

**Guidance document to support schools
informing their approach to social distancing**

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1.1 Aim: to clarify an approach to social distancing in school.

2.1 Rationale: due to current circumstances in society with covid-19. This guidance is to help schools decide how to respond to government guidance published up to 12th May 2020.

3.1 Official advice: This guidance is based upon the key information from the Government and DFE advice.

The following comments by Government are central to this guidance: “We know that, unlike older children and adults, early years and primary age children cannot be expected to remain 2 metres apart from each other and staff.” ([Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): implementing protective measures in education and childcare settings](#))

They continue: “In deciding to bring more children back to early years and schools, we are taking this into account. Schools should therefore work through the hierarchy of measures set out” in the below links:

- avoiding contact with anyone with symptoms
- frequent hand cleaning and good respiratory hygiene practices
- regular cleaning of settings
- minimising contact and mixing

Key principles are suggested below to help determine an appropriate response. These responses depend on age, needs and personal circumstance of our children (e.g. SEND). Three key points are:

- all children and staff are to remain two metres apart whenever possible (although the aim is all times).
- Groups of children must NOT mix together or come into contact, and children within a group should remain two metres apart, if they can.
- minimise physical contact unless absolutely necessary.
- staff and children must stay at home if symptomatic. (cough/fever)

Further information is on the DFE website: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-implementing-social-distancing-in-education-and-childcare-settings>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-implementing-protective-measures-in-education-and-childcare-settings/coronavirus-covid-19-implementing-protective-measures-in-education-and-childcare-settings>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-on-vulnerable-children-and-young-people/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-on-vulnerable-children-and-young-people>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/actions-for-educational-and-childcare-settings-to-prepare-for-wider-opening-from-1-june-2020/actions-for-educational-and-childcare-settings-to-prepare-for-wider-opening-from-1-june-2020>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-for-schools-and-other-educational-settings>

4.1 Education of children: it is key that any group of children receive practical advice on the first day within the first hour as they arrive in school as to what social distancing means and how it will be implemented in school.

This may involve children being walked around the school and practising certain times of the day and their maintenance of social distancing. Parents will also be requested to brief their children before they attend school.

All staff are to reinforce these messages.

Communication with parents is also advised to prepare children for changes to the school process, social distancing and washing hands (e.g. hand washing duration/frequency at home to get them ready) before they return. This is communicated through letters to parents and the home-school agreement that all parents and children must sign before returning.

5.1 Staff induction: all staff have training in what is expected of the children. Key messages are shared and reinforced by leaders to staff during INSET. **Keep your distance, don't touch and wash hands.**

6.1 How to Protect yourself

- Clean your hands regularly.
- Wash your hands with soap and water often and dry them thoroughly – do this for at least 20 seconds
- use hand sanitiser gel if soap and water are not available
- always wash your hands when you get home or into work
- cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or your sleeve (not your hands) when you cough or sneeze
- put used tissues in the bin straight away and wash your hands afterwards
- try to avoid close contact with people who are unwell
- Encourage children to sing "Happy Birthday" twice, to encourage them to wash their hands thoroughly
- Do not touch your eyes, nose or mouth if your hands are not clean
- Use DfE: [guidance on hand cleaning](#)

Visit www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19 for further details.

6.2 World Health Organisation protection guidance/ Washing of hands – upon children starting back in school, staff are to model how the children should wash their hands using soap/gel in an agreed method (e.g. taken from World Health Organisation). This should also occur after sneezing or coughing, arriving and leaving school and before and after eating, as a suggested minimum.

7.1 Entry in and out of school: Schools cannot be responsible for parents and children practising social distancing off the school premises, whilst they are waiting for the school day to start or end. Only one parent is allowed to drop off or collect their child, as per government direction.

However, it may be helpful to message parents about social distancing outside school and provide signage to parents (if necessary) reminding them of the current government guidance and the need to wait two metres apart. (N.B. schools will not be expected or able to monitor or regulate social distancing of parents beyond the school boundaries). As a school we will also displays signs to encourage social distancing.

When entering the school playground how will staff greet children on the gate and reinforce immediately the need to be two metres apart?

Key members of staff will be available around the school site to encourage parents to drop their children off and leave, encourage social distancing, welcome children and ensure they enter their classrooms safely.

How will parents be allowed (or not?) on to the school site to wait with their children?

Year Six parents are requested to leave their child at the gate and for them to walk around to their classroom on their own. Key staff will be available to ensure that the pupils arrive at class safely. Reception parents are requested to also leave their child at the EYFS gate and staff will be available to welcome them and escort them into the classroom. Year 1 parents will be allowed to escort their child around to the classroom doors – due to their age and the distanced needed to walk around the school. Key workers and vulnerable pupils' parents will be allowed to drop them off at the classroom doors due to the flexibility of times. 2m markings and signage have been displayed.

At the end of the day all parents will be allowed to collect their children from the classroom doors, although for Year 6 it is encouraged that they agree to meet their child offsite. This also assists with transition and preparing the pupils for secondary school. Only parent should collect the child and they should remain outside the 2m box around the classroom door. Signage encouraging social distancing is also displayed.

To ensure minimum numbers of parents on the site at any one time we will stagger start and finish times, also allowing parents to collect siblings from other years groups to avoid waiting and gatherings. All pupils will have a designated entry / exit point to limit numbers entering / exiting any one point. Information on staggered start and finish times and entry and exit points can be found in the 'reopening' plan.

8.1 Ratios of staff: Leaders are to plan that key staff are on site in the key roles identified (e.g. a leader, paediatric first aider for EY, DSL etc). Please see rotas that have been distributed. They clearly highlight SLT, DSL and first aiders on site each week. This will change as numbers increase and SLT will continue to monitor and review this closely.

9.1 Use of school building: as much of the school building will be kept closed as possible, so as to reduce the need for cleaning – see the Q&A below in the appendix on how to approach cleaning for more advice on this (delete if this is not relevant).

In corridors, will there be a one-way system in place and clearly signed. Where we do not have the capacity for a 1 way system (Year 5 and 6 build) children and staff will walk on the left-hand side of

the corridor according to the direction of travel. Electrical tape could indicate two metre distances on the floor and/or indicate the centre of the corridor.

Schools may wish to identify pinch points in corridors and devise systems (e.g. one way / waiting procedures etc.) where they are not wide enough for two-way travel.

Fire evacuation procedures may need to be reviewed to ensure they still function safely in the light of any changes made and social distancing guidelines. These have been reviewed for out school and can be found in the 'reopening' plan. A fire drill will be required within the first week – in line with the risk assessment.

The use of staffrooms may need to be reviewed in the light of social distancing, health and hygiene. Please refer to the reopening plan. You should sit two seats apart and ensure that your items are loaded into the dishwasher and surfaces cleaned with the antibacterial wipes provided, before leaving.

10.1 Class sizes: where possible, the smallest number of children should be based in a classroom to give children as much space above the two-metre recommended distance. This may mean some classes or groups of a class being taught in a hall or other more ventilated space. Doors are to be wedged open (unless fire doors) to allow air circulation.

The Local Authority has issued guidance to schools suggesting a maximum of 6 – 10 pupils work in each classroom area depending on the size of the room. Schools will define their own total capacity based on internal teaching space. Where additional staff are deployed to support individual children's needs, schools will need to ensure that numbers in classrooms still comply with the latest Government guidance on social distancing and the space available.

Children should be kept in the same group throughout the day and over the weeks to minimise contact with other groups of children. They will be based in the same room / group (bubble).

11.1 School office: will the school office be closed for face to face queries? **OR**

The school office will be manned daily but parents must phone, email or dojo before coming to the office and then it will be on an appointment system only. No one without a prior appointment will be allowed to enter. For the parents / visitors who do enter, social distancing signs are displayed and a screen will be installed. Only one visitor / parent will be allowed in the foyer at one time.

12.1 Assemblies: there should be no assemblies held at this time in communal halls. As things progress, we could do this through google meet and everyone remain in their bubbles.

13.1 In class: all desks should be two metres apart (Government advice is "if possible"). Children should not share equipment and will have their own copies of paperwork, books etc, whenever possible. Toys and equipment should not be used by other groups if possible and as a minimum should be cleaned between use by different groups. Unnecessary items in classrooms should be removed and stored elsewhere in the school. All soft furnishings, toys and soft toys will be removed that cannot easily be cleaned every day.

Children will not run errands and take messages.

All children, but especially younger ones, should be trained to practise to aim to sit on the carpet two metres apart.

Further reinforcement of two metres should be developed through apparatus around the school to support awareness e.g. tape on floor, flags on walls etc'.

Children will stay in one room for education throughout the day to minimise contact with other groups, and lessons will be arranged for outside, wherever possible.

For younger children, the resources made available for child-initiated learning should be carefully considered. For example, malleable resources, such as play dough, should not be shared and consideration should be given to their safe use, depending on circumstances.

14.1 Toileting: children are to be reminded not to enter the toilets when there are already 2 children in there. They must wash their hands thoroughly using the method shown above. To reduce the number of pupils using sets of toilets – specific toilets have been allocated to the different groups. Reception will use EYFS toilets, Year 1 Key Stage One toilets, Key Worker / vulnerable groups will use Key Stage Two toilets and Yr6 will use the toilets in their block. Only one child per bubble will be allowed to attend the toilet at any one time.

15.1 Playtime: no physical games are allowed that may involve physical contact. Children sit in groups but must maintain the two metres distance. (Should this be their educational group only. Entry in and out of the building should be staggered and children should not line up. Upon the first bell, children should stand still. Children enter when the bell is rung on the second occasion but only when their year group or table groups are called by their teachers. Children must maintain the distance when they enter the school. At Glebefields, playtimes have been staggered and play equipment will be taped off.

16.1 Lunchtime: Children in receipt of UFSM and/or FSM will receive a packed lunch (all of R and Yr1). Children not in receipt of FSM will be required to bring their own packed lunch in a plastic bag that can be disposed of afterwards. Packed lunches provided by school will be delivered to each bubbles, ensuring social distancing is maintained. Children will eat their lunch in the classroom.

17.1 Young Children: It is recognised that children in Early Years will find social distancing more difficult and this will be a challenge. Changes in routines of ‘free-play’ may need to be reviewed depending upon the size of the unit. A toy (e.g. crocodile) could be used as a practical resource to aid the visualisation of maintaining distance. Children are to be encouraged to remain as far apart as possible.

Constant reminders should be issued by staff and will be modelled.

Some children, including young children and those with special educational needs, may be unable to follow social distancing guidelines, or require personal care support. In these circumstances, government indicates that staff need to increase their level of self-protection, such as minimising close contact (where appropriate), cleaning frequently touched surfaces, and carrying out more frequent handwashing.

18.1 First Aid: Staff must wear gloves and a mask when treating children in first aid. Only one child should be allowed in the first aid area at a time. Cuts or grazes must be covered as soon as possible.

19.1 Precautions: Children and staff wash their hands upon entry to school, before after eating, before and after lunchtimes and after coughing and sneezing.

When using computers, children should wipe down their own work station/laptop at the start and end of the session.

Consider using additional sanitizer dispensers around school/classrooms where needed to enable regular cleaning of hands. There will be hand sanitiser available in every classroom.

There needs to be a COSHH assessment around the safe handling and storage of alcohol gel. Ideally, staff would have their own individual-sized portable bottles of gel. (Sanitising gel needs to be alcohol-based and contain at least 60% alcohol).

20.1 Risk Assessments: Consider which policies need reviewing and risk assessments considered – e.g. physical handling

If there are situations where the two-metre distancing may not be possible schools must consider how to minimise risk and consider whether to complete a risk assessment to identify how children and staff will be kept safe and risks reduced.

In line with government guidance, school should carry out a risk assessment before opening. The assessment should directly address risks associated with coronavirus (COVID-19), so that sensible measures can be put in place to control those risks for children and staff. This will be shared with staff

21.1 Managing intimate care of children where social distancing is not possible (e.g. Special Schools, Pupil Referral Units and Focused Provisions) In situations where it may not be possible to maintain social distancing, schools will need to review how staff are kept safe. In these circumstances, when there is a greater risk of air-borne contamination (such as when staff deliver personal / intimate care) PPE should be worn including face masks / visors (if necessary), gloves and apron.

Settings may need to carry out a risk assessment if it is deemed that a child or young person may not be able to follow instructions, to determine what mitigations need to be put in place and whether, in rare circumstances, they should stay at home. For those children and young people with a social worker, our expectation is that they should attend their educational setting unless a risk assessment concludes they will be safer at home.

22.1 Health concerns - children: School leaders should have due regard to individual children who have medical needs and consider how to ensure they maintain the two metre distance. These children's medical plans may need to be reviewed to ensure that their safety can be maintained. This is particularly true of those with asthma or any condition identified as making them vulnerable to corona-virus.

22.2 Health concerns - staff: See advice from DFE and HR regarding to which staff with health issues should be in school and how to maintain staff safety for all.

The use of PPE is an ever-changing guidance, but this the current government advice for reference only: *Government current advice is that school staff do not require PPE. However, government guidance says that school staff who look after/ support the personal needs of pupils as well as kitchen/cleaning staff require PPE. Face masks will also be used by staff that are supervising children that are ill/showing symptoms in school while waiting for parents to collect.*

23.1 Sharing and awareness - this guidance should be shared to parents and the community via the school website. Implications for parents need to be communicated before the re-start of school through the school's communication system (e.g. email/text).