



COVID 19 Planning Tool to support contingency/outbreak management plans in early years, schools and colleges

Document information

Title	COVID 19 Planning Tool to support contingency/outbreak management plans in early years, schools and colleges
Authors	Programmed Development Unit (Developed by the South West HP Network, adapted by PDU for generic use)
Approved by	Alexa Gainsbury
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Document history

Version	Change made	Reason	Date	Author
2.00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Daily LFD testing for close or household contacts while awaiting the results of a PCR test More frequent testing, including daily testing for a group or cohort in secondary schools where case numbers are very high Additional actions may also be implemented if the setting is situated in an area of high prevalence 	Updated with additional control measures agreed by UKHSA & DfE (BN 2021/067)	14.10.21	Sarah Bolstridge & Alexa Gainsbury
2.01 (Draft)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adapted extended LFD testing to read 'for a maximum of 7 days' for household contacts Added Co2 monitor readings to inform risk assessments Note regarding the needs of vulnerable children and children of critical workers to be considered in the decision to recommend attendance restrictions and planned for in the event of 	Updated in response to feedback from SW Education Network	15.11.21	Sarah Bolstridge and Alexa Gainsbury

	<p>temporary closure of onsite provision</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recommendation that uptake and strategies for improving uptake amongst specific populations should be considered when recommending increasing LFD testing as part of enhanced measures. 			
3.0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adapted in accordance with face coverings briefing note and expected update to education contingency framework. Recommendation of face coverings in communal spaces included as a baseline measure where high/rising prevalence and/or recommended by DPH. 	Updated with additional control measures agreed by UKHSA & DfE (BN 2021/067)	15.11.21	
3.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Omicron variant and Plan B measures added 	Updated in line with government briefing 27 November 2021	09.12.21	Sarah Bolstridge
4.0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Finalised with feedback included 	Feedback from AG	10.12.21	Sarah Bolstridge
4.01	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Self-isolation no longer required for contacts of Omicron cases. Contacts of all covid cases should LFD test for 7 days, continue to attend education setting. 	National guidance updated 14/12/21	14.12.21	Sarah Bolstridge
4.02	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Changes to self-isolation period 	Updated Stay at Home guidance published 22/12/21	22.12.21	Sarah Bolstridge

Note this document will be periodically reviewed in line with changes to national policy and guidance.

Next review date: 13.10.22 (or sooner if policy/guidance is updated)

Any queries regarding this document should be sent to: OpsPDU@phe.gov.uk

Planning Tool: COVID-19 Outbreak Management in Education & Childcare Settings

Introduction

This planning tool aims to help education and childcare settings develop their outbreak management / contingency plan in order to prepare for and manage outbreaks of COVID-19 or when the setting is in an area considered to have high prevalence. It aims to help settings navigate their way through the [DfE's Contingency Framework](#), and gives clarity about the process for seeking additional support if required.

The key principles set out in the contingency framework are:

- maximise the number of children in face-to-face education or childcare and minimise any disruption in a way that best manages the COVID-19 risk
- managing transmission should be weighed against any educational drawbacks
- measures should affect the minimum number of children for the shortest time
- attendance restrictions should be considered as a last resort where all other risk mitigations have not broken chains of in-school transmission

Settings are required to update their outbreak management / contingency plan and describe how they will respond if children, pupils, students or staff test positive for COVID-19, how they will operate if they are advised to reintroduce any measures to help break chains of transmission.

The **DfE's Contingency Framework** sets out a range of measures that can be considered by settings as part of their outbreak management plan and decision making processes, as follows:

1. **Baseline control measures** – settings can implement any of these without additional support/approval and prior to an outbreak
2. **Additional outbreak control measures** - settings should consider these actions when a threshold is met
3. **Enhanced outbreak control measures** - some, or all, of these measures may be recommended following a risk assessment (IMT) with local authority public health or the local HPT, or if the setting is situated in an area considered to have high prevalence
4. **Exceptional outbreak control measures** – these measures may be recommended in exceptional circumstances following a joint risk assessment (education and public health) via an Outbreak Control Team (OCT) meeting

Further details of these measures can be found overleaf.

Thresholds for considering additional measures

The DfE has now defined 'thresholds' to indicate that transmission may be occurring within a setting and additional control measures may be needed.

- School/ out-of-school setting reports cases of COVID variants linked to the school/ setting
- 5 cases / 10% of pupils/staff, who are likely to have mixed closely, test positive within a 10-day period (mainstream schools).
- 2 cases who are likely to have mixed closely* test positive within a 10-day period (SEND/residential schools or settings with <20);
- There are any admissions to hospital for COVID-19.

If a setting meets the threshold set out above, they can access support via the DfE helpline (0800 046 8687) or local authority public health teams via their local processes.

To reduce duplication and risk of variation in advice between agencies, settings **do not** need to escalate via multiple routes.

* The Contingency Framework provides examples of groups that may be identified as close mixing for a range of settings (P19)

Baseline (non-outbreak), additional, enhanced and exceptional outbreak measures

Note: these measures are not exhaustive or prescriptive and, based on the individual circumstances and setting, DsPH, public health teams and/or local HPT may recommend other measures as appropriate and proportionate to the outbreak.

Baseline Measures that can be in place at all times (non-outbreak)	In place and date stood up
Strengthened communications to encourage pupils to undertake twice weekly LFD testing (staff and secondary aged or above pupils only) and reinforcing advice on symptoms and case isolation	Yes/no Date:
Follow and promote public health guidance on testing, self-isolation and managing confirmed cases of COVID-19 (N.B. Confirmed cases may end self-isolation after 7 days, following 2 negative LFD tests taken 24 hours apart. The first LFD test should not be taken before the sixth day. Staff that are unable to work from home can return to work and should consider wearing a face covering when in enclosed spaces for days 8, 9 and 10.)	Yes/no Date:
Consider if staff undertaking specific tasks may be able to work from home (n.b. face to face teaching should continue)	Yes/no Date:
Strongly encourage visitors aged over 11 to take LFD test prior to entry to the school	Yes/no Date:
Mandatory certification for qualifying events (i.e. indoor events with 500 or more attendees ¹)	Yes/no Date:
Maintain appropriate cleaning regimes	Yes/no Date:
Keep occupied spaces well ventilated and use CO2 monitors as required	Yes/no Date:
Appropriate use of PPE	Yes/no Date:
Deliver strong messaging about signs and symptoms of Covid-19, isolation advice and testing to support prompt isolation of suspected cases	Yes/no Date:
Encourage vaccination uptake for eligible students and staff	Yes/no Date:
Promotion of PCR testing for close contacts identified by NHS Test and Trace	Yes/no Date:
Recommend the use of face coverings when on dedicated or school or college transport (secondary age and above only)	Yes/no Date:
Face coverings in communal areas for staff/visitors and pupils (pupils, secondary age and above only)	Yes/no Date:
Contacts of confirmed Covid cases: Daily LFD testing for close or household contacts (identified by NHS Test and Trace) if fully vaccinated, or under 18 years 6 months. Tests should be carried out in the morning before attending. Eligible contacts should still attend educational setting, unless a positive test result received Note: this can be applied in secondary and in primary, at parent/guardian discretion. ²	Yes/no Date:
Consider whether to go ahead with planned international educational visits, referring to Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office travel advice and the guidance on international travel .	Yes/no Date:

Additional Outbreak Control Measures - Settings should consider these actions when a threshold is met		
Additional Measures for Consideration where Thresholds Apply	When to consider	In place and date stood up
Provide warn and inform information to identified group (e.g. class, year group, common activities group).	As standard	Yes/no Date:

¹ You should not use the NHS COVID Pass as a condition of entry for education or related activities such as exams, teaching, extra-curricular activities or any other day-to-day activities that are part of education or training.

² Test kits are available [online](#) or at local community pharmacies.

Advise school to provide outbreak information to whole setting community	On setting discretion where whole setting communications will be beneficial. In periods of low transmission this should be considered a standard action.	Yes/no Date:
Consider moving activities outdoors, including exercise, assemblies and classes	As standard when feasible (e.g. weather) with priority given to activities where large groups gather, there is contact between those who would not usually mix or where singing, shouting or exercise may be taking place	Yes/no Date:
Further improvement of ventilation indoors (where this would not significantly impact thermal comfort). This may include the use of CO2 devices to measure sufficient ventilation in settings where available.	As standard, with particular focus on improving ventilation during activities where singing, shouting or exercise may be taking place	Yes/no Date:
One-off enhanced cleaning focusing on touch points and any shared equipment	As standard	Yes/no Date:
Review and reinforcement of hygiene measures	As standard, with particular support for those where maintaining hygiene standards may be difficult (for example younger cohorts)	Yes/no Date:
Promote vaccination uptake for eligible students and staff	As standard	Yes/no Date:

Enhanced Outbreak Control Measures

Some, or all of these measures may be recommended following a risk assessment with local authority public health or the local HPT. These are likely to be considered when:

- There is evidence of transmission within the setting, and additional measures will add value in reducing the risk of ongoing transmission; and/or***
- There are multiple groups within the setting who meet the threshold for considering additional action (as this may indicate increased risk of transmission within the setting)***
- The setting is situated in an area considered to have High prevalence.***

Measures	Action	Additional planning
Increased frequency of LFD testing (staff and secondary aged or above pupils only) including daily testing where case numbers are very high amongst an identified group or cohort. This should be done for a minimum of 5 days, increasing to 7 days as necessary to ensure the final test is taken on a school day.	If evidence of significant spread within the setting.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify the daily testing cohort Advise on local processes for accessing test kits if necessary Plus: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clear comms: to parent / carers and on your setting website
Promoting social distancing and reducing crowding.	When evidence, or high risk of transmission between groups or where there is evidence of significant transmission within the setting. This may include reducing the number of children gathering together (for example in assemblies) and minimising pinch points in the school day Limit:	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • whole setting activities <p>Reintroduce:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • staggered start/ finish times at secondary and college • staggered parent drop off/pick up times at primary and early years 	<p>Use previous Risk Assessment regarding implementation of any of these measures to adjust school organisation.</p> <p>Plus:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear comms: to parent / carers and on your setting website <p>e.g.</p> <p>In implementing these structural changes state how will you ensure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Equal access to teaching and learning for all • EHCP requirements will be met • Provision for CiN, CYP on CP Plan, and LAC will be met • Sufficient staffing capacity ensures effective curriculum delivery
Recommend a one-off PCR test for a wider group or cohort	When the risk assessment indicates a potential shared exposure or transmission within the setting and a contact group can be clearly defined.	
Introduce methods to reduce intergroup mixing (for example separate break times, staggered entry etc.)	<p>Evidence, or high risk of inter-group spread within the setting (e.g. not via siblings or out of school activities). This measure is most likely to be effective when there is substantial mixing between classes and most likely to be proportionate when implementing does not disrupt lesson planning.</p> <p>Create:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • smaller groups / bubbles <p>Limit:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • staff crossing between groups 	
Reducing mixing of staff e.g. by holding meetings remotely	<p>Where there is evidence, or high risk of transmission between staff and/or low vaccination rates amongst staff.</p> <p>Limit / review necessity for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • staff face to face meetings • onsite CPD <p>Governor etc. monitoring visits</p>	
Temporary reinstating face coverings in communal areas and/or classrooms for pupils/students / staff (<u>primary age children should not be advised to wear masks</u>)	<p>Where there is high community transmission and/or high risk of transmission within the setting AND a cohort who can reasonably apply this measure. If other ventilation measures are hard to apply this may be recommended as an addition.</p> <p>Have clear comms: to parent/carers an on your setting website on the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who and when the wearing of face coverings will apply and for how long • How face coverings are made available to those who may not have their own • A system for the wider community to understand and facilitate exemption rules 	
Limitation of residential education visits, open days, transition/taster days,	<p>Where there is evidence of ongoing transmission within cohort where visits/etc planned.</p> <p>Limit / review necessity for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • residential trips 	

parental attendance, live performances	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • sporting events • open days, transition or taster days • parental attendance in settings and at performances • staff face to face meetings • onsite CPD • Governor etc. monitoring visits 	
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Exceptional Outbreak Control Measures

These measures may be recommended in exceptional circumstances following a joint risk assessment (education and public health) via an Outbreak Control Team (OCT) meeting

Measures	Action	Additional planning
Reinstating on-site LFD testing. (Assisted testing site)	<p>Where asymptomatic uptake is sub optimal and there is evidence of significant asymptomatic spread within the setting. This measure may include daily testing for a defined group of students or staff.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reintroduce on-site asymptomatic testing • LA deploys a community testing van (PH decision) 	<p>Have clear comms: to parent / carers and on your setting website on the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When testing will take place • Where testing will take place • Who will receive on-site testing (which CYP) • How testing will be undertaken
Consider whole-genome-sequencing of an identified group	Where there is evidence, or high risk of transmission of a variant of concern, of variant under investigation that requires enhanced management	
Attendance restrictions (see below for types of restrictions)	<p>NOTE: Any restrictions to the attendance of pupils (non-cases) may only be considered in extreme cases ‘as a short-term measure and as a last resort’. where other measures have been implemented and have not broken chains of transmission ** IMT required**</p> <p>In all circumstances, priority should continue to be given to vulnerable children and young people and children of critical workers to attend to their normal timetables.</p> <p>Where measures include attendance restrictions, DfE may advise on any other groups that should be prioritised.</p>	
a. Partial closure	<p>Previously schools could contact trace and ask individuals who were close contacts to self-isolate and/or move classes to remote learning as necessary.</p> <p>Contact tracing <u>in an outbreak situation</u> is now termed as ‘partial closure’, as legally only over 18s who have not had both vaccine doses, or those with symptoms / those who have tested positive can be asked to isolate by NHS Test and Trace and those exempt do not need to isolate.</p>	<p>List what will be put in place should a large number of children and/or staff need to go home and be in receipt of high-quality remote learning due to stepped up measures to break a chain of infection.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide location of your remote learning plan(s), e.g. remote learning policy). • Be clear on how you will continue to prioritise meals or lunch parcels for pupils eligible

		<p>for benefits-related free school meals while they are not attending because of COVID-19 isolation guidelines.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Insert details of how you'll distribute meals or lunch parcels to pupils (e.g. parents collect from setting). • Clear comms: to parent/carers and on your setting website of these arrangement <p>NOTE: CYP/staff are not being asked to isolate.</p> <p>In implementing this partial closure state how will you ensure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Equal access to teaching and learning for all • EHCP requirements will be met • Provision for CiN, CYP on CP Plan, and LAC will be met • Sufficient staffing capacity ensures effective curriculum delivery <p>Also outline:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Travel plans to get children home, where appropriate • Provision of appropriate IT and technical support for remote learning
b. Full closure	<p>When transmission reaches the point that partial closures and/or staffing capacity can no longer maintain safe teaching and learning within the setting, the outbreak control process may recommend a move to remote learning for the whole school for a short period of time.</p>	
c. Wraparound care	<p>Limit access to before and after-school activities and wraparound care during term time and the summer holidays to those that need it most. If holiday clubs are cancelled following government advice, they should operate flexibly to ensure that eligible children still receive support that meets the aims of the programme.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Setting / Holiday activity provider to communicate who will be eligible to attend once the restrictions are confirmed.
Management of Confirmed or suspected variant via UKHSA led IMT.	<p>In line with national guidance regarding the management of Variants and Mutations, including the Omicron variant.</p>	

Additional Considerations

Please note the following considerations, should attendance be restricted for any reason:

Remote Learning:

High-quality remote learning in schools, further education and higher education settings should be provided for all pupils and students if:

- They have tested positive for COVID-19 but are well enough to learn from home; or
- Attendance at their setting has been temporarily restricted

Safeguarding measures:

- Review child protection policy to make sure it reflects any local restrictions and remains effective.
- Aim to have a trained DSL or deputy DSL on site wherever possible.
- If attendance restrictions are being considered, the Outbreak Control Team (OCT) will need to assess the impact on vulnerable children, including children on Education Health Care Plans, children in care and children subject to child in need or child protection plans, and the children of critical workers. If attendance restrictions are recommended the OCT will need to consider the plan for vulnerable children and children of critical workers. This should include prioritising (based on risk assessment) their access to in-person education and, where provision is temporarily stopped onsite, ensuring alternative arrangements are in place for vulnerable and children and young people within the local authority.

Adapt as necessary according to the arrangements you have in place

- If the DSL (or deputy) can't be on site, they can be contacted remotely by (insert contact details).
- If the DSL (or deputy) is unavailable, we will share a DSL with (insert setting name). Their DSL can be contacted by (insert contact details). Baseline measures (operational intervention to manage and prevent ongoing transmission)

Acknowledgments:

This planning tool has been developed through the best endeavours of the South West Health Protection Network. It has been adapted by the Programmed Delivery Unit (PDU), UKHSA, to create a generic version allowing any HPT to adopt this framework for use in their local area