

Covid 19 Outbreak Management Plan
Gateshead Council Public Health Guidance
Updated January 2022



Context

1. The Department for Education has published a [Contingency framework for education and childcare settings](#) and this describes the principles of managing local outbreaks of COVID-19 (including responding to variants of concern) in education and childcare settings, covering:
 - the types of measures that settings should be prepared for
 - who can recommend these measures and where
 - when measures should be lifted
 - how decisions are made
2. Local authorities, directors of public health (DPH) and PHE health protection teams (HPTs) can recommend measures described here in individual education and childcare settings as part of their outbreak management responsibilities. Where there is a need to address more widespread issues across an area, ministers will take decisions on an area-by-area basis.
3. 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.
4. Measures affecting education and childcare may be necessary in some circumstances, for example:
 - to help manage a COVID-19 outbreak within a setting
 - 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
5. All education and childcare settings should have outbreak management plans (sometimes called contingency plans) outlining how they would operate if they were advised to reintroduce any measures described in this document to help break chains of transmission.

A good plan should cover:

- Roles and responsibilities
- When and how to seek public health advice
- Details on the type of control measures you might be asked to put in place

For each control measure you should include:

- Actions you would take to put it in place quickly
- How you would ensure every child, pupil or student receives the quantity and quality of education and support to which they are normally entitled

- How you would communicate changes to children, pupils, students, parents, carers and staff

Please see outbreak plan in appendix 2.

When settings should consider extra action

For settings testing pupils, students and staff in asymptomatic test sites after the summer holidays, this section only applies after the initial two tests are complete. Cases identified in the test-on-return period should not trigger extra measures or escalation to the DfE helpline.

6. The [Operational Guidance](#) sets out the measures that all education settings should have in place to manage transmission of COVID-19 day to day. For most settings it will make sense to think about taking extra action if the number of positive cases substantially increases. This is because it could indicate transmission is happening in the setting.
7. For most education and childcare settings, extra action should be considered whichever of these thresholds is reached first:
 - 5 children, pupils, students or staff, who are likely to have mixed closely, test positive for COVID-19 within a 10-day period; or
 - 10% of children, pupils, students or staff who are likely to have mixed closely test positive for COVID-19 within a 10-day period (note this could be where for example a setting e.g., nursery only has 40 children and therefore the threshold could be 4 children)

For special schools, residential settings, and settings that operate with 20 or fewer children, pupils, students and staff at any one time:

- 2 children, pupils, students and staff, who are likely to have mixed closely, test positive for COVID-19 within a 10-day period
8. Identifying a group that is likely to have mixed closely will be different for each setting. Appendix 1 gives examples for each sector, but a group will rarely mean a whole setting or year group.
 9. The thresholds above can also be used by settings as an indication for when to seek public health advice if they are concerned. In areas where rates are high, this may include advice that local circumstances mean that the threshold for extra action can be set higher than set out at paragraph 7.

Extra actions for the setting to consider once a threshold is reached

10. At the point of reaching a threshold, education and childcare settings should initially review and reinforce the testing, hygiene and ventilation measures they already have in place. Settings 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
11. Settings may wish to seek additional public health advice if they are concerned about transmission in the setting.
12. The Gateshead public health team is available to provide public health if required. Please complete the online tool:

www.gateshead.gov.uk/covid19schoolschildcare.

A member of the team will get back to you as soon as possible.

13. Settings can also phone the DfE helpline (0800 046 8687, option 1) if they wish to do so.

Additional action that could be advised by public health experts

14. If you have contacted the Gateshead public health team or the DfE helpline for advice and the Gateshead Director of Public Health (DPH) and/or Regional Health Protection Team (HPT) subsequently judges that additional action should be taken because they have assessed that transmission is likely to be occurring in the setting, they may advise settings take extra measures such as:
- Testing – communication to encourage pupils to undertake twice weekly home LFD testing, more frequent testing, reintroduction of asymptomatic test sites (not for primary schools and early years settings)
 - Reintroduction of face coverings for a temporary period – not for primary school or early years children
 - Reintroduction of “bubbles/consistent groups” for a short-term period
 - Other measures – as outlined in the contingency framework e.g. limiting residential educational visits etc
 - Short term attendance restrictions - this would be in extreme cases, and as a last resort where all other risk mitigations have not broken chains of in-school transmission. A DPH may advise introducing short-term attendance restrictions in a setting, such as sending home a class or year group (as they could any workplace experiencing a serious infectious disease outbreak)
15. Shielding is currently paused and would be reintroduced by national government if required
16. If the DPH and/or HPT advise settings to take extra measures they will work closely with their regional partnership teams and keep the situation under regular review. Settings will be informed when it is appropriate to stop additional measures, or if they should be extended.

17. There are a number of considerations that settings will need to detail in their outbreak plans if attendance is restricted on the advice of the DPH:

- Remote education
- Education workforce
- Safeguarding and designated safeguarding leads
- Vulnerable children and young people
- Transport
- School and further education meals
- Educational visits

All settings should seek public health advice if a pupil, student, child or staff member is admitted to hospital with COVID-19. They can do this by phoning the DfE helpline (0800 046 8687, option 1), or by contacting Gateshead public health team via the online tool www.gateshead.gov.uk/covid19schoolschildcare

Hospitalisation could indicate increased severity of illness or a new variant of concern. Settings may be offered public health support in managing risk assessments and communicating with staff and parents

Close Mixing

Identifying a group that is likely to have mixed closely will be different for each setting. Below are some examples.

For early years, this could include:

- a childminder minding children, including their own
- childminders working together on the same site
- a nursery class
- a friendship group who often play together
- staff and children taking part in the same activity session together

For schools, this could include:

- a form group or subject class
- a friendship group mixing at breaktimes
- a sports team
- a group in an after-school activity

For boarding schools, this could include:

- staff and children taking part in the same class or activity session together
- children who share the same common space in a boarding house
- children who have slept in the same room or dormitory together

For FE, this could include:

- students and teachers on practical courses that require close hands-on teaching, such as hairdressing and barbering
- students who have played on sports teams together
- students and teachers who have mixed in the same classroom

For wraparound childcare or out-of-school settings, this could include:

- a private tutor or coach offering one-to-one tuition to a child, or to multiple children at the same time
- staff and children taking part in the same class or activity session together
- children who have slept in the same room or dormitory together

For higher education institutions, this could include:

- students in the same household, sharing living, washing and cooking facilities
- students who take part in sporting or social activities together
- students taking part in the same seminar or group learning activity such as a presentation

Education and Childcare Outbreak Management Plan: Harlow Green Primary – Measures that settings should plan for

SPECIFIC COVID ACTIONS				
Measure	Actions to be considered	Who makes decision	For what period	Communication
1. Testing	<p>Increased use of home testing by staff (all schools/childcare settings).</p> <p>Ensure adequate stock of LFD testing kits are available.</p>	<p>DPH for an individual setting</p> <p>Setting</p>	<p>As determined and agreed by DPH and setting</p> <p>Ongoing</p>	Senior Leadership Team, Staff, parents/carers, pupils
2. Bubbles	<p>Classes are already staggered which creates a bubble situation and reduces contact.</p> <p>Although the MUGA has been used as one yard and children from the same Year Group have played together, this will revert back to two separate spaces when infection is high.</p>	N/A	N/A	Senior Leadership Team, Staff, parents/carers, pupils
3. Face coverings (note primary school age and early years children should not be advised to wear face coverings)	<p>Face coverings are to be worn by staff in communal areas and on the yard with parents/carers.</p> <p>Other areas (e.g. classrooms) could be considered if infection rates become high but this would be done in conjunction with Public Health.</p> <p>Ensure adequate stocks of face coverings are available in the setting for those who may not have them or are unable to access them</p> <p>Screens are used by TAs when working on a 1-2-1 basis outside the classroom.</p>	<p>DPH and/or HPT</p> <p>DPH and/or HPT</p> <p>Setting</p>	<p>For an initial period of two weeks pending review</p> <p>As required</p>	Senior leadership team, staff, parents/carers, pupils

4. Shielding	<p>Shielding is currently paused but school will consider actions to be taken for staff or pupils who may be advised to shield again including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifying staff and pupils on shielded list • Reinstate home learning for pupils • Review risk assessment for staff who will need to shield • Determine whether staff can work from home or undertake other duties • Consider ongoing support for staff and pupils who are shielding e.g. keeping in touch 	<p>National Government will make decision on shielding.</p> <p>HT will be responsible for all other actions.</p>	National government	Senior leadership team, staff, parents/carers, pupils, human resources
5. Attendance restrictions	<p>Only to be considered as a short-term measure and a last resort and may be for a class/year group/whole setting.</p> <p>The school's remote education will be implemented for all pupils or students not attending.</p> <p>Priority for attendance at setting to be given to vulnerable children and those children of critical workers to attend to their normal timetables.</p> <p>DfE may advise on any other groups that should be prioritised to attend the setting.</p> <p>If the school has to temporarily stop onsite education provision on public health advice, they should discuss alternative arrangements with Gateshead Council.</p> <p>Determine workforce required on site dependent on how many pupils will be attending setting.</p>	<p>DPH and/or HPT On public health advice in extreme cases where other measures have not broken chains of in-setting transmission</p> <p>Senior Leadership Team and Setting.</p> <p>Senior Leadership Team and Setting.</p> <p>DfE</p> <p>Senior Leadership Team and Setting</p> <p>Senior Leadership Team and Setting.</p>	To be determined dependent on circumstances	Senior leadership team, staff, parents/carers, pupils, DfE

8. Education workforce	<p>School to determine workforce required to be able to provide onsite learning and remote learning/education</p> <p>Consideration will be taken if any staff need to work remotely and whether they have the equipment to do so.</p> <p>Risk assessment will be implemented for staff who are working from home.</p>	Senior Leadership Team and Setting	In accordance with period of attendance restrictions	Staff
9. Safeguarding and designated safeguarding leads	<p>There should be no change to local multi-agency safeguarding arrangements</p> <p>All settings must continue to have regard to any statutory safeguarding guidance that applies to them including:</p> <p>Keeping children safe in education Working together to safeguard children Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) framework</p> <p>Out of school settings should also review: keeping children safe in out of school settings: code of practice</p> <p>All settings to be vigilant and responsive to all safeguarding threats with aim of keeping vulnerable children and young people safe, particularly as some may be learning remotely</p> <p>Designated safeguarding lead (DSL) or deputy to review child protection policy so that it reflects any local restrictions and remains effective Trained DSL available on site</p> <p>If no trained DSL available on site consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trained DSL available to be contacted via phone or online video 	Senior Leadership/ Setting/DSL	Ongoing	Staff

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share trained DSL with other settings (who should also be available to be contacted via phone or online video) <p>Where a trained DSL (or deputy) is not on site in addition to one of the above options a senior leader should take responsibility for co-ordinating safeguarding on site</p>			
<p>9. Vulnerable children and young people</p>	<p>Where vulnerable children and young people are absent education settings should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • follow up with the parent or carer, working with the local authority and social worker (where applicable), to explore the reason for absence and discuss their concerns • encourage the child or young person to attend educational provision, working with the local authority and social worker (where applicable), particularly where the social worker and the Virtual School Head (where applicable) agrees that the child or young person's attendance would be appropriate • focus the discussions on the welfare of the child or young person and ensuring that the child or young person is able to access appropriate education and support while they are at home • have in place procedures to maintain contact, ensure they are able to access remote education support, as required, and regularly check if they are doing so <p>If school has to temporarily stop onsite provision on public health advice, they should discuss alternative arrangements for vulnerable children and young people with Gateshead Council.</p>	<p>Education setting – including Headteacher and relevant staff member where appropriate</p>	<p>In accordance with period of attendance restrictions</p>	<p>Education staff, parent/carer/pupil</p>

10. Transport	<p>Transport services to education settings should continue to be provide as normal where children are still attending.</p> <p>See guidance on transport to schools and colleges: dedicated transport to schools and colleges COVID 19 operational guidance</p>	Education setting and transport provider	As long as attendance restrictions are in place	Education staff, transport provider, parents/carers
11.School and further education meals	<p>School will provide meal options for all pupils who are in school.</p> <p>School will provide free school meals support in the form of meals or lunch parcels for pupils who are eligible for benefits.</p> <p>School will identify which pupils are not attending and eligible for meal/lunch parcel.</p> <p>Make arrangements for meal/lunch parcel to be collected or delivered where appropriate.</p> <p>School to liaise with the manager of this service to ensure they are aware of numbers and requirements</p> <p>providing school meals during the COVID 19 pandemic</p>	Office staff	As long as attendance restrictions in place.	Parents/carers
12. Educational visits	<p>Any attendance restrictions should be reflected in the visits risk assessment and setting leaders should consider carefully if the educational visit is still appropriate and safe.</p> <p>Only students who are attending the setting should go on an educational visit e.g not those who are currently learning at home.</p> <p>Education settings should consult the health and safety guidance on educational visits when considering visits.</p>	Setting	Dependent on attendance restrictions	Staff/parents/carers/pupils