

COVID-19 – Advice from Billington Safety Services and other sources and Guidance sources for schools

Firstly, it goes without saying that where persons are displaying any symptoms of COVID-19, they must not enter the school and should isolate themselves and their family for 14 days. Where persons live alone, self-isolation of 7 days should take place.

DfE COVID-19: guidance for educational settings (updated 16 March 2020)

All schools should have read the following guidance and have implemented arrangements for dealing with the current situation; it is recommended that the website is visited at least daily as the guidance is updated following COBRA meetings and as other information becomes available.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-to-educational-settings-about-covid-19/guidance-to-educational-settings-about-covid-19#limiting-spread-of-coronavirus-covid-19-in-educational-settings>

There is no requirement for a specific risk assessment for COVID-19, in much the same way that you would not have a risk assessment for norovirus, threadworms, common colds or head lice. The school should have a Biological Hazards/Infection Control risk assessment, Cleaning risk assessment (where employed by the school), Caretaking/Site Services Activities risk assessment and other risk assessments where issues arising from the coronavirus are covered as general good practice. However, the school may want to document any procedures that have been implemented specifically to 'contain' coronavirus.

Cleaning and waste guidance

The Responsible Person should read the following guidance and ensure that relevant staff (caretaker, cleaners, lunchtime supervisors, etc.) are aware of its content; in addition, COSHH assessments for new cleaning products must be shared with these members of staff.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-decontamination-in-non-healthcare-settings/covid-19-decontamination-in-non-healthcare-settings>

The above guidance recommends using:

- use either a combined detergent disinfectant solution at a dilution of 1,000 parts per million available chlorine, or
- a household detergent followed by disinfection (1000 ppm av.cl.). Follow manufacturer's instructions for dilution, application and contact times for all detergents and disinfectants, or
- if an alternative disinfectant is used within the organisation, this should be checked and ensure that it is effective against enveloped viruses

Milton® Sterilising Fluid is one of the disinfectants that PHE has previously recommended to schools for decontamination following outbreaks of norovirus and therefore, as it contains 1000 ppm available chlorine, should be effective in cleaning/decontamination for COVID-19; to this end, the COSHH portal now has the material safety data sheet and corresponding generic COSHH assessment uploaded.

It is strongly recommended that protective gloves are worn when using this product and where spilled. The minimum PPE to be worn for cleaning an area where a person with possible or confirmed coronavirus (COVID-19) has been is disposable gloves and an apron. Hands should be washed with soap and water for 20 seconds after all PPE has been removed.

Hygiene/Infection Control

We have received a number of queries regarding pupils' bringing their own hand gel into school, the Government have clearly stated that handwashing with soap and water or hand gel should be in place.

Therefore, as long as schools have suitable soap and warm/hot water in place, there should be no need for pupils' to bring their own hand gel into school – unless they are medically vulnerable and the use of this is supervised.

The school's Biological Hazards/Infection Control risk assessment for primary schools may state that handwashing will be supervised for specific settings/years; this is a measure that should be in place year-round and therefore no amendments are required to the assessment.

Pregnant and Vulnerable Workers

Advice regarding pregnant workers changes daily, as of the briefing by the Prime Minister on 16 March 2020, pregnant workers are now considered to be 'at risk' and Headteachers are advised to allow 'working from home' where possible; within a school environment, this may not be achievable and therefore the risk assessment for the individual should be updated to reflect control measures that could be implemented such as:

- limited contact with pupils and others
- distancing away from pupils and others
- access to handwashing facilities and frequent use of these
- removal from first aid duties, where relevant.

Vulnerable workers may also require the above measures implemented, dependent on their risk level, and this should be documented

Non-essential visitors to school

Ofsted have agreed to defer inspections of schools at the current time due to coronavirus and, therefore, as social distancing and working from home are key in the current phase of the government's action plan for dealing with the coronavirus outbreak, it is recommended that all non-essential visitors to schools for meetings such as parents and service providers such as finance, HR, etc. and events such as parents' evening, book fairs, etc. are cancelled. This will lower the risk of potential transmission between the school and visitor(s) and vice versa.

Other sources of guidance

- Asthma UK - <https://www.asthma.org.uk/advice/triggers/coronavirus-covid-19/>
- British Heart Foundation - <https://www.bhf.org.uk/information-support/heart-matters-magazine/news/coronavirus%20and%20your%20health>
- Diabetes UK - https://www.diabetes.org.uk/about_us/news/coronavirus
- NHS - <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/>
- TES - <https://www.tes.com/>