

OUTBREAK MANAGEMENT PLANNING

The Scottish Government has specified that all schools should prepare and maintain clear, strong contingency plans for providing education remotely.

In the event of a local outbreak of the virus, a school or a number of schools may be closed temporarily to help control transmission. As part of ensuring readiness, local authorities and schools should ensure that:

- parents/carers are fully informed of the contingency plans in place;
- the essential items and information that would be needed in the event of a school closure are identified, such as access to contact information, and the correspondence that would be used to inform parents and others of the arrangements for closure and subsequent re-opening.

Schools and local authorities are expected to familiarise themselves with the key scenarios, expectations and actions set out in Annex B of the *Coronavirus (COVID-19): guidance on reducing the risks in schools* (<https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-on-reducing-the-risks-in-schools/pages/key-scenarios/>).

KEY SCENARIOS

There are four key scenarios being considered for planning purposes and these are as follows:

Scenario 1 (Removal or reintroduction of mitigations – schools remain open):

Ensuring readiness for an outbreak or moving between the protection levels should these require to be reinstated at either the national or local level, introducing or easing mitigations accordingly and within a carefully considered and agreed timeframe in the school environment.

Scenario 2 (Partial attendance – school buildings remain open):

Partial attendance/remote learning where self-isolation of large numbers of staff/pupils disrupts full-time in-school learning.

Scenario 3 (Partial attendance – school buildings remain open):

Partial attendance of pupils to facilitate reintroduction of physical distancing where required, e.g. in the event of a beyond-level 4 national lockdown scenario, or where local health protection teams advise this as being necessary to control transmission.

Scenario 4 (Full remote learning for all pupils – school buildings closed):

No physical attendance at school for pupils except for key workers and vulnerable children, e.g. in the event of a beyond-level 4 national lockdown scenario, or where local health protection teams advise this as being necessary to control transmission.

EXPECTATIONS

The Scottish Government guidance has set out a number of expectations on schools:

- All relevant risk assessments are kept up to date for relevant scenarios.
- All staff are aware of the actions required to reintroduce or remove mitigations, the timescales required, and how they can best support pupils to ensure educational continuity.
- All pupils and families are aware of the actions required to reintroduce or remove mitigations, the timescales required, and how they will be supported to ensure educational continuity.
- All key staff and pupils have access to and understand the guidance on which mitigations should be in place, dependent on the scenario.
- Plans for remote learning have been developed and can be deployed in line with Education Scotland guidance, in the event that smaller or larger numbers of pupils and/or staff have to self-isolate.
- Children and young people have been provided with the non-IT materials needed to ensure effective remote learning (e.g. writing equipment, notebooks, etc.)
- IT needs of staff and pupils for remote learning for small numbers of pupils self-isolating are met in advance.
- Staff have been provided with guidance and training to allow them to support remote learning effectively, particularly in respect of use of IT.
- Clear wellbeing support arrangements are in place to deal with a range of scenarios and their potential impacts on staff and pupils.
- Schools and local authorities have identified key workers and vulnerable children in advance, and can update their understanding of this rapidly in the event it is required.
- Sufficient staff are available (via supply lists or additional capacity across system) to support implementation of contingency plans.
- Requirements for mitigations on school transport in different scenarios are fully understood and can be implemented to required timescales by operators.

School planning arrangements should consider the above headings. The full Scottish Government guidance also contains a number of prompt actions to support school readiness.

The actions listed in Annex B to achieve readiness are non-exhaustive and local arrangements/circumstances and advice from employers/local authorities and the Scottish Government guidance can also be taken into account.

LOCAL DISCUSSIONS

School Representatives and Local Association Secretaries can use these readiness expectations on schools as a prompt in local discussions. To further support outbreak readiness discussions, it will be helpful for members and representatives to be in possession of the following information:

1. Prevention Measures

This is essentially the school/college risk assessment, and should detail the day-to-day measures to be taken to limit and prevent the spread of the virus in the setting. This should include consideration of hygiene and cleaning, ventilation, provision of personal protective equipment (PPE), dealing with suspected cases, transport arrangements and any other mitigations such as consideration of the use of face coverings and avoiding unnecessary crowding.

Under health and safety legislation, all risk assessments and plans must be subject to consultation with the workforce and/or trade union representatives.

The NASUWT has specific guidance on risk assessment which can be found at: <https://www.nasuwt.org.uk/advice/health-safety/risk-assessment-toolkit.html>. Advice on ventilation has also been provided at: <https://www.nasuwt.org.uk/uploads/assets/uploaded/17137d7e-d79b-4025-a6edd7eab7320055.pdf>.

(continued overleaf)

2. Identification and Management of Cases

The asymptomatic testing offer is for all school staff and secondary pupils. Local authorities and schools should take all appropriate measures to promote awareness and uptake of this offer. Details around testing arrangements and encouragement for twice-weekly testing where appropriate should be shared, as well as information reinforcing self-isolation requirements.

3. Workforce

Enhanced protections for clinically extremely vulnerable (CEV) staff, pregnant staff and staff with underlying health conditions should be clearly set out, including the need for individual risk assessments as appropriate. There should also be a plan to assist in dealing with circumstances where there are staffing shortages.

4. Educational Visits

Schools should consider what visits will be permitted and the COVID-19 risk assessment arrangements for visits, taking into account insurance cover etc.

OUTBREAK MANAGEMENT PLAN

It may be helpful to compile an outbreak management plan. This can detail the steps to be taken in the event of an outbreak, taking into account advice from local public health authorities. The setting will need to have arrangements in place to facilitate working with local public health teams and NHS Test and Trace, and to satisfy any reporting and data collection requirements from the Government, local authority or local public health bodies.

The outbreak management plan could detail the steps to be taken with a single confirmed case, where multiple cases are confirmed within a setting, and where there is substantial community transmission.

In the case of an outbreak, enhanced prevention mitigations will be required, such as preventing or further limiting visitors attending the school/college. Enhanced or on-site testing may also be considered where appropriate. Public health teams may further recommend enhanced self-isolation, such as for a class or year group, where necessary and settings should have plans in place to support provision in these circumstances, which have been the subject of consultation with staff.

Local public health teams or the local authority may also call an incident meeting to discuss the situation and give specific advice/instructions to the setting.

There must be adequate communication in place to ensure that staff and parents are kept updated regarding any outbreak.

The employer must ensure that any plan is subject to consultation with the NASUWT and other school/college workforce trade unions.

ADVICE

Where NASUWT school leader members have any concerns about the advice received from the employer, or about their employer/local authority's expectations, these should be raised with the employer in the first instance. If they are not resolved, contact the NASUWT for further advice.

NASUWT Representatives should ensure that their setting has considered an outbreak management plan, and that this is subject to consultation, along with the school/college risk assessment. Any deficiencies/concerns should be raised with the school/college management in the first instance, and if concerns are not addressed, contact the NASUWT for further advice.

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