

School/Trust Name
Opening schools for more children and young people: Planning checklist

In the week beginning 11 May, the Department for Education published a number of guidance papers to support education and childcare settings in England to prepare for opening for more children and young people. These include:

- [a document setting out the overarching aims and principles of this next phase, and the actions schools and colleges need to take](#)
- [information for parents and carers](#)
- [guidance on implementing protective measures when more pupils are in school or college](#)
- [an initial planning framework](#)

This planning checklist is intended to supplement these government documents. It takes the DfE’s initial planning framework as its starting point, adds further suggested actions, and provides links to sources of additional information and support. It is designed to help schools, colleges and trusts to consider risks and trigger points, and to plan measures to mitigate these as much as possible.

Inevitably, any generic checklist cannot anticipate specific risks in every institution. We hope, however, that this will serve as a useful starting point for an organisation’s own planning, or as a checklist against which organisations can compare their existing risk assessments.

[You may also find it useful to read ASCL’s Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) Guidance for School and College Leaders guidance published in March 2020, which includes suggested actions in response to specific issues and control measures.](#)

Theme	Suggested actions from DfE (see initial planning framework, published 12 May 2020)	Additional actions suggested by ASCL, with links to sources of further support	Task Owner	Completed
Strategic scenario planning		Work with staff to review and update your health and safety plan, and associated risk assessments, to reflect public health requirements, emergency management and first aid provision. Consider plans based on re-opening partially or fully as appropriate and depending on timing. Team ASCL Planning Forward Webinar 13 May 2020 Re-opening of schools and colleges - questions from members		
Children and parents				
Pupil numbers	Identify likely numbers of pupils returning and agree required staffing resource and approach and liaise with your local authority on your plans.			
	In special schools, specialist post-16 and hospital schools only, agree which additional pupils will return irrespective of year groups to achieve a phased return.			
Communication plan	Plan content and timing of communications to parents and pupils (including discussing attendance expectations and other specific things that parents should do to help prepare returning pupils, for example, arrangements for drop-off/collection).			
Attendance registration	Plan to resume taking attendance registers and continuing to complete the online educational setting status form to provide daily updates on how many children and staff are in school.	Clearly establish which children are due to come on-site each day/week Attendance calls - this is best assigned to the same group/team of staff (bearing in mind the possibility of rotas operating) who may be allocated specific categories of pupils – relationship and consistency are important factors. Plan arrangements for non-attendees who should be in, for example, a phone call home Check how absences should be recorded/coded		
Unexpected arrivals		Have a process in place for managing pupils/students who arrive unexpectedly		
Critical workers and vulnerable pupils	Plan how children of critical workers and vulnerable children will be accommodated alongside returning year groups and encourage attendance (unless they are extremely clinically vulnerable and shielding, or medical advice or further guidance suggests they should not attend).			

Support	Agree what returning support is available for vulnerable and/or disadvantaged children (including any dual-registered students) and put in place provision for the return of pupils with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) in conjunction with families and other agencies and engage with partners who will help to provide that support, for example, local authorities.			
Safeguarding	Agree what safeguarding provision is needed in school to support returning children (e.g. where new issues have arisen, or existing ones escalated) and consider any necessary changes and referrals as more children return to school, including those with problems accessing online offers. Check for revised protocols from your local authority and update safeguarding policy if necessary.	Review welfare support guidance, policy and timetabling for coverage. Provide sign posting information to agencies for support and information on bereavement Be prepared for increased disclosures to DSL In the Team ASCL webinar Barry Carpenter, CBE, Professor of Mental Health in Education at Oxford Brookes University and Mathew Carpenter, Principal, Baxter College refer to a Recovery Curriculum based on 5 Levers (links below). Refresh where to get help posters all around school for when students return and place them in prominent places		
		Team ASCL supporting vulnerable children webinar 6 May 2020 https://www.evidenceforlearning.net/recoverycurriculum/		
Behaviour policy	Update behaviour policies to reflect the new rules and routines necessary to reduce risk in your setting and agree how to communicate this to school staff, students and parents and review uniform expectations.			
Catering	Work with your catering supplier to ensure meals are available for all children in school. Also, consider your arrangements for those year groups still out of school and eligible for benefits related free school meals.			
Wrap around care	Agree whether breakfast clubs, lunch clubs and after-school clubs can operate (in line with the implementing protective measures in education and childcare settings guidance), and under what terms.			
Individual support		Individual support plans are in place for each child who may be at increased risk or has additional needs		
Staff (teachers, support staff and non-teaching staff)				
Communication	Decide content and timing of staff communication(s) including if bringing staff in in advance of pupils returning is necessary.	Provide staff who will be onsite with a briefing about how school will operate and what measures will be in place, examples include: Social distancing plans and measures Personal hygiene Monitoring of symptoms What to do if a colleague or pupil is unwell Dedicated first aiders and safeguarding leads Revisions to emergency plans Plan to supervise arrivals and departures, break and lunchtimes (include details for managing late/early arrivals and departures) Plan a system for providing feedback and relief for staff to facilitate breaks and absence		
Staffing levels	Consider options if necessary staffing levels can't be maintained (including school leaders and key staff like designated safeguarding leads and first aid providers).	Plan and agree who is working onsite and offsite; timetable allocations and duties. Consider what re-timetabling has to be done. Provide staff with details of changes to duties.		
Vulnerable staff	Identify staff who can't return to school at this point (for example, those who are extremely clinically vulnerable or those who are clinically vulnerable or living with someone who is extremely clinically vulnerable and stringent social distancing cannot be adhered to on site) and how they can work from home (for example, supporting remote education).	Consider whether individual return to work assessments are required, including new or revised personal risk assessments Consider individual requirements and Government guidelines as to when and whether they are they able to return when schools open		
Flexible working	Agree any flexible working arrangements needed to support any changes to your usual patterns (for example, staggered start/end times).			
Workload	Agree staff workload expectations (including for leaders).			

Training	Decide what staff training (either delivered remotely or in school) is needed to implement any changes the school plans to make (for example, risk management, curriculum, behaviour, safeguarding).			
Wellbeing and welfare	Put in place measures to check on staff wellbeing (including for leaders).	<p>Induction for new staff joining</p> <p>Impact on mental health - consider options available to support e.g staff welfare support, occupational health referral and signposting information and support</p> <p>Reporting systems for monitoring and responding to staff absence</p> <p>Include appropriate ongoing adjustments to application of sickness absence policies to reflect Covid-19 related absences/issues.</p> <p>Consider the approach to handling cases of staff subject to any ongoing/pre-existing processes under sickness absence, capability or disciplinary policies.</p>		
		For advice on wellbeing and mental health refer to the ASCL Team Webinar 22 April		
		ACAS Guidance		
		HSE Guidance: Statutory requirements on an employer around home workers		
Protective measures and hygiene				
Guidance	Read the guidance on implementing protective measures in education and childcare settings and agree how this will be implemented in your school, including agreeing on any necessary updated health and safety policy and risk assessments.			
Risk management	Decide the physical and organisational structures needed to limit risks and limit movement around the building(s) (for example, classroom layouts, entry and exit points, staggered starts and break times, class sizes, lunch queues, use of communal staff areas). Agree how safety measures and messages will be implemented and displayed around school.	<p>Stocks in place or ordered</p> <p>Hand sanitiser or soap in place in classrooms, bathrooms, restaurant and communal areas i.e. staff room, reception</p> <p>Posters and signage promoting good hygiene and social distancing practices</p>		
Cleaning	Decide what an enhanced cleaning schedule looks like and how it will be implemented in your school (for example, how often, when/if an additional clean is necessary) and how you will ensure sufficiency of supplies.			
Hygiene	Decide the approach to enhance hygiene (for example, toilet use, hand washing) and decide on policy related to usually shared items (for example, books, toys, practical equipment).			
Illness	Plan the school level response should someone fall ill on site (in line with relevant government guidance).			
PPE	Make arrangements for the very small number of cases where personal protective equipment (PPE) supplies will be needed: if your staff provide intimate care for any children or young people and for cases where a child becomes unwell with symptoms of coronavirus while in their setting and needs direct personal care until they can return home.			
Medical and first aid support		<p>If high need or demand, consider options available for triaging response to welfare needs</p> <p>Options for abiding with social distancing policy</p> <p>Check existing spaces used for medical and first aid support are appropriate</p> <p>PPE</p> <p>Check that first aid and medical training certificates have not expired</p> <p>Check medical and support plans, including equipment and medication</p>		
Classrooms and workshops		<p>Classrooms and practical workshops laid out so that physical distancing of at least 2m can occur, including room for staff to move around the room</p> <p>Consider ventilation and opening windows</p> <p>Provide social distancing and any revised H&S regulations in all practical areas.</p> <p>Ensure all students and staff wear normal workshop PPE clothing in practical areas</p>		

Breaktimes		Break times could be staggered with a defined maximum of pupils allowed out at the same time; consider keeping same grouping to reduce contacts. There are potential supervision implications, particularly for lunch break, depending on whether they are sitting inside to each/in the dining hall/classrooms, queuing implications and how to rota catering staff for different times.		
Timetabling		Plan supervision and rota to encourage social distancing		
Pupil wellbeing				
Wellbeing	Plan likely mental health, pastoral or wider wellbeing support for children returning to school (for example, bereavement support) and discuss with your local authority what wider support services are available. Work with your local authority to secure services for additional support and early help where possible (for example, around anxiety, mental health, behaviour, social care, or changes to mobility), and consider how these might apply to pupils and students who were not previously affected.	DfE guidance: Supporting pupils' wellbeing		
Clothing		Consider if it is appropriate to notify staff and parents sensitively to change/wash clothes daily		
Learning				
Provision	Agree what learning is appropriate (including the relationship between face-to-face and remote education), for example, identify curriculum priorities, agree revised expectations and required adjustments in practical lessons, and any approaches to 'catch up' support.	<p>It is likely that schools will continue to have significant numbers of pupils continuing to learn remotely. Care will need to be taken to ensure the content covered at home and in school is coherent and appropriately sequenced.</p> <p>Depending on the number of children being educated on site, and the logistical challenges schools face, it may be prudent to continue to view the remote curriculum as the primary means of curriculum delivery. It will be important to continue think carefully about the workload of teachers, some of whom may be responsible for teaching/supervising pupils on site as well as designing the remote curriculum.</p> <p>It is likely that pupils onsite will welcome the opportunity for face-to-face interaction with teachers. It will also be important to continue to consider how to provide opportunities for interaction and feedback for those pupils who won't be on site.</p> <p>Schools might understandably want to identify gaps in pupils' learning but they should be cautious and sensitive in how they do this. Low stakes quizzes might be helpful in some circumstances. Leaders should work with curriculum leaders and teachers to plan when and how best to do do this sort of work in their own subjects and context.</p> <p>Schools should continue to communicate with parents about how they are teaching the curriculum, helping to manage expectations and sharing advice with parents about how they can support their children. Aspects of previous ASCL guidance on remote learning will continue to be applicable during this time.</p>		
		https://www.ascl.org.uk/ASCL/media/ASCL/Help%20and%20advice/Leadership%20and%20governance/Coronavirus-Leading-learning-during-coronavirus-school-and-college-closures.pdf		
EHCPs	Work with your local authority or trust (and where applicable NHS Clinical Commissioning Group) and families to identify what provision can be reasonably provided for in line with education, health and care (EHC) plans.			
Remote learning	Agree ongoing learning offer for eligible pupils who can't attend school, as well as offer for those that continue to be out of school.	https://www.ascl.org.uk/ASCL/media/ASCL/Help%20and%20advice/Leadership%20and%20governance/CV-Feedback-from-members-on-how-they-are-leading-remote-learning.pdf		
		https://www.ascl.org.uk/ASCL/media/ASCL/Help%20and%20advice/Leadership%20and%20governance/ASCL-What-are-the-best-bets-of-remote-learning.pdf		
Vulnerable/priority pupils	Agree ongoing approach for learning offer for vulnerable children and children of critical workers who are in school but not in the returning year groups.	Team ASCL Webinar on supporting vulnerable children 6 May 2020		
Centre based assessment		Team ASCL Webinar with Duncan Baldwin on centre-assessed grading, plus presentation 15 May 2020		

PE and dance curriculum		Measures to consider: Social distancing and strict rules around non-contact No contact sports No common surface touching activities Changing rooms could be taped in line with social distancing guidance advised measurements for changing Pupils could come dressed in PE clothing on an allocated day		
Other considerations				
Other providers	Work with other school based-provision as necessary (for example, nursery, SEN unit) to ensure policies are aligned where they need to be.			
Building works	Agree approach to any scheduled or ongoing building works.			
Supplier arrangements	Plan arrangements with your suppliers and check they are following appropriate social distancing and hygiene measures (for example, food suppliers, grounds maintenance, transport providers), including when in school.			
Protected characteristics	Ensure you have considered the impact on staff and pupils with protected characteristics, including race and disability, in developing your approach.			
Resources for teaching and learning		Departments to request resources Additional capacity may be required to support admin team Check whether additional resources are required so as to not touch/share resources		
Behaviour and conduct		Consider suitable adjustments to application of sanctions/processes to reflect staffing capacity, social distancing and minimize need for face to face meetings with parents/parents to make journeys to school. Consider adjusting policies/processes to include Covid-19 related rules/expectations (e.g. social distancing) and relevant sanctions and mechanisms for communicating this clearly to all stakeholders.		
Organisation				
School/college day		Examples to consider: Staggered timings i.e. start to the day, break and lunchtimes, end of the day – consider implications for families with more than one child or dropping off at more than one school Bus/transport timings Phasing the day, focus on groups and their movement		
Briefing staff		Consider necessary frequency Location – consider IT options, for example, MS Teams allows meetings to be recorded and shared with those not able to attend		
Communication with parents/carers and all relevant stakeholders, including Governors, trustees, employers, contractors, cleaners, caterers, etc		Review reporting dates and plans for parent meetings and information evening events Consider if online options are possible Agree regular updates and both the format and timings of these		
Events and school trips		You may be wise to consider whether there should be no external trips in Term 1 of 2020-21. If considering trips further forward in term 2 or beyond carefully consider travel and movement guidance, financial planning, risk assessment and insurance Keep abreast of exam board guidance about fieldwork assessment Consider ways of adapting some of the 'community' or 'fun' events to lighten the mood eg partially or fully virtual debates, Arts Week		
Assemblies		Examples to consider: keep numbers lower, bi-weekly or tri-weekly, alternating groups each week, recorded options which could be streamed for home learners Assess and plan for social distancing in the hall, agree capacity		

Duties		Points to consider: Positive and reassuring presence Think about locations Socially distancing labels for social spaces Distance between benches and seating		
Open evenings and recruitment events		Consider online open evenings and recruitment events		
Celebrations for Class of 2020		Consider online graduation events		
Transition				
September intake, Primary to Secondary, Infant to Middle transition		Consider providing a task/activity for after May half-term Telephone meetings with teacher Learning support meetings with schools Agreed statement with other schools on forming rationale for putting classes together - this maybe an area of concern this year for parents/carers worried about who their child is grouped with Welcome via video message Virtual tours of school Request Q&A from students and parents		
Year 9 to 10 or KS3/KS4 transition		Positive start to their GCSE Consider induction work in July Consider appropriate timing for Year 9 to start their Year 10 timetable depending on when they return		
Transition Year 11 to 12		Consider whether a summer school is allowed, feasible and/or required. Some schools/trusts have advised us that they acknowledge that families (all staff and parents) may need the summer to re-set/reacquaint with each other and their wider social networks, also considering wellbeing/mental health aspects too. Earlier start for vulnerable pupils External candidates' induction Pre-reading assessments For adult learners, consider the same measures as for 16 years and under and ensure adult learners are aware of all social distancing and safety measures in place in a setting before they return to learning and that they agree to adhere to them when on site.		
Parents and carers				
Parents and carers		Plan and communicate the process for parents and carers who want to see members of staff. Consider there may be an initial increase when their child returns to school. Check if measures are required to protect reception staff, for example, screen protection Consider what and whether wrap-around care is possible, bearing in mind staffing and also changed family needs (more parents working from home but fewer grandparents to help)		

Communicating plans and arrangements		<p>Notify families about the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Update on plans for distance learning for those not in school How you will be communicating information Where their child will need to go on day 1 and at what time Plans for drop offs and picking up, keeping to a minimum number of people coming onsite School hours Rota arrangements if applicable Who will be onsite and supporting their child That they must notify of changes in situations i.e. sickness Ask them to update their contact information for any changes The importance of their child staying at home if they are unwell Meal arrangements, for example, will they need to bring packed lunches or lunch money - another transfer risk, where to leave it - often parents take it to office, but some children give to teacher. 		
Financial difficulties		<p>Some families will be in financially difficult situations and consider what support can be offered where it is affecting their ability to access education</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Remind families of the eligibility and process for claiming free school meals Remind students who have financial difficulties of the bursaries available 		
Operational activities				
Cleaning resources		<p>Check stock of essential cleaning supplies.</p> <p>Consider if additional measures need to continue, for example, additional frequency of cleaning touch points.</p>		
Social distancing communication		<p>Plan for key transition areas, for example, staff room, hallways and staircases.</p> <p>Measures could include labels, signage, tape, one-way systems.</p>		
Delivery capacity assessment		<p>Under social distancing rules, what can each classroom take?</p> <p>How many classes/rooms does this affect?</p>		
Dining hall/restaurant		<p>Consider options and requirements, such as: layout for social distancing, barriers, signage and PPE</p>		
Property and transport				
Site		<p>Refer to the DfE Managing school premises, which are partially open, during the coronavirus outbreak</p> <p>Undertake a site inspection and property management checklist</p> <p>Plan movement/storage of furniture and equipment to allow social distancing</p> <p>Refer to the DfE Managing school premises, which are partially open, during the coronavirus outbreak guidance (link above), which advises to review arrangements for: hot and cold water systems, gas safety, fire safety, kitchen equipment, security including access control and intruder alarms systems and ventilation and includes guidance on re-opening after a lengthy closure.</p> <p>Consider arrangements for deliveries</p>		
Contractors		<p>Contact and brief cleaning, maintenance and other contractors on health and safety requirements, visitor sign in processes and additional measures</p>		
Cleaning		<p>Schedule cleaning and check that supplies are in place</p>		
Transport		<p>School transport in place as needed and social distancing measures planned and communicated</p> <p>Consider the transport challenges around flexing and part-time timetables, if pupils are in school for half-days or a later start time, will they be able safely travel to and from school?</p>		
Visitors		<p>Only essential visitors on site²</p> <p>Ensure your visitors process is clear</p> <p>Registration to ensure contact tracing</p> <p>Ways to manage congestion and distancing – potentially one in one out and floor markings for where to stand</p> <p>Signage at the front gate/entrance/car park/barriers²</p>		
Financial planning		<p>Financial support for education, early years and childrens social care</p> <p>Excel template ASCL published to help schools quantify and record additional COVID-19 related costs</p>		

		DfE COVID-19 Reducing burdens on educational and care settings guidance		
Internal audit		Coronavirus (COVID-19): Guidance on remote internal audit		
HR tracking		Track staff groups i.e. those who are unwell, shielding and in self-isolation. Need to differentiate between absence related to COVID and other absences. Ensure robust audit trail of all support provided for in cases of staff absence Regular reporting of staff absence figures Revisions to work plans and risk assessments Also consider staff returning to work from maternity or long term sickness leave		
Contact tracing (if it is required)		Maintaining attendance and visitor records to facilitate identification dates/times for all individuals who are/have been on site.		

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