

Reference guide for return to school (Primary)

Following the Prime Minister's announcement (22 February) that all pupils will return to school full time from 8 March, the NASUWT has prepared this reference guide for members, summarising our key advice on what you should do to prepare for your return to the workplace.

A. Prior to returning to work

- Please read the NASUWT COVID-19 operational guidance which is available at www.nasuwat.org.uk/8MarchOperationalGuidance.
- Ensure that you have received a revised copy of your whole-school risk assessment and that the control measures in place have been updated to relate to the new guidance.
- Ask for confirmation that the NASUWT has been consulted on your employer's risk assessment.
- If you are clinically extremely vulnerable and have a letter from the Chief Medical Officer, you should not be returning to the workplace. Contact your headteacher/principal immediately if you have been asked to return.
- If you are in one or more of the other higher risk groups – clinically vulnerable, BAME, or disabled or if you are aged over 50, then you are strongly advised to request an updated individual risk assessment as a matter of urgency to determine how you can safely return to work, or if you should continue working from home. The employer would also need to consider potential discrimination issues and other risks, if it is proposing to follow the Government guidance, as the ultimate responsibility for decisions on the safety and wellbeing of employees rests with the employer.
- If you are pregnant, you should be provided with an updated individual risk assessment as a minimum, but you should also refer to the UK-wide Government guidance: www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-advice-for-pregnant-employees/coronavirus-covid-19-advice-for-pregnant-employees. In particular, if you are over 28 weeks, you will need to ask your employer how they are complying with the following advice: *'All employers should consider both how to redeploy these staff and how to maximise the potential for homeworking, wherever possible.'*
- Confirm that you will be provided with lateral flow tests (LFTs) for your use for home testing and advised of the procedures you should follow.
- If you work with pupils with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), enquire about eligibility for COVID-19 vaccination.

B. When you return to work

- If you are not confident that all of the COVID-control measures have been put in place, raise this with your line manager in the first instance. The NASUWT incident reporting form (www.nasuwat.org.uk/ComplyingCovidRiskAssessments) can be used as a helpful tool.
- Check that arrangements have been put in place to enable you to maintain physical distancing from pupils and other adults.

- Check that arrangements are in place to ensure the wearing of face masks/coverings in communal areas.
- Check what arrangements will be in place to ensure appropriate ventilation in any rooms where you are expected to work. (Please see the NASUWT advice on ventilation www.nasuwt.org.uk/VentilationCovid19).
- Confirm that you will be provided with LFTs for your use for home testing and advised of the procedures you should follow.

C. Following your return to work

If you encounter any situation where the required safety measures from the Government guidance or your own individual risk assessment are not being implemented, or if you have not been provided with an updated workplace risk assessment, you should immediately raise your concern with your line manager and allow opportunity for them to promptly address and rectify the situation.

If there is a health and safety representative at your school, you have an obligation to notify the employer or the health and safety representative of any work situation that could reasonably be considered to represent a serious and immediate danger to health and safety, or any shortcomings in the employer's protection arrangements which have not been previously reported.

If having done so, and the situation is not rectified satisfactorily and you still believe you are at risk, then please contact advice@mail.nasuwt.org.uk immediately.

If there is an NASUWT Workplace Representative or Health and Safety Representative in your school, you should also discuss any concerns with them.

We recognise that some members may still experience high levels of anxiety about returning to the classroom, even where a school has all of the control measures in place. This is a completely normal reaction to what is a very unusual and often stressful situation. It is widely recognised that the physical and mental health of the profession has been badly affected by the pandemic.

The NASUWT's long-standing advice to any member in this position is to seek advice from your GP for support if you feel you are unable to return to work. Your health and wellbeing has to be your top priority. Further advice around taking control of your wellbeing during COVID-19 can be found at: <https://www.nasuwt.org.uk/advice/health-safety/coronavirus-guidance/take-control-of-your-wellbeing-during-covid-19.html>.



E-mail: advice@mail.nasuwt.org.uk
Website: www.nasuwt.org.uk