

School Outbreak Plan Template

1. Purpose

The outbreak plan template for schools aims to guide schools in the actions which they need plan for to respond to either a local outbreak of COVID-19 (including variants of concern) or an outbreak in their setting.

There is a caveat that further guidance to support Directors of Public Health in managing outbreaks in education and childcare settings is to be published although no date for publication has been provided. The areas covered in this outbreak plan template are taken from the most current guidance and therefore it is likely that many of the areas covered will be the same or similar to those included here.

Further Public Health England may produce an outbreak plan template and that would then supersede this document.

2. Context

Actions for schools during the coronavirus outbreak schools guidance at step 4 (last updated 19th July)

Link: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/actions-for-schools-during-the-coronavirus-outbreak>

The preventative measures which schools need to maintain are outlined and covered in this guidance. Schools will still require a current risk assessment and proportionate control measures including good hand hygiene, good respiratory hygiene, environmental cleaning, good ventilation and the management of cases and contacts in line with current public health advice.

In addition, if there is an outbreak of coronavirus in school then some additional measures which may be advised on a temporary basis in an outbreak situation. These measures are reflected in this template.

Contingency framework: education and childcare settings (last updated 25th June 2021)

Link: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-local-restrictions-in-education-and-childcare-settings/contingency-framework-education-and-childcare-settings>

The contingency framework describes the principles of managing local outbreaks of COVID-19 (including responding to variants of concern) in education and childcare settings and sets out that local authorities, directors of public health (DsPH) and PHE health protection teams (HPTs) are responsible for managing localised outbreaks and that they play an important role in providing support and advice to education and childcare settings. The measures described in the contingency framework are reflected in this template.

3. Outbreak definition

A standard outbreak definition is two or more confirmed COVID-19 cases associated with the setting with an onset of illness in the last 14 days and:

- where the cases are likely to have been exposed to each other using the close contact definition (within 2m for more than 15minutes, within 1m for 1minute, within 1m and face to face for any amount of time, shared a small vehicle for any amount of time)

Or

- where there is no sustained community transmission

4. Outbreak assessment

An assessment of an outbreak is undertaken by working with public health who will advise on public health actions and this assessment is made taking into account the current position regarding COVID-19 in the population.

5. Outbreak Management Plan Template

All education and childcare settings should have outbreak management plans outlining how they would operate if any of the measures described below were recommended for their setting or area.

This includes how they would ensure every child, pupil or student receives the quantity and quality of education and care to which they are normally entitled.

Public Health Actions to be included:

1) Prevention measures:

Review the current COVID-19 risk assessment and ensure that all prevention measures are fully implemented. Where needed seek advice from your health and safety advisor.

2) Bubbles

Bubbles may need to be reintroduced and please plan for how these would be reinstated for each of your classes and/or year groups in school.

3) Face coverings

Face coverings may need to be reintroduced for staff (all schools) and students (secondary age pupils/schools and colleges, and as previously there will be reasonable exemptions for their use.

This may include face coverings in communal areas (for pupils, students and staff) and/or classrooms (for both pupils, students and staff).

Please refer to the section covering face coverings in your current risk assessment.

4) Testing:

Increased testing may be advised this may include:

Increased use of home testing by staff (all schools) and pupils and students (secondary age pupils/schools and colleges).

In accordance with the testing guidance in the current risk assessment schools may be advised to:

Request more frequent use of home LFD testing by some staff (all schools) and pupils and students (secondary age pupils/schools and colleges) for a specified period, for example 7 days.

Please refer to the section covering testing in your current risk assessment.

And/or

Request the use of home PCR testing by some staff (all schools) and some pupils (all schools) by accessing testing via NHS 119.

And/or

There may be a requirement for asymptomatic testing to take place at school. This may include scaling up the asymptomatic test site retained at school, the reintroduction of an asymptomatic test site or setting up a new asymptomatic test site. This would be agreed with the school and support would be available from DCC.

5) Shielding

Should shielding be reintroduced by national government then those on the shielded patient list should follow national guidance. Shielded pupils will be required to learn remotely from home. Shielded staff will be required to work from home.

6) Other activities

A range of activities may be paused or restricted during an outbreak including educational visits, residential educational visits, open days, transition days, parental attendance, performances and use of the school premises by other organisations.

7) Contact tracing

Contact tracing may be reinstated and in this situation South Tyneside Council will work with schools to ascertain the contacts of cases during their infectious period and will provide a letter for schools to share with identified contacts advising the contact to seek a PCR test and where not exempt, to self-isolate.

For primary school age pupils the whole class could be considered contacts of a case.

For secondary school age pupils contacts would usually be those pupils/staff who meet the standard contact tracing definition which is a person who has been within 2m for more than 15 minutes, within 1m for 1 minute, within 1m and face to face for any amount of time, shared a small vehicle for any amount of time during the infectious period for the case.

8) Attendance restrictions

Settings should make sure their outbreak management plans cover the possibility they are advised to limit attendance, although this would be a measure of last resort.

High-quality remote education should be provided for all pupils or students not attending.

In all circumstances, priority should continue to be given to vulnerable children and young people and children of critical workers to attend to their normal timetables.

Early years settings

If attendance restrictions are needed, vulnerable children and children of critical workers should be allowed to attend.

Primary schools

If some attendance restrictions are needed, all vulnerable children, children of critical workers, children in reception, year 1 and year 2 should still be allowed to attend.

If, by exception, attendance is restricted further, vulnerable children and children of critical workers should still be allowed to attend.

Secondary schools

If some attendance restrictions are needed, all vulnerable children and young people, children of critical workers, pupils in years 10, 11, 12 and 13, and other pupils who were due to take external exams this academic year should still be allowed to attend.

If, by exception, attendance is restricted further, vulnerable children and young people and children of critical workers should still be allowed to attend.

9) Other areas which you may wish to include are:

Safeguarding

Meals

IT Access

Communications

