

Guidance document to support schools informing their approach to social distancing

CONTENTS:

1. Aims
2. Rationale
3. Official advice/sources of information
4. Education of Children
5. Staff induction
6. World Health Organisation protection guidance / washing of hands
7. Entry in and out of school
8. Ratios of staff
9. Use of school building
10. Class sizes
11. School office
12. Assemblies
13. In class
14. Toileting
15. Playtime
16. Lunchtime
17. Young Children
18. First aid
19. Precautions
20. Risk Assessments
21. Special schools, pupil referral unit and focused provision
22. Health considerations – pupils and staff
23. Sharing and awareness of this guidance.

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-education-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. **OR** Children can be briefed before they attend school and on the first session in 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.

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 the method shown below (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)

Parents will be told to ensure that they remain 2metres apart from all other people. Signage, floor markings and daily staff presence will be available to remind parents. EYFS/KS1 parents will be allowed onto the school site in a staggered way to different entrance/exit points. KS2 parents will be encouraged not to enter the site. Only one parent per family to enter the school site.

We will be using a one way system- in through the main gates and out through Grafton gate. Schools are to consider having different entry/exit times in to the school site, to alleviate pressure on main entrances. This will be Red bubbles- 8.45am and 3.15pm, Blue bubbles 9am-3.30pm and yellow bubbles 9.15-3.45pm. Parents will drop off/collect children from different doors around the school building.

8.1 Ratios of staff: Leaders will ensure that the minimum but correct number of staff are in attendance every day to maintain an appropriate ratio with pupils. EYFS/KS1 1:6 and KS2 1:9. 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).

9.1 Use of school building:

In corridors, children and staff walk on the left-hand side of the corridor according to the direction of travel. Electrical tape indicates two metre distances on the floor. Movement around the school is limited and all bubbles use their nearest entry/exit points to access outside.

Fire evacuation procedures have been reviewed to ensure they still function safely in the light of any changes made and social distancing guidelines. A fire drill will take place during the first week of pupil return.

The use of staffrooms has been reviewed in the light of social distancing, health and hygiene. Two facilities are available and staff breaks are staggered.

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: 6 pupils in EYFS/KS1 and 9 pupils in KS2. 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:

The office could be open with reduced hours (1.30pm) but will only allow 1 parent into the foyer at a time and the two metre rule will be implemented for queueing. Tape on the floor will indicate the distance visitors must stand back from the counter.

The preferred method of contact for parents will be emails via contact.us@causewaygreen.sandwell.sch.uk telephone calls during office opening hours and postal correspondence will continue to be responded to. Requests for forms will be undertaken via email and payment will be taken through electronic systems (where available).

12.1 Assemblies: there should be no assemblies held at this time in communal halls.

13.1 In class: all desks should be two metres apart. 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.

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. Young children will be supervised with this. They must wash their hands thoroughly using the method shown above.

15.1 Playtime:

No physical games are allowed that may involve physical contact. Children can sit within their usual educational group but must maintain the two metres distance. Entry in and out of the building should be staggered and children line up two metres apart. Children *should* move to their line upon instruction from the teachers so that it is controlled and the two metre distance can be maintained when numerous children move. Children must maintain the distance when they enter the school.

16.1 Lunchtime: sandwiches only in classrooms to prevent queueing.

- Children wait outside and not partake in physical games that may involve contact during lunch.
- lunch times will be staggered so fewer children are playing in the same area at once

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, (a separate risk assessment will be undertaken for these pupils) 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. Minor injuries may be able to be self-treated, under supervision, particularly by older children. 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.

Additional sanitizer dispensers will be available around school/classrooms where needed to enable regular cleaning of hands.

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:

In line with government guidance, school has carried out a risk assessment before opening. All staff have been consulted and the final document shared with all staff. 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.

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).