathering
* discourage parents from gathering at school gates
* See guidance on [Coronavirus (COVID-19): 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#qa) for practical tips on social distancing and infection control

**What can I do when social distancing is not possible?**

There will be instances where social distancing is not possible in schools, particularly where there are young children or children with additional needs. Staff should implement the recommended measures as far as they are able, whilst ensuring children are kept safe and well cared for.

Paying particular attention to handwashing before and after supporting children who need help with nappy changing, toileting or eating, as well as avoiding touching their own face whilst at work is important.

As much as possible, settings should seek to prevent the sharing of food, drink, utensils, equipment and toys.

Equipment, toys and surfaces should be cleaned and disinfected more frequently.

See guidance on [Coronavirus (COVID-19): 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#qa) or practical tips on social distancing and infection control.

**The Government will shortly publish advice for schools with children with complex needs.**

**Do I need PPE to undertake my job safely?**

Personal Protective Equipment or PPE provides enhanced protection for workers and the public in certain environments and situations. It should only be used by trained individuals alongside broader infection control measures.

Not everyone needs PPE to carry out their roles safely. PPE is only one of several important measures to prevent infection, the most important are handwashing, social distancing, and catching coughs and sneezes.

At present the Government guidance is that PPE is only required in the following scenarios:

* Someone in has symptoms of COVID19 and you cannot remain at a safe distance of 2 metres (6 feet)

and/or

* Someone is shielding because they are extremely vulnerable

Therefore, the scientific advice indicates that educational staff do not require personal protective equipment.

Some children and young people with special educational needs may be unable to follow social distancing guidelines. They may also require personal care support. In these circumstances, staff need to increase their level of self-protection, such as minimising close contact (where appropriate), cleaning frequently touched surfaces, and carrying out more frequent handwashing.

**The Government will shortly publish advice for schools with children with complex needs.**

**Relevant Guidance**

**Guidance for educational settings**

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-to-educational-settings-about-covid-19/guidance-to-educational-settings-about-covid-19>

**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>

**The Government will shortly publish advice for schools with children with complex needs.**

**Cleaning in non-healthcare settings guidance:**

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-decontamination-in-non-healthcare-settings/covid-19-decontamination-in-non-healthcare-settings>

Guidance on social distancing for everyone in the UK:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-on-social-distancing-and-for-vulnerable-people>

How to protect extremely vulnerable people (shielding):

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-on-shielding-and-protecting-extremely-vulnerable-persons-from-covid-19>

Self-isolation guidance for suspected coronavirus:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance/stay-at-home-guidance-for-households-with-possible-coronavirus-covid-19-infection>

Guidance for employers and businesses:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-to-employers-and-businesses-about-covid-19/guidance-for-employers-and-businesses-on-coronavirus-covid-19>