

COVID-19 Contingency Planning Guiding Principles

2021/22

The government has made it a national priority that education and childcare settings should continue to operate as normally as possible during the COVID-19 pandemic.

All academies should already have contingency plans (sometimes called outbreak management plans) describing how they would operate if they were advised to reintroduce any measures to help break chains of transmission.

Prioritising education

- The overarching objective is to maximise the number of children and young people in face-to-face education, or childcare, and minimise any disruption, in a way that best manages the COVID-19 risk.
- The impacts of having missed face-to-face education during the pandemic are severe for children, young people and adults. In all cases, any benefits in managing transmission should be weighed against any educational drawbacks.
- Decision-makers should endeavour to keep any measures in education and childcare to the minimum number of settings or groups possible, and for the shortest amount of time possible.
- Decision-makers should keep all measures under regular review and lift them as soon as the evidence supports doing so.
- Measures affecting education and childcare settings across an area should not be considered in isolation, but as part of a broader package of measures.
- Attendance restrictions should only ever be considered as a last resort.

Measures affecting education and childcare may be necessary in some circumstances, for example:

- to help manage a COVID-19 outbreak
- as part of a package of measures responding to a Variant of Concern (VoC) or to extremely high prevalence of COVID-19 in the community
- to prevent unsustainable pressure on the NHS

The DAT Risk Assessment outlines the operational measures academies must implement to manage COVID-19 day to day. However, if after the initial 2 LFD tests on return to site, a threshold below is reached, extra action may need to be considered or may be suggested by PHE.

Contingency plans should describe how the academy would operate if it needed to take extra action to help break chains of transmission. COVID-19 resilience and planning are now more important than ever. Academies do not need to reformat their existing contingency plans to specific templates, but the plans should be kept robust and up to date.

In your plans, for each control measure you should include:

- actions you would take to put it in place quickly
- how you would ensure every student receives the quantity and quality of education and support to which they are normally entitled
- how you would communicate changes to students, parents, carers and staff

Thresholds

- 5 students or staff, who are likely to have mixed closely, test positive for COVID-19 within a 10-day period

Or

- 10% of students or staff who are likely to have mixed closely test positive for COVID-19 within a 10-day period

(If a student or staff member is admitted to hospital with COVID-19, seek public health advice. This can be done by phoning the DfE helpline (0800 046 8687, option 1). Nick Weller and Luke Sparkes should also be informed immediately.

Employers should call the Self-Isolation Service Hub on 020 3743 6715 as soon as they are made aware that any of their workers have tested positive. Employers will need to provide the 8-digit NHS Test and Trace Account ID (sometimes referred to as a CTAS number) of the person who tested positive, alongside the names of co-workers identified as close contacts. This will ensure that all workplace contacts are registered with NHS Test and Trace and can receive the necessary public health advice, including the support available to help people to self-isolate where required.



Actions to consider once a threshold is reached

At the point of reaching a threshold, academies should review and reinforce the testing, hygiene and ventilation measures they already have in place. They should also consider:

- whether any activities could take place outdoors, including exercise, assemblies, or classes
- ways to improve ventilation indoors, where this would not significantly impact thermal comfort
- one-off enhanced cleaning focussing on touch points and any shared equipment

Academies may wish to seek additional public health advice if they are concerned about transmission in the setting, either by phoning the DfE helpline (0800 046 8687, option 1) or in line with other local arrangements.

Measures to plan for	Possible responses	Academy actions
Testing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Re-introduce ATS on site • Increase the frequency of testing for staff and students • Increase uptake of ATS testing amongst staff and students 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider deployment of a ‘testing team’ • Communication with families • Identify timetable adjustments / curriculum amends to incorporate capacity for additional testing
Face coverings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All staff wear face coverings in communal spaces • Secondary students wear face coverings in communal spaces • Face coverings to be worn in all areas in secondary schools • Likely to be for a period of 2 weeks 	
Shielding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shielding can only be reintroduced by national government 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Know the staff who are CEV and how their workload will be covered if shielding is re-introduced
Residential educational visits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refer to DAT Risk Assessment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refer to DAT Risk Assessment
Open days / parents’ events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limit contact on site for families 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Re-introduce remote events • Use Teams to meet with families • Videos for events on academy websites • Re-introduce emergency on-site meetings only
Attendance restrictions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A ‘class’ closure • A year group closure • Remote learning reintroduced 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remote learning plans in place • Vulnerable children to attend on site • Pastoral / well-being contact arrangements • DSL arrangements • School meal arrangements

