

Schools HR Update – 6th July 2020

- Guidance for Full Opening – Schools @ 2nd July 2020
- Number of Key Phrases/Statements:
 - Actions school leaders should take to minimise the risk of transmission in their school – based on PHE advice
 - Rest of guidance focused on what DFE expects schools to operate in
 - Prepared input from school leaders, unions and sector bodies in consultation with PHE and the H&S Executive
 - In relation to working in schools, whilst it is not possible to ensure a totally risk-free environment ONS suggest that staff in educational settings tend not to be at any greater risk from the disease than many other occupations. There is no evidence to suggest that children transmit the disease any more than adults.
 - Measures set out in guidance provide a framework for school leaders to put in place proportionate protective measures for children and staff – if schools follow the guidance set out here can be confident they are managing risk effectively.
 - Guidance is in two sections:
 - PHE advice schools MUST follow to minimise risk of C19 transmission and a process that schools SHOULD follow where anyone develops C19 symptoms while at School = PHE endorsed system of controls which ensure that schools are able to effectively minimise the risks but must follow ALL of these
 - How DFE expects Schools to operate – broken down into 4 areas.
 - Expect Schools to work closely with parents, staff and unions – as they normally would

Section 1 – PH Advice to Minimise C19 Risks

- All schools to prepare for full-time return at the start of the autumn term
- Situation is Fluid – document mentions employers having ‘active’ arrangements in place to monitor the controls that are – effective, working as planned, updated appropriately
- Schools must work through system of 9 ‘controls’ that include prevention (6 point) and response (3 point)
- 6 points – minimise contact, clean hands more thoroughly, ensure good respiratory hygiene, ‘introduce’ enhanced cleaning, minimise contact and maintain social distancing
- 3 points – wear PPE where necessary, appropriate response to infection (T&T), manage confirmed cases, contain outbreak

Section 1 - Bullet 5 (1)

Minimise contact and maintain social distancing:

- Schools MUST do all possible to reduce contacts between children and staff and mixing while delivering
- Keeping groups separate (bubbles)
- Maintaining social distancing
- these are not alternative options and both measures will help, but the balance between them will change depending on:
 - Age of children
 - Layout of school
 - Feasibility of keeping distinct groups separate
- likely for younger children emphasis will be separating groups – as recognises that children (especially the youngest) cannot social distance – and this provides an additional protective measure,
- for older children maintaining social distancing in bubbles that do not mix makes it quicker and easier in the event of a positive case - notes year group and a full class (KS3)
- Schools with capability to do so should limit interaction, sharing of rooms and social spaces – as much as possible
- Recognise that younger children will not be able to maintain social distancing and it is acceptable for them not to distance within their group

Section 1 - Bullet 5 (2)

- Does not say whole school - assumes that social distancing, etc maintained outside of bubble but is not an 'all of nothing' but even where implemented partially will have benefits – goes on to note may not be possible re transport, wider specialist teaching, wraparound care. Siblings may also be in a different groups – but endeavouring to keep these groups at least partially separate and minimising contacts will still offer public health benefits and reduces network of possible direct transmission
- All staff can operate across different classes and year groups in order to facilitate school timetable
 - assuming SEND, other support is including this
 - staff should try to keep their distance from pupils/ other staff as much as can – ideally 2 metres from other adults;
 - recognise not likely to be possible with younger children and
 - teachers in primary schools can still work across groups if that is needed to enable a full educational offer

Section 1 - Bullet 5 – (3)

Measures within the classroom:

- Maintaining social distancing whilst inside – strong PHE advice that staff in secondary schools maintain social distancing from their pupils, staying at the front of the class and away from their colleagues wherever possible
- Ideally adults should maintain 2 meters distance from each other and from children
- Know this is not always possible, particularly when working with younger children but if adults can do this when circumstances allow this will help
- Avoid close face to face contact and minimise time spent within 1 metre of anyone
- Not possible when working with pupils with complex needs or who need close contact care
- For children old enough, supported to maintain distance and not touch staff or peers where possible. This will not be possible for some of the younger children and some children with complex needs and it is not feasible in some schools where space does not allow
- Where cannot maintain social distancing, particularly younger children in primary schools, risk can be reduced by keeping pupils in smaller, class-sized groups (as noted)

Section 1 - Bullet 5 (4)

Measures elsewhere:

- Groups should be kept apart – avoid large gatherings or collective workshop with more than one group – still need to provide for collective workshop as part of planning
- Movement around school kept to a minimum
- Passing in corridors or playground is a low risk, but schools should avoid creating busy corridors, entrances and exits
- Consider staggered break times and lunch times (and time for cleaning in between groups)
- Plan how shared staff spaces are set up and used to help staff keep their distance from each other
- Use of staff rooms should be minimised, although staff **MUST** still have a break of a reasonable length during the day

Section 1 - Bullet 5 (5)

Measures for arriving and leaving:

- Travel, consideration of staggered starts or adjusting start and finish times to keep groups apart
- Staggered school day should not reduce the amount of overall teaching time
- Condensing/ staggering free periods or break times but retain same amount of teaching, or change the school day (*for different year groups?*) to avoid rush hour
- Parental communication, including reminder (*assumes the majority of children have been at school, what about new children – new year groups or in-year?*) on drop off and pick up, including gathering at school gates
- Message to all parents that cannot come onto the school site without an appointment (how long for?/ how frequently do you remind parents of this?)
- Face coverings – and what to do with them once pupils arrive at school?

Section 1 - Bullet 5 (6)

Other considerations:

- Parent help/support for changes to routines for some children (SEND)
- Supply teachers, peripatetic teachers, temporary staff can move between schools – good induction/ expectations – including the agency/ supply pre and during placement?
- Specialist, therapists, clinicians and other support staff for pupils with SEND should provide interventions as usual - pre and during assignment expectations need to be clear/ confirmation of understanding?
- How to manage visitors – including contractors/ third party – pre and during assignment – including those dual registered again pre and during expectations and understanding factors
- A record should be kept of all Visitors – if had to do T&T does your visitor records hold enough information?
- Where child routinely attends more than one setting (e.g. dual registration school/PRU or special school) schools need to work through a system of controls between them – what about staff who have more than one post or who are shared between schools?
- Use of resources to be minimised – staff and students needs to have their own pens and pencils; other resources can be used / shared within the bubble – but should be cleaned frequently along with all frequently touched surfaces
- Sports, Art, Science equipment should be cleaned frequently and meticulously and always between bubbles or left unused for 48/72 hours
- Outdoor playground equipment should be cleaned more frequently; recommended pupils limit equipment they bring in to school on each day – includes mobile phones!
- Some shared resources can be taken home – but unnecessary sharing should be avoided – especially where does not contribute to pupil and education development

Other

Section 1 - Bullet 6:

- PPE – wear appropriate wear, but the majority of settings will not require beyond what they would not normally need for their work. Is only needed in a very small number of cases (examples provided).

Section 2: School Operations

- pupils who are at home shielding and self-isolating – *cohort can change; expectation is for schools* to be able to immediately offer them access to remote education and schools should monitor activity
- Discussions with parents to understand concerns and what is being done at school to reduce the risk
- Communicate clear and consistent expectations on attendance before the end of the school year to families – including other professionals who work with the family where appropriate

School Workforce – CEV & CV

- Relaxation of Shielding measures from 1st August 2020 – expect that most staff will attend school
- Those that can work from home should be do so
- Recognise that this will not be applicable to most school staff, but where a role may be conducive to home working (admin/leadership) school leaders should consider what is feasible and appropriate.
- CEV & CV (including pregnant) Staff
 - Where schools apply full measures in this guidance the risks to all staff will be mitigated significantly
 - Expect most staff to return, although advise those in at most risk categories to take particular care
 - Can return to work from 1st August as long as they maintain social distancing – other guidance is dated 24th June
 - School leaders can be flexible in how those members of staff are deployed to enable them to work remotely where possible or in roles in schools where it is possible to maintain social distancing
 - People who live with those who are CEV or CV can attend the workplace

School Workforce – H&S and Equalities

- Staff who may be otherwise at increased risk: BAME, Age/Male, Other – as noted in EIA and the staff you have already ask to identify themselves to you so you can work with them. Family members can attend work
- Legal duty to protect employees and others from harm and continue to assess H&S risks and consider how to meet equalities duties in the usual way.
- Following steps in guidance will mitigate risks to pupils and staff and help schools to meet their legal duties to protect employees and others from harm

School Workforce – Supporting Staff

- Regard staff, including Head teachers work-life balance and wellbeing – *this includes workload*
- Should have explained to all staff the measures they are proposing and involve all staff in that process
- Employers have a duty of care and this extends to their mental health
- Guidance already provided on Wellbeing at Work, also Education Support Partnership provide a free targeted helpline for school staff

School Workforce – Staff Deployment

- May need to alter the way in which the deploy and use staff more frequently/ in a different way; managers should discuss and agree any changes to staff roles with individuals
- Unnecessary and unmanageable workloads should be avoided – review existing practice – what do you want your team to stop doing, do in a different way, keep doing?
- Notes provision of remote education can help to manage workload and wellbeing? Working from home including PPE?
- Where support staff capacity is available, schools may consider using this to support catch-up provision or targeted interventions
- TA's may also be able be deployed to lead groups or cover lessons, under the direction and supervision of a qualified teachers (Educ (Spec Work) Reg's 12) – Need to be mindful of grades and job descriptions

School Workforce – Supply/Third Party/Temporary/Trainees/ Volunteers

- Can continue to use and movement between schools is acceptable – visitors checklists, induction, expectations and consequences of non-compliance. Need to agree with their organisation/ employer what this is and how this operates pre/during/post placement
- Considerations for Catch up/ Funding?
- Strongly advised to consider hosting ITT trainees and a list of work that they could do is noted for consideration.
- Volunteers can be used as they normally would – with proper support and appropriate roles, but mixing volunteers should be kept to a minimum and they should remain 2 metres apart from pupils where ever possible

School Workforce – Other

- DSL/ DDSL's should be given more time initially to catch up
- Kitchens expected to be fully open from September – need to talk to your provider if these are not your staff as those employers may have their own RA arrangements/ considerations
- School capacity – not think there is a need for deliver on other sites as class sizes can return to normal and spaces used by more than one class can be used between use
- School Building – normal pre-term checks are still needed; ventilation
- Educational Visits – can resume non-overnight domestic – will need to review RA / operational plans/ control measures
- Breakfast/After School Provision – schools should consider resuming, can be built up over time, logistically challenging, working alongside schools wider protective measures including keeping in small year groups/ bubbles or should use small/ consistent groups.
 - Schools advising parents to limit the number of different providers they access as far as possible
 - Parents to seek assurance that providers are carefully considering their own protective measures and only use providers that can demonstrate this.
- As with Physical activity contact sports during the school day should not take place.

Annex A -H&S Risk Assessments (RA1)

- COVID-Secure? Further guidance available for HSE, but not school specific. Assuming this document is equivalent to those provided to other sectors/ industries.
- Do everything reasonably practicable to minimise risks but recognise cannot completely
- RA identifies measures to reduce risk; not about creating huge amounts of paperwork, rather identifying sensible measures to control risks in the workplace – and the role of others in that
- RA help school leaders and employers decide whether they have done everything they need to.
- Legal Duty to consult their employees in good time. Document notes it also makes good sense to involve pupils (where applicable), young people and parents – *suggestion seems to be that 'service' users are to be involved in RA this is not normal/standard practice*
- Employers can do this by listening and talking to them about how the school will manage risks from C19 and make the school C-secure; involving them in making decisions shows that the school takes their H&S seriously

Annex A - H&S Risk Assessments (RA2)

- Sharing your RA – workforce and if possible consider publishing it on website to provide transparency of approach to parents, carers and pupils – HSE would expect all employers with over 50 staff to do so
- Legal Requirement to Consult = MUST
 - Consult on full RA with own staff in school and named school TU reps; where don't have named school TU rep must consult with local TU reps and would also need to refer to regional TU reps where don't have a local one – e.g. NAHT and ASCL. Does not matter if you have members of those staff in that TU at School – there are national recognition rights in the Sector and these apply – regardless.
 - What about third parties (non-employees)? No need to consult but assurance and expectations of what to do when they are on your site needs to be clear
 - Publishing a full RA on your website? Suggestion is think about policy statement which gives assurance, RA is the procedural part of the process and will likely change on a daily basis/ is fluid – out of date potentially as soon as publish it. May have to provide full RA if asked (parental request, FOI) but will be able to consider each request and determine how best to respond.
- Delegated Responsibility – DfE H&S responsibilities and duties for schools – operationally delegated to the head teacher and the leadership team and includes the sign-off / involvement of the G/M Board at a strategic level
- Consultation does not remove the employer's right to manage – they will still make the final decision
- Consultation on changes to RA for start of autumn term to commence with staff before the summer break to ensure that those that are on term-time contracts have adequate time to contribute – remember those not physically at work
- Resolving Issues & Raising Concerns – concerns should be raised initially with line manager and TU reps, and concerns should be given proper consideration; if this does not resolve the issues, concerns can be raised with the HSE – HSE are then able to use their role/ statutory powers – these are not new powers.

Considerations/ Next Steps:

- Risk Assessments – V3, V4, etc – in main similar, with exception of -
 - Movement around school is a key consideration and will differ from school to school
- Shared work spaces – reasonable expectation to clean own workspace; limited/no personal equipment
 - Individual responsibility for work H&S and this includes keeping workspace clean
- Staggered Starts – consideration re home to school, transport, drop off/ pick up
- Alter School Day – considerations for part time workers, staffs own circumstances, parents circumstances, costs?
- Role of Governors – GB Meetings? Separate Update re HT wellbeing
- Individuals at home CEV/CV – still working – how do you prepare them for what school will look like/ what will be expected of them?
- PPA Cover/ SEND
- New ways of working – reference to what did before/ some normal some not
- Phasing in September/ Use of Directed time/ STPCD remains/ Taught Hours
- Breaks and shared staff spaces, e.g. staff room
- TU's and consultation
- Other resources/ considerations