

COVID-19 EMERGENCY PLANNING HIGHLIGHT REPORT

SERVICE AREAS:	Education
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NEW GUIDANCE AND IMPACT

- On the 23rd August, [Professor Chris Whitty released a statement](#) which takes into account UK and international studies, and summaries of the scientific literature from SAGE, the DELVE Group of the Royal Society, the Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health, and data from the Office for National Statistics. The report outlines that multiple sources of evidence (including international evidence) show that a lack of schooling increases inequalities, reduces the life chances of children and can exacerbate physical and mental health issues. School improves health, learning, socialisation and opportunities throughout the life course including employment. The risk of death or severe illness as a result of Covid-19 is very low for children and teenagers, and there is clear evidence from many studies that the great majority of children and teenagers who catch COVID-19 have mild symptoms or no symptoms at all. Data from the UK (Office for National Statistics (ONS)) suggest teachers are not at increased risk of dying from COVID-19 compared to the general working-age population. ONS data identifies teaching as a lower risk profession (no profession is zero risk). International data supports this. There is an acknowledged risk that the reopening of schools may contribute to increased community transmission of Covid-19, for example due to changed behaviour by parents such as returning to work and meeting socially or at school gates. This could increase the 'R' value to above 1. This will be monitored nationally, and other measures to reduce social interaction may be considered before the closure of schools. Locally, where there are high rates of transmission of Covid-19, local authority areas may be classed nationally as 'areas of intervention'. In this case, national powers may be used to limit attendance of pupils at school, through the different tiers of intervention outlined in the national 'Contain Framework' guidance (see later section). Following consultation with our Director of Public Health, as a result of rates of Covid-19 in Cambridgeshire and its districts being below or similar to the national average, there is no reason for the reopening of schools in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough to differ from the national position. This advice was shared with schools on the 2nd September.
- Reopening Guidance** - There has been two updates to the [Guidance for full opening: schools](#) over the summer. This included clarification on the age requirements related to face coverings on public transport, revised guidance on cleaning including toilets, DfE support for schools over the summer on communications with staff, parents and pupils, advice on managing contractors and other visitors to schools, including immunisation and the test and trace process. The DfE reiterated the advice we have previously given around staffing issues. Those staff who are clinically extremely vulnerable can return to school in September 2020 provided their school has implemented the system of controls outlined in this document, in line with the school's own workplace risk assessment. Staff who are clinically vulnerable can also return and should follow the sector-specific measures in this document to minimise the risks of transmission. This includes taking particular care to observe good hand and respiratory hygiene, minimising contact and maintaining social. This provides that ideally, adults should maintain 2 metre distance from others, and where this is not possible avoid close face to face contact and minimise time spent within 1 metre of

others. People who live with those who are clinically extremely vulnerable or clinically vulnerable can attend the workplace. Pregnant women are in the 'clinically vulnerable' category, and are generally advised to follow the above advice, which applies to all staff in schools. Employers should conduct a risk assessment and following the Royal College of Obstetrics and Gynaecology guidance from 28 weeks of pregnancy. We continue to provide our own [Individual Risk Assessment](#) and [Guidance on Individual Risk Assessments](#) to schools.

- Further guidance was released over the bank holiday weekend which included -
 - [Face coverings in Educational Establishments](#) – key change is for year 7+ where HT have discretion over the use of face coverings in circulation spaces.
 - [School Covid-19 tests](#) – Each school will be receiving 10 tests for children who are unlikely to access other testing routes.
 - [Protective measures for after-school clubs and other out-of-school settings](#) – latest advice on how to open safely extended provision. There is now greater flexibility and an acknowledgement that it may not be possible to maintain bubbles and instead ensuring consistent groups and distancing.
 - [Free School Meals during Covid-19](#) – requirement for all pupils to have access to water and food parcels for those children not in school
 - [Contain Framework](#) – This guidance outlines the process for decision making if local lockdown is required. Where required due to data suggest a need for actions, areas will be identified as either areas of concern, enhanced support or intervention. In these cases, there will be a decision on whether the education offer in the area needs to be changed. Annex 1 outlines the tiered process that will be in place. The presumption will be that schools and settings remain open but there is a graduated approach which moves from requiring face masks in circulation spaces and rotas for pupils in secondary to closure for schools and settings to all but key workers and vulnerable pupils. In all tiers, special and AP schools remain open to all. There is specific guidance for [tier 2](#). This outlines rota systems for pupils in secondary schools and remote learning expectations. Schools are required to plan for these scenarios.
- **Examinations Update** - Following the Covid-19 closure of schools, all assessments and exams were cancelled. GCSE and A-levels exams were not sat but instead schools submitted teacher assessed grades (including consideration of mock examinations) and ranked their children from top to bottom by subject. These were sent to exam bodies who used an algorithm to produce grades. This was based upon how students have been ranked in ability, how well their school or college has performed in exams in recent years and prior attainment. The intention was that the estimated results effectively mirroring the positions of recent years. Prior to the release to A-level results on the 13th August, the government announced a "triple lock" guarantee with students receiving the highest grade out of the teacher estimated grade, an autumn written exam or a mock exam sat prior to closure, dependent on a successful appeal through a school. Mocks are operated in many different ways in schools so it is a challenging measure to use. The impact of the algorithm on results meant that nearly 40% of entries had a lower grade than teachers predicted for A-levels. It meant that talented outlier, such as the bright child in the low-achieving school, or the school that is rapidly improving, were significantly impacted. Disadvantaged pupils were also disproportionately impacted. Following significant challenge, on the 17th August, the government performed a U-turn and instead agreed that children will receive the higher of the teacher assessment or their result from the algorithm. This applies to both GCSEs and A-levels. GCSE pupils received Pupils receiving GCSE results will get their teacher assessed grade on the 20th August with the algorithm results coming the following week. No announcement has been made yet on the format or timing of the summer 2021 examinations.

- **Transport** – the [guidance for LA's on home to school transport](#) for September was released on the 11 August. In the absence of firm information, much of the guidance we had assumed would be in place and had planned accordingly.
 - Local Authorities are required to work with schools to collect information on demand. This has been challenging with schools being closed though. The guidance makes clear that *'social distancing guidelines that apply on public transport will not apply on dedicated school transport services from the autumn term. Social distancing should still be put in place within vehicles wherever possible.'*
 - Schools and Local Authorities should be promoting active travel e.g. cycling, walking, scooting following the £2bn for cycling and walking investment.
 - Local authorities must give active consideration to the impacts of increased car use on local congestion, and ensure that mitigations to minimise these impacts are implemented through their network management duty. We will be working with Highways on this.
 - Local authorities should work with schools to consider whether changing or staggering school start and finish times would reduce pressure on transport services. The guidance is however clear that 'it is likely that children and young people in different groups or bubbles will need to travel together on home to school transport so that it may not be possible for them to arrive at different times from one another'.
 - If there is still a need for additional transport capacity after all of the above measures have been considered, then local authorities should procure suitable vehicles. LAs should charge non-entitled students to use contracted at a rate equivalent to what they would pay on a public service routes.
 - For Dedicated education transport which the LA commissions (including post 16 institutions and operators who provide transport used to get to school) must do all that is reasonably practicable to maximise social distancing where possible and minimise the risk of transmission. In particular:, social distancing should be maximised within vehicles wherever it is possible, between individuals or 'bubbles' Face masks for over 11s not mandatory on dedicated school transport but recommended that LAs advise over 11s to wear on dedicated school routes. This is our intention.
 - Where social distancing / bubbles cannot be maintained, other measures in the system of controls become even more important:
 - Seating arrangements (drivers should not be expected to police these)
 - Last in first out
 - Personal travel budgets and mileage allowances are permissible with parental consent
 - A series of preventative measures will also be required on transport including operators undertaking risk assessments, cleaning regimes and assessment of driver's health.
- To outline our **local arrangements**, the following guides have been sent to parents– [Mainstream](#) / [SEND](#).
 - Full details of the [catch up premium](#) have been released. Schools' allocations will be calculated on a per pupil basis, providing each mainstream school with a total of £80 for each pupil in years reception through to 11. Special, AP and hospital schools will be provided with £240 for each place for the 2020 to 2021 academic year. This funding will be provided in 3 tranches. As the catch-up premium has been designed to mitigate the effects of the unique disruption caused by coronavirus (COVID-19), the grant will only be available for the 2020 to 2021 academic year. It will not be added to schools' baselines in calculating future years' funding allocations. Schools should use this funding for specific activities to support their pupils to catch up for lost teaching over the previous months, in line

with the guidance on [curriculum expectations for the next academic year](#). The Education Endowment foundation has released [a guide for schools](#) on how to spend the funding. Schools have the flexibility to spend their funding in the best way for their cohort and circumstances.

- **Help with technology** - The DfE has updated [guidance](#) on laptops and help with technology. For the 2020 to 2021 academic year, more laptops and tablets will be made available for disadvantaged children in certain year groups who are affected by disruption to face to face education at their school (i.e. a local lock down), or have been advised to shield because they are clinically extremely vulnerable.
- **Winter Flu Programme** - The Department for Health and Social Care (DHSC) has outlined [details](#) of its expanded winter flu programme and the nasal spray flu vaccination for autumn 2020. It is likely that flu and COVID-19 will both be circulating at the same time which means that it is more important than ever this year to help protect against flu. The scheme has been extended to include all school year groups up to and including year 7.

NEW CHALLENGES AND ACTIVITY

- **Early Years** - The number of children attending early years settings have decreased in line with normal holiday variations but the position remains positive. We continue to collect data and supporting all child minders and early years settings to open in September as per normal.
- **School test and trace** - We continue to monitor the weekly local public health data reporting to help inform schools of position around Covid-19 including pillar 2 testing. The test and trace process continues to operate well. We have seen higher rates of suspected symptoms in line with increasing pupil numbers but very low reported cases of covid-19 in either staff or pupils. There have been a low number of suspected and confirmed cases in early years setting during the summer holidays.
 - We have produced a guide for schools on the [test and trace process](#) to ensure that cases are reported appropriately.
- **Buildings** - There have been a number of issues around building that may impair the ability for schools to open in September. Our capital team is working hard with schools to address concerns. Issues include a fire at Duxford primary has seen around half of the teaching accommodation damaged beyond repair. We are currently working with insurers and temporary accommodation has been ordered for the site. We have also had damage from a lightning strike and flooding from roofs. A capital bid for maintenance will be made in Cambridgeshire to address some of these issues
- **School full opening** - The LA expectation remains for full opening in September. This means 190 days of education for maintained schools. *The Schools Minister has stated that it is “unacceptable for schools to shorten their working week when it is not a direct action to support and enhance their pupils’ education. Schools should organise the school day and school week in the best interest of their pupil cohort, to provide them with a full-time education suitable to their age, aptitude and ability.* Reception pupils will need support and careful induction. Parents are entitled to access a full education for September however statutory requirement for attendance does not apply until the term after they are 5. There will be no delay unless agreed formally. However, our view in the LA is that delivering protective measures and ensuring a safe opening may mean a phased start for year groups – this ideally should be within the first week of opening.
 - To reassure parents, we have produced a [helpful guide to support pupils as they transition back into formal education](#). In it we have given clear information on some of the common things parents ask us about every year,

such as transport, attendance, free school meals, etc. We have also made a point of clarifying the Test & Trace process and made clear our expectation on parents to help protect our school staff.

RECOVERY ACTIVITIES

- We have reviewed and agreed risk assessments for all maintained schools. They have been shared with unions.
- A briefing was held with 280 attendees from schools on the updated guidance and an overview of LA advice to reopening.

DECISIONS MADE SINCE LAST REPORTING PERIOD

None

NEW FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS SINCE LAST REPORTING PERIOD

- Following the release of guidance on home to school transport, the combined authority has been allocated £678k to support the additional cost of transport resulting from the need to introduce preventative and protective measures. The allocation of this funding is currently being considered.
- In July, the government announced the Dedicated Schools Grant provisional allocations for 2021/22. As part of a £14.4bn increase over three years, a further £2.2bn was added to the £2.6 billion announced in 2020-21. The increase has seen per-pupil funding rising to £4,000 per primary place and £5,150 for secondary place. Extra funding for small and remote schools will increase by over 60 per cent, reflecting the financial challenges that these schools can face. For 2021 to 2022, every school will attract at least 2% more funding per pupil for their pupil-led funding. There has also been an increase in high needs block funding to support SEND and including, by a minimum of 8%. We are currently reviewing the funding allocations in light of a number of grants being mainstream and will report further in the autumn. The Institute for Fiscal Studies have announced that the increases will still leave schools with less in real terms than they had a decade ago.

WORKFORCE CHANGES

- There are no critical issues currently with staff absence although the workforce has worked extended hours for nearly a 3 month period. Our capacity for business as normal activity is impaired.

COMMUNICATIONS

- We have responded to questions around A-level and GCSE results.
- There have been several media interviews around reopening and transport arrangements.

Annex 1 – Contain Framework – Education Tiers in response to Local Lockdown

Tier 1

- The default position for areas in national government intervention is that education and childcare settings will remain open. An area moving into national intervention with restrictions short of education and childcare closure is described as 'tier 1'. There are no changes to childcare, and the only difference in education settings is that where pupils in year 7 and above are educated, face coverings should be worn by adults and pupils when moving around the premises, outside of classrooms, such as in corridors and communal areas where social distancing cannot easily be maintained.
- All nurseries, childminders, schools, colleges and other educational establishments should remain open and continue to allow all their children and young people to attend, on site, with no other restrictions in place.

Tier 2

- Early years settings, primary schools and alternative provision (AP) providers, special schools and other specialist settings will continue to allow all children/pupils to attend on site.
- Secondary schools move to a rota model, combining on-site provision with remote education. They continue to allow full-time attendance on site to vulnerable children and young people and the children of critical workers. All other pupils should not attend on site except for their rota time. Further education (FE) providers should adopt similar principles with discretion to decide on a model that limits numbers on site but works for each individual setting.
- In all areas of national government intervention, education settings where pupils in year 7 and above are educated, face coverings should be worn by adults and pupils when moving around the premises, outside of classrooms, such as in corridors and communal areas where social distancing cannot easily be maintained.

Tier 3

- Childcare, nurseries, primary schools, AP, special schools and other specialist settings will continue to allow all children/pupils to attend on site.
- Secondary schools, FE colleges and other educational establishments would allow full-time on-site provision only to vulnerable children, the children of critical workers and selected year groups (to be identified by Department for Education). Other pupils should not attend on site. Remote education to be provided for all other pupils.
- In all areas of national government intervention, education settings where pupils in year 7 and above are educated, face coverings should be worn by adults and pupils when moving around the premises, outside of classrooms, such as in corridors and communal areas where social distancing cannot easily be maintained.

Tier 4

- All nurseries, childminders, mainstream schools, colleges and other educational establishments allow full-time attendance on site only to our priority groups: vulnerable children and the children of critical workers. All other pupils should not attend on site. AP, special schools and other specialist settings will allow for full-time on-site attendance of all pupils. Remote education to be provided for all other pupils.
- In all areas of national government intervention, education settings where pupils in year 7 and above are educated, face coverings should be worn by adults and pupils when moving around the premises, outside of classrooms, such as in corridors and communal areas where social distancing cannot easily be maintained.

